Year Up comes to Philly

A program helps out students and fights unemployment.

Year Up is an educational program that works on multiple levels. The initiative helps train college students for professional life through specific courses, and it also bridges the gap between students and corporate internships at places like JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo.

Peirce College in Philadelphia has joined forces with Year Up in order to enhance education and battle the city’s unemployment rate.

Year Up provides an environment for young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. For one year, students are taught tools for a successful career and how to apply them. Those enrolled can earn college credits and a stipend, with qualified students placing an internship with one of Year Up’s partners.

Diana Campbell is the executive director of Year Up Professional Training Corps Philadelphia. “We provide an opportunity for students who are disconnected,” she says. “They’re not in school or not working a full-time job. They’re not connected to mainstream opportunities.”

Uva Coles, vice president of Student Services for Peirce College, helps reach out to such students. “We work a three-pronged approach: Year Up, Peirce and an external outreach,” she says. “On the Peirce end, all student services departments are plugged in and tuned in. We have students come in and we take a look to see if they fit the Year Up program.”

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What are other students saying?

“I have had a great experience with Year Up. I have gained a strong mentor to guide me through my journey, as well as life-long friends,” says 20-year-old Andre Brown. “Due to my great experience with the Year Up program at Peirce College, I plan to continue my education at Peirce and will hopefully extend my internship with JPMorgan Chase.”

Leticia Thomas, 19, of Northeast Philly, says of her time there: “I plan to use everything that the Year Up program at Peirce College has taught me to become the successful young woman I know I am capable of being.”
School partnership will prepare for job market

Peirce College and the University of the Arts have developed an educational partnership intended to better prepare students for the current job market.

Peirce will offer select business courses to University of the Arts students, while UArts will offer courses in design, media and the visual and performing arts to Peirce students.

"The University of the Arts is excited to partner with Peirce College to help both student communities develop the skills necessary to succeed in the creative economy," said Sean T. Buffington, president of University of the Arts.

In addition, support services such as tutoring and advising will be available.

"Peirce and UArts' distinctive educational strengths will complement each other very well, to the benefit of both student populations," said Kirk E. Pillow, a provost at UArts.

Class offerings are available at www.peirce.edu/Partnerships/UArts and www.uarts.edu/academics/partnership-peirce-college **
Temple will offer grants

Up to 500 low-income students to get $4,000 a year, to boost on-time graduation.

By Susan Snyder
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Beginning in the fall, Temple University will offer incoming students from lower-income families $4,000 annual grants to help cover the cost of tuition if they agree to limit their off-campus jobs to no more than 10 hours a week during school, President Neil D. Theobald announced Monday.

The program, "Fly in 4," is designed to help students graduate within four years by reducing their need to work off campus. Currently, 43 percent of Temple students graduate within four years, according to the university.

The grant would cover more than a quarter of in-state tuition and fee costs, now $14,096.

Up to 500 of the university's 7,000 incoming freshmen will be eligible for the grants annually, Theobald said Monday. Transfer students also are eligible if they can graduate in four years.

The program will cost Temple about $2 million in the first year and $8 million by year four.

"In talking to students at Temple about why they aren't proceeding on a four-year plan, the issue that comes up is, 'I have to work,' " Theobald said. "We've been looking at data on that. The research is very clear — kids who work more than 15 hours a week have a lower GPA than kids who work less than 15 hours per week." Students from needy families are working on average 25 hours a week, he said.

The program is aimed at reducing student debt, which Theobald announced as a major focus of his presidency in January 2013. During his inaugural address in October, he promised a "landmark new affordability pact."

"We want to make this place as affordable as possible," he said.

The average debt for Temple graduates was $33,500 in 2011-12, above the Pennsylvania average, according to the national Institute for College Access and Success.

Pauline Abernathy, vice president of the institute, commended Temple for the new effort, but questioned whether it would be enough. She said students from lower-income families had to borrow, earn, or save about $18,000 annually to cover tuition, fees, room and board, books, supplies, and other expenses in 2011-12. Only 17 percent of Temple students have their needs fully met, she said.

"Given the high levels of unmet need, is the grant sufficient?" asked Abernathy, who previously served as senior adviser to Mayor Nutter and as deputy director of health and human services policy at the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Theobald's announcement comes one day before Gov. Corbett is set to announce higher education funding for next year. Temple and other state-related universities have seen declining or flat funding over the last few years.

Theobald said that he did not know what the governor's budget would include for Temple, but that Temple had made the legislature and governor's office aware of the program.

Five hundred new students will be accepted into the grant program each year, more if donors step up and want to target funding to help, Theobald said.

Also, Temple will guarantee to provide all courses students need to graduate in four years. If not, Temple will pay for the additional courses, Theobald said. The university will step up academic advising and course scheduling to help, he said.

Nationally, colleges are trying new approaches to mitigate the rising cost of tuition as pressure mounts from students facing a crushing debt load.

Cabrini College in Radnor cut tuition 12.5 percent to $29,000 for 2012-13, then froze it for this year, as well as most room-and-board rates.

Rowan University in Glassboro also froze tuition this year. Peirce College in Philadelphia will give a 10 percent discount on summer tuition to students who attend the previous fall and spring semesters.

Strayer University is providing students with a free course for every three courses completed. The free courses can be cashiered in during the student's final year.

Some colleges have created online degree programs and accelerated degrees so students can graduate earlier and avoid additional debt. States including Florida, Texas, Wisconsin, and California have seen a push for a $10,000 four-year degree.