



CARRIE QUINNEY AND KRISTIA ADAMS

The sixth annual Gene Harris Jazz Festival brought about 10,000 students and jazz fans to the Boise State campus for three days in April. Highlights included (top left): the Mount Hood Community College jazz choir, winner of the vocal jazz collegiate competition; acclaimed jazz vocalist Barbara Morrison; Dirty Dozen Brass Band tenor saxist Kevin Harris (bottom left); and outgoing Boise State President Charles Ruch with Janie Harris. Ruch was awarded the 2003 Gene Harris Endowment Award during the Festival.

Boise State student Callison testifies on Capitol Hill

Gonzalo Callison knows firsthand about the challenges some students face in persevering through high school and preparing for college. Now a senior at Boise State University majoring in political science, Callison credits the university's Upward Bound program with helping him navigate through a difficult adolescence and build his education dreams.

Callison recently testified before a U.S. House of Representatives appropriations subcommittee in Washington, D.C., about his personal experiences with Upward Bound. Speaking on behalf of the Council for Opportunity in Education, Callison urged Congress to support a \$173 million budget increase in fiscal 2004 for federally funded TRIO programs. The programs, which include Upward Bound, help prepare and motivate students who are low income, first generation and college bound for success beyond high school.

"It was a great experience," says Callison. "I learned a lot, and I'm glad I had the opportunity."

Idaho has an important connection to the Labor-Health and Human

Services-Education Appropriations Subcommittee that Callison addressed. Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, sits on the subcommittee; Callison acknowledged Simpson's position in his remarks to the group.



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Callison testifies to the House subcommittee.

In his testimony, Callison also described the challenges he faced when his mother and father, neither of whom had finished high school, divorced when he was in ninth grade and remarried people he didn't get along with.

Callison lived with relatives and friends while attending high school in Caldwell, moved numerous times and struggled academically. He started to hang out with friends who were in gangs.

But Callison said that Boise State's Upward Bound program turned his life around. "The program gave me a real sense of stability as I was required to meet with program counselors for one class period, every day of the school week," Callison told the subcommittee. "The counselors and participants became my family away from home."

Callison says he felt his testimony was well-received and that he hopes his efforts help procure needed funding increases for the programs. Callison is still involved with the program that reshaped his life: this summer he is residential mentor for Upward Bound students who are spending five weeks on campus to take college preparation courses and workshops and participate in extracurricular activities. He also works as an assistant enrollment counselor for the university.

— Janelle Brown