

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE TRIO UPWARD BOUND MENTOR PROGRAM...

WHAT TO EXPECT

From UB

- Timely and consistent updates regarding letter exchanges and upcoming events via e-mail
- Monitor of exchanges between mentor and mentee
- Resources if you have questions about your mentee or the content of their letters

From Your Mentoring Relationship

- Expect your mentee to write to you within one week of receiving your letter/e-mail.
- Expect your mentee to be excited to meet you and get to know you, but to be shy as well.
- Expect that your relationship may be “one-directional” at first; it may take some time to establish a relationship.
- Expect to make a difference! You may not see that difference, but your mentee does feel special about having a mentor.
- Expect to have questions; please ask them!

BACKGROUND

What is Upward Bound?

Upward Bound is a federally-funded TRIO program designed to help high school students get to college by providing academic and personal support and guidance. St. Olaf College Upward Bound students are from families below 150% of poverty and would be the first generation in their family to attend college. Upward Bound has been at St. Olaf College since 1989 and has helped over 200 students enroll in college!

TRIO programs were created in the 1960's during President Johnson's Great Society programs. Education was determined to be the “Great Equalizer” and the populations across the country who were not enrolling in college were students whose parents did not attend college and whose parents were below 150% of poverty.

What is Upward Bound Mentor Program?

The St. Olaf College TRIO Upward Bound Mentor Program was implemented in 1999 to enhance and expand services to TRIO Upward Bound students. Many current mentors of the mentoring program are graduates of St. Olaf College and/or TRIO alumni who have graduated from a postsecondary institution. It is important for high school students to have a role model who has had experience with postsecondary education.

Mentors are paired with at least one Upward Bound student, and mentees and mentors correspond via letters and participate in scheduled social activities throughout the year. Mentees are expected to ask mentors a variety of questions about their mentor's education, career, etc.

For more information on TRIO or St. Olaf Upward Bound, visit the following websites:

<http://www.eoa.org/>
www.mntrio.org
wp.stolaf.edu/upward

For more information concerning the St. Olaf College Upward Bound Mentoring Program, please contact the mentor coordinator, Aye Bra Tha at tha@stolaf by phone at 507-786-3718 or toll free at 1-800-827-8658.

COMMONLY ASKED MENTOR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How often should I look for a letter?

UB students will write once a month. We ask that mentors respond to mentee letters within approximately one week of receiving a letter. Mentors may respond by letter or e-mail; contact information will be deleted (information like phone number, e-mail, address, etc.).

About what should I be writing?

The purpose of the mentoring program is to connect UB students with working adults in their community. Most UB students have little knowledge of the world of work outside their parents' occupation and what they see on television. So, you can write about what you do at work, what you like to do outside of work, etc. Our goal is also to show mentees how valuable a college education is – so, write about education, continuing education, etc. Mentees will have questions for you in their letters and please feel free to ask mentees questions about school, jobs, etc (but probably not their love interests...).

Can I contact my mentee outside the UB program?

For liability purposes, please do not contact your mentee outside of the UB program. We will notify you of events that mentors are welcome to attend along with the mentor/mentee visits. If a mentee asks you for your phone number, e-mail, or personal contact information, please do not provide that information. This is for your protection as well as theirs.

What do I do if my mentee tells me/write about a personal issue that makes me feel uncomfortable?

If your mentee writes or talks about issues with which you are uncomfortable dealing with, please contact Nou ASAP and the UB staff will determine the best course of action. If this occurs, we will keep mentors informed of any course of action taken. If your mentee tells you of physical, sexual, spousal, etc. abuse, please contact Nou ASAP; as a mentor, you are a mandated reporter of abuse. UB will then make any report to the proper authorities.

How long is my commitment to the Upward Bound Mentoring Program?

You will be paired up with a rising junior Upward Bound student. You will mentor this student until they graduate high school. We ask that you are able to commit two years to the mentoring program and attend required mentor events.

How do I talk to teens?

- Be yourself! If students see that you are relaxed, they will be relaxed, too.
- Ask questions about them. The more interest you show in their lives, the more they will want to share with you.
- Listen to your mentee.
- Include other mentors and mentees in conversation. Sometimes students may feel more comfortable in a group.
- Let them know that they are important to you and you enjoy getting their letters.
- Talk about hobbies and interests (movies, books, vacations, travel, jobs, etc.).
- Know your role. You are neither their parent nor their friend. Establish good boundaries.
- Remember what it was like to be a teen!
- Don't be afraid of your mentee; they will be nervous and may not be very talkative.
- Don't ignore your mentee; try to keep conversations going and find some common interest to talk about.
- Don't be negative about college; use constructive criticism about college (I wish I would have gone to school x and studied y...)
- Don't hesitate to talk to UB staff for assistance! We know the students very well and may be able to provide insights.
- Be a role model, not a parent.