UNLV Celebrates National TRiO/GEAR UP Day with the Largest Attendance in Event’s History
by Danielle Gross, Academic Counselor

Elected officials, community partners, UNLV and Clark County School District (CCSD) administrators, as well as students and families came together on February 22, 2014 to celebrate the achievements of TRiO and GEAR UP participants, both past and present. Shortly after 5 pm, the Brasilia Ballroom at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino was filled to capacity by more than 1,100 people, the largest attendance in the history of the event. Among those in attendance were Donald Snyder (UNLV president), Pat Skorkowsky (CCSD superintendent), Dr. Linda Young, Patrice Tew, Stavan Corbett (CCSD trustees), Cedric Crear, Dr. Jack Lund Schofield (NSHE regents), Mark Alden (former NSHE regent), Dr. Juanita Fain (UNLV vice president for student affairs, Dr. Marta Meana (UNLV dean of honors college), Dr. John Valery White (UNLV executive vice president and provost), as well as several principals from CCSD middle and high schools.

TRiO/GEAR UP Day is proclaimed by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Day of Service. A slideshow presentation prior to the event’s opening showcased numerous pictures of TRiO and GEAR UP participants and staff volunteering in the community throughout the year. Events included: sorting gently used donations for Goodwill, sorting and packaging popcorn for Opportunity Village, Upward Bound students and staff assisting with the setup of UNLV Festival of Communities and Greenfest, as well as combining program materials for attendees of the NASFAA conference. Additional efforts included feeding the homeless, hosting literacy nights, acting as mentors for at-risk youth, among other countless community events. Mr. Keith Rogers, deputy executive director, referenced the slideshow presentation proudly stating that although TRiO/GEAR UP Day is a day of service, UNLV TRiO and GEAR UP programs serve the community continuously throughout the year.

The mistress of ceremonies Maria Silva, news anchor, reporter, and producer from KVU Fox 5, began her welcome by stating that she looks forward to attending the TRiO/GEAR UP Day event each year and praised The Center for Academic Enrichment and Outreach (The Center) for hosting the event. She also offered her congratulations to those who participated in and completed TRiO/GEAR UP programs. These programs help low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to overcome physical, social, cultural and academic barriers. “The Center houses the largest suite of federally funded (sixteen TRiO and three GEAR UP) programs in the nation,” said Dr. Juanita P. Fain. “Under the leadership of Dr. William W. Sullivan, The Center provides exceptional services to more than 29,000 students in Southern Nevada.”

Two GEAR UP participants and five TRiO alumni were honored for their accomplishments during the event. Keynote speaker, Steven Horsford, United States Congressman for Nevada’s Fourth District, received the prestigious Educational Pioneer Award for his community efforts and supporting low-income and first-generation students who seek to obtain a higher education degree. Mr. Horsford is a UNR TRiO alumnus. The audience listened as the honorees shared their stories on how the TRiO and GEAR UP programs positively changed their lives and their futures. The GEAR UP achievers were Ashley Sosa-Aldana and Jamaica Price. The TRiO honorees were: Dr. Lorenzo Nichols (McNair alumnus), Detrick Sanford (SSS alumnus), Carmen Mercedez (UB alumnus), Terry Benson (ETS alumnus), and Barbara Gordon (AES alumnus). The next annual TRiO/GEAR UP Day Celebration is scheduled for Saturday February 21, 2015, at the Rio All-Suite Hotel.
U.S. Senator Harry Reid Meets with UNLV Upward Bound Students in Washington, D.C.

by James Archibald, UB Academic Counselor

The annual policy trip to Washington, D.C. allows participants to gain both historical and political knowledge. Ten Upward Bound participants, all Clark County high school students were selected to travel to D.C. for this year’s trip. The students who were chosen to act as ambassadors of the program, are: Caroline Benton (Veterans Tribute), Hermelinda Mejia (El Dorado HS), Jana Burd (Valley HS), Isabella Munguia (Western HS), Deanna Kassa (Rancho HS), Giovanny Vazquez (Western HS), Jose Correa, Daniel Rakita (Canyon Springs HS), Jalen Jones (Desert Pines HS) and Fredrick Johnson (Silverado HS).

Many exciting opportunities were provided for the students during this important trip, including campus tours of American University, Georgetown University, and the University of Maryland in College Park. Ambassador Isabella Munguia was extremely grateful for the tour of American University as it is a prospect for her undergraduate degree. During the five-day trip, the students enjoyed a great deal of sightseeing. Time was spent exploring the national mall, where they visited a number of national historic sites, including but not limited to, the Capitol Building, the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Wall, as well as the World War II, Lincoln, Washington, and Martin Luther King Jr. Memorials. Additionally, they visited Ford’s Theater, Peterson’s House, Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum, and the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. The students viewed the blue, green, and red rooms of the White House, toured the Pentagon, and Arlington National Cemetery, where they visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and viewed the Changing of the Guard.

The students and staff had the opportunity to meet and speak with Congresswoman Dina Titus, Congressman Mark Amodei, Congressman Steven Horsford, and Senator Harry Reid at the Cannon House Office Building. During these meetings, the students spoke about their personal stories of academic success and struggle, and how the Upward Bound program has assisted them in their journey. The government officials took the time to meet and take photos with each student to commemorate the experience. This opportunity was well received by Ambassador Caroline Benton stating, “It’s not every day that students have the chance to speak with government officials about the needs of students.”

While on the road and during meal times, the Upward Bound seniors were overheard talking about the exciting activities provided and shared stories of their experience in the Upward Bound program over the years, such as living in the UNLV dorms during the summer, Saturday academic sessions, counseling, tutoring, and building new relationships with their peers from other high schools.

Upon returning to Las Vegas, the students expressed their gratitude for being given the opportunity to see many historical sites, speak with government representatives, and visit campuses they may have never visited on their own. All students represented The Center, the Upward Bound Program, and themselves in the most respectable manner.

“I was pleased to meet with these remarkable high school students from Nevada and their TRIO and Upward Bound directors from UNLV and Nevada State College. Regardless of who your parents are or how much money they make, everyone deserves the opportunity to get a quality education. Nevada receives eight Upward Bound grants that serve more than 500 students at Nevada State College, UNLV, and the University of Nevada-Reno, and I am delighted to have met some of the beneficiaries of these great programs.”

– Senator Harry Reid

Upward Bound students visit the Lincoln and Washington Memorials, Arlington National Cemetery, and the Peterson House.
Helping Those Who Wish to Further Their Education
by Peggy Madow, EOC Director

The UNLV TRIO Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), locally known as Adult Educational Services program, has several partnerships in the Las Vegas community, two of which are with the Foundation for Recovery and the Salvation Army. The partnerships were developed to provide preparation and pre-testing for the High School Equivalency exam, academic and career advising, assistance with completing college admissions applications and filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at various locations around the city.

Services are provided at eight locations and are extended to displaced workers, unemployed, underemployed, low-income and first-generation college students, veterans and active duty military who wish to enroll in postsecondary education. Tutoring is provided in four subject areas (mathematics, science, social studies and language arts) in a classroom setting. Whether an individual plans to attend a two-year college, four-year university, technical, vocational or trade school, an EOC counselor can help with the process.

SSS and McNair Give Back to Those in Need
by Dr. Deanna Davis, Academic Enrichment Director

On Thursday, June 26th, Student Support Services and McNair staff and participants volunteered at the Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada. Staff and participants distributed serving trays, served hot meals, and provided table service to clients with physical disabilities and to over six-hundred fifty homeless men and women in the Las Vegas Valley.

UNLV McNair Scholars Attend the 22nd Annual Pacific Northwest Spring Research Conference
by Jennifer Bolick & Gisele Goertz, McNair Scholars

Two UNLV McNair Scholars, Jennifer Bolick and Gisele Goertz, attended the McNair & EIP 22nd Annual Pacific Northwest Spring Research Conference at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA, during May 15-17, 2014. This conference is designed to provide prospective graduate students the opportunity to present their research before an interdisciplinary community, and network with other students and faculty from attending research institutions. Both scholars reflected on their experiences:

“From the moment we arrived on the University of Washington campus, replete with lush greenery and beautiful architecture, we knew it was going to be an amazing experience. The conference began with a social for all visiting scholars in the Husky Union Building.

The following morning we attended the welcome breakfast and conference orientation, during which we had the opportunity to network with graduate school recruiters and discuss funding options and career opportunities for the future. The recruiters kindly extended an invitation to attend the University of Chicago McNair Graduate School Fair in July 2014. Later that morning, we arrived at Mary Gates Hall where the symposium was being held. Michael K. Young, J.D., President of the University of Washington, acknowledged the presence of state officials and praised the hard work and dedication of all scholars and mentors in attendance. The conference was described as the country’s largest undergraduate symposium with over eleven-hundred presenters from ten universities. Being able to learn how to effectively communicate complex research to a large audience was a unique opportunity, as was engaging with the prospective next generation of McNair Scholars. Following the presentations, many students expressed their interest in conducting research and inquired about how to get involved. It was very rewarding being able to share our academic background and assist them on how to find research opportunities within and outside of their respective universities.

The research topics presented at the symposium were wide spread. Presentations ranged from cancer research to waste water treatment to generating alternative energy from magnetic field force. One of the many fascinating topics was presented by Michael James from Edmonds College. His research was in the field of Physics and focused on studying burn patterns in non-conductive material, such as wood, caused by an applied dielectric high voltage. Computer simulations of such processes could help engineers design safer insulating material for airplanes. In addition to participating in the symposium, we had the pleasure of exploring the beautiful city of Seattle, while interacting with welcoming locals. Attending the McNair & EIP 22nd Annual Pacific Northwest Spring Research Conference was a wonderful experience that enriched us academically and culturally, which also opened doors to potential graduate funding opportunities.”

SSS and McNair volunteer at Catholic Charities

Gisele Goertz and Jennifer Bolick, UNLV McNair Scholars attend the McNair & EIP 22nd Annual Pacific Northwest Spring Research Conference at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington.
Mock Trials Give Students Courtroom Experience
by James Archibald, UB Academic Advisor and Elizabeth Glaser, AmeriCorps Volunteer

Thirty Upward Bound students took part in a mock trial at the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law on March 1, 2014. Ten law students volunteered to present basic legal system information, including the rules of evidence, the types of trials that exist, and a broad overview of the legal system so that each Upward Bound student was prepared to successfully participate in the mock trial.

The students were divided into three groups: prosecutors, defense team, and jurors. Students acting as attorneys studied the case, while the prosecution and defense teams were preparing to present their case. The juror group was given a tour of the law school and the chance to try on a judge’s robe. Moreover, they viewed a video presentation which discussed the intricacies of witness testimonies during court cases and how easily memories may be distorted and misconstrued. Upward Bound staff members were impressed to hear some of the more introverted students assertively yell “objection” and see them zealously defend their “clients”. Once the attorneys presented their case, the jurors were dismissed to lunch and spent an hour discussing the case. The foreman of the jury announced the decision at the group session after lunch.

Both the Dean of the William S. Boyd School of Law, Daniel W. Hamilton, and Nevada Assemblywoman Lucy Flores gave presentations on life after law school and highlighted the most common legal field concentrations. Assemblywoman Flores shared her background of growing up in less than ideal conditions in North Las Vegas to turning her life around by completing her undergraduate degree at the University of Southern California then enrolling in and successfully graduating from the William S. Boyd School of Law. Dean Hamilton, along with the volunteer law students discussed the prerequisites required for admission acceptance, how to successfully apply, and what life is like in law school. The students were engaged and interested throughout the session; it was great to see prominent members of the Las Vegas community spend the day with Upward Bound.

Upward Bound students pose at a blasting station

McNair Scholar Recognized as Outstanding Graduate at UNLV Spring Commencement
by UNLV university communications

The sight of scorpions and snakes causes most to run, but not Michael Webber. Even as a child, the Las Vegas native was fascinated by venomous creatures of the night. So it’s fitting that the Mojave High School graduate, who already has an undergraduate degree from UNLV in biology, earns a Ph.D. for work that shines new light on the life history of the Arizona bark scorpion.

Michael graduates with an impressive 3.97 GPA and already has seven research articles to her name, including work as co-author on an article about the landmark discovery of a new scorpion species in Death Valley. Her accomplishments also include being awarded the highly competitive Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation, the Wolzinger Family Research Scholarship, and participation in the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program. A frequent guest speaker in classrooms and wildlife parks across the region, Michael hopes her excitement for science will provide a spark for kids to consider a career in the field.

Upward Bound students participate in a mock trial at the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law Thomas & Mack Moot Courtroom

Upward Bound Students “Spread the Love” at Colorful 5k
by Geannine Jordan, Asst. Director Upward Bound

On March 1, 2014, students from the UNLV Upward Bound Math & Science Center volunteered at the annual Tie Dye 5k (5-kilometers or 3.1 miles) held at Sunset Park. The Tie Dye Run is a great way for runners of all levels to experience a 5k, without the anxiety of a clock tracking their progress. The ultimate goal of the race is to become as tie dyed as possible at the end.

Upward Bound students operated blasting stations located at each of the three one-mile markers. There they were armed with squeeze bottles and buckets to “Spread the Love”, a term used by the event organizers to douse the runners’ shirts in bright colorful powder. The students cheered and encouraged the runners and walkers as they passed not to give up and keep their eyes on the finish line. The students thoroughly enjoyed themselves as they gave back to the Las Vegas community and now look forward to helping out in next year’s race.
TRIO Programs: A Pipeline to Meet Educational Goals
by Cicely Morgan, ETS Coordinator

During the 2013-2014 school year, Educational Talent Search (ETS) participants experienced many educational opportunities including College Day at the College of Southern Nevada, walked the scenic trails at Nevada State College, participated in an economics class with hands-on activities to learn how the stock market operates, and enjoyed lunch with students from University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) while attending Counselor’s Day at UNR. Several TRIO ETS students had the opportunity to showcase their talents at the International House of Blues Foundation, “Unity in Diversity” celebration in late March 2014. Representatives from Wells Fargo explained the importance of financial literacy to participants at target schools. For one ETS participant, Orestes Marquetti, paying for college became less of a challenge as he was awarded a $20,000 scholarship from Foot Locker.

The ETS program and its counselors give financial information to ETS participants on the scholarship process and how it works. An explanation is provided on how scholarship money is awarded, and what it may be used for (tuition and fees, textbooks, room and board, and computers). Upon completing the college admissions and enrollment process, graduating seniors from the ETS program receive a TRIO ETS program honor cord to wear at their graduation ceremony.

ETS Student Named Presidential Scholar and Gates Millennium Scholarship Recipient
by Danielle Gross, Academic Counselor

TRIO ETS participant and Veterans Tribute Career and Technical Academy (VTCTA) student Erika Carrera has been named a 2014 U.S. Presidential Scholar in addition to being a recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship. Erika is an excellent student who makes time for many extracurricular and community activities. She has completed over two-hundred hours of community service with a number of organizations. She serves as Student Body President and is the Executive Board Secretary for the VTCTA Ambassadors. She has taken many rigorous courses while maintaining a 4.7 GPA. Erika is fluent in both in both English and Spanish. Her SAT scores qualified her to receive the competitive Hispanic Scholar Recognition award in the eleventh-grade. TRIO ETS staff congratulate Erika in her success thus far.

ETS participant, Erika Carrera. Photo courtesy of the Clark County School District website

Zappos CEO Visits Fremont Middle School
by Patra Nakornthap-Arjong, GEAR UP Coordinator

Zappos CEO, Tony Hsieh (top middle), poses with the Mariachi Azul team

CEO of Zappos and strong supporter of education, Tony Hsieh, toured John C. Fremont Middle School’s UNLV GEAR UP program and After-School All-Stars (ASAS) on March 31, 2014. During the tour, Mr. Hsieh received a glimpse of the educational and fun after-school activities offered by ASAS and UNLV GEAR UP. The tour concluded with a performance by the Fremont Middle School Mariachi Azul team.
Two Upward Bound Students Awarded Newly Established Diversity Scholarships

Cox Communications Las Vegas, in partnership with eight Southern Nevada diversity organizations, announced a new initiative to support diversity scholarships for higher education, launching a five-year commitment to fund the scholarships with $175,000. UNLV Upward Bound students, Jana Burd and Isabella Munguia, were among the sixteen college bound high school graduates awarded the newly established diversity scholarships during a formal presentation dinner ceremony.

Jana Burd, Valley High School, was awarded the Cox and 100 Black Men Diversity Scholarship

Isabella Munguia, Western High School, was awarded the Cox and Fiesta Las Vegas Latino Parade and Festival Diversity Scholarship

CAEO Honors Exemplary Staff Members

On February 22, 2014, during the National TRIO/GEAR UP Day Celebration, three employees were recognized by Ms. Ambu Yegappan, chair of the CAEO employee recognition committee, as CAEO Employees of the Year. The recipients of the award were nominated by co-workers, supervisors, and management team members for their outstanding performance and contribution to the betterment of CAEO, university, and the community.

Employees of the Year 2013

Professional Staff
Miriam Dunbar, TRIO Training Coordinator

 Classified Staff
Beth Moore, Office Manager

Part-time Staff/Student
Mark Brindley, Peer Advisor

ETS Student Receives Full-Ride Scholarship to the University of Notre Dame

by Cicely Morgan, ETS Coordinator

Orestes Marquetti, ETS participant

Orestes Marquetti is one of the many successful UNLV TRIO Educational Talent Search (ETS) seniors at Cheyenne High School. Orestes will graduate with an Advanced Honors High School Diploma and also receive the Gold Shield Distinction award. This award is given to students who excel academically and complete a rigorous course of study while maintaining an unweighted GPA of 3.25. Orestes’ hard work has paid off. Not only has he been accepted by five universities and awarded nine scholarships, he is also a Gates Millennium Scholarship finalist, who had been invited to attend the Balfour-Hesburgh Engineer Summer Bridge Scholarship program at the University of Notre Dame, and earned fifteen college credits from his high school AP classes.

In the fall of 2014, Orestes will be attending the University of Notre Dame. There, he will pursue a bachelor of science degree in Chemical Engineering with a minor in Economics. Being the recipient of the University of Notre Dame University Scholarship, a merit-based scholarship, his full tuition is paid for. Cheyenne High School and the ETS program are very proud of Orestes and his academic success so far.

Student Spotlight

Soraya Peron, Valley High School student and ETS participant was named a 2014 National Merit Scholar. She plans to pursue a degree in pre-medicine at the University of Oklahoma.
CAEO Volunteers with Three Square to Combat Local Hunger
by Danielle Gross, Academic Counselor

UNLV CAEO is committed to directly helping the local community, taking part in numerous volunteer events throughout the year. The spring 2014 volunteer event took place at the largest food bank in Southern Nevada, Three Square. Through various partnerships and volunteers, Three Square is able to distribute more than thirty million pounds of food and grocery products annually. On March 7, 2014, Three Square hosted seventy CAEO staff members to assist in their pursuit of providing food assistance and hygiene items to the residents of Southern Nevada.

Following the warm welcome by the volunteer coordinators, the staff was split into three groups. One small group was designated to the Kids Café program, while the two larger groups made their way to the volunteer room to sort through thousands of pounds of grocery and hygiene products. The staff organized themselves into an assembly line along the conveyor belt to begin the sorting and packing process. Each packed box contained twenty-pounds of a variety of assorted hygiene products. These boxes were prepared to be distributed to families/individuals in need.

CAEO helped pack forty-five hundred pounds of hygiene products, equating to two-hundred and twenty-five boxes, and sorted through thousands of pounds of grocery donations. To conclude the event, the staff was given a tour of the large facility. During the tour, CAEO encountered the Backpack for Kids program area where volunteers had the pleasure of packing shelf-stable foods into bags for children who lack adequate food over the weekend. CAEO staff members were impressed with the large modern facility and the organization provided by the volunteer coordinators, which allowed the large group to work most efficiently.

GEAR UP Participants and TRIO Alumni Honored at 2014 National TRIO/GEAR UP Day

GEAR UP Staff Recognized at Orr Middle School
by Kirk Williams, Assoc. Director for GEAR UP

The UNLV GEAR UP team members were honored by William E. Orr Middle School Principal George Leavens and Assistant Principal Cecilia French for the outstanding work and support they provide to Orr Middle School students.

Congratulations to all GEAR UP staff and support staff for their positive impact on student success at Orr Middle School!
SAVE THE DATE!

NATIONAL TRIO & GEAR UP DAY

February 21, 2015
Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino