This past year has been exciting and extremely busy as the Center for Academic Programs (CAP) devoted time to plan the 40th Anniversary Celebration which takes place on October 20, 2007. The event will be an occasion for alumni to reconnect with former classmates and staff as well as an opportunity for the department to honor many of our outstanding alumni. The University has been hosting TRIO programs since 1967. During the last forty years, tens of thousands of students have been afforded the opportunity to participate in higher education through the academic, personal, professional, cultural, and financial guidance provided by the Center. Despite the amount of work generated by the planning of this huge event, the Center continues to fulfill its mission by improving and expanding existing programs.

A new record was set in the summer of 2007 when 324 students, including Storrs and regional campuses, participated in the SSS program. The increased enrollment numbers reflect the success of SSS. This program continues to flourish by implementing innovative ideas and best practices. The partnership with the University of Liverpool where each summer SSS sends approximately 10 students for a credit bearing short term study abroad experience is a good example of this. Once again the Center coordinated the SSS Summer Leadership Conference. This event attracted many students from Storrs and the regional campuses who explored topics such as choosing a major, career choices, study skills and more.

This past year we were able to integrate the College Experience Program (CEP) and the Pre-College Experience Program (PCEP) into the SSS program. Both CEP and PCEP are residential summer programs which run concurrently with the SSS pre-collegiate experience. Program participants took classes in the sciences which are combined with work experience at the UConn Health Center. The PCEP program was reorganized so students earn up to 8 college credits instead of the customary stipend. Also, the UB program assumed responsibility for the administration of the High School Research Apprentice Program (HSSRAP), previously managed by the Institute for Student Success.

GEAR UP (GU) continues to expand and develop their services by solidifying some of their partnerships and initiating others. In this vein, GU has developed a highly successful relationship with the UCONN School of Pharmacy by which 9th grade students take advantage of coordinated college visits and job shadowing opportunities. Students in this program learn about the academic rigors needed to be in the School of Pharmacy. Since the goal for this year was to connect academics to real life experiences, students in the program visited Walgreen’s and Yale Pharmacies to observe how “their” academic curriculum impacts the world of work.

Educational Talent Search (ETS) started a newsletter called “The Growing Tree,” which will be distributed three times a year. The first edition was sent out last spring. In the community ETS has created collaborations with CT State Scholars where a 10 week Leadership Academy was offered to students; New Life Corporation’s “La Oportunidad,” which is a youth development program; and the Lift Program at Windham Middle School. In addition we all said a fond farewell to Mrs. Patricia Jenkins-Simmons who spent eleven years with ETS and had been a valuable member of the CAP department.

This past year Upward Bound/ConnCAP (UB) undertook new initiatives to improve and expand student services. New partnerships were created with the Physics and the Journalism Departments at UConn. In collaboration with the Physics Department the UB program was able to secure credits for students taking PHY 101Q during the summer. We were extremely pleased to have been awarded nearly $1.2 million for the Upward Bound Program over the next four years from the U.S. Department of Education. This program is the only one of four UB programs in the state to receive funding in the first round of awards.

The Center continues implementing new strategies to improve retention and graduation rates. We are proud to report that CAP served over 2600 students this past year. The SSS freshman retention rate is 93% for Storrs and 90% for the regional campuses, which compare favorably to national rates for all college students. This past year 85 SSS students graduated from the program. We are very proud that our graduation rate continues to be one of the highest among SSS programs in the nation. Ninety percent of our high school program participants in the Educational Talent Search and Upward Bound/ConnCAP programs enrolled in post-secondary institutions.

continued on page 2
Our TRIO programs made history in 2007 when we were asked to appear before a federal government subcommittee last spring. I had the honor to be asked by Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT), to testify before the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness. My remarks centered on the success and effectiveness of TRIO programs at the University and its impact nationwide. The case to continue funding for educational opportunity programs such as TRIO was strongly presented and the feedback has been extremely positive.

It is with great excitement that we welcome two new staff members to the Center. Tashesha Ricketts joined Educational Talent Search as the New Haven program advisor in December, 2006. Prior to coming to UConn, Tashesha was a behavioral specialist for the Boys & Girls Village, Inc. In August 2007, Elvis Diaz was hired by GEAR UP as a new program advisor. Elvis comes to our department with higher education experience in the areas of administrative, advising, and residential services. We are currently in the process of hiring a new UB advisor as Yaritza Gonzalez left the Upward Bound Program in June to pursue a career in elementary education.

This fall, the Center staff will have a presentation on how to implement the Council for the Advancement in Standards in Higher Education (CAS). This meeting will set the stage for a full CAS standards evaluation with the emphasis on TRIO programs. These standards were written by the Council for the Advancement in Standards in Higher Education in collaboration with the Council for Opportunity in Education. The TRIO and Other EOP Standards and Guidelines are a set of standards of good practice that are achievable by all TRIO an Educational Opportunity Programs. Stay tuned.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Center staff for their commitment and dedication to providing superb services to our students. I also would like to thank those in the University community who continuously support our mission, especially members of the CAP Advisory Board. We hope you enjoy this newsletter, particularly the articles written by students.

The Center for Academic Programs’ Director, Dr. Maria D. Martinez, had the opportunity to testify before the Federal House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness. Her testimony at the hearing entitled, “The Higher Education Act: Approaches to College Preparation,” focused on the value of TRIO programs and how these programs have proven to be successful in improving students’ access to and graduation from institutions of higher learning in Connecticut. Below are some excerpts from her testimony:

“Connecticut may be the most affluent state in the Union and its citizens are definitely among the best educated. Yet, there are also pockets of poverty in our state, which lead to serious inequities in college access and completion.”

“In 1983 the University established our Center. Annually, through federal, state, institutional and private funds, our Center works with more than 2,500 college and pre-college students. Yet we, together with other college-access efforts in Connecticut, are just scratching the surface of the students who could be served.”

“The University has sponsored TRIO programs since 1967 because we know and can prove that they work. Over the past 40 years thousands of students have been able to overcome the academic, social and cultural barriers to entering and completing college by participating in TRIO.”

“I think you will agree that I am understandably satisfied with the results of our TRIO programs. But what I need you to appreciate is that our record of achievement confirms the success of TRIO and its impact nationwide. TRIO is a pipeline of powerful programs that help nearly 900,000 students per year to prepare for, enter and complete college.”

CAP is proud of Dr. Martinez’s activism on behalf of our TRIO programs and know that it is only through the continued efforts of those like Dr. Martinez that we can address the problems of inequity in education.
The Leadership Academy, a program developed to provide high school students with career development and college awareness, has taken its roots at Cross CT Scholars. The Academy is a collaborative effort among Cross CT Scholars, the Connecticut Business & Industry Association, the Network for Public Education, UConn Educational Talent Search (ETS), and New Haven Public Schools Career Services.

With the funding of generous supporters, such as Connecticut Light & Power, our students have been given the opportunity to gain the skills and knowledge needed to effectively secure and maintain a job. The career development portion of the program provides seminars on writing a resume, business communication, interview skills, community service, and characteristics of the model employee. The seminars include fun and innovative activities which allow students to practice what they have learned.

In addition to The Leadership Academy, an after school program has been developed by Chantelle Bailey, a senior from James Hillhouse High School. With the support of Mrs. Judy Puglisi and Miss Tashesha Rickets, Chantelle has been very successful in her endeavor. During the first portion of the class students complete their math and science schoolwork. Once the work is done the students transition into a dance class which they enjoy very much.

Lakeisha Adkins, a sophomore and participant of the after school program states that “the program helps me to do my homework, because I don’t always have the motivation to do it on my own. It also keeps me active because I normally go home after school and fall asleep.”

Chantelle, pictured above, comments that she loves what she does: “I am able to connect with the kids, learn more about them, and have fun at the same time. I want to be an elementary or pre-school teacher and this will give me the experience I need for my future.” Chantelle is in the top 1% of her class and was accepted as an SSS student at the University of Connecticut.

This past year the Hispanic Health Council (HHC) and UConn Hartford SSS collaborated on the creation of an after-school tutoring/mentoring/leadership development program, which was funded by the St. Paul-Travelers Foundation grant. Special thanks go to both Lola Elliott-Hugh, of the UConn Urban & Community Studies (UCS) Program, and HHC’s Maria Agramonte-Gomez who have been invaluable in the formation, maintenance, and success of this partnership endeavor.

A compelling feature of this program was that it extended outreach and tutoring opportunities to high school, middle school, and elementary school-aged students from the Hartford Public School System. This was a fortunate occurrence as many of the UConn Greater Hartford Campus students, who are serving as tutors, are also alumni of the Hartford Public School System. As such, these UConn students are in the unique position of being familiar with the problems their tutees are encountering which in turn equipped them to work with the students.

In January 2007, eight UCONN students (representing six different countries and collectively speaking five different languages!) were carefully screened and interviewed before beginning work as program tutors. By March of 2007, the responsibility for the oversight and mentoring of the program was transferred to the SSS program on campus. Choosing SSS to head the program seemed to be both a logical and excellent fit since seven of the eight tutors were already members of the SSS program. Feedback on the performance of the tutors has been so positive that one of the CAP students was considered for a full time position. While the grant ends in June, the HHC and UConn hope to renew it in the future as this collaboration represents the quality and creative kinds of partnering that UCONN Greater Hartford is pleased to support and endorse.
A STUDENT’S TAKE ON TRIO DAY 2007!!

Toddchelle Young, a junior at Hillhouse High School, shared with us her reflections on participating in the TRIO Day Celebration.

Having the opportunity to attend the TRIO Day College Fair in Nashua, New Hampshire was an excellent experience. I was not expecting such a prestigious fair, but it was well beyond my expectations. The opening session was great because it gave us information on exactly why we were at TRIO Day. Every student was able to visit at least two colleges and, regardless which college we were visited, the tours offered great opportunities for everyone. My group visited Daniel Webster College and New Hampshire Technical Institute, two colleges that I found quite interesting.

In addition to the college trips, the following day involved an extremely large college fair in the Grand Ballroom that I really enjoyed. Sixty-nine colleges and universities attended the fair. It gave students an excellent opportunity to gather significant information about different colleges. Booths that I attended included University of New Hampshire, Albertus Magnus, Massachusetts School of Pharmacology, and many others.

I have been to other college fairs but they were not as great as the one in Nashua. I really enjoyed all of the activities, including making an ETS poster and quilts for a community service project, attending the party, and most of all, the college fair. I am grateful that ETS made it possible for me to attend this fair and will recommend this trip to other students.
THE CAP/SSS STAFF WANT TO CONGRATULATE THEIR 2006-2007 GRADUATES

Brenda Carolina Jaramillo
Laterrius Johnson
Rita Kensah
Jennie Kersaint
Monika Kulas
Camila Martins Laurindo
Andrew Rafael Lavana
Katie Lee
Nadine Linger
Jason J. Madden
Kendra J. McDonald
Jessica Phyllis McKissick
Carlos A. Medina
Tia Krystal Mincey
Tracy Kathy Miranda
Vanessa Mojica
Frances Marie Morales
Shmeka Morgan
Courtney Elizabeth Mullins
Candace Thuy Nguyen
Cathy Thao Nguyen
Khoa Dang Nguyen
Mitchell Noel
Falguni Panubhai Patel
Meetul Dipak Patel
Nirali Patel
Veronica Pena
My Hong Pham Thi
Chansavanh Phanthalangsy
John W. Pina
Jordan B. Porcher
Diane Marie Quinones
Jennifer Reyes
Teresa Reyes
Ken Kwabena Riverson
Rochelle S. Robinson
Noemi Rodriguez
Michelle Roman
Dew Jones Rosado
Jayann Lee Samuda

Jose L. Santana
Marzena Katarzyna Sasiela
Shamara Scott
Alisha Lynn Simpson
Nickeisha Judeen Smith
Valena Rosemarie Smith
Diane Solano
Steven Michael Tavares
Stacy Michelle Taylor
Angelica Crystal Thompson
Jacqueline A Tran
Yasser A. Vavanann
Ilaya Velazquez
Christopher M. Vergara
Gyna Villard
Keisha J. Williams
Kimberly D. Williams
Michelle Yan
Crystal K. Yeung
Sokphoury Yos

Genoveva Arce
Jean A. Argant
Kwaku Ayebi-Awuah
Rachel Makeda Barker
Peta-Gaye Brown
William L. Cabrera
Kelley Lynn Carrigan
Georgette Clements
Brandon Patrick Cox
Jesse Julius Crespo
Merly Del Castillo
Sabine Dufreny
Stacey Anne Dunlap
Kim-Trang Duong
Daniel Espinosa
Melissa Espinosa
Daniel Figel
Yadira Figueroa
Breyonne A. Golding
Jeffrey Manuel Gonzalez
Rashid K. Grier
Beatrice Guerrier
Karla M. Ishier
Lashanda T. Jackson
Sebastien Rolf Janvier

ThE CAP/SSS STAFF WANT TO CONGRATulate ThEIR 2006-2007 GRADUATES
My name is Erica Whyte and this summer I had the opportunity to do something amazing. I was chosen to be one of seven Sankofa students, from Britain and the U.S., to embark on the first leg of the Atlantic Freedom Tour on the Freedom Schooner Amistad. The Sankofa program focused on the Amistad incident of 1839-1841 when 53 Africans were captured from their homeland, sold into slavery, revolted, were put on trial, and were able to sail back to Africa. It is a story of freedom, bravery, and humanity. The Freedom Schooner Amistad was a reconstruction of the original La Amistad, the Spanish cargo ship that the Africans were on when they revolted against their captors.

I learned a lot from being in the Sankofa program. As a Coastal Studies major and an African American Studies minor, the program definitely appealed strongly to both of my interests. The first two weeks I lived in a house in Mystic with the other six students and the professor. During this time we drove to over a dozen museums across New England for the purpose of learning the Amistad story. The professor gave us lots of reading about the history of slavery during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. All of the students, both from England and the U.S., were absolutely amazed about how much we learned about slavery and how integral it was in the shaping of the New World. We knew close to nothing about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and we couldn’t help but feel cheated out of a good education. “Why am I just learning about this now?” a fellow Sankofa student once exclaimed, and we all knew how he felt.

I also learned a lot about nautical science. The captain and staff-crew taught the students everything about the boat. They taught us the names of all the lines and the sails as well as how to sail handle. They showed us how to do different types of knots that would be useful on the boat. There were 19 crew members in all, including the students. The staff-crew and students were split into three watches. The watch leaders taught the students how to do boat checks, steer at the helm, and do bow watch. Eventually the students were able to lead their own watches, which was pretty cool. On the boat we continued to have class every afternoon and we kept daily logs of our adventure.

From being on the Amistad, I got to travel to lots of exciting places. First we sailed out of the New Haven port and up the Gulf Stream to Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada. We spent a week there where we explored the city and told the story of the Amistad to the public. Then we embarked on the Atlantic Ocean. There was nothing but water around us, but the scenery was breathtaking. We saw whales, sea turtles, sea birds, and lots of dolphins. Then we sailed to the Azores and spent two days there. It was an unexpected detour but well worth it. It was a really beautiful place. Then, after about 28 days at sea, we finally arrived in Falmouth, England.

The key thing that I learned from being a part of the Amistad trip is that slavery is not an American story, a Black story, or a national story; it is an international story that everyone should know. Learning about the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade can help people understand how the social structures of today came to be. It is a story of the largest forced migration in history, of the strength and resilience of a people, and of a united struggle for human rights.

On March 10-13, 2007, I had the opportunity to attend a conference in Washington D.C. on behalf of TRIO programs. The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is the organization which convened the annual meeting. At this event, participants learned about how TRIO is funded as well as its efforts to ensure the continuity of its programs. In this regard, COE encouraged attendees to continue supporting TRIO by meeting with our state representatives and senators to make them aware of the importance and benefits of TRIO programs in the educational success of young people.

I must stress that it is crucial for our state representatives and senators to meet and have discussions with people who have participated in these programs to get first hand knowledge of the importance and significance of the support students receive. I had the opportunity to speak with, among others, Chris Dodd, Joe Courtney, Joe Larson, and Rosa DeLauro. I talked about the great opportunities, including the numerous college visits, which TRIO has afforded me.

I hope that some day current students of Student Support Services, Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search will have the opportunity to go to Capitol Hill and testify about the effectiveness and importance of TRIO programs in the achievement of their educational goals. To my fellow alumni, I must say that we all need to continue supporting TRIO and one way to do this is to take advantage of the opportunities TRIO offers us and share our success stories at Capitol Hill.
This summer marked the sixth year that Student Support Services (SSS) offered SSS students the opportunity to engage in a three-week study tour program at the University of Liverpool. This program provides the opportunity for students to study black roots history, focusing on the cultural and political context of 400 years of black settlement, development, and the role that the city played in the African slave trade. Students met with individuals and community groups, attended lectures on contemporary issues and visited various social, political, and cultural sites. In addition to traveling throughout Liverpool, this program included additional traveling such as excursions to Conway, London, and Chester in Britain as well as to Berlin, Germany as a means of developing their educational experience. Below are some of this year’s attendees’ reflections on the experience.

**Paul Concepcion**

Going to England and Germany has changed my outlook on and attitude towards education and politics for the better. I have a deeper understanding of who I am as a student, a minority and a person in the United States. I’m even more excited and confident of having declared Economics as the field of study for my undergraduate degree. I’m definitely considering visiting another country in Europe in the future. I will also remember English toasties, the best breakfast ever. Yum.

**Devon Benedict**

Going on this trip has broadened my horizon. It gave me a deeper and more complete sense of my history and identity. I learned a more complete and accurate history of the slave trade, and was excited to realize that it all began in Liverpool.

**Vilma Rodrigues-Silva**

The culture is different as well as the accents with which the people speak English. There were so many mixed people. Some looked white but they were part African and Caribbean. But I’m surprised by the difficulties faced by people of color in Liverpool. The black community is still living in what we call projects or ghetto areas. Even people who are educated still can’t make their way in the world. You barely see a person of color working in the city center. There’s more progress here in America.

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**SSS STUDENT COLLECTS SHOES FOR GHANAIIAN YOUTH**

Teddy Amoaning, a SSS sophomore at the UConn Hartford campus, wanted to give back to his home country. Teddy is originally from Ghana and has been deeply affected by the extent of poverty and dependency he sees whenever he visits home: “every time I visit I see a youth in need and I feel bad because I have so many things that I waste,” he would say. With the aid of Daniel O’Reilly, activities coordinator for the UConn Hartford Campus, Teddy created a fundraising project where he collected shoes, donated by Hartford area residents, to ship back to his native Ghana. In the end he had collected over 100 pairs of footwear. Teddy credits the success of this project to the people around the Greater Hartford Campus who were so kind to consider other people’s needs and give generously to the project. Teddy also notes that this endeavor would not have been possible without the support and encouragement he received from many people including Mr. Robert Brown, SSS Program Manager at the Hartford campus; Daniel O’Reilly, for his help putting the project together as well as providing storage space for the shoes; and Teddy’s father who is providing the funds to cover the costs of shipping the shoes to Ghana.
STUDYING AND SERVING ABROAD:
A SSS STUDENT IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
By SSS Hartford Student Arnaldo Perez

As a UConn student, I have always wanted to take advantage of a study abroad program opportunity. I was surprised, finally having had the experience, at how easy it was to apply and participate. I simply submitted an application for a program online and met with an advisor. I initially looked at different programs worldwide and then narrowed the list down to courses which placed an emphasis on education, human services, and other fields related to my major. I decided the ideal opportunity would be one in the Dominican Republic. Ultimately I ended up on the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean, which was both study abroad and service learning.

The immersion in another setting and culture allowed me to make connections with my own society and this helped me to develop a better understanding of issues both abroad and at home. For example, something that struck me was the exploitation of Haitian labor in the Dominican Republic. This is in many ways similar to our own situation with immigrant labor, primarily the exploitation of Mexican workers. Most of the people work all day to receive a payment at the end of the week which is equivalent to what you can make in an hour in the U.S. We came to understand that this system of racism stemmed not only from the heritage of the two groups, but from economic need and political propaganda.

More importantly, the trip showed me that even though we were there to teach students, they taught us many things as well. We learned about the greater emphasis they placed on being appreciative and taking pride in what one has instead of on the pursuit of material wealth. Their passion for spirituality, life, family, friends, and music is inspiring. They achieve great things through working together as well as being organized and highly motivated through their religion. We were fortunate to have had a missionary program known as La Casa Pastora as hosts in the eastern city of La Romana. The people were warm and courteous, provided sincere friendships and we shared memories that I will forever carry with me.

Overall, this trip was a unique experience that I learned a lot from and will never forget. I would encourage all others to take advantage of any opportunities to study abroad, especially under a service learning program. I now look forward to taking more trips to the Dominican Republic to make new friends. I have begun researching trips to other parts of the world and feel better equipped to help those in need. This trip helped me to learn that while direct interactions are worthwhile and essential, the true battle must be fought in the political and social arenas of life. It is only through organization and the strength of numbers that we can hope to make a change.

HU$KY ENTERTAINMENT
By Brandon Cardwell

Husky Entertainment is the University of Connecticut’s first student-run independent music label. In response to a growing interest in the music industry the program was founded by SSS students at the Stamford campus with the assistance of Dr. Thomas Gibson, who was at the time the Stamford campus SSS Regional Coordinator. Some of the founding SSS members include Andrea Gomez, Rashaad Carswell, Christine Monds, Kip Graham, Brianna O’Neil and Brandon Cardwell. This past year Husky Entertainment moved to the Storrs campus and its members are no longer limited to SSS students, though their advisor is still a SSS staff member, Carl Dean. By bringing in non-SSS students the membership is growing and Husky Entertainment is flourishing.

The overall purpose of Husky Entertainment is to operate like a legitimate independent record label; so that everyone involved gains an understanding of what it takes to promote and market their recordings. The label consists of many different departments that allow students to find what area suits them best. Some of these are business affairs, art, legal, marketing, publicity, sales, and promotion. Currently Husky Entertainment has completed three projects. The first was “The Crossover,” a compilation CD of previously recorded tracks and the second was a 2 track promotional CD recorded by Husky Entertainment titled “Husky Entertainment Presents: Michael ‘Majesty’ Devone”. The most recent project was the Mike Horn & The Method album titled “Between The Borders” CD/DVD. This was the Husky Entertainment’s first full length project where they produced every track on the album as well as a DVD documenting the process of recording the album.

With every new school year, an album is expected to be released by the label, typically early in the spring. The fall semester is usually used for recruiting interested students and planning future projects. What I would especially like to see is the club to transition to an actual business. Of course, this would require great effort and dedication from all the current club members as well as the new recruits who will eventually be the future of the organization.
HARTFORD STUDENTS STUDY ABROAD IN SPAIN
By Damaris Diaz and Beata Obara

“No pasa nada” is a phrase commonly used by Spaniards. Being relaxed and not worrying about minor obstacles in life is what we believe is part of the Spanish culture. From the time we stepped out the airplane we were welcomed with open arms, and even though we were sad to leave home, the warmth of our Spanish family’s hugs as they greeted us, made us look forward to our upcoming journey in Spain. Every day was a new adventure, from hiking in the Sierra Nevada to trying Spanish food such as a tortilla Española, provided us with different learning experiences that we will never forget.

We were lucky to stay in a beautiful city called Granada. We attended el Centro de Lenguas Modernas, which is a branch for foreign students within the University of Granada. We had wonderful professors who always gave us a helping hand when we needed it. In the literature class we learned about the great Garcia Lorca and in art class we were exposed to wonderful Spanish painters like Picasso. Everything we learned opened our eyes and made us appreciate the Spanish culture even more.

During our study tour we were very fortunate to travel to many different and interesting places within Spain such as: Seville, Cordoba, Extremadura, Toledo, Madrid, as well as other countries in Europe. Having the opportunity to travel made us realize how many precious and unique places there are in the world. Some of us experienced interesting adventures such as sleeping in elevators or getting lost in a foreign country. These were experiences that made the trip even more exciting.

Going to Spain was one of the best decisions we made in our college careers. We will never forget the wonderful people we met or the great things we learned. We will always carry our memories with us. We can say that studying abroad made our learning experience ten times better. Spain is not just another country to us, it’s our second home.

LESSONS LEARNED IN STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES BRINGS A STUDENT SUCCESS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM
By: Myra Gonzalez, SSS Waterbury

There is always something to learn in every life experience. As a SSS student and a newly trained soldier, I have noticed how much I have matured in so many ways. For the past four months I have been away completing my military training. Joining the military was not an easy decision to make. The worries of taking a semester off, leaving my family behind, and not knowing what was to come in the future were my main issues. After attending the SSS Summer Program and completing a semester at the Waterbury campus, I learned to set goals for myself and make grown-up decisions. The one thing SSS always stressed to their students is to take responsibility for their own learning. That’s when I gained the courage and strength to go through with enlisting in the military. Yes, people doubted me but I didn’t let that stop me.

On January 18, 2007, I was on my way to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri to begin my Basic Combat Training (BCT). The two and a half months of BCT were the most physically and mentally enduring experiences of my life. What the drill sergeants taught us in so many ways reminded me of what I learned back home from SSS though at SSS there wasn’t any screaming in my face and push-ups. Time management was the main key of BCT. Everything had a deadline and each and every one of them had to be met in order for us to graduate on time. When we were given a task the drill sergeants always told us to put forth our best effort, another key to success I learned through the SSS program. In my first semester at UConn Waterbury I demonstrated my best potential and ended strong with a 3.75 GPA. I carried over that same determination with me to my military training and I received the highest honors in my Advanced Individual Training (AIT) and graduated first in my class. Through these experiences I’ve learned that nothing is impossible. As long as one has an open mind and determination the sky is the limit. Now that I have returned to Connecticut, I have enrolled in classes again and I’m ready to continue my education at UCONN, applying the skills I’ve learned.
**SPOTLIGHT ON THIS YEAR’S CAEOP TRIO ACHIEVERS**

At the 20th Annual Conference of the Connecticut Association of Educational Opportunity Programs (CAEOP) in October 2006, two UConn CAP Alumni were honored as TRIO Achievers. Each recipient participated in different aspects of CAP and went on to achieve significant success.

Sam Beamon, Jr. was enrolled at UConn through the CAP Student Support Services Program. With the assistance and support of the SSS staff Sam graduated from UConn in 1992 with a degree in communication sciences. He went on in his professional career to become a grant writer for the City of Waterbury Police Department. Sam was very successful in this position securing as much as $2 million in grant funds each year. This success enabled him to acquire first a position with the US Department of Justice as a grant monitoring specialist for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and later as program specialist for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In addition to his professional success Sam has also devoted considerable energy to his more creative pursuits as a stand-up comedian. He has enjoyed success on this front as well by performing in many of the Northeast’s famed comedy clubs, openings for big name headliners, and receiving recognition as a finalist for “Funniest Person in Connecticut” award, among others. Sam has truly been the embodiment of the successful SSS student by continuing his education through a variety of certificate programs, striving to excel in his chosen profession, while still giving time and energy to pursuits that allow him to express his creative and fun-loving nature.

Dr. Robert F. Grant was part of UConn’s Upward Bound program while he was enrolled at Hartford Public High School. Robert emigrated from Jamaica to the United States at the age of 12. Upward Bound provided him with the tutoring, advising, and academic support he needed to ensure his success in his new environment. After high school he was accepted at Amherst College where he received a bachelor’s degree in history and then went on to Jefferson Medical College to receive his MD. Since graduating from Jefferson Medical College, Dr. Grant has returned to Connecticut and has held several prestigious medical positions. He began as a pediatrician at the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center and after serving two years in this position, he changed his specialty to psychiatry. Once he finished his residency he served as a fellow in the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Department at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) and has since served as a staff psychiatrist at the Institute of Living Medical Group, Community Child Guidance Clinic. He is currently a consulting psychiatrist for the Klingberg Family Center in Hartford. In addition to his professional pursuits, Dr. Grant has been active in his church, having functioned as both deacon and director for the Seventh Day Adventist Church Health and Temperance Committee. He also remains interested in his ethnic roots through the study of African and Caribbean history. Dr. Robert F. Grant is more than just another SSS success story. He has shown that even if a person has a difficult beginning there is no limit to what he can do with support and hard work.

**JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT VISITS WINDHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL**

The UCONN Journalism Department paid a visit to Windham Middle School Educational Talent Search Program. Maureen Croteau, department head and professor, spoke with our middle school students about the many different careers in journalism. Students were entertained with the thoughts of becoming writers of all sorts. They enjoyed conversations about sports writing, covering entertainment events, and other journalism related careers. ETS students had several questions and enjoyed hearing first hand from Keila Torres, a UCONN journalism student, on how she chose to major in journalism.
A unique collaboration has evolved between the UCONN School of Pharmacy, the GEAR UP program, Walgreens Pharmacy, and Yale New Haven Hospital Pharmacy to expose high school students to the field of pharmacy. GEAR UP has teamed up with these partners to make students aware of the career opportunities within the field of pharmacy and the academic excellence that must be achieved in high school to become a pharmacy student.

The partners who include academic and health care professionals, met with high school students to obtain feedback and the best strategies to expose high school students to pharmacy careers. The program was created to connect the rigors of academics to the world of work.

Students and parents met with Dr. Andrea Hubbard, Associate Dean, School of Pharmacy, during a Saturday Academy to discuss “What it takes to get into college and the School of Pharmacy.” This discussion was complemented by visits to the School of Pharmacy, hands on demonstrations by pharmacy students, and visits to pharmacy practice sites Walgreens and Yale New Haven Hospital Pharmacy.

The realities of careers in retail and hospital pharmacy were emphasized during the Walgreens and Yale New Haven Hospital tours. The partnership hopes that through these practical experiences students can begin to understand the application of math and science to pharmacy careers and appreciate the characteristics valued in a pharmacist. Most of all we hope that our students develop a strong interest in math and science and the curiosity and desire to learn!

GEAR UP (GU) BRINGS NEW TECHNOLOGY TO EDGEWOOD MAGNET SCHOOL IN NEW HAVEN

In 2006, the UConn GEAR UP program was successful in bringing new technological capabilities to one Connecticut school. The GU staff recognizes that one of the keys to success in higher education as well as in the workplace is having a strong grasp on the use of technology. It is this awareness that spurred program staff to coordinate efforts to ensure that their students have greater access to technology. Working in conjunction with the AT&T Foundation, GU created a wireless computer lab for students at one of the GU serviced schools, Edgewood Magnet School. The $53,000 lab includes 30 wireless laptop computers and a laser printer that can be wheeled from classroom to classroom. In addition to helping to secure the technology for Edgewood, GU and the AT&T Foundation are also contributing money to train teachers to integrate information technology into their curriculum. “The teachers learn to incorporate software into class work, so students can use the laptops as another learning tool,” said Glen Schwartz, a spokesperson for AT&T Connecticut. The addition of the computer lab and teacher training will bring a new element to the classroom as well as provide students with greater ability to track their grades, collect information, and improve their computer skills for the future.

UPWARD BOUND HEALTH CAREERS CONFERENCE AT THE UCONN HEALTH CENTER

In America there is a lack of minority students who pursue careers in the medical or health fields. In turn, this has created an initiative nationwide to recruit students who come from minority backgrounds to pursue courses in these fields and eventually begin a career in an area of specialization. These initiatives led the UConn Upward Bound/ConnCAP program to begin collaborating with the UConn Health Center Department of Health Career Opportunity Programs.

The result of this collaboration was the first Health Careers Conference held on December 9, 2006. The conference hosted over 90 students and was a huge success, with students attending three different presentations. These presentations included, “The Oral Health Module” presented by Dr. Hubert Benitez; “The Sickle Cell Module” presented by Dr. Victoria Odesina; and “The Pathways to Medical and Dental School Module” presented by Mr. Rafael Pacheco, a second year medical student at the UConn School of Medicine.

The conference gave students an opportunity to learn about the world of health sciences and exposed them to careers in this field. Afterwards the students expressed their gratitude to the presenters for all that they learned. Overall, this was a very successful event and UB plans to continue working with the UConn Health Center in the future.
FIRST JOURNALISM CLASS SURVIVES UPWARD BOUND 2007
By Kodi Barth

After a grueling six weeks at UConn’s Upward Bound program, a significant 63 per cent of high school students taking the first journalism course here said they would consider a career in the media.

That percentage didn’t come easily. On the first day of this summer class, only one student was fired up.

“Mister Barth I got an idea,” said Erika Heyliger, keeping a steady pace beside this writer, the course instructor, on the way to class. “When we’re at home on weekends, can we cover stories and do like a major newsletter?”

It was already a difficult summer afternoon. The humidity was relentless. And the sweat-drenched lead group of students and instructor trekking uphill north of campus for what looked like two miles couldn’t find their designated building, Gentry. The instructor’s mind was on other things, like if his teaching assistant would round up a quorum for the two classes of nine sophomores and nine juniors. And here was this enthusiast who wanted to skip all preparation and plunge straight into the job.

Cover real stories? To say the least, that would be a tall order for a course designed to merely introduce youngsters to the journalism landscape. No, he eventually explained to the two classes. He would have to see the students’ first interview of classmates, their first writing, their first Internet research, and their first scavenger hunt on campus, a foretaste of investigative journalism. Then, perhaps he would invite them to write blogs – not publish a “major journalism.”

Yet these expectations, from interviews to blogs, formed only a fraction of what the journalism department at UConn originally had in mind.

When Department Head Professor Maureen Croteau first discussed the idea of teaming up with the staff at the University’s Center for Academic Programs to work with talented kids who seldom catch the eye of college recruiters, a broader objective was on the table. Professor Croteau tasked this writer to develop a syllabus that would reflect the broader objective: to help put the case to the youngsters that continuing their education exposes them to unlimited possibilities, including journalism.

The first attempt produced a dozen-page printout, complete with weekly calendars, lecture plans, activity outlines, film reviews, weekly projects, an exit survey and thorough instructions for each student’s course management folder. It all fit nicely into a crisp, cream folder that the instructor branched proudly at faculty orientation.

“Oh, I haven’t taught a class like this before,” he said to Program Director Susana Ulloa. “But I could use a reality check. What won’t work here?”

It took him just a week to find out.

By the end of that week there were still guys like Erika, a senior who despite course overload still insisted to add journalism to her schedule. And there was Michelle Gibbons who said she wasn’t just going to score good grades; she was aiming to run for president. And there was the group of Christopher Antoucci, Francisco Abreu, Angelo Lopez, Andrew Francis and Bethany Postemski who demonstrated impressive multitasking skills early, even if it initially slowed them down.

But something was wrong with the big picture. Too many kids exhibited in their writing assignments considerable difficulty in constructing sound sentences. And grades refused to climb above average. Worse still, a significant minority appeared distracted through lectures. Out of the blue, a student you thought was all ears would go, “Mister, how much did you say that Mac book cost?” A boy who failed to hand in a quiz on the Watergate film, “All the President’s Men” said, “I had no freaking idea what was going on!” And a girl who appeared to care little about lousy grades reasoned, “I got more important stuff to do, really. Like hang out with my pals, and finding me a job, you know. Yet here I am stuck in this thing, watching summer pass me by!”

It quickly hit the instructor that this was a group that needed more tough love than polished syllabi. This was not an honors class; it was a class of talented students who needed the chance to earn honors. For that to happen, a teacher needed to pay attention to basics, not sophistication.

A quick review was imperative.

“I knew you would find that out quickly,” said Program Director Susana Ulloa with a laugh, explaining that she preferred that new faculty members make firsthand observations of the program. Then they would craft strategies that, first, were faithful to the program mission and, second, met the instructor’s careful consideration to implement to a given group.

It was time to get to work with this journalism class. The broad structure of the initial syllabus remained intact, but the detail got slashed down to a two-page schedule. Yes, every Monday the students would still get a calendar for the week, each day featuring quick descriptions of lecture, activities and assignments. The rest would come in reduced bits, little sign posts reasonably paced out toward the finish line.

By the last week of class, attitude was at an all time high. A significant 94 per cent said in an exit survey that they had come to understand the difference between fact
and opinion, and 88 per cent said they now understood that journalism writing was different that other forms of writing. Sixty-three per cent of the class said they were now disposed to be more critical media consumers. An equal percentage said they would consider pursuing journalism, while a significant 69 per cent said they would recommend journalism to their friends.

Amy Choi, who initially displayed a leave-me-alone face, was now leading a group swearing they were ready to hit the road as human-rights reporters. And the tech savvy boys on the other side of class boasted they could interview the pope. Any time.

That was all banter, of course. What was not banter was that the instructor and his teaching assistant, Joshua Iwunor, were running out of Hall of Fame certificates, the traditional Thursday awards that turned out to be wonder prescriptions for morale and performance.

REFLECTIONS ON MENTORING AT WEST SIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL
By Matthew D. Gravell, SSS Avery Point

I first entered college not fully understanding the importance of good grades. During my SSS precollegiate summer program my eyes were opened to methods of studying, writing, and an overall work ethic that I was not aware of after graduating from high school. In my first semester of college, I put these acquired tools to work and was able to achieve a spot on the Dean's List. As a first generation college student in my family, making the Dean's List was a big accomplishment.

During my first semester my advisor, Marcia Orcutt, proposed to me the idea of mentoring students at West Side Middle school located in Groton, Connecticut. I thought this could be a great way to help students realize their potential. Also I was hoping to turn their school work around for the better, much like I did in my freshmen year of college. We created the mentoring program as we went along, week-by-week. For example, at first I would play games with my student as a means of establishing a close relationship and trust between the two of us. After a few weeks, my student and I incorporated his school work into the program often focusing first on the schoolwork before moving on to playing games. Keeping the games was a great incentive as it motivated my student to finish his work, so we could move onto the games. As time moved on we eventually began spending the whole mentoring time focusing on his school work and that my student would do so without complaint showed me that he had begun to realize the importance of school work.

More than just my student taking something from this experience, I equally benefited from this program. I learned the importance of giving back. I am lucky enough to be able to attend college, and I consider it my duty to help others accomplish their academic goals.

SSS STUDENT IS AWARDED THE NAACP IMAGE AWARD

The University of Connecticut Chapter of the NAACP honored SSS student, Tony Omega, with an Image Award. The award was presented by the UConn Black Student’s Association (BSA). Tony felt privileged to have been considered for the Image Award and noted that it was not until the very end of his sophomore year that he realized that he needed to get involved more on campus. Tony saw the need to be a good role model to incoming students and became much more active in the BSA as well as in the SSS program. This award is given to individuals who embody the ideas of the BSA and NAACP through participation, activism, and leadership on campus. This contribution to campus life is reflected by the fact that Tony is held in high regard by his fellow students as well as by the faculty and staff at UConn. Tony reflected on the experience that, “it’s good to have your hard work rewarded [by] something as prestigious as the NAACP Image Award … it is indeed an honor.”

SSS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

This summer SSS held its second annual Leadership Conference. The focus of this two-day event is on facilitating transitions. The attendees were primarily rising SSS Storrs sophomores and SSS students from regional campuses who are transferring to the Storrs campus. The purpose of the conference is to provide information and support to ease their transition into the next phase of their academic career. A variety of topics were covered including choosing a major, exploring career options, the advantages of networking, getting the most out of your college experience, etc. Speakers came from departments across campus including Assistant Vice Provost Steven Jarvi, who gave the keynote address. His talk focused on the formula for success that should guide these students through their careers at UConn. There were approximately 40 students in attendance. Students and staff greatly enjoyed the conference.
UB COLLEGE FAIR REFLECTIONS

As part of their mission to get their students college ready, Upward Bound takes their participants on college fairs several times throughout the summer and academic year. Below are some student reflections on those experiences.

By Francisco Abreu

My experience at the college fair was very positive. I enjoyed interacting with my friends and at the same time learning about places that I can attend to further my education. The college fair gave me a chance to look at different colleges. It also helped me find out what I need to do in order to complete the college application process and to get admitted into a college. I realized that I need to focus more on my work and possibly take AP classes to get college credits.

By Jaron Riddick

The college fair that I attended with my fellow Upward Bound students along with students from all over the state of Connecticut provided me with an opportunity to speak to representatives from different colleges across the nation. I particularly liked the conversation I had with the people from the colleges. They really helped me understand the admission process.
CHOOSING A COLLEGE:
A UB STUDENT’S REFLECTIONS ON THE COLLEGE TOUR
By Alicia Pittman

So you want to know how I felt about the college tour? Well, in a few words, I enjoyed it from the moment I stepped onto the bus! The University of Maryland was gorgeous, and visiting it in the middle of fall made it all the more lovely. Overall, after touring the campus, seeing the indoor and outdoor stadiums, walking through the arts building, and hearing more about the diversity and security on campus, I thought this school was great. I am seriously looking forward to applying to this university.

Next on the agenda was Morgan State University the only historically Black College on the list of stops for the tour. While we were there no one had any questions, except me. There was one question burning inside me. So at the spur of the moment I raised my hand and asked, “What is the diversity here?” the man replied, “Good question, in fact and surprisingly, we are 39% Caucasian.” I believe everyone was surprised when he said that, because Morgan State is known as being a “black university,” and to learn that there were students of different backgrounds was great. This is surely a place where I could apply for admission with no regrets.

Saturday came and our trip was coming to an end, but there were some lovely sites to be seen on our way to Pennsylvania. Our next stop was Temple University. The campus is wonderful! It is different from the University of Maryland because it was set right in the midst of a city. There was a lot of land but there were buildings in place of grass and sidewalks instead of paths, all set in the middle of trees. The campus had more of a community vibe, where you would actually get to know everyone you meet. This encouraged me to send them an application too! The senior trip was great; everyone came together, learned, and overall had a wonderful time.
Mission Statement

The Center for Academic Programs (CAP) increases access to higher education for high potential students who come from underrepresented ethnic or economic backgrounds and/or are first-generation college students. CAP prepares students for successful entry into, retention in and graduation from a post-secondary institution through its four constituent programs. Educational Talent Search, GEAR UP, and Upward Bound/ConnCAP provide programming to increase middle and high school students' college access and retention; Student Support Services provides programming to facilitate students' retention in and graduation from the University of Connecticut. CAP designs and implements these programs in accordance with guidelines set forth by its funding bodies, including the University, the State of Connecticut and the U.S. Department of Education and other programs which promote educational opportunity for all.