Upward Bound

Educational outreach program to expand into Gwinnett, Atlanta high schools

By Liz Babcock • babcock@gsu.edu

If you want to understand how Georgia State’s Project Upward Bound can help a student, take a look at Rueben Carter.

Although he faced financial hardships during high school, Carter is now a Georgia State freshman with a 4.0 GPA and plans to study international business.

Carter credits his achievements in part to the extra support and guidance he received through Project Upward Bound during his time at Southwest DeKalb High School.

“I met people who cared about my success and made me feel like I could go on to pursue my goals and do whatever I wanted to do in life,” Carter said.

For more than 20 years, Georgia State’s Project Upward Bound has been helping DeKalb County high school students from low-income families, and from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree, prepare for college.

Now, thanks to a four-year, $1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the university’s Office of Educational Opportunity will expand the program into Atlanta city and Gwinnett County schools.

Selected students will receive tutoring, mentoring, counseling and academic instruction on Saturdays at Georgia State. They will also spend six weeks during the summer living on campus, taking college prep courses and extracurricular classes, and pairing up with mentors.

“With this new program, more students will have an opportunity to have the experience of being on a college campus, getting the extra educational support,” said Robert Reese, director of Student Support Services.

In addition to the grant to expand Project Upward Bound into Atlanta and Gwinnett County schools, Georgia State received a four-year, $1.6 million grant to sustain its program in DeKalb County and a four-year, $1 million grant to sustain another program that encourages students to pursue math and science careers.

High court’s first woman to give Miller Lecture

Former Justice O’Connor visits Georgia State today

By Michael Davis • mdavis6@gsu.edu

The U.S. Supreme Court’s first female justice is returning to campus today (March 11) for the first time in 15 years. Former Associate Justice Sandra Day O’Connor will deliver the College of Law’s 42nd Henry J. Miller Distinguished Lecture.

The event, which is invitation only, will be held from 12-1:15 p.m. in the State Ballroom of the Student Center.

O’Connor delivered an address in 1992 marking the College of Law’s 10th anniversary. This time, the college is celebrating its silver anniversary.

“She is one of the most influential justices of our time,” said Dean Steven J. Kaminshine. “We were very hopeful she could come to our 25th anniversary and see the progress we have made as a law school over the last 15 years.”

“In her time on the Supreme Court, Justice O’Connor was often viewed as the ‘swing vote’ on important cases,” says law professor Mary Radford, who was a Supreme Court Fellow from 1990-1991.

And to get to know O’Connor while working in the office of then-Chief Justice William Rehnquist. “Rather than apply any preconceived agenda to a case, she took each case on its own facts and merits,” said Radford, who was invited to O’Connor’s regular morning exercise class on a basketball court within the Supreme Court building – known to some as the highest “court” in the land.

In 2006, O’Connor relinquished her position on the Court and that same year, Arizona State University renamed its law school the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law.

You recently were invited to the White House and congratulated by the First Lady for your good work with the CAD program. Congratulations!

Thank you. It was the third anniversary of the Helping America’s Youth (HAY) Initiative and they invited 131 programs that have had documented effects on the nation’s at-risk youth. It was held in the East Room, and it was very exciting because Ms. Bush singled out five programs that truly embodied what she had been trying to achieve in the HAY Initiative, and ours was the first one she discussed.

How did the program get its start?

We put a group of community partners together in 2004, and we targeted the lowest-income schools we could reach. We wanted schools that were the destination campuses of federally funded housing communities. Frankly, when we began, it wasn’t an easy transition; we had more learning to do than the kids did at first in terms of reaching them and getting their trust, which was essential to making the program work.

Is the CAD program in any other schools?

We’re only working in two schools, but that’s intentional. We’re funded by the Department of Justice, and we’re creating videos of best teaching practices so others can learn from us and use our experience.

What’s a day like for one of the students?

They stay after school with us until 6 p.m. Their instructors are college students from here, which is a wonderful thing, because they look up to our kids as role models — our debate team puts in a huge amount of community service and this is just one of the things they do.

Do they debate competitively against other students?

Yes, we compete against all the other schools that participate in the middle school league, which are mostly schools in the Atlanta public school district, but some others as well.

What are some results you’ve seen?

It’s remarkable. Their absences reduced by an average of 11 percent; the disciplinary referrals have dropped 50 percent, their grades have gone up, their reading scores have gone way up, and we went from having a group of 7th graders who weren’t on reading level – none of them — to now over 30 percent of them are on reading level. So, it’s been a remarkable success.
Enjoy benefits of chocolate, with moderation

By Chris Rosenbloom  •  detettic@ajc.com

Is chocolate the health food the media headlines would have us believe? When we first heard that chocolate contained healthy compounds with hard-to-precise chemical names (such as polyphenols, flavonoids and proanthocyanins) we justified our M&M’s habit by saying it was good for us. Are we fooling ourselves and letting our taste buds rule?

Early research with cocoa compounds was done in vitro — that means in cell cultures in petri dishes. Many com-

AWARDS AND HONORS

Students plan Law Week

The College of Law will celebrate Law Week April 7–12. Free activities planned by the Student Bar Association and law student groups include speakers, legal games and community service events. Law Week’s theme, “Reflecting on Our Past, Focusing on Our Future,” pays homage to the College of Law’s 25th anniversary.

The activities are designed to promote a greater understanding of the legal system, encourage the breadth of College of Law alumni and introduce legal topics to potential new students, said student co-chairs Denise Jackson and David Purvis.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Nursing school adding emphasis to psychiatric studies

Beginning this fall, the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing will offer a nurse practitioner program specializing in psychiatric care. The school has begun focusing more resources on training nurses to care for patients needing psychiatric care in response to reports that have drawn attention to weaknesses in psychiatric care in Georgia.

The program will be available for those without nursing experience and current nurses who wish to learn more about psychiatric treatment. In addition to working in clinical settings, the students also will interact with classmates and instructors through online courses, enabling them to more easily fit the classes into their schedules.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Daniel Levitin to deliver annual Plummer Lecture

The College of Arts and Sciences’ 2008 Plummer Lecture will feature scientist, musician and producer Daniel Levitin, an associate professor of psychology at McGill University in Montreal, who will speak at 11:30 a.m., March 17 in Speaker’s Auditorium in the Student Center.

Levitin’s book explores the human response to music from a hard-science perspective. An accomplished musician and record producer — with Steve Wonder, Santana, Eric Clapton and others — Levitin uses music to discover nuances about the brain, and uses the brain to teach about music.

At McGill, he runs the Laboratory for Music Perception, Cognition and Expertise, one of the leading labs in probing the way music affects people. For more information about Levitin and his book, visit http://www.youbrainnonmusic.com.

Teen working in biology lab wins scholarship

The efforts of teens interested in science is a chief goal of Georgia State’s science departments, and the faculty’s efforts in this area were recognized recently when a high school student working in the department of biology’s lab earned third place honors and a $1,000 scholarship at the Georgia Junior Science and Humanities Symposium.

Omar Haque, a junior at Woodward Academy, is researching adult neurogenesis of spiny lobsters in the lab of Charles Derby, a professor of biology at Emory University. He is one of 50 students selected to give an oral presentation based on his project research and has also been selected to compete in the 46th National Junior Science and Humanities Symposium later this spring in Orlando, Fla.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Faculty launches new math journal

College of Education faculty recently launched the Journal of Urban Mathematics Education, a first-of-its-kind academic journal devoted to the scholarship of mathematics in urban schools.

Assistant professor of middle-secondary education Lou Matthews will serve as editor in chief of the journal. The other founding members include associate chair Christine Thomas, assistant professors Pier Junior Clarke, Kezia McNeal, David Sinson and clinical instructor Ollie Marley from the college’s Department of Middle-Secondary Education and Instructional Technology.

The peer-reviewed, open-access journal will be published twice a year, starting in the fall. The articles in the first issue will feature work of emerging and noted scholars whose research focuses on the theory and practice of mathematics teaching, learning and policy in urban settings.

The journal’s advisory board comprises scholars in urban education from the University of Maryland, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Teachers College at Columbia University and the University of Georgia. For more information, visit http://education.gsu.edu/jume.

PAW PRINTS

Kay Toberg (left), Cheryl White (center) and Melissa Buchheit (right) from Recreational Services get ready to motor their basketball-themed golf cart through downtown Thursday, Feb. 14, for the fifth annual Homecoming Golf-Cart Parade. They showed the chilly temperatures and joined members of more than 20 other university offices and student organizations in the parade, which kicked off a weekend of activities including the 2008 Homecoming basketball game against Northeastern and the alumni reception and dance.

COLLEGE NEWS

ANDREW YOUNG SCHOOL OF POLICY STUDIES

Project examines employee satisfaction

As part of ongoing work to measure the satisfaction of state employees and Georgia citizens with state agencies, adjunct professor of public administration and urban studies Dean Locklin was recently awarded a contract worth $93,138 for the Georgia Workplace Satisfaction Index Focus Group Project.

Locklin, director of the Public Performance and Management Group, said the project will further research into how state agencies with more than $500,000 in state agencies with more than $500,000 in projects involving measures of performance are improving.

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and urban studies

J. MACK ROBINSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Hall of Famers announced

Four leaders of business known for their industry acumen and their community involvement will be inducted into the Robinson College of Business’ Business Hall of Fame.

Xernona Clayton is president and CEO of the Trumpet Awards Foundation Inc.; Mackay J. McDonald is chairman of VF Corp.; Sam A. Williams is president of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce; and John A. Williams is CEO of Williams Realty Advisors LLC. The four will be inducted into the Business Hall of Fame on May 15 during the 2008 Hall of Fame dinner at the Intercontinental Hotel in Buckhead.

“Tall of our four honorees have distinguished themselves as leaders in their respective fields and serve as inspirations for our students and other future business leaders,” said Robinson College Dean Fenwick Huss.
university briefs

Campus Campaign kicks off

The Georgia State University Foundation will kick off Georgia State’s 2008 Campus Campaign March 24. The yearly initiative is a time for faculty and staff to provide philanthropic support to the university. The gifts are used in a variety of ways, such as creating scholarships for staff and students, recruiting distinguished faculty, expanding campus facilities, and funding research and academic programs.

During the campaign, employees can select specific programs, departments or cultural activities to which to give, including the Georgia State University Fund, which allocates money to high-priority initiatives and areas of greatest need.

Employees will soon receive campaign packets through campus mail with donation forms, envelopes and instructions on how to donate. Also, a Web site with more information, www.gsu.edu/mb/giving/08cc, will be launched this month.

Faculty and staff will be able to contribute either through payroll deduction, online, in person or by mail.

The 2007 Campus Campaign raised an unprecedented $678,347. The gifts are tax-deductible. For more information, contact Georgia State’s Office of Annual Giving at (404) 413-3424.

Neuroscience movie night on tap

As part of March’s Brain Awareness Month festivities, Georgia State neuroscience researchers and the Center for Behavioral Neuroscience will host Movie Night at Fernbank on March 11.

Starting at 6:15 p.m., guests can watch Snow Cake, a 2006 independent film dealing with autism, starring Sigourney Weaver and Alan Rickman.

Diana Robins, an assistant professor of psychology at Georgia State, will then lead a discussion on her research into autism. Robins conducts clinical research on the neurological mechanism that causes autism.

The event will be held at the Fernbank Museum of Natural History at 767 Clifton Road. Admission is free, but advanced reservations are required. For more information, contact Martha Koontz at (404) 413-5464 or mkoontz@gsu.edu.

Celebrating the Gullah culture

Learn more about one of the most authentic African-American cultures, Gullahs, at a panel discussion presented this month by Georgia State’s Office of Educational Opportunity and TRIO Programs.

The panel discussion, held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 24 in the Student Center Speaker’s Auditorium, will feature Queen Quet, chiefess of the Gullah-Geechee Nation, who has led the charge to preserve the community’s land and culture.

Other panelists include Sallie Ann Robinson, a former resident of Daufuskie Island, S.C., and the author of two Gullah cookbooks, and Akinyele Umoja, associate professor of African-American studies at Georgia State. A reception featuring Gullah foods will follow the discussion in the Speaker’s Auditorium Lobby. The event is free and open to the public.

Gullahs, referred to as Geechee in some parts of the South, live in the Low Country—the coastal plain and Sea Islands of South Carolina and Georgia. Gullahs speak a unique mix of English and African language and have developed a culture that retains a strong African influence.

For more information, contact the Office of Educational Opportunity at (404) 413-1680.

Fifth Middle East Film Festival underway

The Middle East Institute is hosting its fifth annual Middle East Film Festival March 10-15 at the Cinefest Theater in the University Center. This year’s featured film, Guerre Sans Image (War without Pictures), will be presented in collaboration with the Swiss Consulate General of Atlanta.

Guerre Sans Image, a 2002 film by Mohammed Soudani and Michael von Graffenried, focuses on the Algerian civil war of the early 1990s. Graffenried, an award-winning Swiss photographer, traveled to Algeria throughout the decade photographing images of the country’s civil strife. At the conclusion of the film, there will be a discussion with the filmmakers.

The festival also will include a special screening of the 1978 drama Alexandria, Why?, with a post-screening discussion with Ahmed Abdul Meguid, an instructor in the department of philosophy. Other featured films include Forget Baghdad, Me and the Mosque, My Country, My Country, and Private.

All films are free and open to the public. For more information and a schedule, visit www.gsu.edu/cinefest.

New digs

City and university officials broke ground Feb. 28 at the corner of Edgewood and Piedmont avenues, the site of both a new Freshman Hall and Special Interest Student Housing. The residence halls will provide more on-campus living choices for students and bring additional vibrancy to downtown Atlanta.
Holocaust survivor, author, political activist and professor Elie Wiesel will be the featured speaker at Georgia State’s third biannual Cultural Competency Conference, hosted by the Counseling Center and the Division of Student Affairs.

From 6 to 8 p.m. March 27 in the Sports Arena, Wiesel will discuss “Building a Moral Society: The Urgency of Hope.”

A survivor of the Nazi death camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald during World War II, Wiesel has pushed for human rights in many parts of the world and has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

In 1965, Wiesel published his first book, “Night,” a memoir of his experiences in concentration camps, and has since authored more than 50 books. Wiesel has been a visiting scholar at Yale University. A Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City College of New York and Andrew W. Mellon Professor at Boston University.

Tickets to “An Evening with Professor Elie Wiesel” are free for Georgia State students with a valid student ID. Georgia State faculty and staff may purchase tickets for $10 at the Rialto Box Office or by calling (404) 413-9849. Tickets are $35 for community members.

Wiesel is one of several speakers at the two-day conference, themed “Navigating the Complexities of Multiple Identities: Multicultural Skills for Life.”

Co-sponsored by Georgia State’s Counseling Center and the Division of Student Affairs, the conference will run 8:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. March 27 and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. March 28.

Discussions at the conference will focus on racial identity skills for life; cultural competence in lesbian, gay and bisexual health issues; refugee families in their search for new identity; and ethnic-cultural diversity, among other topics.

The cost to attend the conference is $170 per day for faculty, staff and the public and $60 for students.

For more information, visit www.gsu.edu/counseling/cultural or contact the Counseling Center at (404) 413-1640 or e-mail conference08@gsu.edu.