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DURHAM, N.H. - Services that aid low income and first-generation college students and those with disabilities will be heralded Feb. 21 and 22 in Nashua as New Hampshire hosts New England TRIO Day for the first time in six years. The federal TRIO programs promote educational equality and provide educational opportunity regardless of race, ethnic background or economic circumstance. TRIO Day is celebrated around the country in February.

Randy Schroeder of the University of New Hampshire’s Center for Academic Resources (CFAR) and TRIO Student Support Services, and Kristin Sweeney from Keene State College are coordinating the event which will bring approximately 500 high school students from across New England for two days of college tours, workshops, and other activities.

TRIO programs include Upward Bound (serving 9 through 12 grade students), Veteran's Upward Bound, Talent Search (for 6 through 12 graders), Student Support Services, the Ronald McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program, Upward Bound Math and Science, and Educational Opportunity Centers.

“For students coming from difficult circumstances, whose families don’t have a history of higher education, the TRIO programs can offer the support and encouragement needed not only to make it to college but to succeed when they get here,” says Schroeder.

The UNH Upward Bound program is one of more than 900 such programs in the country that helps eligible high school students gain access to a college education. Educational Talent Search, which serves more than 1,100 New Hampshire students throughout the state, works with low income, first-generation college students.

Named for astronaut Ron McNair, who died in the 1986 Challenger space shuttle explosion, the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement program encourages low-income students and minority undergraduates to consider careers in college teaching and also prepares them for doctoral study.

Education Talent Search is in 32 schools in New Hampshire. It serves students in grades six through 12, providing counseling and information on college admissions requirements, scholarships and various student financial aid programs.

While UNH hosts these programs as they help students prepare for college, participants are free to attend any school in the country.

The TRIO programs were created during the Johnson administration to help break the cycle of poverty. Two-thirds of the students served by the programs must come from families who meet the
federal guidelines for low income and where neither parent holds a 4-year college degree. More than 2,900 TRIO programs currently serve nearly 840,000 low-income Americans.

Nationally, 37 percent of TRIO students are white, 35 percent, African-Americans; 19 percent, Hispanics; 4 percent, Native Americans, 4 percent Asian-Americans, and 1 percent are listed as "other," including multiracial students. Twenty-two thousand students with disabilities and more than 25,000 U.S. veterans are currently enrolled in the TRIO programs as well.

New England TRIO Day takes place at the Radisson Hotel in Nashua. For more information visit http://www.cfar.unh.edu/trioday.html.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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