



Introduction

The Upward Bound program provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance. The program provides opportunities for participants to succeed in pre-college performance and ultimately in higher education pursuits. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families as well as high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rates at which participants enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education.

Performance Objective 1 Identify, evaluate, and select qualified participants for the Upward Bound Program and ensure parental and student satisfaction.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 72 eligible participants will be selected for the program.

1.1 Data

Participants Enrolled in Program:

Academic Year	#	Benchmark met?
2015-2016	72	Yes
2016-2017	78	Yes
2017-2018	80	Yes
2018-2019	80	Yes
2019-2020	75	Yes
2020-2021	73	Yes

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Revise:

- Increase family-oriented activities.
- Increase participant exposure to highly reputable community organizations and causes.

Develop:

- A family counseling component in coordination with referral services.

2017-2018:

Enrollment increased to 80 students. While our funding is limited, we would like to serve more students. The absolute maximum number of students we could serve under this grant is 90 when we consider funding. We will increase enrollment by targeted recruiting in middle schools, and high schools (LaGrange and Washington Marion). The counselor will collaborate with school officials to recruit students. We target freshmen because they can stay in our program for four years, giving us time to assist them with their academic goals.

2018-2019:

Each year, we replace participants with incoming freshmen as senior participants graduate. We purchased new marketing materials, and we have been announcing our program through partnerships in the community such as churches and community leaders. This is a strategy we will develop and revise for the upcoming year to target the population eligible for our grant.

2019-2020:

We met our goal this year. Initially, we were concerned that it may be difficult to recruit students while facing a global pandemic. However, we refined our online interest form and circulated the online form on social media. Upward Bound instructors and other teachers from the school district, who help us recruit students, shared our form with parents and people in the community. We are grateful that this strategy worked. Furthermore, we plan to use this online recruitment strategy next year. If public health restrictions allow, we will also return to face-to-face recruitment presentations next year.

2020-2021:

We met our goal this year. Initially, we were concerned that it may be difficult to recruit students while facing a global pandemic. However, we refined our online interest form and circulated the online form on social media. Upward

Bound instructors and other teachers from the school district, who help us recruit students, shared our form with parents and people in the community. We are grateful that this strategy worked. Furthermore, we plan to use this online recruitment strategy next year. If public health restrictions allow, we will also return to face-to-face recruitment presentations for the up and coming year.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 10 eligible participants will be recruited from four or more middle schools and two high schools.

2.1 Data

2016-2017:

The participants were recruited from four middle and two high schools, meeting the performance indicator.

2017-2018:

Middle schools and number recruited:

- F.K. White Middle School: 0
- Molo Middle School: 2
- Oak Park Middle School: 4

High schools and number recruited:

- LaGrange High School: 0
- Washington Marion High School: 0

2018-2019:

High Schools

- LaGrange High School: 4
- Washington Marion High School: 4

Middle Schools

- Molo Middle School: 1
- Oak Park Middle School: 7
- F.K. White: 0
- S.J. Welsh: 1

2019-2020:

High Schools

- LaGrange High School: 9
- Washington Marion High School: 3

Middle Schools

- Molo Middle School: 2
- Oak Park Middle School: 3
- F.K. White: 1
- S.J. Welsh: 1

2020-2021:

High Schools

- LaGrange High School: 2
- Washington Marion High School: 1

Middle Schools

- Molo Middle School: 2
- Oak Park Middle School: 9
- F.K. White: 1

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Revise:

- Increase family-oriented activities.
- Increase participant exposure to highly reputable community organizations and causes.

Develop:

- A family counseling component in coordination with referral services.

2017-2018:

The benchmark explicitly states that we would recruit from four or more middle schools. This year, we were only able to recruit from three. At the time, we were not fully staffed.

Now that we have an assistant director, he and the academic coordinator can share recruiting loads. Each can take two schools. Our goal is to recruit four more students than last year, increasing from six to 10 students.

2018-2019:

Since 16 students graduated from high school in 17-18, we have recruited a total of 17 students. Therefore, we exceeded our goal of recruiting 10. While we could increase the goal, our budget will only allow to serve a particular range of students. We cannot serve more than 90 students.

We have implemented recruitment strategies that include building partnerships with school counselors, school teachers, and members of community organizations.

Next year, we will form a more structured plan to reach community leaders because we have observed a stronger response from families who interact with certain programs for disadvantaged than if we were to remain using schools as our primary form of recruiting.

2019-2020:

We met our goal this year. In fall 2019, we worked hard to recruit freshmen and sophomores to fill spots in these cohorts. We were able to add nine students from LaGrange High School and three students from Washington-Marion High School in fall 2019. We accomplished this by visiting high schools and collaborating with school personnel. During spring 2020, we had 14 students complete an online interest form. While 14 students completed an interest form, we were only able to add seven new students from area middle schools. We will continue recruitment of more students in the fall via online forms and social media as well as continuing to collaborate with teachers in schools. If public health policies allow, we will visit schools in the fall. Still, we will continue to use electronic forms of recruitment as a strategy.

2020-2021:

We met our goal this year. Due to Hurricanes Laura and Delta in the Fall of 2020, we worked hard in the Spring of 2020-2021, to recruit freshmen and sophomores to fill spots in these cohorts. We were able to add twelve incoming freshmen and two upperclassmen students going to LaGrange High School and one student entering Washington-Marion High School in fall 2021. We accomplished this by visiting high schools in the Spring of 2020-21, school year, utilizing social media/ online recruiting strategies, and collaborating with school personnel. During Spring 2021, we had 20 students complete an online interest form. While 20 students completed an interest form, we were only able to add twelve new students from area middle schools. We will continue recruitment of more students in the fall via online forms and social media as well as continuing to collaborate with teachers in schools. If public health policies allow, we will visit schools in the fall. Still, we will continue to use electronic forms of recruitment as a strategy.

3 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 2/3 or more of participants will be first generation and from low income families.

Prior to 2017-2018, the benchmark was 70% or more participants will be from low income families.

3.1 Data

Percent of First Generation Participants from Low Income Families:

Academic Year	#	%	Benchmark
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			met?
2017-2018	58/80	73%	Yes
2018-2019	62/80	78%	Yes
2019-2020	62/75	83%	Yes
2020-2021	57/73	78%	Yes

3.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Revise:

- Increase family-oriented activities.
- Increase participant exposure to highly reputable community organizations and causes.

Develop:

- A family counseling component in coordination with referral services.

2017-2018:

We exceeded our benchmark of two-thirds (66.6%). This year, our percentage was 73%. Due to grant regulations, as long as 2/3 of students are low income and first-generation, then we have satisfied federal requirements.

2018-2019:

This year we served first-generation and low-income students who make up 78% of our participants. The way we plan to monitor this progress is through careful screening of participant applications regarding parents' education and financial information that is submitted as part of the application. We are required to report this annually to the federal government and monitor the process to ensure 2/3 of the applicants meet this requirement.

2019-2020:

We met our goal this year. Per federal guidelines 2/3 or more of our students must be low-income and a potential first-generation college students. Due to screening of applicants via an online interest form, we can target this population better. We plan to continue using the interest form (online and paper version) as a screening tool, yet we still try to serve other students as allowed by federal guidelines.

2020-2021:

We met our goal this year. Per federal guidelines 2/3 or more of our students must be low-income and a potential first-generation college students. Due to screening of applicants via an online interest form, we can target this population better. We plan to continue using the interest form (online and paper version) as a screening tool, yet we still try to serve other students as allowed by federal guidelines.

4 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: On the survey for parents of Upward Bound program participants, score satisfactory or above on all survey items for at least 80% of responses.

Prior to 2019-2020, then benchmark was to score at least 4.00 (agree/satisfied) on all items listed.

4.1 Data

Academic Year	Response Rate	
	#	%
2018-2019	8/80	10%
2019-2020	34/75	45%
2020-2021	25/73	34%

Parental Survey Results:

Response Item	Academic Year Ending			
	2017	2018	2019	2020
Overall the UB Summer Program is helpful	5.00	—	4.50	4.50
Overall the UB After-School Program is helpful	5.00	—	3.75	3.75
The UB staff is genuinely concerned about my child's success	5.00	—	4.50	4.50
The information I receive from UB is helpful	5.00	—	4.75	4.75
My child's grades have improved because of UB	5.00	—	3.25	3.25
My child's character and conduct has improved because of UB	4.50	—	4.00	4.00
My child is more likely to complete high school because of UB	5.00	—	3.50	3.50
My child is more likely to attend college because of UB	5.00	—	4.25	4.25
My child is more likely to successfully complete college because of UB	5.00	—	4.00	4.00

Parental Survey Results (New Survey Instrument) - Percentage Indicating Satisfactory or Above:

Response Item	Academic Year Ending			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall the UB Summer Program is helpful.	94%	94%		
The staff is genuinely concerned about my child's academic future.	94%	94%		
The information i received helped me understand financial resources available to pay for college.	64%	64%		
My child learned about college expectations that will help him or her navigate and persist through college until graduation.	74%	74%		
My child is motivated to obtain a 4-year degree and finish within six years.	85%	85%		
My child receives assistance with admissions and/or financial aid information when he/she needs it.	55%	55%		
When my child attends academic tutorials or the summer academy, he/she receives adequate support.	85%	85%		
When my child attends college tours, cultural events, workshops and/or community service events, he/she learns more about how to become a well-rounded college student.	74%	74%		

4.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Revise:

- Increase family-oriented activities.
- Increase participant exposure to highly reputable community organizations and causes.

Develop:

- A family counseling component in coordination with referral services.

2017-2018:

The assessment was not administered for the previous assessment cycle due to a change in office leadership. The assessment will continue to be administered in the next assessment cycle.

2018-2019:

We did not meet our goal for each item on the survey. Parents indicated areas of improvement are the after-school sessions, increased likelihood to complete high school, and grade improvement.

Often times, students come to us with good GPAs, and they are already on the rigorous core four pathway to prepare them for college. Therefore, I understand why some parents do not believe it increased the likelihood of their student graduating high school. They are already beyond that idea and hoping we help their child with college entry. Also, this may also explain why they do not believe we were instrumental in improving grades. Many students do not need after-school tutorial as much as others, especially if they already have good GPAs. Often times, the needs are social skills, life skills, and navigating college.

As a result of this survey, we will concentrate more on the participation aspect of each student to ensure they have participated in such a way that they are truly benefiting from the program. While we monitor attendance, we will take a closer look on how increased participation affects students.

2019-2020:

We did not meet our goal this year. For parent responses, four survey items scored below 80%. When analyzing these categories, we have new participants who have not had services related to the items. These items reflect college admissions, financial aid resources, and some experiences in UB that are voluntary for participants. For example, most of our freshman and sophomores participants have not had exposure to information concerning financial aid and college admissions. They currently receive general information about these areas. Juniors and seniors receive more specific information concerning financial aid and admissions processes. However, we spend most of participants' senior year discussing financial aid and college admissions in parental workshops. We can do more to start targeted discussions with freshmen and sophomores.

Regarding experiences in Upward Bound, we plan to be more explicit about what activities each participant needs to take part concerning their interests and goals after high school. This year, we are revamping our advising structure to be more student centered. This should also make improvements toward participants satisfaction.

2020-2021:

[Upward Bound Parent Survey 2019-2020 \(Xitracs\)](#) [XLSX 26 KB]

5 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: On the survey for seniors participating in the Upward Bound program, score satisfactory or above on all survey items for at least 80% of responses.

Prior to 2019-2020, the benchmark was to score at least 4.00 (agree/satisfied) on all items listed.

5.1 Data

Academic Year	Response Rate	
	#	%
2019-2020	75	49%
2020-2021	—	—

Participant Survey Results - Percentage of Participants Indicating Satisfactory or Above:

Response Item	Academic Year Ending			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall, the UB program was helpful.	81%	Will report.		
The staff was genuinely concerned about my academic future.	92%	Will report.		
The information I received helped me understand financial resources available to pay for college.	70%	Will report.		
I learned about college expectations that will help me navigate and persist through college until graduation.	92%	Will report.		
I am motivated to obtain a four-year degree and finish within six years.	89%	Will report.		
I received assistance with admissions and/or financial aid information when I needed it.	62%	Will report.		
When I attended academic tutorials or the summer academy, I received adequate support.	86%	Will report.		
When I attended college tours, cultural events, workshops, and/or community service events, I learned more about how to become a well-rounded college student.	78%	Will report.		

[UB 2020 High School Graduate Exit Survey \(2\)](#) [XLSX 22 KB]

[Upward Bound Participant Survey 9th-12th Grade \(1\)](#) [XLSX 30 KB]

5.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2019-2020:

Interestingly, the results of the participant survey are reflected of improvement areas from the parent survey. We did not meet our goal of 80% satisfactory on each item. There are three categories that need work. Obviously our participants would like more information catered to financial aid and college admissions. Senior participants receive a lot of information regarding college admissions and financial aid options. However, we need to begin this discussion in earlier cohorts. When it comes to experiences of participants, we will begin to advise each participant on experiences with which they should take part regarding our services to address the needs they have. As mentioned in the previous analysis for improvement, we are revamping our advising form to be more student-centered, and we will develop plans of support for each student.

Other open-ended responses on the survey that are not reflected in the table show that students benefit most from the summer academy, speakers, and college tours. Due to COVID-19, we were unable to travel this summer. However, we have been offering virtual tours through our College Planning course. Additionally, we have had speakers talk to participants via Zoom conferences.

2020-2021:

We provided a program survey for all students in program. However, due to the historic flooding in May, which caused us to be out of our assigned building, we oversighted surveying our seniors. We will provide an update on this data in the coming months.

Performance Objective 2 Increase scores on standardized tests and enrollment in college of Upward Bound participants.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 95% of participants will score Fair or higher on the state End of Course (EOC) tests in reading/language arts and math.

1.1 Data

Participants Scoring Fair or Higher on State EOC Tests:

Academic Year	#	%	Benchmark met?
2015-2016	19/20	95%	Yes
2016-2017	17/18	94%	Yes
2017-2018	16/16	100%	Yes
2018-2019	20/20	100%	Yes
2019-2020	—	—	—
2020-2021	16/17	94%	Yes

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Implemented:

- Developed peer to peer tutoring/mentoring to encourage peer accountability for ACT Testing registration, preparation, and attendance.

Develop:

- Develop an ACT-Intensive Summer Component two-weeks prior to summer testing.
- Increase exposure to STEM-focused programs and careers along with Innovation Center.
- Develop program incentives for participating in ACT Testing and achieving a composite of 20 and or making significant progress.

2017-2018:

We will not be able to report on the 2017-2018 school year until the fall of the next school year. Counselors will submit student scores to our office, and then we will report it in our master plan.

As a new director, however, there is need for improvement in the areas of math and language arts based on student data from the summer enrichment program. This year we are implementing several new initiatives.

1. Targeted, individualized academic counseling.
2. Individualized, differentiated instruction through IXL learning program.
3. Common formative assessments administered during Saturday workshops to drive instruction from tutors.
4. ACT-focused instruction through Cambridge curriculum.
5. Provide incentives for students who master standards in curriculum.

2018-2019:

We are not able to report on 18-19 since our reporting is a year behind due to the time it takes to retrieve such information from our target schools. However, we met our goal for students who passed their end-of-course exams for 17-18, and the pass rate was 100% for senior participants (16 out of 16).

This year we implemented more counseling and implemented the IXL learning program which is individualized instruction for students. We also implemented other initiatives in our workshops to motivate students to perform well. Although we met our goal at 100%, we will not revise the benchmark since it is one of the objectives in the grant proposal that we must meet each year to keep the grant.

Update:

For the 18-19 year, all of our participants passed the standardized tests necessary to graduate high school. All of our seniors have had academic tutorials through their time in UB, opportunities to participate in the summer academy, and academic counseling when needed.

2019-2020:

We are not able to report standardized testing data for the current year because such information is not made available to our office until the fall semester.

Note: Due to the pandemic and the fact that students were let out of school in March 2020, many students may not have standardized test scores to report on for next year. Standardized assessments were not administered in spring 2020.

2020-2021:

We met our goal for students who passed their end-of-course exams for and the pass rate was 94% for senior participants (16 out of 17).

This year we implemented more counseling and implemented the Method Prep (ACT) Learning program which is individualized instruction for students. We also implemented other initiatives in our online workshops, to motivate students to perform well. Although we met our goal at 94%, we will not revise the benchmark since it is one of the objectives in the grant proposal that we must meet each year to keep the grant.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 55% of all seniors participating in the program will score a composite of 20 or above on the ACT.

Prior to 2018-2019, the benchmark was 50%.

Prior to 2017-2018, the benchmark was 40%.

2.1 Data

Graduating Seniors in Program Scoring 20 or Above on ACT:

Academic Year	#	%	Benchmark met?
2015-2016	10/20	50%	Yes
2016-2017	11/18	61%	Yes
2017-2018	8/16	50%	Yes
2018-2019	8/21	38%	No
2019-2020	8/15	53%	No
2020-2021	8/17	47%	No

2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2017-2018:

We developed peer-to-peer tutoring and mentoring to encourage peer accountability for ACT Testing registration, preparation, and attendance.

This year, we will work to increase the percentage from 50% to 55%. We will do this through hosting six Saturday workshops throughout the school year that targets students' weakness. We will also utilize ACT resources to test students and assess their progress throughout the year.

2018-2019:

Since students typically stop taking the ACT in the spring of their senior year, we do not have current data for this benchmark. For 18-19, unfortunately, we did not meet our benchmark of 55%. Only 8 of 21 seniors scored a 20 or higher (38%).

While we feel students are able to successfully pass end-of-course tests, the ACT has been a challenge. We will implement strategies to help students with timing and pacing for the test. In addition, we will use structured tutoring to target gaps in knowledge. This summer, Cambridge ACT materials were used to help with scores. However, we will not know the results of utilizing those resources until next year. Based on current data, math scores are lower than scores from English and reading. We plan on targeting students' weakest areas for improvement.

2019-2020:

While we were 2% shy of our goal, we did increase the percentage of seniors who scored 20 or higher by 15%. Our seniors worked hard this year on academic preparedness for the ACT assessment. Furthermore, we had several students in dual enrollment which contributed to their academic growth. Students had the option to have face-to-face tutorials this year as well as the online tutorial platform.

We would like to help more of our seniors qualify for TOPS. We plan to help them by being more strategic about having more ACT prep incorporated into tutorials. We plan to implement a program called Method Test Prep to target skills to improve ACT scores.

2020-2021:

Due to Hurricanes Laura and Delta, many of our students were displaced which caused them to attend school through the virtual classroom. There were many adjustments to the school year. However, our seniors worked hard this year on academic preparedness for the ACT assessment. Furthermore, we had several students in dual enrollment, by the Spring 2021 semester, which helped to contribute to their academic growth. Due to the pandemic, students had participated in the online tutorial platform.

We would like to help more of our seniors qualify for TOPS. We plan to help them by being more strategic about having more ACT prep incorporated into tutorials. The Method Test Prep platform helps to target skills that will improve ACT scores.

3 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 85% of all seniors participating in the program will enroll in postsecondary education by the fall term after their high school graduation.

Prior to 2018-2019, the benchmark was 75%.

3.1 Data

Participants Enrolled in Post-Secondary Institution by Fall Following High School Graduation:

Academic Year	#	%	Benchmark met?
2015-2016	16/20	80%	Yes
2016-2017	13/18	72%	Yes
2017-2018	13/16	81%	Yes
2018-2019	20/21	95%	Yes
2019-2020	14/15	93%	Yes
2020-2021	11/17	65%	Yes

3.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Implemented:

- Developed peer to peer tutoring/mentoring to encourage peer accountability for ACT Testing registration, preparation, and attendance.

Develop:

- Develop an ACT-Intensive Summer Component two-weeks prior to summer testing.
- Increase exposure to STEM-focused programs and careers along with Innovation Center.
- Develop program incentives for participating in ACT Testing and achieving a composite of 20 and or making significant progress.

2017-2018:

This year, 13 out of 18 students (81%) are attending college in the fall of 2018. These students benefited from the

after-school tutoring sessions, and summer enrichment program.

For the upcoming year, 2018-2019, we will begin targeted, differentiated instruction using the IXL program to improve students' weaknesses. Our goal for next year is that 85% of students will enroll in the fall.

2018-2019:

At the moment, 95% (20 of 21) of senior participants have been accepted to a school and plan to enroll in the fall of 2019. We believe this has been successful because of the content and delivery of information in our parent workshops. We host 1 workshop in the fall and 1 workshop in the spring. In addition, many students have understood the ways to be accepted into college via alternative tests such as the ACCUPLACER. Since this goal is such an important objective on the grant proposal, it will not be revised as it is the goal we must meet to keep our grant.

2019-2020:

We met our goal this year. Upward Bound staff were diligent about fostering ongoing communication with seniors. Also, many seniors had qualified for dual enrollment, which boosted their confidence to continue post-secondary education. We implemented a senior binder to help students learn college expectations concerning choosing a major, budgeting, organizational skills, and navigating a college institution. We hope to continue this through our online learning system as a modular course in the upcoming academic year.

2020-2021:

We met our goal this year. Upward Bound staff were diligent about fostering ongoing communication with seniors. We implemented a senior binder to help students learn college expectations concerning choosing a major, budgeting, organizational skills, and navigating a college institution. We hope to continue this through our online learning system as a modular course in the upcoming academic year.

4 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: 35% of all seniors participating in the program will attend the Summer Bridge program at McNeese.

4.1 Data

Seniors Participating in Summer Bridge Program at McNeese:

Academic Year	#	%	Benchmark met?
2015-2016	5/20	25%	No
2016-2017	6/18	33%	Yes
2017-2018	2/16	13%	No
2018-2019	6/21	29%	No
2019-2020	5/15	33%	No
2020-2021	5/17	29%	No

4.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2016-2017:

Implemented:

- Developed peer to peer tutoring/mentoring to encourage peer accountability for ACT Testing registration, preparation, and attendance.

Develop:

- Develop an ACT-Intensive Summer Component two-weeks prior to summer testing.
- Increase exposure to STEM-focused programs and careers along with Innovation Center.
- Develop program incentives for participating in ACT testing and achieving a composite of 20 and or making significant progress.

2017-2018:

This year, we did not meet the goal of 35%. Therefore, we will make improvements by having our senior meeting in the fall to discuss admissions to McNeese, the ACCUPLACER test/ACT test, and explain the Summer Bridge Program in more detail. We will also have exit counseling in the spring of 2019 to ensure the students are prepared for enrollment regarding summer 2019.

2018-2019:

Although we basically doubled the percentage of bridge students by increasing the percentage to 29% (6 out of 21), we did not meet the goal of 35%. The exit counseling and workshops implemented this year were truly helpful. There were more students who qualified for bridge who chose not to participate. As a result, we will encourage students to participate in summer bridge by offering more opportunities for students to interact with McNeese faculty, staff, and students. This will be executed in the form of presentations from McNeese representatives to provide information to students.

2019-2020:

This year one-third of our graduating seniors participated in Summer Bridge. Four out of five of these students were dual enrollment students. Over the past couple years, it seems dual enrollment is a good indicator of who may participate in Summer Bridge. Our hope is that we can increase participation in dual enrollment to boost participation in Summer Bridge. More students applied to McNeese, but the timing was late. Many of them did not have time to take the ACCUPLACER test prior to the registration deadline.

2020-2021:

All five students that participated in the Summer Bridge Program were dual enrollment students. Over the past couple years, it seems dual enrollment is a good indicator of who may participate in Summer Bridge. Our hope is that we can increase participation in dual enrollment to boost participation in Summer Bridge.

Performance Objective 3 Administer the Upward Bound program in accordance with US Department of Education guidelines and state and University policies and procedures.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Zero exceptions on audits or program reviews that may be conducted internally or externally in the project year.

Prior to 2019-2020, the benchmark was zero exceptions on US Department of Education program audits.

1.1 Data

2017-2018:

A US Department of Education audit was not conducted during the year. Therefore, there is no data to report from an audit.

2018-2019:

An audit was not conducted by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the Upward Bound staff is hiring a consultant to conduct a mock visit to provide feedback regarding how we would perform in case a true audit occurred.

2019-2020:

In January 2020, an Upward Bound consultant was hired to evaluate the program to help the staff make improvements. There was no evidence of an external program evaluation with the previous two directors. Although this was not a formal audit, result of the mock audit revealed some positive aspects of the program as well as improvement areas.

Positive Comments:

- Strong collaboration and persistence among Upward Bound staff
- Collaboration with other offices with the university
- Documentation regarding expenditures and budget management from business office

Improvement Areas:

- More assistance from accounting office to help with budget reconciliation
- Signage near entry of building that indicates where Upward Bound is located
- Organization of participant files to be more identical
- Organization of program files to be more easily accessible
- More use and implementation of Blumen (online subscription to house Upward Bound Data)

2020-2021:

An audit was not conducted by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the Upward Bound staff corresponds with a consultant to help keep us on track regarding how we would perform in case a true audit occurred.

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2017-2018:

An audit was not conducted this year. Therefore, areas of improvement cannot be driven from a report from an audit. However, the office will make improvements for the 2018-2019 year regarding record keeping. Our office will follow the updated federal regulations for record keeping that includes, but is not limited to, the following procedures:

- Folders with sensitive information regarding participants will be locked in a filing cabinet.
- Records will be shredded six years after participants have graduated high school.
- Copies of requisitions, travel requests, and other items indicating grant funds were utilized will be kept in organized binders.
- The grant specialist will approve funding for operational purposes only when it falls within the regulatory guidelines.
- The grant accountant will approve the amount of money that can be spent for such purposes that the grant specialist approves.
- Annual reporting will be submitted in a timely manner and consist of all necessary components as outlined in regulations.

2018-2019:

An audit was not conducted by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the Upward Bound staff is hiring a consultant to conduct a mock visit to provide feedback regarding how we would perform in case a true audit occurred.

2019-2020:

Since Upward Bound hired a professional consultant to evaluate the program, information from the mock audit will be used to drive improvements regarding participant files, budget reconciliation, and organization of program files.

Beginning in the next project year, a budget reconciliation binder will be used and the accounting office will provide necessary documents to the director for assistance with budget reconciliation.

The director and academic coordinator will collaborate to review all participant files and reorganize folders as necessary to ensure information and checklists are visible, complete, and in the same sequence.

Binders have already been created to house travel documents, signatures for workshops and services, and other key program information that a federal site visitor may request. Before, this was housed in folders. In the past Blumen has only been used to send the APR to the federal government. Other documentation have been kept in folders. Since the mock visit, we have been using Blumen as an electronic form to reflect other forms of documentation such as services, tutorials, workshops, and other events. In fall 2020, we will fully implement Blumen to reflect all our program operations and contacts with participants. This will make it easier to complete the APR we send to the federal government.

2020-2021:

The office will continue to make improvements for the 2021-2022 year regarding record keeping. Our office will follow the updated federal regulations for record keeping that includes, but is not limited to, the following procedures:

- Folders with sensitive information regarding participants will be locked in a filing cabinet.
- Records will be shredded six years after participants have graduated high school.
- Copies of requisitions, travel requests, and other items indicating grant funds were utilized will be kept in organized binders.
- The grant specialist will approve funding for operational purposes only when it falls within the regulatory guidelines.
- The grant accountant will approve the amount of money that can be spent for such purposes that the grant specialist approves.
- Annual reporting will be submitted in a timely manner and consist of all necessary components as outlined in regulations.