National TRIO Day Banquet Draws Community and University Together

Nearly 200 invited guests of the Office of Special Programs (TRIO, GEAR UP, and Office of Disability Services) came to the WSU Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex on the campus of Wichita State University on the evening of February 13, 2014 to show their support of the programs. Included on the guest list was the Honorable Carl Brewer, Mayor of the city of Wichita who read a proclamation declaring the date as National TRIO Day. The Mayor also presented honored guest and keynote speaker Linda Byrd-Johnson, Ph.D. with the Medallion to the City.

A VIP reception was held prior to the banquet and included many dignitaries from local, state, and federal government. Some of those in attendance included Vice President for Academic Affairs Anthony Vizzini, Ph.D., Vice President for Campus Life and University Relations Wade Robinson, Ph.D., Dean of the College of Fine Arts Rodney Miller, Ph.D., Career Services Director Jill Pletcher, Executive Director of Secondary Schools for Wichita Public Schools Lori Doyle, Associate Vice President and Director of the Rhatigan Student Center Jim Herrman, Professor of Psychology Rhonda Lewis, Ph.D., State Agriculture Representative for Senator Pat Roberts Office Mel Thompson, Constituent Services Representative for Senator Jerry Moran’s Office Joseph Mayans, and Byrd-Johnson representing the United State Department of Education. Many of the student honorees were in attendance as well as the Special Programs office directors.

Planning an event like National TRIO Day requires a lot of time and energy by a number of people. The vision is that of Associate Vice President for Campus Life and University Relations Deltha Q. Colvin and the details are worked out among all the program directors under her supervision (Richard Armstrong, Ph.D., Communication Upward Bound; Grady Landrum, Office of Disability Services (ODS); Martha Lewis, Disability Support Services; Frances (Continued on page 5)

Student Corner: Vy Lam

A senior at West High School, Vy has taken the most rigorous curriculum available at her high school, graduating in May with dual credentials in both the Health Sciences and Engineering Academies.

Serious about her desire to become a neurosurgeon, Vy has volunteered at a local hospital since she was in middle school. She enjoys the helper role and looks for opportunities to make others smile.

Linda Byrd-Johnson Ph.D. speaks at the banquet.
NATIONAL TRIO DAY BANQUET

Ervin, Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC); Corinne Nilsen, Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP (KKGU); LaWanda Holt-Fields, McNair Scholars Program; Deema de Silva, Ph.D., Student Support Services; Larry Ramos, Talent Search; Kaye Monk-Morgan, Upward Bound Math-Science; Rhonda Hicks, Upward Bound/Wichita Prep; Shukura Bakari-Cozart, Veterans Upward Bound.

Also on the planning team include Alan Dsouza, Ph.D., policy analyst director, Special Programs and Hercilia Thompson, administrative officer, Special Programs.

Committees and subcommittees were formed and chaired by the program directors to arrange for the decorations, food, awards, entertainment, publicity, and other details. The committees are comprised of TRIO/ODS/KKGU staff and affords individuals to share their talents and to work with staff from other programs. Prior to the banquet, several staff members where asked “what does National TRIO Day mean to you?” A wide range of responses was received. Brad Webster of Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) stated that “TRIO Day is all about opportunity.” While his comment was succinct it was also poignant. The event is an opportunity for the community to learn about the great work that is being done at WSU but it is also an opportunity for the programs to let the community know how grateful they are for all its support. Stacia Lyday, also of VUB, commented that “TRIO Day is a celebration of the students that we help” while Vic Chavez of EOC said National TRIO Day is an opportunity “to recognize the amazing programs and services that are available across the country.”

Whatever significance National TRIO Day holds for people on an individual basis, there is no doubting the passion and value that exists for the people

(Student Corner: De’Andra Hughes)

De’Andra Hughes, a junior at Southeast High School, has participated in the Communication Upward Bound program since the summer before her freshman year. President of the fashion club at school, De’Andra enjoys expressing her unique style in everything she does, especially through fashion.

De’Andra hopes to attend an art institute in either Colorado or Kansas City and plans to major in fashion and art.

The audience looks on at the banquet.

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who either work in the programs or those who are served by the programs.

One of the highlights of the evening was recognizing student achievers selected from each program. These students were selected based on their level of involvement with their current program, their longevity with the program(s), and their academic and/or personal achievements. Eleven student achievers were honored. These individuals are impressive and deserved this recognition.

Frances Ervin, director of Educational Opportunity Centers introduced each student achiever. The recognition was important to the students and many were quite humbled that TRIO would even give them an award. Bishop Rice, a middle school student in the Talent Search program said “Receiving this award means a whole bunch to me…I’m just really happy!” The following are abbreviated comments provided by Ervin during this important portion of the banquet.

Communication Upward Bound – De’Andra Hughes, a junior at Southeast High School, is a regular participant of the Homework Assistance Program and juggles her schedule to address her love for art and keeping good grades.

Office of Disability Services – Jon Brooks embraced his chance to fulfill his dream of earning an engineering degree at WSU with supportive help and assistance from Disability Support Services at Cowley Community College and at WSU.

Disability Support Services – Danielle Bryant is planning to graduate in spring 2014 with a general studies degree with a concentration in chemistry and then go on to attain a Ph.D.

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Educational Opportunity Centers Program - Emma Chilton earned a social work degree from WSU and participates in civic activities such as feeding the homeless, signing up families for Operation Holiday and volunteering at the local health department.

Kansas Kids@GEAR UP - Teresa Coons is a sophomore at Wichita North High School and has been in Kansas Kids@GEAR UP since 2010. After high school, she hopes to attend college and study science.

McNair Scholars Program - Francesca Chavira is a senior at WSU majoring in criminal justice. She is conducting scholarly research and is very proud that she has been able to complete her bachelor’s degree this spring and further her education as an example to her three boys.

Talent Search – Bishop Rice is an eighth grader at Brooks Technology and Arts Magnet Middle School. She has been a TRIO Talent Search participant for three years and plans to pursue a career as a marine biologist.

Student Support Services – Shelby Harris will graduate with a degree in nursing from WSU this spring and plans on joining the World Health Organization (WHO) or the Peace Corps to serve people in underdeveloped countries. Shelby says that with the help of Student Support Services and TRIO, her dreams of being a nurse have come true.

Student Corner: Shelby Harris

Shelby is currently finishing her last semester as a nursing student with a minor in aging studies. After graduation, she is going to stay in the Wichita area for a couple of years. Thereafter, she plans on joining the World Health Organization (WHO) or the Peace Corps to serve people in underdeveloped countries. Shelby says that with the help of Student Support Services and TRIO, her dreams of being a nurse have come true.
Upward Bound Wichita Prep – 
Tu Huyen Nguyen joined Upward Bound Wichita Prep as a freshman at East High School. Now a senior, she has maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average throughout her high school career. Her career goal is become a dentist.

Veterans Upward Bound – 
Logan Cockrum joined Veterans Upward Bound after serving four years in the U.S. Marine Corps. Logan is enrolled as a pre-med student at WSU. He plans to attend chiropractic college.

The services that the programs provide to students don’t just seem to focus on one particular area for students. On paper it appears that programs provide a lot of assistance to help bolster students’ academic skills. However, Cockrum said that Veterans Upward Bound really helped him to make the transition from active duty to full-time college student. Upward Bound Math-Science student Gabrielle Owens said “Upward Bound Math-Science has taught me a lot about dedication and perseverance...to never give up.” Sergio Ziad, another Upward Bound Math-Science student said the program wasn’t just another program—it was “family” to him.

Byrd-Johnson served as the evening’s keynote speaker and received a special legacy award from Vice President Wade Robinson for her significant contributions to TRIO. Later, she was given the Building Bridges award given to individuals who provide exemplary support to the WSU special programs. She tailored her remarks for the students in the audience and gave a stirring and motivational message to them. While student oriented, her talk hit home with many people in the audience.

Byrd-Johnson spoke of dedication and commitment and the importance of doing their best. Near the end of her speech, she had all the students stand up and promise to work hard to achieve their dreams. Associate Vice President Colvin said Byrd-Johnson made sure that her speech conveyed how important the students are and how important it is for the students to work toward hav-
ing a career. Shukura Bakari-Cozart said Byrd-Johnson “really connected with the audience… especially the students.” Riccardo Harris of Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP said Byrd-Johnson “challenged the kids to be great.” The overwhelming majority of comments received following the event were positive, ensuring that the planning for this event was well-conceived and carried out.

Deema de Silva, Ph.D., director of Student Support Services was given a legacy award by Colvin for her years of dedication and unique contributions. All in all, the evening was a splendid success and left many in the audience with a deep sense of pride and appreciation.

Student Corner: Francesca Chavira

Francesca Chavira is a senior at Wichita State University majoring in criminal justice who really enjoys schools and taking care of her family. She is conducting scholarly research with Michael Birzer, Ph.D., chair of the School of Community Affairs. Chavira plans to attend WSU and further her education in the master’s program of criminal justice.

She is also the mother of three boys, who are very active, loving and extremely bright. They all do very well in school.