



ASPIRE

A TRIO/Student Support Services Program

University of Montevallo



September 2011 Newsletter

From the Director

Happy Fall! We hope that your summer was both relaxing and fun and that you are ready for a new academic year. We are happy to see our continuing students and excited to have our new ones join our program.

This first newsletter of the year is short, but provides lots of important information!

To kick off the year we are having our Fall Open House & Ice Cream Social on Thursday, September 8, from 2:00 – 4:00. We invite all participants as well as anyone who is interested in applying to the ASPIRE Program, to join us in the ASPIRE Office for a great time, music and free ice cream. Try your hand at creating the best ice cream sundae ever!

We will have evening hours again this year. Beginning Tuesday, September 6, we will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 7:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Friday. We are considering providing some weekend hours as well, so stay tuned! We have quite a few great activities scheduled this semester already. Please check them out on our *Facebook* page, ASPIRE/Student Support Services@UM. Click that you like us! We anticipate scheduling more events as we make final details.

Kudos to three of our ASPIRE alumni! We heard from a few of them over the summer. Shernita Little (2010) is attending the Birmingham School of Law. Sedrick Smith (2011) is pursuing a graduate degree in Math at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. Marvin Price (2009) is Project Manager for the

Birmingham Business Alliance. We hope to grow our alumni network so that we can keep everyone updated on what our former participants are doing.

As you settle into this semester please check out our *New Student Handbook* on our website. The handbook provides a great deal of information not only about our services but also about your responsibilities as an active participant in ASPIRE. Included in the handbook are several new requirements expected of all participants that the Department of Education, which funds all Student Support Services programs, instituted.

Last year we received notice that the ASPIRE Program had been funded for another five years, through August 2016. Along with this new grant cycle came several new interpretations of what the Department of Education considered allowable services. In the previous two years participants had the opportunity to borrow textbooks from our Lending Library for many of the General Education courses. We provided this service in an effort to help defray some of our participants' expenses as well as to ensure that everyone who needed access to a required, but prohibitively expensive, textbook for a course, had it.

Effective this fall the ASPIRE Program may no longer lend textbooks and laptops for an entire semester; however, we will work with students to ensure that they have access to what they need. Please con-



tact our office for more information.

For the past several months the major topic of discussion on the national scene has been cutting our federal deficit and whether to raise the debt ceiling. After extremely tense and fractious negotiations between Congress and President Barack Obama, they finally struck an "eleventh hour" deal.

President Obama signed into law the Budget Reduction Act (BCA) on August 2, which raised the debt ceiling by \$900 million through 2013. The deal also required federal spending *cuts*, about \$3 billion of which will come from non-security*, domestic spending. TRIO programs fall under this category.

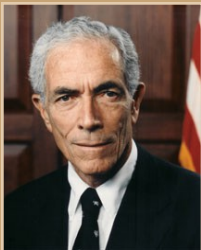
To date TRIO budgets have received a 3.1 percent cut as a result of the federal deficit with more cuts anticipated. Will this affect our services to you immediately? Probably not; but consider other family or friends in your home community who might benefit from support programs like TRIO to assist them not just in getting into college, but *staying* in college, and graduating.

What can you do? You can write letters, call, email or fax to your House Representatives and Senators. Tell them what the program means to you, especially if you also are an Upward Bound, or Talent Search alum or participants in the McNair Scholars Program. Now is the time for you to make your voice heard!

—Dr. Denise Myers

* These are programs whose funds are appropriated annually.





CLAIBORNE PELL A Champion of Higher Education

Amid the recent debt ceiling crisis Pell Grant funding was in jeopardy of being cut. Two options for the program were considered: either lowering the maximum amount or lowering the number of recipients. Ultimately, the August 2 deal that Congress struck with President Obama to raise the debt ceiling maintained the funding for Pell Grants, protecting the program from cuts until 2013. It seems appropriate to re-run the following article on Claiborne Pell, sponsor of the Pell Grant. It is a shortened version of the one published in our January 2009 newsletter, after he passed away on New Year's Day at age 90, from Parkinson's Disease.

Born November 22, 1918 in New York City, Claiborne de Borda Pell served as a U.S. Senator (Rhode Island) from 1961 to 1997. Pell distinguished himself in many areas. He graduated *summa cum laude* with an A.B. degree in history from Princeton and an M.A. degree from Columbia. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II, participated at the international conference that created the United Nations, and served as a U.S. State Department official and Foreign Service officer.

Claiborne Pell was a longtime supporter of federal aid for higher education throughout his political career. Although he attended some of the nation's finest private schools and came from a long line of U.S. senators and congressmen in his family (his father, several uncles, great uncles, and a great-great-grandfather), Pell took a particular interest the problems that many low- and middle-income students were having in affording college. The college population had swelled in the late 1960s, straining college-based financial aid.

He took a lead role in eliminating financial barriers to higher education and was instrumental in creating the *Basic Educational Opportunity Grants* in 1973, as part of the 1972 amendment to the Higher Education Act. Congress later renamed it the "Pell Grants" in 1980.

Pell Grants also initially provided for grants for prisoners, as Pell understood that educating incarcerated individuals resulted in a 65% drop in recidivism rates. Congress later removed that provision.

Claiborne Pell also distinguished himself as a supporter of gay rights. In 1993 during a bitter confirmation battle over Roberta Achtenberg as an assistant secretary of the Department of Housing and

Urban Development (HUD). Senators Jesse Helms, Bob Dole, and Trent Lott were among a bloc of senators objecting to her appointment solely because she was openly a lesbian.

Pell, whose daughter Julia was a lesbian, supported Achtenberg's nomination, stating, "I believe we should strive to let simple standards of fairness and equal treatment be our guide in examining all nominees that come before us...I know I would want to see my daughter treated fairly, if she were the nominee before us today." Achtenberg won the nomination, and thus was the first openly gay person to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

Pell also was the principal sponsor of a 1965 law establishing the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. In 1999 Pell received the Award for Advocacy of Independent Higher Education from the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU).

Pell's belief that no American with the drive and ability should be denied a higher education solely because of a lack of financial resources has been the cornerstone of American higher education policy for a generation. His conviction and foresight significantly changed American higher education and society.

At his death his family noted in their statement that the courtly Pell often expressed the definition of his job in seven words: "Translate ideas into actions and help people."

The strength of the United States is not the gold at Fort Knox or the weapons of mass destruction that we have, but the sum total of the education and the character of our people."

— Claiborne de Borda Pell

ASPIRE Fall Hours

First Week of Class

7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p. m.

Beginning Tuesday, September 6

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p. m.

(Closed Labor Day)



TUTORING SCHEDULE

Tutoring sessions start the week of **September 19**. By that time you will have discovered whether tutoring is

a viable option for any or all of your classes! *Sixty-three* percent of our participants who consistently attended their tutoring sessions during the Spring 2011 semester earned an "A" or "B" in their course; and *no one failed*.

You may complete a Tutor Request form in the ASPIRE Office. Don't forget that we offer online tutoring as well!

If you have any questions please contact Maija Braaten, braatenmm@montevallo.edu.

Don't wait until you are in too deep to get back on course in your classes. We're here to help you!

You're Invited!



Please join us for our
Open House and Ice Cream Social!

Meet new people, check out the
ASPIRE Program and have an
ice cream treat on us!

WHEN: Thursday, 6 September 2011
WHERE: ASPIRE Program Office
TIME: 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.