Let's Talk
TRIO
News you can use
WINTER 2005

"Americans have the determination and the will to overcome any challenge from man or nature."

—**George W. Bush**
43rd president of the United States

HURRICANE ASSISTANCE

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have had a massive impact on all levels and facets of education. In the wake of these hurricanes, thousands of students, including many in higher education, have been displaced from their home education institutions. The U.S. Department of Education is committed to assisting students, teachers, schools, and colleges and universities affected by these hurricanes.

As one of many actions by the U.S. Department of Education, TRIO's Student Support Services (SSS) program made supplemental awards totaling over $3.2 million to 49 institutions in 18 states to assist in serving displaced college students who enrolled in new institutions of higher education as a result of these hurricanes.

Department offices have been working to ensure that federal student aid rules are applied in ways that enable every student displaced by the hurricanes to continue his or her education. Federal Student Aid has established a special Web page, **http://www.ifap.ed.gov/eannouncementskatrina.html,** to provide information about the changes to federal student aid and other programs as they relate to the students and institutions affected by the hurricanes. For example, the Department announced that eligible students impacted by hurricanes Katrina and Rita will receive federal student aid for the remainder of the 2005–06 academic year without regard to disbursements that were made for fall 2005 to what became a nonoperational institution as a result of the hurricanes.

The Department will also be distributing additional campus-based funds to institutions of higher education that were severely impacted by the hurricanes. Unspent campus-based aid (Federal Work-Study, Perkins loans, and Supplemental Educational Opportunity grants) will be reallocated to campuses that requested funds to help meet the needs of displaced students. The recently passed *Department of Defense Appropriations Act* also will provide additional funds to help reopen institutions of higher education in Louisiana and Mississippi, and help displaced students return to their home schools.

In addition, the federal government created several other Web sites to provide information and links related to the hurricane assistance efforts. The Department of Education's Web site, www.ed.gov/katrina, links schools with organizations that have resources to meet their needs. And the Office of Management and Budget's Web site, **http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/financial/fin/katrina_admin_relief_093005.pdf**, provides guidance on grant-related issues arising from the hurricanes' effects.

While the destruction from these storms has been vast, the response has been equally dramatic. The U.S. Department of Education is committed to making certain that programs and schools have the flexibility needed to continue to provide quality services to the students served.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Department of Education has proposed a new indicator for measuring individual state graduation rates. This indicator, which will improve the quality of graduation rate data, will be used to assist in making high schools more accountable and to help prevent students from dropping out.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

> Daring ideas are like chessmen moving forward; they may be beaten, but they may start a winning game.
>
> —**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**
> German writer, scientist, and philosopher

UPWARD BOUND AND THE SEXES

UB is 64.2 percent female and 35.8 percent male. UBMS is 61.7 percent female and 38.3 percent male. VUB is 18.6 percent female and 81.4 percent male.

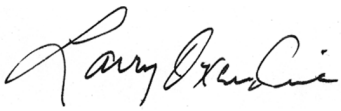
During the early years of the TRIO programs, grant competitions consisted of calls for proposals with subsequent submissions being read and evaluated entirely by Department of Education employees. During the mid-1970s when I was in the Office of Federal Student Aid, I remember receiving calls from the TRIO office asking for volunteers to serve as proposal readers in the competitions. Later, as TRIO received additional funding, grant proposals were read by a combination of nonfederal and federal employees. Generally, the three-member reader panels consisted of two nonfederal employees and one federal employee.

Due to the nature of competition, some proposals succeed and others do not. As a result, some potential grantees who were not successful lodged complaints about the evaluation process, including arguments that readers were not qualified, were not provided proper guidance, or were biased against particular organizations.

At the urging of the TRIO community, Congress mandated in the *Higher Education Amendments of 1992* that each TRIO application be reviewed by at least three readers who are not employed by the federal government. Even though federal employees no longer read applications and numerous quality-control checks have been implemented, complaints remain. While the process has been refined to make it as objective as possible, some subjectivity remains.

As director of the federal TRIO programs, it is my job to ensure that the competition process is as fair as possible. The Department continues to examine ways to improve the process, keeping in mind the five basic TRIO programs all share common goals—college enrollment, retention, and graduation.

As this column provides a way for me to share my thoughts, I encourage you to also share your ideas regarding competition process improvements that may subsequently be put into action. With this issue, TRIO is introducing a new e-mail format by which grantees may share their ideas and needs. (See more on p. 3, Tough Problems / Smart Solutions.)



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced the formation of the Secretary of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education on Sept.19, 2005. The new commission is charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America's diverse population and also address the country's future economic and workforce needs.

The commission will engage students and families, policymakers, business leaders, and the academic community in a national dialogue about all key aspects of higher education. Through public hearings to be held around the country, the commission will attempt to answer the questions: How can we ensure that college is affordable and accessible? How well are institutions of higher education preparing our students to compete in the new global economy?

The commission will submit a final report by Aug. 1, 2006, with specific findings and recommendations. The final report will serve as a blueprint for a 21st-century higher education system.

The commission has held two public hearings since its inception last September. The first meeting was held in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 17, and the second meeting was held in Nashville, Tenn., on Dec. 8 and 9. For more information about the commission, its upcoming schedules, and past hearings, including transcripts of each hearing, visit **http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/about.html**.

TOUGH PROBLEMS/ SMART SOLUTIONS

Q: How can I suggest issues and ideas for consideration as newsletter topics?

A: The *Let's Talk TRIO* newsletter serves as a direct venue for the federal TRIO office to communicate with TRIO grantees. This newsletter provides information about key issues affecting TRIO programs, program management, increasing effectiveness and efficiency, dates and notifications regarding events of interest, best practices in the field, free resources, and pertinent topics regarding the U.S. Department of Education.

With the first year of the newsletter completed, we are excited to introduce a way for grantees to communicate directly with the federal TRIO office regarding *Let's Talk TRIO*. A new e-mail address, letstalktrio@ed.gov, has been established for this purpose.

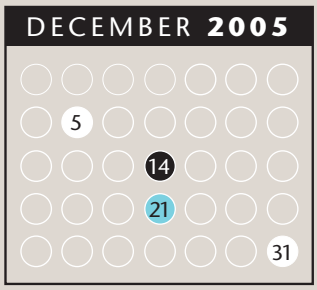
Grantees are encouraged to share their needs and ideas regarding the following topics via the new e-mail address:

- Key issues affecting TRIO programs,
- Program management issues,
- Effective practices in the field (either your own or those you have seen),
- Problems or recurring questions,
- Important scheduled TRIO program events or related activities,
- Other Department of Education information or issues,
- Resources for TRIO grantees (e.g., financial information or Web sites—all must be free of charge), or
- Motivational quotes.

Submissions to the e-mail address should be concise and directly related to the topics listed above. The purpose of this e-mail address is for information gathering; therefore, submitted e-mails will not receive individual responses.

KEY DATES

December



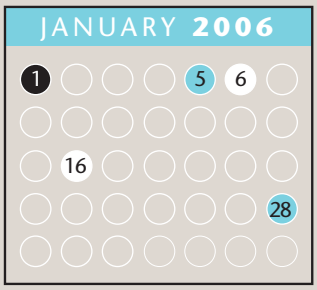
5 – Birth anniversary of Walt Disney, who lived from 1901 to 1966

14 – Margaret Madeline Chase Smith, the first woman elected to both houses of Congress, was born, in 1897.

21 – Winter begins.

31 – APR due for UBMS and McNair

January



1 – New Year's Day

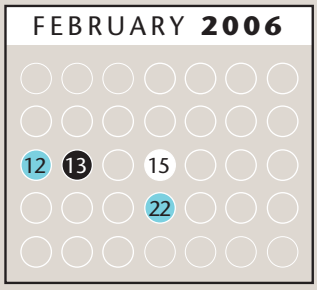
5 – Anniversary of George Washington Carver's death, in 1943

6 – TS grant applications due

16 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

28 – The 20th anniversary of the Challenger Space Shuttle explosion. The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Program is named after one of the crew members who was on board.

February



National Black History Month

12 – Abraham Lincoln's birthday

13 – The Boston Latin School, the first public school in America, opened, in 1635.

15 – EOC grant applications due

22 – George Washington's birthday

> "Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."
>
> —**Confucius**
> Chinese philosopher and reformer

UB / UBMS / VUB – The UBMS APR is due Dec. 31. The VUB profile report for 2000–01 will be mailed to project directors this quarter. Others may access the entire report on the TRIO Web site.

TS – Applications for new grant projects will be due Jan. 6, 2006.

EOC – Applications for new grant projects will be due Feb. 15, 2006.

SSS – The profile report for 1998–99 through 2001–02 was disseminated to project directors and posted on the TRIO Web site in August. The APR is due in November. Program specialist assignments have changed; check the TRIO Web site to verify yours.

McNair – The APR is due Dec. 31.

Dissemination – The FY 2006 TRIO budget was reduced by $8.36 million. In order to limit the adverse effects on the projects that provide services to students, we will not compete the TRIO Dissemination Partnership Program during FY 2006.

CCAMPIS – New (i.e., no grant last year) CCAMPIS grantees will need to submit an interim performance report on May 15, covering their first six months of performance in order to receive their noncompeting continuations.

Training – Applications for new grant projects will be due in April. Training opportunities for December through February are listed below. Visit the TRIO Web site for registration information.

Priority 1 – fiscal and project management

- Dec. 1–3 – Houston, Texas
- Dec. 12–14 (UB) – Key West, Fla.
- Jan. 25–27 – Mesa, Ariz.
- Jan. 29–Feb. 1 – Honolulu, Hawaii
- Feb. 2–4 – Memphis, Tenn.
- Feb. 20–22 – Waikiki, Hawaii

Priority 2 – legislation and regulations

- Dec. 9–11 – Orlando, Fla.
- Jan. 11–15 – St. Thomas, U.S.V.I.
- Feb. 1–5 – Greensboro, N.C.
- Feb. 9–11 – Washington, D.C.

Priority 3 – counseling, retention, and graduation strategies

- Dec. 5 – Webcast teleconference on counseling, retention, and graduation
- Jan. 18–22 – San Juan, P.R.
- Jan. 19–21 – Clearwater Beach, Fla.
- Feb. 16–18 – Albuquerque, N. M.
- Feb. 22–26 – Las Vegas, Nev.

Priority 4 – coordination and model projects

- Feb. 25–27 – El Paso, Texas

Priority 5 – educational technology

- Dec. 4 – San Juan, P.R.
- Jan. 23–24 – Las Vegas, Nev.

> "Life is too short to spend time doing anything except what you are passionate about."
>
> —**George Mateljan**
> Cookbook author and founder of Health Valley Foods

SSS FINDINGS

Using reported data from 881 projects for academic year 2003-04, we found the following:

- Project rates of successful outcomes ranged from 59 percent to 100 percent;
- The average percentage of successful outcomes was 89 percent;
- The cost per successful outcome ranged from $370 to $15,902;
- The average cost per successful outcome was $1,470;
- The range of costs per student served was between $370 and $14,519;
- The average cost per student served was $1,306; and
- The average cost per successful outcome, for the 25 percent of projects with the lowest cost per successful outcome, was $1,076.

Note: A successful outcome is defined as any student persisting in school, graduating with a degree or certificate, or transferring from a 2-year to a 4-year institution. Fifty-five projects, 5.8 percent of the original 936 projects, were not included in the above estimates because their submitted data were incomplete.

RESOURCES

The Committee for Economic Development (CED), a 62-year-old independent nonpartisan organization focused on topics that include education, has released a new report, *Cracks in the Education Pipeline: A Business Leader's Guide to Higher Education Reform*. This report discusses trends in college preparation, participation, completion and affordability, and the benefits of a highly educated population. Copies of this report may be downloaded free of charge from the CED's Web site, www.ced.org/docs/report/report_highered.pdf.

This newsletter contains hypertext links to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. These links are provided for the user's convenience. The U.S. Department of Education does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. Furthermore, the inclusion of links is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered, on these sites, or the organizations sponsoring the sites.