The Warrior's Journal is a publication of the TRiO Veterans Upward Bound program at the University of Pennsylvania. TRiO VUB is a federally-funded program of the U.S. Department of Education.

The Warrior's Journal newsletter serves as a vehicle to highlight program events and student accomplishments, and provides an empowering forum for creative expression within the Veterans Upward Bound community.

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That of what you seek, if of pure at heart, is always within your grasp.

"Love is not admiration, adoration nor adulation; love is acceptance."

Jere Lorenzo Miller
USMC

"VUB Eagle" - Picture illustrated by Veterans Upward Bound student, D. Mammucari.
Dear TRiO VUB Participants, Alumni, Staff and Colleagues:

Isn’t it amazing how one learns from another? We are here at VUB for the purpose of giving knowledge and support to the VUB students toward their academic success. The students participate in a variety of academic classes, interact with fellow classmates and instructors, and move ever closer toward their goal of attaining higher education. They do this, for the most part, with positive commitment.

There is, however, another form of learning that occurs during the cycle. It is the growth and learning that the VUB staff gains from our students – what we learn from the students’ experiences and the accomplishments in their lives that they share with us is beyond measure. I can attest that this awareness and growth occurs often.

The VUB students are incredible and they touch us deeply with what they have gone through and continue to overcome. Many students deal with an array of illnesses and disabilities, yet they persist by attending tutoring sessions and all of their classes. Some students are homeless, yet rarely do we hear a complaint about their situation, only questions about housing options to help them improve their situation. With the challenging economic times many students are unemployed, trying to make ends meet for themselves and their families. Again, we offer all the resources that we have, and they continue to hold their heads high, do their school work to their fullest ability, and persevere until they get that critical “lucky break” to have their need fulfilled.

Still, despite many challenges our veteran students stay with the program and continue on their educational path. Students continue in VUB with the same incredible focus and drive to achieve as they always have – as real troopers! There is a particular student whose focus on his academic success is not only for himself but as an example for the same success of his family. He sees his academic success as bigger than that of himself.

It never ceases to impress upon me the hurdles that our students leap over to reach their dreams – and accomplish them! Their tenacity and inspiration cannot be equaled by anyone. They continue to fight hard and strong for what they believe in. They did this while they were in the military and they continue to move strongly forward for themselves here at VUB. I am indebted to the examples they give all of us to overcome hardships and move forward in their lives. To the VUB Students, thank you for your unending courage and determination.

Wishing our VUB Students much success,

Diane Sandefur
VUB Director
Veterans Upward Bound Memorial Scholarship Fund

One way of making a positive difference in the life of a VUB graduate is to award scholarship monies that will help fund their college education. The TRiO Veterans Upward Bound Program at the University of Pennsylvania offers two scholarships annually in the memory of VUB participants, Stephen Garlanger, and L'Salle Harvey. Stephen Garlanger graduated VUB in 2000. He immediately began attending the College of General Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Steve passed away in July 2005 after a lengthy illness. For the last five years Steve and his wife conducted the POW/MIA missing man ceremony at our annual graduation. His wife now continues this tradition and also presents a scholarship in his name. Finally, L’Salle Harvey was a student with VUB during the Summer ‘06 cycle. He was tragically murdered on the streets of Philadelphia in August, 2006.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to either scholarship fund, please mail your check to:

“The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania”, Attn: Diane Sandefur, Director of VUB, 220 S. 40th St. Suite 260, Philadelphia, PA 19104

My Experience with Veterans Upwards Bound

By: Fran Jenkins, Counselor

It has been a humbling experience to be a part of the TRiO Veterans Upward Bound program. My greatest joy has been listening to and talking with our veterans. They shared with me their experiences in serving our country. With all they have gone through, no one has expressed any regrets for their service. In listening many times, I have put myself in their shoes and wondered what I would do. To me, what they have done is bravery to leave their comfort zone of family and friends to serve, only to come back to a different world than the one they have left. While in service, our students increased their knowledge through exposures of other cultures, living and working with diverse people, using their skills in team building and team work as well as acquiring different abilities that are not always marketable for today’s employment market.

TRiO Veterans Upward Bound offers options to this different world of today, and as a result, the VUB students are eager to gain more knowledge to strengthen their assets for the benefit of family and society. They see all their possibilities of opportunities through education. Having this experience of seeing it happen has given me a greater appreciation of their service to our country and a wanting for the best for them. Unlike my 28 years of TRiO experience with Student Support Services and High School Upward Bound, VUB students show a maturity that is unmatched due their eagerness, commitment and trust of the program. Being in their environment gives me confidence and joy that our country is served well by the best. To all of the vets past, present and future—our country owes you.

Thank you.

Kristen M. Reed joined the Veterans Upward Bound staff in October 2009. She worked as an interim Administrative Assistant until January 2010 and then transitioned to Data Entry Technician and created an alumni database for students who have participated in the TRiO Veterans Upward Bound Program over the past ten years and went on to pursue a postsecondary degree. Kristen’s experience at VUB was life changing. She learned so much about her country’s heroes and heroines. But, most importantly she learned that we can never do enough to thank our nation’s Veterans for their honorable service.
Lunch and a play at the Arden! This was my first class trip in a while. My fellow classmates and I were treated to a play at the Arden Theater and lunch at Fork restaurant. It was chilly and windy, but well worth the trip. We were accompanied by Todd Derby, Jere Miller, and Diane Sandefur, the best staff we could have been blessed with.

It was my great privilege to attend “The Blue Door,” a gripping play by Tanya Barfield. This was a two-person play about an African American professor, Dr. Lewis, who had lost his way in society. He believed that his mathematical knowledge and job title would make him more acceptable in various social circles. One night, during a fitful and dreadful sleep, Dr. Lewis is visited by the voices of his ancestors, Simon, Rex, and Jesse. Dr. Lewis is guided through their history and heritage. It is in this way that we, the audience, come to understand the importance and themes of the play.

The play’s timeline spans over 100 years. Great Simon is the patriarchal heir. His mother instructed him to paint the door of their house blue to preserve their souls. This was her way of giving her son and her family something to hold on to just before she was sold to another plantation. It was common for families to be broken up on plantations as a way of preventing slaves from uniting and organizing. Simon’s mother may not have known that painting that door blue was going to play such a vital role in her family’s history; nonetheless, this act of family preservation saved the sanity of the great-great grandson she never knew.

The extraordinary thespians (one of whom portrayed multiple roles) should be awarded for their excellence in portraying this story. I consider this play to be of epic significance. I would recommend this play to all people of all colors. We may not have a blue door to preserve our souls; however, we do have each other. It is easy to get caught up in the social expectations of society. It is easy to lose our way. For young African Americans, this can be problematic, because if we never truly know where we came from, how can we know who we are or where we are going?

by: GENE LEWIS
On March 9, 2010, the Veteran Upward Bound Program sponsored a very interesting and enjoyable trip for the Spring 2010 students. We were absolutely elated about the festivities that were planned for us. These events showed how much we were appreciated and how much the program cares. I am personally grateful and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to be a part of this trip.

First, we went to the Arden Theatre, which is located on 2nd Street just north of Market Street. *The Blue Door* is the name of the play that we experienced. *The Blue Door* gave a realistic viewpoint of people’s own indiscretions that may or may not affect what they have become later in life. The actors playing multiple roles and keeping the audience captivated was very intriguing. After the performance, my classmates and I were able to chat with the actors. Johnnie Hobbs, Jr., the actor portraying the main character, Lewis, is a Vietnam Veteran of the U.S. Army! I strongly recommend this play to everyone.

After the play, we strolled down to Market Street to Fork restaurant for lunch. My classmates and I had a chance to reacquaint ourselves after our midterm exams. Some of us hadn’t been able to have a sit-down in a while. It was good to be with everyone. It was inspiring to see how far we’ve come in the program and I am looking forward to graduating with them. The food and atmosphere were very enjoyable. I had the crab cake entree which was delightful.

Once we finished lunch we walked through Independence Mall. Immediately, and refreshingly we were reminded that Philadelphia is the birthplace of America. Constitution Hall, the Bank of the United States and the other buildings on site conjured up days of yore. After strolling through the Bourse on 5th Street we ended up (via the El) at Drexel University’s campus. We had two wonderful campus tour guides, both Drexel seniors. They were really enthusiastic about Drexel. We viewed all of the amenities: the gym, great; the student center, very accessible; and the library, expansive. It was a wonderful day! If you ever get the chance to become part of one of these trips, I would highly recommend participating in these events.

Thank you all that made this excursion possible!

**Paul’s Perspective**
It was a rainy afternoon field trip. In two vans the Spring 2010 Science class travelled to the Simeone Foundation, a classic car museum in South Philadelphia. The class had speculated that the teacher might even try to drive off with one of the vehicles because they were so nice. What strange excuse could there be for a science class to go to a race car museum? The answer: “momentum and inertia.”

At the museum, we learned of the constant battle between weight, engine size, brakes, suspension, and terrain. We also saw the evolution of the automobile, complete with actual examples of cars as opposed to pictures or other media. I remember seeing this huge old car that was nothing but an engine and some wooden wheels. Or, the sled car with an engine that looked like something made in a kid’s garage. Nearby, we saw a car that looked like the inspiration for Speed Racer’s Mach 5. All of the cars were gorgeous racing cars that caught your eye and imagination all at once.

The one car that stood out to me the most was a red Maserati 300S. It stood out to me not because of anything eye-catching or exotic, but rather, because of its age. This stunning sports car looked like something from present day, but it was made in 1956 (54 years ago!). The car was truly ahead of its time; at least in exterior design.

After our instructor showed us all of the cars, we started to do some science. We experimented by pushing bowling balls with brooms on various tracks so that we could better understand speed, weight, time, and momentum. Suffice to say, there was a lot of competition and enjoyment watching the class succeed and fail pushing a bowling ball along a race track. From this exercise we learned that gaining and braking speed is easier said than done. I think we all came away from this trip understanding a lot more about automobiles and physics than we did when we first arrived.

By: BRUCE NATHAN WINTER
Knocking on the Door of Opportunity

BY WILLIAM HEGGS JR.

On this particular day of all days, I was lost in thought, having time on my hands, wondering and thinking, “There has to be something that I can do to better myself. I need to take advantage of this time! The clock is ticking.” Lo and beyond, along came someone I knew, so I struck up a conversation and asked, “What are you doing?” To my surprise, he replied, “Veterans Upward Bound.” It didn’t take very long for me to consider returning to school. It had been a few decades since I was in school, but like they say, “It’s never too late.”

So I called VUB, knocking on the door of opportunity. Yes, indeed! The door opened up wide. I knew it was going to take determination and a very strong commitment to overcome the obstacles ahead. I had to consider taking tests and overcoming my fears. But most of all, I had to stick with VUB and stay to the end. I want to accomplish a lot of things in life, but most of all, I want to continue with my education.

This past semester, I met new and different people—people doing positive things. The air was filled with joy and laughter. A sense of well-being. I wanted to become a part of that, so I took on the challenge. I took the necessary tests and received my course outline. I was set. Nothing could stop me. I had goals that I wanted to fulfill, and yes—dreams that I once had were returning to me. There was hope in the things to be.

Attending VUB is very promising—the staff, the counselors, the tutors, everyone plays a part. It’s beautiful. And to think, all that you have to do is ask. (A good move on my part.) Even though life is full of exciting and rewarding challenges, it’s up to the individual to seek out and encounter the unknown. Pursue things in life! Get back on course! So what if you stray off course? It’s never too late. Things happen for the best. Find new doors to knock on. Plot your goals. Say what you mean and mean what you say. First and foremost, you are Number One. Engage!

Love to write?
Submit to the Warrior’s Journal.
Contact your VUB counselor.

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