



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA LANCASTER AWARDED \$297,529.00 ANNUALLY FOR FIVE YEARS TO HELP LOW INCOME, POTENTIAL FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS ACCESS HIGHER EDUCATION

The University of South Carolina Lancaster TRiO Upward Bound will provide students at Andrew Jackson High, Buford High, and Lancaster High with academic enrichment courses, personal mentoring and coaching, and assistance with college, financial aid, and scholarship applications.

Lancaster, South Carolina —The U.S. Department of Education announced that the University of South Carolina Lancaster will receive an **Upward Bound** grant of \$297,520.00 annually to provide supports to help low-income students who would be the first members of their families to earn degrees to prepare for and enroll in college. Since 1997, the TRiO Upward Bound program has been in place at the University of South Carolina Lancaster.

One of the Federal TRiO Programs, Upward Bound is an intensive intervention program that prepares students for higher education through various enrichment courses. At least two-thirds of the students in each local Upward Bound program are from low-income economic backgrounds and families in which neither parent has a bachelor's degree. Many Upward Bound alumni have gone on to great success, among them Academy Award-winning actress **Viola Davis**, ABC News Correspondent **John Quiñones** and U.S. Senator **Raphael Warnock** (D-GA).

“For 25 years, the USC Lancaster Upward Bound program has helped over 1,600 high school students to not only graduate high school but also to enroll in college. For the past several years, their participants had a 100% high school graduation rate, notes TRiO Program Director, Matt Williamson. He further states, “My staff and I are excited and humbled to serve the students who enter the program each year, especially the rising 9th graders who enroll in our Summer Experience

program every June.” Designed specifically for rising 9th and 10th graders, the Summer Experience provides fundamental support to these participants in their preparation for high school success. “For six weeks rising Freshmen and Sophomores attend this non-residential summer bridge program Monday through Thursday to enhance their knowledge in composition, literature, mathematics, science, and foreign language. Also, twice a week, participants work on team building exercises to help improve their coping and social skills. On most Fridays, students participate in a community service project to help them develop empathy for others as well as explore career options,” said Director Williamson. Upward Bound also provides intensive mentoring and support for students as they prepare for college entrance exams and tackle admission applications, financial aid packages, and scholarship forms.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 86% of Upward Bound participants enroll in postsecondary institutions immediately following high school graduation. In FY21, more than 70,000 students participated in 966 Upward Bound TRiO projects throughout the United States and its territories.

In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act established Upward Bound as a pilot program in response to the War on Poverty. It was the first of seven federal “TRiO” programs to later be authorized by the Higher Education Act of 1965 to help students succeed in higher education. It recognizes that students whose parents do not have a college degree have more difficulties navigating the complexity of higher education, bolsters students from low-income families who have not had the academic opportunities that their peers have had and helps remove obstacles preventing students from thriving academically.

Dr. Walter Collins, USC Lancaster Dean, added, “Congratulations to our TRiO staff for another successful Upward Bound grant application. The funding will continue the dynamic programs we have in place and allow us to positively impact high school students and help them onto a path for future success.”

“As systemic inequality and financial hardship hinder students’ success in getting to and through college, TRiO programs such as Upward Bound take on new importance because they address many of the barriers that prevent low-income, first-generation students from earning degrees,”

said Maureen Hoyler, president of the non-profit Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) in Washington, D.C. COE is dedicated to furthering the expansion of college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities nationwide.

As of 2021, over 3,200 TRiO projects serve more than 844,000 students yearly. TRiO projects are in every State and many U.S. territories.

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