

Evaluation Brief #52

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Upward Bound: 2014-15 (Year 3)

Catherine Parker, M.A., Daylene M. Meuschke, Ed.D., and Barry C. Gibbons, Ph.D.

Through a five year grant funded by the Department of Education, College of the Canyons and the William S. Hart Union High School District launched an Upward Bound (UB) program at the Golden Valley High School (GVHS) campus in 2012. Specifically, Upward Bound is designed to support low income, first-generation college bound high school students. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in their pre-college performance and ultimately in their higher education pursuits. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from post-secondary education institutions. To participate in the Upward Bound program, students must meet the following criteria:

- Students must be in grades nine through twelve,
- Students must be between the ages of 13 and 19,
- Students must be either from low-income families or first-generation college students, and
- Students must demonstrate a need for academic support in order to pursue a program of postsecondary education.

During the 2014-15 academic year (Year 3), Upward Bound served 65 high school students. Of the 65 students served, 46 were female (71 percent) and 19 male (29 percent). Ethnicities represented in this population were Hispanic/Latino and White (82 percent), African American/Black (15 percent), and Asian/Pacific Islander (3 percent). Ages ranged from 15-18 years.

The purpose of this evaluation brief is to assess the degree to which the project objectives have been met and provide recommendations for improvement.

Objectives

Objective 1: Sixty percent of participants served during the project year will have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better on a four-point scale at the end of the school year.

- Overall, 50 out of 65 students (85 percent) had a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better, which is above the 60 percent target for this objective. To achieve this outcome, the Upward Bound program:

- Provided weekly tutoring at the school site (GVHS) as well as during Upward Bound Saturday Academies.
- Offered Saturday Academies at COC’s Valencia Campus on a bi-monthly basis. Students were offered college planning, test taking strategies, goal setting, personal development, and career advisement workshops, as well as tutoring in mathematics and the sciences to assist students in understanding and completing homework assignments. In addition, workshops were conducted for students and their parents in college planning, the application process for financial aid and college admission, and financial literacy.
- Offered a seven week Summer Academy that provided additional instruction in math, laboratory science, foreign language, literature, and English composition at the College of the Canyons Valencia campus.
- Collaborated with COC’s Academic Affairs to enroll advanced Upward Bound students in summer college courses, including Psychology, Sociology, Communication Studies and American Sign Language.



Photo 1 Upward Bound Students at a Festival of Trees

Objective 2: Fifty percent of Upward Bound seniors served during the project year will have achieved at the proficient level on state assessments in reading/language arts and math.

- Fourteen of the 14 seniors (100 percent) achieved proficient level on the California High School Exit Exams (CAHSEE) in Reading/Language Arts and Math, which is above the target for this objective. To achieve this outcome, the Upward Bound program:
 - Designed Saturday and Summer Academies’ curriculum to include Reading/Language Arts and mathematics to help students achieve proficient level on CAHSEE tests.

- Offered frequent counseling and advising to support, track, and monitor progress toward proficient level. Counseling and advisement assistance was offered through individual counseling at the school site two days a week as well as Saturday and Summer Academies.
- Provided weekly after school tutoring at the GVHS school site.
- Provided test taking/study skills strategies during the Saturday and Summer Academies.

Objective 3: Fifty percent of project participants served during the project year will continue in school for the next academic year, at the next grade level, or will have graduated from secondary school with a regular secondary school diploma.



Photo 2 Upward Bound Students on a Field Trip at JPL

- Fourteen seniors graduated and the remaining 51 students continued in school for the next academic year, which achieved the target for this objective. To achieve this outcome, the Upward Bound program:
 - Assessed by a dedicated counselor for academic and career planning needs at the start of the program.
 - Established an academic plan for each student.
 - Supported, tracked, and monitored each student’s academic progress, and updated their annual academic plans.
 - Provided weekly tutoring after school at the school site and at the bi-monthly Saturday Academy Workshops.
 - Provided workshops to students and their parents addressing college and career planning, college applications, financial aid, study skills, test taking strategies, financial literacy, and other college survival skills.
 - Took field trips to Jet Propulsion Lab, Getty Museum, and CSU Long Beach. The visit to Jet Propulsion Laboratory was designed to encourage students to pursue careers in Mathematics, Science and Engineering. The visit featured tours of the clean rooms, Mission Control Center, and talks by JPL personnel on their latest projects.

- Visited college campuses in order to provide students with first-hand knowledge of the campuses and its admission requirements. Faculty and staff opened their doors to allow us to visit the Interior Design, Engineering, the 3D Design Lab and even the Japanese Gardens. The students also met with CSULB students working in the Rocket Lab and received a briefing on the project. As part of our commitment to enhancing their exposure to cultural activities, we took the students to the Getty Museum. The docents provided us with a guided tour of the exhibitions as well as a visit to their famed garden.
- Offered workshops communicating academic excellence goals of UB to parents. Topics included the “role of the parent in academic achievement”, the College Systems- Community College, CSU, and UC, and financial resources for college. In addition, program staff met with families to provide individual and group counseling sessions regarding their son or daughter’s student academic plan and progress to date, their college applications, and their (Federal Student Aid) FAFSA.

Objective 4: Twenty-five percent of all current and prior-year Upward Bound participants who graduated from high school during the school year with a regular secondary school diploma will complete a rigorous secondary school program of study.

- 11 of the 20 seniors (55 percent) who graduated completed a rigorous secondary school program of study in which they completed the A-G requirements for CSU and UC admissions. An additional three students were initially in this group, however, they dropped from the program.

Objective 5: Forty percent of all current and prior-year Upward Bound participants who graduated from high school during the school year with a regular secondary school diploma will enroll in a program of postsecondary education by the fall term immediately following high school graduation, or will have received notification by the fall term immediately following high school from an institution of higher education of acceptance but deferred enrollment until the next academic semester.

- 15 of the 20 seniors (75 percent) enrolled in a community college or four-year University, which surpassed the target of this objective. Specifically, eight graduates enrolled at College of the Canyons, one at LA Pierce College, two at California State University, Northridge, one at California State University, San Luis Obispo, one at California State University, Long Beach and one at University California, Santa Barbara. To achieve this outcome, the Upward Bound program:
 - Assisted participants with academic advisement in selecting courses needed to be ready for college courses upon graduation.
 - Offered workshops for all students on preparing for college, including: study skills, test taking, financial aid, scholarships, college applications, and navigating the college system.

- Offered Summer Academy courses in science, English, Foreign Language, and mathematics to prepare students for college level coursework.
- Exposed students to potential careers and academic pathways through field trips to college campuses, as well as faculty and industry, and COC's College 2 Career Day.



Photo 3 Collage of 2015 Upward Bound High School Graduates

Objective 6: Thirty percent of participants who enrolled in a program of postsecondary education, by the fall term immediately following high school graduation or by the next academic term as a result of acceptance but deferred enrollment, will attain either an associate or bachelor's degree within six years following graduation from high school.

- Two of the three graduates from the 2012-13 cohort (Year 1) are still enrolled in college.
- Students who graduated in 2013-14 will be tracked for six years. It is too soon to assess the outcome of this objective, the following activities have been implemented as support:
 - Provided with an introduction to MESA, DSPS, and/or EOPS programs at COC and other community colleges. Students were also referred to support services and/or personnel at COC or other college campuses including University of California and the California State University system.
 - Conducted exit surveys with all graduating seniors and follow-up contact and tracking will be conducted annually at the end of each year upon postsecondary completion.

Recommendations

Upon review of the results, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Consider replicating the programs at additional high schools and/or elements of the program.