

# TRiO Programs

## Newsletter 2011-12

Matt Williamson  
Editor

### Special points of interest:

- Early Start 2011
- OSP Highlights, Achievements and Statistics
- UB Summer Component
- OSPYs & Pathfinders Awards Ceremonies
- Black History Month TRiO Events

### Inside this

#### Issue:

Opportunity Scholars Program	2
OSP Highlights Achievements & Statistics	2
Gear Up and Upward Bound	3
OSPYs & Pathfinder Awards	3
Delta Links and Omega Scholars	4
About TRiO Programs	4

## Early Start 2011

Monday, July 24, 2011 started a new chapter in the lives of thirty seven entering Freshmen to TRiO's *Opportunity Scholars Early Start Program*. Participants received instructions from TRiO staffers, Max Bonek, Academic Specialist and Matt Williamson, Career and Cultural Specialist, on the purpose of the program designed to assist first-year students in making a smooth transition from high school to college. Through participation in *Early Start*, participants gained first-hand experience in academic survival skills, computer applications, and college adjustment techniques. Also, they earned four college credits that count toward graduation before they took their first Fall class!

Participants also got the opportunity to become familiar with the campus, resources, faculty, staff, each other, and most importantly, themselves.

Over the three week period, participants formed lasting bonds and friendships that served as support for each other throughout their semesters at USCL.

Participants received instructions on Library Orientation, Academic Integrity, Financial Literacy, Social Networking, Community and Civic responsibility, to name a few. In

one particular session, Survival, participants learn to appreciate the diversity of an individuals' skills and approaches to problem solving, which possibly could save lives during an emergency.

On the final day, Friday, August 12, 2011, participants received a Certificate of Completion and school supplies.

By the end of the year, these thirty seven *Early Start* participants went on to exceed a predicted GPA of 2.02 to an actual GPA of 2.73.



(Early Start participants on graduation day in front of the home of TRiO Programs Director, Thelathia B. Bailey. Names of participants listed below.)

Kelsey Baker, Stephanie Baker, Derrick Blackmon, Sha'Quana Brown, Veronica Clayton, Ronald Clyburn, Hailey Criminger, Chassity Davis, Kirenski Fletcher, Patrick Ford, Joshua Gray, Anita Harris, Christopher Harris, Amber Hildreth, Aries Hood, Brittany Johnson, Shannon Kirby, Kayla Lucky, Jameshia McClinton, Jami Melton, Samuerika Mingo, Jacob Murphy, Jacob Neal, Tyrek Patterson, Ashley Plyler, Jasmine Rice, Caitlin Sitte, Chakerria Southern, Jacob Toedtman, Khadija Trotter, Lawrence Venezia, Nena Walker, Ezra Walls, Brandon Waitenbaugh and Evander Wilson.



OSP participants enjoyed answering questions during the OSP Sports Day Super Bowl Trivia Contest on Wednesday, February 1, 2012.



Winners in the Black History Quiz Bowl showed off their medallions.



Early Start participants received instructions during the "Showing Our True Colors" session.

## Opportunity Scholars Program

The goal of the *Opportunity Scholars Program* (OSP) at USC Lancaster is to increase college retention and graduation rates and facilitate the process of learning from one level of education to the next. In addition to providing academic counseling, OSP staff exposed OSP participants to a host of academic, career and cultural activities throughout the academic year.

The Strong Interest Inventory is an assessment tool used by OSP staff to help identify personal and vocational interests of participants as

they make decisions about majors and careers. Also participants attended a series of workshops to help improve their study skills, familiarize them with campus resources and helped them develop effective social skills.

OSP staff, Max Bonek, Matt Williamson and CoSonja Allen closely monitored each **student's schedule, course work, grades, etc.** during each semester. They worked closely with professors that ensured each OSP participant had a plan of action in the case of difficulties.

### OSP Achievements, Highlights and Statistics

In September, 2011, participants observed the tenth anniversary of 9-11 by watching videos of the attacks on the World Trade Centers and viewed facts displayed in the TRIO Learning Resource Center. They tested their knowledge in the Constitution Day Trivia Challenge on Thursday, September 15. During the month of February, participants enjoyed answering questions during the OSP Sports Day Super Bowl Trivia Contest and contributed to the Speak Up & Speak Out Poetry Competition, the Quiz Bowl, and Soul Food Cook Off during the Black History Month

Celebration.

Academically, OSP participants had higher GPAs than non-participants by race and gender. They championed 12 **on the President's Honor Roll** and 52 on the Dean Honor Roll. Of the 160 participants who received OSP services, almost 80 percent of OSP participants met academic performance levels by earning a GPA equal to or greater than 2.00. And 37 percent had cumulative GPA equal to or greater than 3.0.

Nearly 35 percent of 2010-11 participants transferred to other four year institutions.

With wide eyes and expressions of enthusiasm, sixty Gear Up/ Upward Bound students entered the Academic Year and Summer Component program phases. With much success, the twenty-four Empowerment Sessions enabled these students to improve in English, Math, Science and a foreign language. Additionally, students engaged in activities on academic survival skills, career exploration and personal development. Students took both the SAT and ACT practice tests and applied to at least three colleges prior to December.

The summer Component, which



*Thirty-one Gear Up and Upward Bound students gathered for a group photo in the USC Lancaster Rose Garden during the TRiO Programs GU/UB Summer Component.*

lasted six weeks, allowed students to experience college life by receiving classroom instructions from both high school teachers and USCL faculty and staff. To conclude the program, students toured various four-year institutions throughout South Carolina.

## OSPYS and Pathfinders Awards



*TRiO staff stood proudly in front of the "Celebrating 15 Years of TRiO at USC Lancaster" banner during the OSPYS and Pathfinders Award ceremony.*

The annual OSPY and Pathfinder Awards ceremonies took place in the James A. Bradley Arts and Sciences Building multipurpose room on Wednesday, April 11,

2012. This year's theme, *Celebrating 15 Years of TRiO at USC Lancaster*, allowed OSP participants the opportunity to "strut their stuff" in formal attire during the common lunch hour on campus. The OSP staff created an elegant atmosphere to emphasize **the importance of the participants' individual achievements** in a variety of categories which included the OSP Lab Spirit Award, Positive Attitude Award, Quiet Leader Award, Most Promising New Student Award, Turn-Around Student of the Year Award, and the Foundation of Excellence Award to name a few.

Pathfinder students were delighted to dress up for their awards ceremony later that evening. Seniors were allowed to bring their parents and friends as they were recognized for their achievements during four years of high school. Furthermore, the Upward Bound staff awarded a parent who most exemplified **parent participation in their child's education**. All nine seniors were accepted into seven postsecondary institutions.

## Delta Links and Omega Scholars

Collaboration made a world of difference for the Delta Links and Omega Scholars organizations. Together, these peer mentoring groups had 348 members, 797 individuals, 66 faculty and staff to participate in 12 events at 8 different locations on the USC Lancaster campus and in the community. These events included a Pizza Inn Fundraiser in October, the Adopt A Leader Holiday Dinner in December, 2011, the Soul Food Cook Off in February and the Hoops for K.A.R.E. Basketball Tournament Fundraiser in March 2012, to name only a few.

Despite a very active event schedule, Delta Links and Omega Scholars maintained their high standards of academic performance with several members on both the President's Honor Roll and Dean's List.



*Delta Links and Omega Scholars took a quick break to take a picture during the Pizza Inn Fundraiser on Tuesday, October 4, 2011.*

## TRiO Programs at USC Lancaster

The TRiO Programs at USC Lancaster is a federally funded program that provides opportunities for academic development, assists students with basic college requirements, and serves to motivate students towards the successful completion of their post-secondary education.

The TRiO staff consists of eight highly qualified and dedicated professionals who have greatly impacted the lives of every student in the program. Staff members are from various backgrounds and experiences which adds to the unique relationships they share to enhance the experiences of the participants.

There are three staffers who oversee the participation of precollege students from eighth to twelfth grade, in the Gear Up and Upward Bound programs. Once in college, students take part in the Opportunity Scholars Program (OSP) which is designed to increase college retention and graduation rates and facilitate the process of learning from one level of education to the next.

Both programs offer Lunch-N-Learn workshops and daily access to advisors and the computer lab. OSP students enjoy even more amenities with easy

access to the Academic Success Center, Medford Library and Counseling Services.

### TRiO Program Staff

Thelathia B. Bailey, Director of TRiO Programs

### Opportunity Scholars Program Staff

Max Bonek, Academic Specialist

Matt Williamson, Career/Cultural Specialist

CoSonja Allen, Administrative Specialist

### Gear Up and Upward Bound Staff

Dia Robinson, Gear Up Program Specialist

Antonio Mackey, Career/Cultural Specialist

Cathy McGriff, Administrative Specialist

### Support Staff

Mark Ammons, Business Manager

Call us at 803.313.7125 or visit us at:

[usclancaster.sc.edu](http://usclancaster.sc.edu)

