The Warriors’ Journal, a publication of the TRIO Veterans Upward Bound program at the University of Pennsylvania, serves to a vehicle to highlight program events and student accomplishments, and provides an empowering forum for creative expression within the VUB community.

The 2012 Spring Semester is under way! The 14-week-long semester that began on Monday, January 8 is off to a great start, with nearly 75 veterans enrolled in classes that include English, Spanish, math, computers, and science. We wish you all the best of luck!

ABOVE: VUB Students in front of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, PA, on Veterans Day 2011.

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Veterans Upward Bound Mission Statement

The TRIO Veterans Upward Bound Program, an educational opportunity program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, advocates for the learning experience of under-represented Philadelphia area military veterans. The program provides intensive pre-college academic courses and comprehensive supportive services to promote the academic development of veterans towards the pursuit of a post-secondary education.
Hello VUB Students, Staff, Friends and Colleagues –

Happy 2012 to each of you! As we enter another year and begin another semester at VUB we are reminded of the tremendous dedication that all veterans have given this country. It is an honor to serve each and every veteran and to support you as you accomplish pre-college goals at VUB and prepare to move forward into college. We are here for you every step of the way.

I would like to focus on the topic of the 2011-12 Penn Humanities Forum: Adaptations. Although Abraham Maslow did not state that adaptation is one of the needs on the Hierarchy Needs Chart, there is no doubt that the ability to adapt is essential in the accomplishment of each of the Maslow hierarchical needs: Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Social Needs, Esteem Needs and Self-Actualization Needs. How can we not adapt in order to attain the basic human needs that we have in our lives? It is critical to adapt and change, if nothing else than to survive as well as to avoid conflict! However, adaptation allows something far greater - it brings growth and transformation. As stated in the Penn Humanities Forum literature: “Charles Darwin saw natural life as a process of adaptation, with organisms, species, and environments caught up in a dance of continual adjustment and transformation”. Truly, modifying who we are over time is our dance towards change. We cannot help but to adapt.

We need to continually adapt not only for individual growth but for worldly transformation. How does this translate to your experience at VUB? How will you adapt, alter, change, adjust, GROW and TRANSFORM through your involvement with VUB? Perhaps these points will help, as adaptation at VUB includes all of these habits:

- Stay focused
- Prepare
- Attend all classes
- Take good notes
- Go to tutoring
- Limit television
- Avoid distractions
- Use a calendar to plan your days
- Join a study group
- Be organized
- Don’t sweat the small stuff
- Determine the best time of day to study
- Believe in your ability
- Get support when needed
- Ask questions of your teachers & counselors
- Avoid cramming
- Be goal oriented
- Visualize your success now
- Do the hardest thing first
- Be proud of your accomplishments
- Teach yourself by teaching someone else
- Get plenty of sleep and drink a lot of water
- Balance your time
- Know when to laugh

Recently I had a conversation with a VUB Alum. He said that VUB changed his life because he never knew that he could accomplish higher education as he didn’t believe in himself or know how to be a quality student. I told him that he always had this within himself, but it took a tool, VUB, for him to know it. Clearly, he utilized multiple sources of adapting to be where he is today. Remember, “Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.” - George Bernard Shaw

Diane Sandefur
VUB Director

Do you love to write?
Ask your counselor about submitting an article, photo, original artwork, or poem to the next edition of the Warrior’s Journal.
VUB Volunteers at the Veterans Comfort House

On a cold and rainy October morning, Veterans Upward Bound students and staff joined forces with Home Depot and other volunteers from the community to give the Philadelphia Veterans Comfort Home (PVCH) an “extreme home makeover.” The PVCH, located at 4108 Baltimore Avenue, has been serving veterans since 1994, always with the same mission: “to leave none of our brothers and sisters behind as we work day by day to make their lives more rewarding and less complicated. It is a mission we are proud to accomplish.”

The volunteer staff, dressed in orange t-shirts, rain ponchos, and work gloves, split up into teams upon arrival. Each team had a different task—some painted walls, some ripped up carpets, some planted a new garden, and some were assigned to garbage duty. In a true team effort, the group completed the majority of the tasks before lunchtime—just in time to return to campus for tutoring and class!

From the PVCH Website:

“The Philadelphia Veterans Comfort House works in conjunction with the Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Veterans Service Organizations to provide a home away from home for patients while they are undergoing treatment for serious health issues. We also offer shelter, meals, support and administrative liaison for homeless veterans while they seek to rebuild their lives.

As a charity we accomplish our mission of helping homeless vets through the generosity and hard work of our great volunteers. Any skill, any level of time commitment and any resources you can provide are always welcome. Typical duties can range from clerical to meal prep, cleaning to media outreach and research. If you’d like to help, please call (267.292.2052) or email us to get details.”

ABOVE: VUB Student Steven Bethea volunteers with his son.

ABOVE: Group photo of the volunteers, which included members of the community, veterans, Comfort House staff, and VUB.

TRIO Veterans Upward Bound at the University of Pennsylvania now has a facebook page! To join, log-on to facebook.com and search: “TRIO Veterans Upward Bound at the University of Penn”
Wharton Students Seek Money to Help VUB Graduates

This past fall a team of Wharton freshmen [Ngoc Duong, Sam Ellis, Alexa Ellman, Mark Kapnick, Min Kim, Ekansh Kumar, Daniel Marati, Nate Rodgers, Luke Roskowinski, Helen Sohn] collaborated with Veterans Upward Bound to create a program to aid VUB graduates who have defaulted on past student loans. Through tireless outreach and a lot of perseverance, the Wharton group was able to identify several possible donors and create a framework that would enable future Wharton groups to continue their mission of raising money to help VUB graduates. Although no money was raised (yet), both groups remain hopeful.

“[We are] incredibly excited to work with...TRIO Veterans Upward Bound this semester. Considering how the veterans have represented our best interests through their service, we feel inspired to demonstrate our gratitude by raising awareness of and financial aid for VUB. We would like to assure you that [our team] is characterized by a strong sense of optimistic realism, shared responsibility, and open-mindedness and passion.”

At a Life Skills Workshop class on October 10, 2011, the Wharton team gave a presentation about the benefits of obtaining a college education. Each member shared a personal story about their educational pursuits so far. Lastly, in mid-November VUB Director Diane Sandefur arranged a meeting with the Wharton Freshmen team and the Development Staff at Radian Corporation. The Wharton students had the opportunity to be seated in a corporate conference room and discuss the art of how to ask for financial contributions for a non-profit organization.

Veterans Upward Bound 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 three scholarships annually. The scholarships support TRIO VUB Graduates to offset their college expenses. Every VUB recipient of the scholarship funds is a deserving and successful student.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to the scholarship fund, you may 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

Or go here to make an online contribution:
https://medley07.isc-seo.upenn.edu/giving/jsp/fast.do
and type in TRIO Veterans Upward Bound in the upper right hand select box.
Wharton Students Provide Financial Literacy Workshops, Trip

The TRIO VUB Program at the University of Pennsylvania was fortunate to collaborate with two Wharton Management 100 student teams this past fall (also see page 4). Every fall semester the Wharton 100 students are divided into teams:


This year there were 528 students and approximately 60 teams. Representatives from area community non-profit agencies and organizations present to the students their agency needs for the semester. The teams then select who they want to work with and then plan their strategies for success!

A team of Wharton 100 freshmen [Rock Zhou, Shaun Ayrton, Divanna Cedeno, Anna Zhang, Joshua Stone, Steven Zhang, Aditya Gathwala, Dan Van Glahn, Charlie Wham, Diana Bongiorno] collaborated with TRIO Veterans Upward Bound to create a Financial Literacy Program for the VUB students. The Wharton students divided into teams of five. After several meetings with the VUB Staff they created a financial literacy curriculum titled “Finance Looking Forward”. The students created a pre-test to determine the VUB students’ knowledge of financial literacy and then created and presented ten financial literacy workshops that covered: Basic Banking, Budgeting, Loans and Debt, Credit Repair and Planning Ahead. Topics within each workshop covered areas such as checking accounts, credit unions vs. commercial banks, savings accounts, credit cards, CD’s, steps in budgeting, credit scores and credit repair, and information on credit such as loans and mortgages. At the end of the semester the Wharton students presented a post-test to measure the VUB students’ increase of knowledge on financial literacy. The VUB students increased in all areas!

In addition to the 10 workshops that the Wharton 100 Financial Literacy team organized, they also planned a no expense outing to visit the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. A “Money in Motion Exhibit” is offered and it is free to the public. It includes exhibits that are technologically fun with interactive learning displays. There is information on the changes of currency and banking since the early 1600’s as well as what future banking may entail. The exhibit includes a 25-foot tower of shredded bills totaling $100 million and a currency cart representing $1,350,000 in $5 bills. Collaborating with the Wharton students was a wonderful experience.
Off to College in Spring 2012

Ronald Alston—Community College of Philadelphia
Jeanine Key—Thomas Jefferson University
Diana Kirkland—Peirce College
John Lee—Bucks County Community College
Gerald McNeill—Peirce College
Kenneth Pernsley—Montgomery County Community College
Andrew Saxon—Community College of Philadelphia
Calvin Terry—Community College of Philadelphia

ABOVE: VUB Students on Veterans Day 2011 after a free lunch from Applebee’s.
From left, David Hart, Herbert Liles, Jeffrey Witherspoon, Tyrone Williams (staff), Diana Kirkland, Joseph Boyd, Mark Briley, John Lee, Stephen Cosby, Andrew Saxon, Jerry Chisom, Roland Smalls, and Gerald McNeill.
Veterans Day 2011

LEFT: VUB graduate Diana Kirkland poses with the Founding Fathers at the National Constitution Center. ABOVE: Former VUB participant Charles McBrearty (right) raises the American flag in front of the Van Pelt Library on the Penn campus.

LEFT: VUB students stop in front of City Hall after visiting Peirce College on Veterans Day. Top row from left: Tyrone Williams, Timothy Turner, Gerald McNeill, David Hart, Jere Miller, and Herb Liles. Middle row from left: Jeffrey Witherspoon, Stephen Cosby, Mark Briley, and Jerry Chisolm. Front row from left: John Lee, Diana Kirkland, Andrew Saxon, and Roland Smalls.

BELOW: VUB staff pose with the Founding Fathers at the National Constitution Center. From left, Todd Derby, Jere Miller, Diane Sandefur, and Tyrone Williams.
“Who Told You?”

*Abdul-Malik Ali Shaheed, VUB Student*

Who told you that you couldn’t learn, that your brain would crash and burn, that you couldn’t have a thought, that your dilemma was all your fault, that there’s too much information and you’d never reach the station?

Who told you that you were too old? From them, that was very bold to assume that because of your age you can not command the stage.

Who told you that you couldn’t fly, that you should lay down and die, when in fact it is just the start? Learning to fly is just an art.

Who told you a bad today, can not give way to a better tomorrow?

Tell the one who told you that, “See me now, in gown and cap.”