

The Blueprint for a Lifetime of Success

Magazine for TRIO Day 2008



Deltha Q. Colvin,
TRIO Director,
Assistant Vice President
for Campus Life

National TRIO Day 2008 was a major success at Wichita State University. Over 270 individuals gathered to participate in sessions and enjoy the opportunity to network. The high school students had the opportunity to learn the importance of identifying skills needed to be developed before graduating. Middle school students had the opportunity to interact through three different sessions. These students were able to expand their knowledge about college life and requirements to attend college, female students were made aware of how different personalities affect job opportunities and success, and male students discussed careers and built a resume.

The luncheon panel was dynamic, sharing their background and the impact of TRIO on their lives. The former TRIO participants answered questions about their career decisions, facilitated by Ms. Rhonda Hicks, and held the attention of the audience. Attendees learned that no matter what part of the country students attended a TRIO Program, the impact of the program was significant. Realizing that a counselor tracking a student down in the cotton fields, to a GED student realizing a law degree was attainable, to being a female engineer without regard to gender was riveting for the audience. The presenters made a lasting impression.

The staffs of the Office of Special Programs hosted community and university personnel to an exciting day. The evaluations documented the success of all activities, 98% of respondents felt TRIO Day succeeded in making participants realize the importance of education and further, 91%

expressed the desire to attend again next year and that the event was beneficial to them.

The staff thanks all those who contributed to the success of National TRIO Day 2008. I want to thank the OSP staff who planned a great event.

Deltha Q. Colvin

Thank you to all the presenters for making TRIO Day 2008 a success:

Diangela Looney, Program Coordinator, GEAR UP

Caroline Biggs, Academic Instructor, GEAR UP

Larry Britton, Director, Veterans Upward Bound

Janice Thacker, Retired Teacher and Counselor

Vanessa Souriya-Mnirajd, Associate Director, Student Support Services

Denise Wren, Assistant Superintendent of High School, Wichita Public Schools

Roderick Harris, Director, Center for Health Equity

Brandi Newry, School Psychologist, Spaght Accelerated Magnet Academy

Brian Black, Community Relations Manager, Spirit AeroSystems

Bach Hang, Attorney at Law

Marc Davis, Attorney at Law

Michelle Bernbeck-Martin, Industrial Engineer, Cessna Aircraft Company

TRIO DAY 2008

The National TRIO Day Celebration held on February 20, 2008 was a successful event exceeding the expectations of students, staff and community participants. In attendance were a large number of TRIO students from middle school, high school and college; Wichita school Principals, Counselors and staff; Wichita State University faculty, staff, administrators and TRIO alumni. The purpose of the event was to celebrate the successes of the academic support provided by Wichita State University's TRIO programs at each educational level. The programs assist students in their efforts to move through the pipeline of middle school, high school, college, and graduate school.

The highlight this year was a panel of five TRIO alumni, presently employed in the Wichita Metropolitan area, who shared their experiences. The panelists included Mr. Roderick Harris, Director, Center for Health Equity; Mr. Marc Davis, Attorney at Law; Mr. Brian Black, Community Relations Manager, Spirit AeroSystems; Ms. Brandi Newry, School Psychologist, Spaght Accelerated Magnet Academy; Mr. Bach Hang, Attorney at Law; and Ms. Michelle Bernbeck-Martin, Industrial Engineer, Cessna Aircraft Company. The panelists were passionate in their articulation of how various TRIO programs around the country played a major role in assisting each of them to understand the importance of staying in school, continuing their education into high school, entering college and seeking professional training. They relayed stories of how their lives were impacted by TRIO personnel and how their academic counselors instilled confidence in them, emphasizing that they were capable, intelligent

students who could overcome financial and social difficulties, obstacles and challenges that they faced each semester and during critical stages in their lives. Each speaker encouraged students to persist throughout Middle School and High School and to continue their hard work so that they could become productive citizens.

Mr. Mel Thompson from Senator Pat Roberts office stayed throughout the luncheon and spoke to students individually and collectively. All participants had the opportunity to evaluate the event.

The proactive year-long planning resulted in a well-organized event and the amount of participation was an encouragement for all collaborating WSU-TRIO personnel whose marketing efforts made the event a success. TRIO Day brought into awareness the immense support that the TRIO programs receive from the Wichita community.

Middle School Session

Gender Matters: Male

During TRIO Day, Major Larry Britton presented two sessions on “The Importance of Male Success” to 26 male middle school students from the TRIO and GEAR UP programs. The material was presented in a “Workshop Style” with continuous interaction between the students and presenter. During the introduction the students were informed of the future roles that were awaiting them. Major Britton told the students, “You live in the most powerful nation on earth. You are, quite simply, the leaders, husbands and fathers of the next generation.” He told the students that limitations were set only by their own imagination and determination.

The students were provided with a handout that allowed them to collect personal reflections and information during the workshop. The session included:

- Students unanimously defining success as “achieving their goals,”
- A discussion of visions and missions,
- The opportunity to write down and share personal career goals and,
- A dialogue about education needed for career choices.

Students learned that in life, everyone needs a vision of their future. Further, the vision should be very detailed, 3 dimensional, in color and high definition. Picturing themselves at 18, 21, 30 and beyond allowed students to think about what they needed to do to be prepared.

One exercise asked the students about their ability to “tie a tie,” which none knew how to



Major Larry Britton presenting Gender Matters to male students.

do. This sparked a discussion about the importance of mentors and how to choose effective mentors for success.

At the completion of the workshop Major Britton refocused students on their handout, which by now listed their goals, their motivation, their chosen path, and selected mentors. Their handout also contained all the requisite information for a resume.

Finally, students were reminded of Major Britton’s opening statement: “You live in the most powerful nation on earth. You are the leaders, husbands and fathers of the next generation, limited only by your own imaginations and determination.”

Middle School Session

Gender Matters: Female



Janice Thacker speaking to students during TRIO Day

The 2008 TRIO Middle School Session emphasized the need to recognize different beliefs, attitudes and interpreta-

tion of student leaders. The True Colors Personality Profile session provided female students with information for self-understanding and an awareness of family, friends and possible career interests. The middle school females whose sophisticated, young ladylike manner facilitated their engagement in a self inventory. Each student was introduced to the True Colors concepts as resources that will help them to identify personality characteristics and develop an understanding of their relationships with others.

The better each student understands the characteristics of others at this stage, the better prepared they are to strengthen themselves.

It was inspirational to see that the young ladies were prepared socially to interact with students from other schools in order to gain leadership skills. The students had an opportunity to view a True Colors Video. The video shows middle school students in an entire school that incorporated the True Colors philosophy.

College Life with Jeopardy

TRIO Day 2008 was a huge success for Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP, both for staff and students! As a college-access program, the staff worked hard to create an activity that would be both fun and informative for the participating middle-school students. The outcome was a “College-Knowledge Jeopardy” game that was both interactive and insightful for the participants, emphasizing that learning about college life could be enjoyable and worthwhile! Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP staff members, Diangela Looney and Caroline Biggs presented two sessions to middle-school students from the Wichita area.

For most middle-school students, the prospect of college seems part of a far away future or something they may never be able to achieve. Therefore, the purpose of the college Jeopardy game was to integrate the approaching aspects of college enrollment needs (e.g. ACT/SAT Preparation, Financial Aid, etc.) with the exciting facets of College Life in itself (i.e. Dorm living, scholarships, etc.). Each student was paired with a partner and given 10 minutes to look over a “College-Life” fact sheet which included information from “picking a major,” to the myth of the “Freshman Fifteen!” After the review time, the participants were divided into three teams that would compete against each other. The projector-screen game-board (which included music and graphics) displayed various categories (e.g. Financial Aid, Courses and Scheduling, Housing and Roommates, Picking a Major, and Potluck) and score-point

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Middle School Session

College Life with Jeopardy

ranges. The students were given autonomy to choose a category and amount, as well as confer with teammates on the answers, making the game an effective collaborative team-building exercise. The game concluded with Final Jeopardy, where a question in reference to TRIO/GEAR UP Programming allowed the teams to wager as little or as many of their points. All participating students were given a prize.



Diangela Looney and Caroline Biggs speaking to students during their session

Students enjoyed the jeopardy-style competition and actively engaged themselves. The upbeat and lively style of learning intrigued the students and adults who participated. Perhaps the once-distant and intimidating thought of college gave way to excitement about selecting a roommate and picking a major. Students learned about taking college-entrance exams and different forms of financial aid. Seemingly the fear of college tests and classes dissolved as the participants gained a better understanding of college and responded to “switching majors” or “finals-week.” The interactive game was an excellent way to dispel myths and enlighten the students about the realities of college and preparation for future entry. The collaborative method of pairing a PowerPoint

presentation with a fun and common game show allowed students to feel less intimidated by their peers and become more confident in their own knowledge.

The presenters designed a specific activity to prevent students from becoming irritated, distracted, and bored. The “Jeopardy” learning style, gave students the opportunity to collaborate with their peers on answers, strategy, and general knowledge in a fun interactive and non-threatening environment.

High School Icebreaker

Vanessa Souriya-Mnirajd, Associate Director, Student Support Services conducted an icebreaker entitled “Human Connections” for the middle school and high school students with the help of Sandra Bush, Kimberly Woolf, and Robert Love. The icebreaker was to help students to get to know each other before attending their first TRIO day session. Students were asked to select a partner then form an outside and inside circle facing each other. Sandra, Kimberly, and Robert were the judges. When the music was turned on the inside circle walked to the left and the outside circle walked to the right. When the music stopped, Vanessa called out two body parts, i.e.: head to head, and the students needed to find their partners and connect themselves head to head. The slowest pair was eliminated. The last two standing received a prize. The students enjoyed the icebreaker and requested to play again.

High School Session

A Lifetime of Success and Quality Education

Students who attended the high school session on National TRIO Day presented by Denise Wren, Assistant Superintendent of High Schools, were very impressed with the way she captured and held their attention for two hours. She accomplished this by using some unusual methods. One such method was expressing her concern to the students about teachers' lackadaisical efforts in the classroom. Approximately eighty (80) high school students attended the all day event held at the Hughes Metropolitan Complex on the campus of Wichita State University. For the first time, only one speaker was featured for the high school session.



Denise Wren, Assistant Superintendant of High School, Wichita Public Schools

Wren presented a highly interactive session that got students up and moving and very much involved during the session. She posed questions for the students and then got them into small groups of five to discuss the questions. One question the students discussed was "what can teachers do to make their classroom settings more fun and not so boring?" Many students agreed that teachers should get students more involved

in their lectures. A student from South High School suggested that students should be able to evaluate teachers every month to keep them on their toes. Wren also had the students write down three areas where they would like to see improvements from teachers. She then asked for reports from each group followed by a discussion of the suggestions. Wren encouraged the students to share any other thoughts that came to mind.



Denise Wren speaking with students during her session at TRIO Day

She concluded the session by discussing the demands placed on high school teachers and administrators and the expectations of high school graduates. Wren assured the students that she would do all she could do to make sure high school students are graduating with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education, the work force, and as citizens of our 21st century global society.

Luncheon Speakers

After a successful morning of educational workshops, the students and staff of the TRIO Programs, Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP and Office of Disability Services, came together for a luncheon in the Metroplex gymnasium. The students gathered at individual tables where specific staff mentors engaged them in a variety of conversations ranging from what the students learned in the morning sessions, to what careers they want to pursue, to how they are doing in school, to how they can make positive decisions in their lives, and much more.

The Mistress of Ceremonies, Ms. Rhonda Hicks, presented a slide show of the staff that makes the special programs at Wichita State University possible. Vice President for Campus Life and University Relations, Dr. Ronald Kopita gave a motivational welcome. Ms. Hicks announced the Essay Contest Winners from each program and presented them with certificates and PDAs. Mr. Harlan Foraker on behalf of his mother, Charmaine and family assisted Mr. Larry Ramos to presenting the Talent Search winner of the Olin Ted Foraker Memorial Scholarship.



Bach Hang, Michelle Bernbeck-Martin, and Marc Davis



Dr. Ronald Kopita, Deltha Q. Colvin, Marc Davis, Bach Hang, Brandi Newry, Roderick Harris, and Brian Black

During the luncheon a panel of dynamic and thriving TRIO alumni shared their experiences and offered guidance to this generation of young TRIO and GEAR UP scholars. The panelists included Roderick Harris, a community health professional; Marc Davis, an attorney at law; Michelle Bernbeck-Martin, an industrial engineer; Brandi Newry, a school psychologist; Bach Hang, an attorney at law; and Brian Black, a community relations manager. After sharing touching stories of their lives, connections with TRIO programs, and their road to success, the panelists left the students with a few parting words. The essence of their thoughts was perhaps best summarized by the words of Ms. Bernbeck-Martin, "Don't be afraid to be smart and to pursue your talents." As the luncheon came to a close, TRIO Director and Assistant Vice President for Campus Life, Ms. Deltha Q. Colvin, led the students and staff in reciting the TRIO Pledge.

Mr. Olin Ted Foraker



Olin Ted Foraker

During TRIO Day, the Olin Ted Foraker Memorial Scholarship was presented by Mr. Larry Ramos and Mr. Harlan Foraker on behalf of his mother Ms. Charmine Foraker and family. The scholarship recipient was Ms. Shelby Binns.

Mr. Olin Ted Foraker served in the U.S. Army from 1952-1954. Foraker received his School of Administration and Business Education M.S. Degree in 1959 and a B.S. Degree from Emporia State University in 1956. His emphasis was in Accounting with a minor in Social Science and Business Administration. Foraker completed additional graduate hours towards a Specialist Degree at Ft. Hays State University. A graduate of Mount Hope High School in Mount Hope, Kansas, he was certified in Business Education, School Administration, and Vocational Education.

Mr. Foraker was Director of Talent Search Project Discovery at Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas from 1989-1998. Prior to joining the TRIO Programs, Ted, as he was

affectionately referred, was Superintendent of Schools in Almena, Sylvan Grove, and Kinsley, Kansas for 7 years; Assistant Director for Curriculum and Instructional Services, North Central Kansas Area Vocational-Technical School, Beloit, Kansas, for 2 years, 1987-1989; High School and Junior High School Principal in Brookville, and Little River, Kansas, for 7 years; and a Business Instructor in Waverly, and Lakin, Kansas, for 9 years.

Mr. Foraker's accomplishments included experience in secondary and post-secondary curriculum objectives, design competency profiles, curriculum guides, government grants, state regulations and agriculture background, and mechanical experience. He was also accomplished on procurement, writing specification for bids, accounting, budgeting, shipping and receiving, direct involvement in staff evaluation, hiring, interviewing, and assignment.

Mr. Foraker's memberships and organizations included:

- The Masonic Lodge
- KABE, former Vice-President & President
- Phi Delta Kappa-National Honor Fraternity
- United School Administrators
- Lions Club International
- National Vocational Association
- Kansas Vocational Association
- Member MO-KAN-NE and MAEOPP
- National NCEOA conferences

His hobbies were antique cars & researching the Civil War. Mr. Foraker was a phenomenal educator, leader, and advocate for students.

Ted Foraker In His Own Words

When I look back over the years at my life, I wonder where to begin in expressing my accomplishments. But, since I have been asked to do this, I will try to give it my best shot, especially for the many people who throughout my life have helped me and assisted in my following the path I did. Remember, one is never alone any time as the days pass by into months and then into years. My 75 years have certainly been directed by others especially through my teachers. I remember my 1st grade teacher, my 3rd grade teacher, then my teacher from 4th thru 8th grade. I know I was not the best student I could have been, and they along with other people tried their best to help me achieve. In high school, I had the helping hand of coaches more than anyone as athletics was a passion with me and my aim was to achieve to my best ability. I know how proud I was when my coach gave awards noting what a fine player I was, and his wish for me to continue in athletics through college. I tried to meet his standard of achievement by continuing on into college although money was a problem. I couldn't do a number of things, but I always kept in mind that my main choice in life was to obtain an education. A college education became my sole objective, and I set out to prove that I could obtain a degree regardless of the financial hardships. So, I obtained a B.S. Degree from Emporia State University in 1956 and a Masters Degree in 1959. My field of study was Business Administration, with Accounting and Education as minors. I taught business education and Social Services for 9 years, and then worked 20 years as a school administrator, and served as a superintendent of schools for over 40 years. I worked my last 10 years at Wichita State University under the guidance of Deltha Q. Colvin who was Assistant Vice President for Campus Life. She was certainly a blessing. I remember at the beginning, I asked her if she would run

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Olin Ted Foraker Memorial Scholarship Winner: Perception of TRIO Day

As a high school student, when I heard about TRIO Day, I was like 'Hey I wanna go. It's an excused day out of school!' but, boy was I surprised that it was much more. At TRIO Day, we started out with fun "Ice breakers" joining with different schools and getting to know new people. Then, we broke off into middle school and high school groups to learn what was available to us as students and to learn what stages we should be in getting ready for college.



Larry Ramos, Shelby Binns, Charmaine Foraker, Karen Foraker, and Harlan Foraker

At TRIO Day, I had a chance to meet a ton of amazing people such as doctors, professors, psychologists, and other very highly skilled people. As it turned out, I also met students from various schools here in Wichita. They all had been in TRIO at one point or another and that is how they got to be in the positions they are in now.

I also had the wonderful experience of meeting the Foraker Family. I was the first recipient ever to receive the Olin Ted Foraker Memorial Scholarship. This was quite an honor. The Foraker Family were nice people. They turned their sad misfortune of losing Mr. Foraker into a positive experience. They are now giving

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**Olin Ted Foraker Memorial Scholarship Winner:
Perception of TRIO Day**

back to the community by giving this scholarship in remembrance of him. I hope I can make Mrs. Foraker and the rest of the family proud.

I would recommend all middle school and high school students who are able to attend future TRIO Days to take that opportunity and use it to their full advantage. You can learn so much in just a few hours about what is available to students who want to take time to get help, and to further their education.

-Shelby L. Binns

In His Own Words

the show or would I run the show, and she blasted me by stating the fact that I was hired to do it!

During these years, it became by objective to recognize that all students can achieve if given the right motivation. I changed my attitude towards being more of an assistant to youth, knowing that students will achieve success, if given the opportunity and proper tools. No child fails in our eyes. It's what we do to evaluate them. To show an interest in a child is a goal. They can achieve if we push the right buttons. Make them feel good about themselves.

I have found that success comes to those who earn it. That means good work habits, dedication, truth, honesty, and a strong willingness to help your program be successful. Your personal attitudes are part of the way we do things. Look for the best in others and you will never lose. Last maybe not least you need to be creative because the status quo is never good enough.

-Ted Foraker 2007

Essay Winners

Each TRIO program held an essay competition that encouraged to show the importance of their participation in TRIO Programs. The most compelling essay was selected. All winners received a certificate and PDA.

Talent Search Winner

Sontia Levy, the essay winner from the TRIO Talent Search program is a



Sontia Levy

freshman at South High School. She has been in the program for two years. She began her program participation as an eighth grader during the Middle School Summer Enrichment Program (SEP). Stephanie Haynes, Director of Middle School Programs convinced her mother that the SEP would be a good experience for Sontia. During that initial exposure to the program Sontia participated in all activities offered and successfully completed the SEP. Once in high school, Sontia continued her program participation and visits with Myron Richard, Educational Development Assistant, on a regular basis.

TRIO Programs are 100% federally funded by the US Department of Education. GEAR UP is 50% funded by the U.S. Department of Education and 50% funded through state and local sources. Office of Disability Services is 100% State Funded.

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Essay Winners

Educational Opportunity Center Programs (EOC) Winner

Carla S. is an African American woman in her early 40's. Carla came to the EOC Program for assistance to re-enter college to complete her Social Work degree. According to Carla, she had not completed her education due to family and personal life struggles that she still faces today. She stated that she had always been in a limited income status and wanted to change this by completing her college degree. Just as important, Carla wanted to be a role model for her daughter. In preparation for college re-entry, Carla attended several EOC Learning Labs to improve her confidence in the use of computers for academic purposes. Her assigned Program Specialist developed an Educational Action Plan that included goals such as: complete the college re-activation form, college admissions forms, the FAFSA online, and enrollment to college. Carla shares that: *“EOC has instilled in me the meaning of balance in my life. As a member of EOC, I have been introduced to new ways to incorporate long term goals as well as short term goals to meet both my educational goals as well as having a more positive outlook in my life as a whole.”*

In Spring 2006, Carla enrolled at Cowley County Community College. She happily reports completing the first semester with A's and B's. Carla plans to transfer to Wichita State University for Fall 2008 Semester.

McNair Winner

Christina Eaves was announced the winner of the Ronald E.

McNair Program Essay competi-

tion for National TRIO Day at WSU on February 20, 2008. Born and raised in Seal Beach, California, Christina was heavily involved in school activities and began showing her leadership skills at an early age. After gaining her AA degree from Coastline Community College in Huntington Beach, CA., Christina achieved what she considered was her greatest academic honor: being selected to participate in the Ronald McNair Scholars Program at Wichita State University in Fall, 2007. The experience of conducting research in the area of Intimate Partner Violence and examining its relationship to socio-economic backgrounds has increased her interest in becoming a career counselor at the academia level.

The following is an excerpt from her winning essay entitled, “My Educational and Career Goals”: “My educational goal is to complete my undergraduate program in psychology at WSU and then continue my education in WSU's Community Psychology PhD program, where I will be educated by faculty members whose doctoral program is recognized as one of the top five community psychology programs in North America. What better place to hone my skills than in an educational center like WSU and its massive support network of dedicated professionals?”



Christina Eaves

Essay Winners

Disability Support Services Winner

TRIO students from each TRIO Program were asked to write an essay for TRIO Day 2008, about the impact TRIO made in their lives.

TRIO Disability Support Services (DSS) student, Dorothy Manson, a returning adult who is now classified as a sophomore, is this year's DSS winner of the TRIO Day Essay Writing Contest. Dorothy is majoring in Social Work and has been relentlessly pursuing her baccalaureate degree from the first day she enrolled at Wichita State University. She has had many obstacles placed in her way, such as some untimely hospitalizations due to surgery, lack of in-town family support, being out of the educational system for many years, and just having to deal with the difficulties that usually arise with her type of disability. However, Dorothy has not allowed any of these obstacles to prevent her from continuing to pursue her goals. She works closely with her Academic Advisor, Phil Bowers whom she sees on a regular basis throughout the semester. Dorothy maintains a good GPA and is always concerned about her grades. She utilizes the peer tutoring services that are available to her through DSS and she has truly been an inspiration to all of the staff that works with her at DSS. Since her family lives hundreds of miles away, the staff tries to make her feel at home. In Dorothy's essay she stated, "The people at Disability Support Services mean as much to me as my own family at times. DSS has been more than just a support group for me. They have been my family away from home. They have meant the most to me when I have been so ill." Congratulations to Dorothy Manson for being one of the 2008 TRIO Day Essay Writing Contest Winners!

Upward Bound Wichita Prep Winner

Erickah Furr is a freshmen at East High School. Erickah joined the Upward Bound Wichita Prep Program at the end of her 8th grade academic career. She has been a faithful, persistent, unwavering and dedicated student. Erickah excels in all areas of her life (academic, social, personal). Erickah is viewed as a leader and a role model for young people.

When the Upward Bound Wichita Prep Program announced the essay contest, Erickah was very excited. She wrote her essay and was one of the first students to turn it in. One day her mother called to alert the Upward Bound staff that Erickah made a grammatical mistake on her essay. Erickah and her mother brought the revised essay version immediately.

Erickah Furr is also responsible for this year's TRIO DAY t-shirt logo. Erickah is an excellent student, a writer, illustrator, great communicator and has a marvelous attitude.

The Upward Bound Wichita Prep Program gives students like Erickah a platform and a community to succeed. The Upward Bound Wichita Prep Program Staff are honored to have

Erickah Furr as the 2008 WSU National TRIO Day essay recipient.



National TRIO Day Celebration 2008: An Evaluation

Introduction: The key word to understand the evaluation approach to National TRIO Day Celebration 2008 is “empowerment.” A systematically conducted evaluation of a campus-wide event such as the National TRIO Day not only empowers the participants, but also the event organizers and TRIO/GEAR UP program administrators. The participants are empowered when their feedback brings about positive programmatic changes. The event organizers and program administrators are empowered in understanding the impact and reach of their services.

Assessing the extended impact of an event such as the National TRIO Day through immediate feedback is challenging. However, the general strategy has been to allow participants to record their impressions in a carefully crafted survey instrument that specifically seeks information that enables both short-term and long-term outcomes of the event/sessions. Two kinds of surveys were developed for this purpose: the track/session specific, and the overall TRIO Day specific. The track-specific instruments included one for the High School Track (on strategic skills’ development during and after high school) and three for the Middle School Track (corresponding to the three sessions that the students attended). The overall TRIO Day specific evaluation focused on the luncheon panel and the overall assessment of the half-day event. This year, all evaluation sheets were color coded to facilitate easy distribution and data collection.

Findings: A total number of 90 non-students and 179 students (N = 269) attended the celebration. As regards response rates, 47 non-students (52.22%) and 147 TRIO/GEAR UP

students (82.12%) completed the responses. The high response rate enabled valid and statistically significant inferences about program sessions. Since no differences were found among groups based on demographics of gender (wherever applicable), grade levels, or programs, comprehensive frequencies and percentages were used to measure and infer on the success and satisfaction level among the event attendees.

The High School Track: Facilitated by the Asst. Superintendent of High Schools, Ms. Denise Wren, this session (prefaced with an ice-breaking session led by Ms. Vanessa Souriya-Mnirajd) was favorably rated by the students (n = 93). While 75% of the students liked the ice-breakers, 93.3% found the session helpful to identify skills they need to develop before graduating from high school. A very high rate 95.5% of students recorded that they benefitted by attending the session. The open-ended question on what they learned from the session pointed to specific pearls of wisdom that the students gathered during the session, as well as the immediacy of the need for such skills. In order to make such sessions more productive, the students suggested more interaction and a series of similar sessions.

The Middle School Track: The Middle School track was divided into three sessions and all the sessions had a 100% response rate.

The session entitled “College Life with Jeopardy” which all students attended had a 100% response rate on the evaluations. Eighty-five percent of the students found the game involving, and 82% reinforced their knowledge

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National TRIO Day Celebration 2008: An Evaluation

about college life and college terms. The impact of the session was recorded as 89% felt that they were comfortable with the idea of a college education, and 91% were interested in going to college. Learning points by the students included additional information about credit hours, dorm life and scholarship requirements. One of the interesting suggestions was to include more difficult questions and make the contest more challenging.

The session on “Importance of Female Success” focused more on how different personalities affected job opportunities and success which, was one of the learning points identified by the respondents. The respondents were not only provided information about different personalities (95%), but also got a better understanding of gender based careers (64%).

The session on “Importance of Male Success,” similarly, provided an idea of how gender impacts careers for males (88.5%). More specifically, the session helped participants in learning how to build a resume (96.2%) and developed an interest in learning about alternative careers (80.8%).

The Luncheon Session: The luncheon session was a panel presentation of past TRIO participants who now lead successful lives in diverse careers. The carefully moderated session got positive assessment by both the student as well as the non-student attendees.

Student Responses: One hundred and forty-seven students responded to the assessment survey regarding the luncheon panel discussion. Seventy-seven percent found it informative, and 87% agreed that the panel suc-

ceeded in sharing with the audience the contribution of education for long-term success. In the open-ended questions about the panel, the students indicated how the panelists made them realize the contribution of education and hard work in lifting not just the individual, but the whole family and community. It was interesting to note that many students suggested that a similar panel of TRIO graduates who have immediately gone to college or work should also be incorporated.

Non-Student Responses: Forty-three non-students (including TRIO/GEAR UP staff and WSU administrators) responded to the evaluation survey. Ninety-three percent of those found the panel discussion appealing and 93% indicated that the panel was successful in sharing how participation in TRIO impacted their life. Some of the non-student attendees recorded their learning experiences ranging from “there are a lot of TRIO programs” to “TRIO stories are inspirational.” A few suggested that the program includes ways and means to inform the public more about what TRIO means and how extensively it serves the Wichita/Kansas population.

Overall Assessment: Both the students and non-students gave high points to the National TRIO Day organizers for the program. Among non-students, a majority suggested that the TRIO Day succeeded in making participants realize the importance of education (97.7%), and that the event was beneficial for them (90.5%). Ninety-one percent expressed their desire to attend the celebration again.

Among the students there was a similar exciting response. Nine-three percent of the stu-

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National TRIO Day Celebration 2008: An Evaluation

dents agreed as to how the celebration succeeded in making them understand the importance of education and found the event beneficial. Eighty-four percent of them indicated that they would like to attend the event again next year.

Conclusion: A high level of positive assessment and satisfaction from the attendees is a source of motivation and power for the TRIO/GEAR UP administrators to continue in their mission of successful TRIO/GEAR UP programs. Simultaneously, as an affected population, the students and other community members, through their responses on the evaluation sheets, exercised their power of giving valuable feedback, and making the event more relevant to their needs. Thus, while TRIO and GEAR UP seek a leveling field in educational access, program evaluations such as these, seek a leveling field between the TRIO/GEAR UP program adminis-

trators and the TRIO/GEAR UP clientele.

The 2008 National TRIO Day celebrations at WSU succeeded in bringing approximately 270 people together, and sharing information and valuable experiences about and through TRIO and GEAR UP. The evaluator hopes that the long-term effects of this event, matches the short-term enthusiasm it has generated, and the educational empowerment of individuals and communities continues unabated.

(The detailed report of the TRIO National Day Celebration is available at the Office of the Assistant Vice President for Campus Life, Wichita State University.)

Dr. Alan Josin D'souza



