



Check out the ACT
Practice Test on page 9!



Check out the upcoming
scholarship information
on page 7!

ST. OLAF COLLEGE

TRIO Upward Bound *Messenger*

Winter 2025

Volume XXXVIII , Issue #2

wp.stolaf.edu/upward/

Fall Mentor Event: Drkula's 32 Bowl

By: Aye Bra Tha

This year, UB kicked off the first mentor event of the 2025-2026 academic year on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at Drkula's 32 Bowl in Inver Grove Heights. UB welcomed a total of 101 students and mentors who attended the event. The event began with a quick icebreaker activity to give everyone a chance to connect.

Then, students and mentors were randomly paired to form groups of 11 participants each to compete in a team activity called Emoji Decoder. In this competition, groups worked together to decode 20 different emojis and submit their answers. The top three groups with the fastest response time and the most correct answers earned a prize of their choice. It was wonderful to see the collaboration among students and mentors as they raced to complete the challenge.



After the competition, participants enjoyed bowling and board games before the event came to a close. Many students and mentors expressed that their favorite activities were the group competition and bowling. Say, a UB junior from Humboldt Senior, noted that the mentor event was beneficial as it helped her get to know her mentor better and made them both feel more comfortable together, especially since this was their first meeting. Pajyeeb, a mentor of one of the junior students at Humboldt, shared, "My mentee and the other kids are so bright; it's a gentle reminder that the youth have insightful ideas and stories to share."

UB would like to thank everyone for making this event successful and enjoyable. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Mentor event on Saturday, May 16, 2026!

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Graduate Update

By: Aye Bra Tha

This month, we are excited to present an update on UB Alumnus Vichian Lee and share what he has been up to since graduating from college.

Vichian is a member of the UB class of 2014. After graduating from Humboldt Senior High, he attended St. John's University, where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Asian Studies in 2018. Reflecting on his four years at St. John's, Vichian says his favorite memory from college is making friends from around the world. When asked what graduating from college means to him, he shared, "For me, graduating from college is like opening a door to new opportunities in my life."

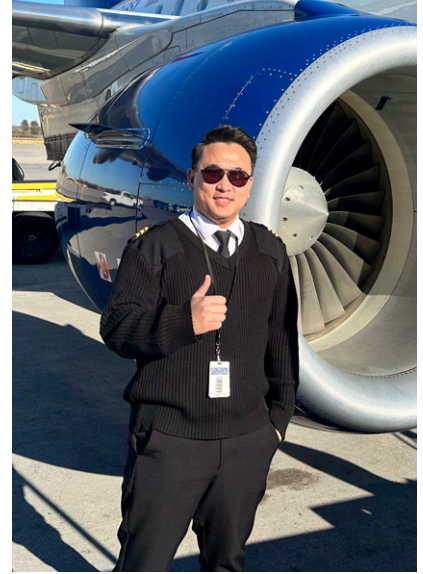
After College, Vichian started flight school in July 2018 and graduated in 2020. Afterward, he became a flight instructor for a year and a half to accumulate the required hours necessary to join the airline.

Today, Vichian is a Captain for SkyWest Airlines. He shares, "I really enjoy my current career because it's my boyhood dream job, and not only that, I also enjoy seeing people getting off the plane happily." The most rewarding part of his job is seeing different scenery and visiting various cities every day, starting the moment he clocks in.

Looking back on his time at UB, Vichian recalls that his favorite memory was the summer events at St. Olaf College, noting that every summer was a blast for him. When asked how his experience at UB contributed to his current success, he said, "UB played a significant role in motivating me to pursue college and helped prepare me for it."

When asked what advice he would give to current UB students or anyone following a similar path, Vichian advised, "It's okay not to know what you want to do while you're still in college. Once you graduate, there are plenty of opportunities out there, and don't be afraid to change careers or jobs."

UB would like to thank Vichian for his graduate update and wishes him the best in his future endeavors!



Bridge Day I, II, & III

By: Nou Yang

This year, Upward Bound (UB) hosted three mandatory College Application Days for our senior "Bridge" students, who are preparing to transition from high school to college. Bridge Day I took place on September 23, 2025, and Bridge Days II and III were held during MEA break on October 16 and 17 at Humboldt High School. Over the course of these three days, students continued developing their college essays and resumes, building on the work they began in the Post-Secondary Exploration course this summer.

During Bridge Day I, students met the UB full-time staff member who will support them as their team leader throughout their senior year. We kicked off the college application process by reviewing key admissions information through a competitive Kahoot activity. Students also received an introduction to the "Bridge Grid," a spreadsheet designed to help them track college applications and senior-year tasks. The rest of the day was dedicated to drafting and refining their college essays and resumes.

Bridge Days II and III continued this momentum. Students learned how to use Xello to request teacher recommendations and official transcripts. They also received information about upcoming virtual FAFSA sessions for students and their parents/guardians. Afterward, they were introduced to the FSA ID process and created their FSA IDs in preparation for the FAFSA appointments in January. Students then met in their Bridge teams to continue finalizing essays, resumes, and college applications.

Overall, all three Bridge Days were productive and successful. Adding a third day proved especially beneficial, providing students and staff with additional work time and more opportunities for individualized support. Many seniors completed polished versions of their essays and resumes and began their college applications through the Common App. The UB team looks forward to supporting Bridge students as they apply to colleges and scholarship opportunities.

December 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6
Mandatory Tutoring: Creative Arts Optional Tutoring: Central & Humboldt	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		
8	9	10	11	12	13
Mandatory Tutoring: Creative Arts Optional Tutoring: Central & Humboldt	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		UB Holiday Party
15	16	17	18	19	20
NO UB TUTORING					
22	23	24	25	26	27
WINTER BREAK! NO SCHOOL & NO UB TUTORING					
29	30	31			
WINTER BREAK! NO SCHOOL & NO UB TUTORING					

Upcoming Birthdays!

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| * Shouayee - December 1 | * Dien - December 24 | * Waluwa - January 23 |
| * Yuri - December 9 | * William Htoo. - December 26 | * Wilo - January 24 |
| * Banyan - December 11 | * Devine - January 2 | * Paw Lae - January 25 |
| * Zarina - December 14 | * John - January 10 | * Say - January 25 |
| * Elena - December 15 | * Nazera - January 11 | * Julianne Y. - January 31 |
| * Fatumata - December 17 | * Erick - January 14 | * Jarvez - February 9 |
| * Brianna - December 18 | * Berenice - January 15 | * Boss - February 15 |
| * Bu - December 20 | * Phoojywg - January 17 | * Zen - February 27 |
| * Makayla - December 23 | * Victor - January 21 | * Monica - February 27 |
| * Nora - December 23 | * Ja'Kyla - January 23 | |

January/February 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5	6	7	8	9	10
Mandatory Tutoring: Creative Arts Optional Tutoring: Central & Humboldt	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		
12	13	14	15	16	17
NO UB TUTORING! FAFSA Night #1	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		
19	20	21	22	23	24
NO SCHOOL MLK Day of Service	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		
26	27	28	29	30	31
Mandatory Tutoring: Creative Arts Optional Tutoring: Central & Humboldt	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL FAFSA Night #2	Mandatory Tutoring: Central	Study Skills	
Februray 2	3	4	5	6	7
Mandatory Tutoring: Creative Arts Optional Tutoring: Central & Humboldt	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		
9	10	11	12	13	14
Mandatory Tutoring: Creative Arts Optional Tutoring: Central & Humboldt	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		
16	17	18	19	20	21
Sophomore Insight Day #2 FAFSA Night #3	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		
23	24	25	26	27	28
Mandatory Tutoring: Creative Arts Optional Tutoring: Central & Humboldt	Mandatory Tutoring: Highland Park	Mandatory Tutoring: Humboldt & OWL	Mandatory Tutoring: Central		

Sophomore Insight Day #1

By: Zookong Lee



On Friday, November 7th, the Upward Bound (UB) 10th-grade students participated in their first Sophomore Insight Day of the year. These Sophomore Insight Day events were designed to keep UB sophomores engaged in UB by offering opportunities to explore academics, build community, and participate in team-building or community service activities. This year, the UB sophomores visited the Science Museum of Minnesota, where they explored a variety of STEM-related exhibits and hands-on learning experiences!

In the afternoon, 27 UB sophomores and 5 staff arrived at the museum. Students split into five groups and spent two hours exploring. They visited exhibits such as Dinosaurs & Fossils, the Human Body Gallery, Skin, and more. One of the favorite exhibits was Sportsology, where students got to test and compare their physical abilities through a series of interactive challenges.

After exploring the exhibits, the group attended a show at the Omni Theater and watched *Wild Rescue*.

The film highlights the work of the

Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network, an organization in California that rescues and rehabilitates injured wildlife. Students enjoyed seeing the impact of this work and learned about different ways people can help support wildlife conservation.

The UB sophomores had an amazing time at the Science Museum of Minnesota! We hope they walked away with new knowledge and excitement for STEM. We're already looking forward to their second Sophomore Insight Day on February 16th!



UPCOMING EVENTS

UB Holiday Party

December 13, 2025

10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Humboldt High School

All UB students must attend.

FAFSA Night #1

January 12, 2026

3:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

All seniors signed up for a 1.5 hr appointment with a UB advisor.

Permission slips will be sent out during winter break!

MLK Day of Service

Monday, January 19, 2026

9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Feed My Starving Children

All SLC members must attend.

FAFSA Night #2

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

All seniors signed up for a 1.5 hr appointment with a UB advisor.

Permission slips will be sent out during winter break.

Study Skills

Friday, January 30, 2026

9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Central High School

All new students and sophomores must attend.

Sophomore Insight Day #2

Monday, February 16, 2026

8:30 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.

Every Meal

All sophomores must attend.

FAFSA Night #3

Monday, February 16, 2026

1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

All seniors signed up for a 1.5 hr appointment with an UB advisor.

Permission slips will be sent out during winter break.

ACT Prep Sessions

ACT Prep Overview: (Jan 5-8, 2026)

Week #1: English Review (Jan. 26-29, 2026)

Week #2: Math Review (Feb. 2-5, 2026)

Week #3: Reading Review (Feb. 9-12, 2026)

Week #4: Science Review (Feb. 24-26, 2026)

Week #5: Writing Review (March 2-5, 2026)

All juniors must attend each review session at their Mandatory tutoring day from 3:15 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Fall Check-in Meetings

By: Nou Yang

Upward Bound (UB) held its first tutoring sessions at five schools during the week of September 15th. It was wonderful to see all of the students after their summer break. During our first tutoring sessions, UB staff reviewed student responsibilities, procedures for advising meetings, curriculum assignments, stipend policy, mentor letters, and upcoming academic year events.

The following are the changes UB has made to this year's programming and in-person/virtual sessions to support our students in their academics.

In-Person Sessions:

Monday

Mandatory tutoring at Creative Arts from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Optional tutoring and support during the day at Humboldt and Central on Mondays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Tuesday

Mandatory tutoring at Highland Park from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Mandatory tutoring at Humboldt and OWL from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Thursday

Mandatory tutoring at Central from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Virtual Sessions:

Mondays

Virtual Study Hall sessions from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. with St. Olaf College tutors!

UB is excited to provide a range of services to support our students. In addition, students are compensated through monthly stipends for attending in-person and virtual tutoring sessions, meeting one-on-one with UB advisors, completing curriculum assignments, maintaining good grades, and participating in events. If you have any questions regarding UB programming, please contact your advisor.

SLC Fall Retreat Recap

By: Tzolquin Pinedo

The 2025-2026 Student Leadership Council kicked off the school year with its first event of the fall. This year, SLC members attended the Student Leadership Conference at the Mall of America, where they participated in the TRIO Opportunity Walk and College/Graduate School fair. The conference brought together more than 500 TRIO students across the country for a weekend focused on leadership development, STEM, college, and career preparation.

SLC members participated in the TRIO Opportunity Walk, a one-mile walk around the Mall of America to celebrate and show support for TRIO programs that are changing lives all over the country. Students proudly wore their favorite UB t-shirts, dating back to 2012 and including this summer's design. Hundreds of students, staff, alumni, community members, and TRIO supporters came together for the first annual TRIO Opportunity Walk.

Following the TRIO Opportunity Walk, Jen Rudolph, Associate Vice President of the Council for Opportunity in Education, spoke about the critical work being done to continue supporting TRIO students and programs nationwide. After the speech, SLC members engaged in themed stations and activities, including a photo booth, a TRIO Trivia wheel, and a postcard-writing station as part of an advocacy action highlighting TRIO's impact on students.

Students also had the opportunity to speak with representatives from top colleges and graduate programs at the College/Graduate School fair. More than 50 institutions were represented, many of which offer TRIO programs, such as Student Support Services (SSS) and McNair, to help further UB students' education. It was an amazing opportunity for senior, junior, and sophomore SLC members to explore their postsecondary options.

Upward Bound thanks all SLC members for their active participation in a day dedicated to advocacy and preparing for the future. Your engagement and commitment are vital to driving positive change and ensuring a resilient future for our community.

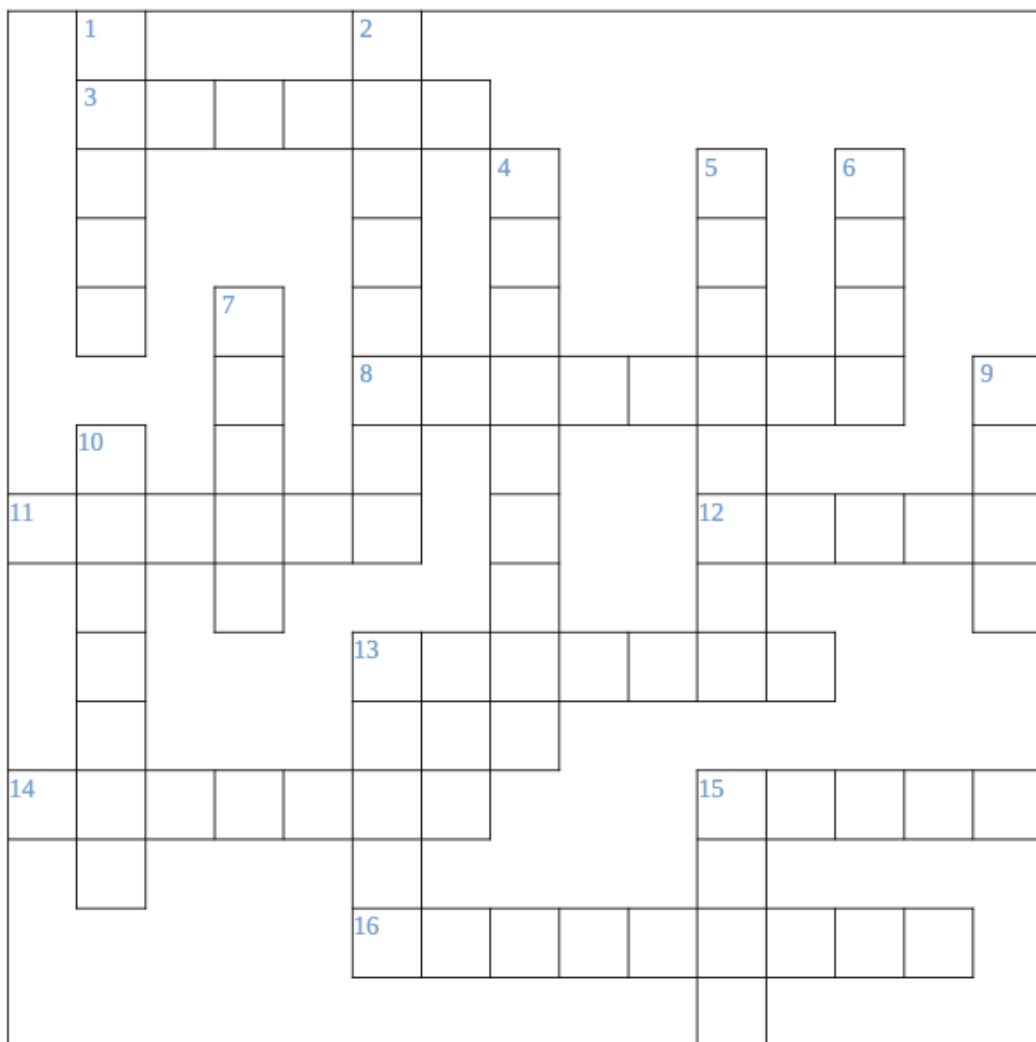


Scholarship Opportunities for Bridge Students!

UB Bridge students have worked hard on their college applications and are now set to dive into the scholarship application process! As the new year draws closer, it's a wonderful time to start thinking about scholarship deadlines. UB is excited to share some upcoming scholarships to consider while you get ready for the winter break. Bridge students, don't forget to check out the comprehensive list of scholarships available on the UB Bridge Grid!

Scholarship Name/Amount	Requirements	Website	Deadline
The Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholarship: Up to \$35,000 over four years	A graduating high school senior, US citizen, show evidence of financial need, show records of academic excellence, attend an accredited four-year institution, show leadership potential, dedication to community service, demonstrate financial need, and must have an ACT score of 21 or higher.	https://jackierobinson.org/apply/	1/9/2026 @ 5 p.m. EST
Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund: \$2,500 one time to multi-year \$20,000 awards	Be of Asian and/or Pacific Islander ethnicity, US citizen or permanent resident, enrolling in Fall 2026, minimum GPA of 2.7, complete FAFSA, and submit one letter of recommendation.	https://apiascholars.org/scholarship/apia-scholarship/	1/15/2026 @ 5 p.m. EST
Wallin Education Partners Scholarship: \$16,000 (\$4,000 a year for four years)	Minimum eligibility requirements: minimum 3.0 GPA, attend a four-year private/public non-profit institute in MN, IA, ND, SD, or WI or any HBCU immediately after high school (no gap year), and have financial need.	https://www.wallinpartners.org/4-year-program.html	1/28/2026
St. Thomas Dease Scholarship Program: Full Tuition	Each year, the University of St. Thomas chooses 10 deserving students to earn a full-tuition scholarship. Students must attend urban high schools, be accepted to the University of St. Thomas, demonstrate financial need and commitment to their academic vocation.	https://www.stthomas.edu/student-affairs/departments/sdis/dease-scholarship-program/	2/1/2026
Dells Scholars Program: \$20,000 (\$5,000 a year for four years)	For high school seniors participating in an approved college-readiness program (UB counts!), plan to enroll full-time at an accredited four-year college or university right after high school, be Pell Grant-eligible, and have at least a 2.4 GPA.	https://www.dellscholars.org/students/	2/15/2026
Horatio Alger Scholarship: 9 Scholarships at \$10,000 each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time high school junior in Minnesota • U.S. citizen with a minimum 2.0 GPA • Adjusted gross family income of \$100,000 or less • Committed to earning a bachelor's degree (may begin at a 2-year college) • Actively involved in school or community activities • Demonstrates integrity, perseverance, and ability to overcome adversity 	https://horatioalger.org/scholarships-and-services/undergraduate-scholarships/	3/1/2026 @ 12 p.m. E.T.
Page Education Foundation Grant: \$2,500-\$3,500 per year	For MN high school graduates of color. Students must be enrolled in an accredited post-secondary educational institution in Minnesota, be enrolled as a full-time student and maintain full-time credits throughout the academic year, and be willing to complete a minimum of 50 volunteer hours with children per year.	https://www.page-ed.org/apply/new-applicants/	4/1/2026
Kao Kalia Yang Scholarship: \$5,000 (One time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood descendants of Hmong race or ethnically identified as Hmong American (with citizenship or as a permanent resident) • High school seniors who reside in the United States • Planning to enroll as a first-year student at a U.S.-accredited 4-year college/university or community college in Fall 2026 (college acceptance required if selected). • Minimum unweighted GPA of 2.8. • Household income must meet federal/state/county low-income guidelines (2024 or 2025 tax return required if selected). • Open to all majors. 	https://www.apcf.org/kao-kalia-yang-scholarship-open	4/20/2026

Winter



Across

- 3 Ice sport played with a puck
- 8 Snowstorm
- 11 The coldest season
- 12 House made of ice
- 13 Gliding on ice
- 14 Sometimes has a carrot nose
- 15 Hot sweet drink
- 16 House warmer

Down

- 1 The color of snow
- 2 Christmas month
- 4 Holiday of giving
- 5 Time off from school or work
- 6 Fun ride down a snowy hill
- 7 Direction birds fly for the Winter
- 9 Frozen rain
- 10 Keeps your hands warm
- 13 Neck warmer
- 15 Opposite of hot

ACT Practice Test

By: Tendor Norbu



On Friday, October 2, 2025, 33 juniors arrived at Central High School in the morning to take a full-length practice ACT. Students grabbed breakfast and then settled in to begin their exam. The UB advisors took turns proctoring different sections to closely simulate what their official ACT testing experience will be like.



Throughout the day, students worked through each section of the ACT. After completing the English, Math, and Reading sections, they enjoyed pizzas, beverages, and snacks before returning to finish the Science section and wrap up with the Writing portion. This structure allowed students to practice pacing, experience real testing conditions, and take meaningful breaks to reset between sections. UB staff guided students through instructions, kept the environment calm and focused, and helped create an experience that mirrored a true ACT environment.

After completing the exam, students wrapped up their day by filling out evaluations. In a week, they will receive a detailed score report that includes an overall performance summary and feedback for each section. UB will be offering a 1-hour ACT practice session during UB tutoring beginning in January and continuing through March. During this time, students will review their score reports, learn to interpret their results, and identify strategies to improve their scores. These practice sessions will help students prepare for the real test in March.

We had a productive and successful day for our juniors! Students gained firsthand experience with the ACT and will soon receive comprehensive score reports to help them map out an improvement plan. UB staff will continue to follow up with students and assign practice exercises and practice tests to ensure each student has the tools they need to strengthen their skills and boost their scores.



Fundraising Time

By: Tzolquin Pinedo

The Upward Bound (UB) Student Leadership Council (SLC) has officially kicked off its fundraising initiative for this year's Bridge Scholarship! This scholarship is awarded annually to a few deserving Upward Bound graduating seniors at the end-of-the-summer Banquet in July.

SLC members have begun selling Gatorade, Rice Krispies Treats, and chips for just \$1 during after-school tutoring. These snacks will be sold on the following days: Monday at Creative Arts, Tuesday at Highland Park, Wednesday at Humboldt, and Thursday at Central. Please check in with your SLC members at your school to learn more!

For anyone who would like to contribute to our Upward Bound Bridge Scholarship, please visit: <https://stolaf.alumniq.com/giving/to/default> to access the donation form. Click on "I'd like to Search for a Different Option" and follow the steps below to donate. The St. Olaf TRIO Upward Bound community truly appreciates your support!

I would like to give

\$

to

Upward Bound

☒ Upward Bound

☐ I would like to specify a designation not listed

» CONTINUE

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The St. Olaf College TRIO Upward Bound Messenger is published quarterly: Fall(October), Winter(December), Spring(March), and Summer(June). Editors reserve the right to add, change, or delete articles for spacing and clarity. All inquiries should be addressed to Mari Avaloz, Director of the St. Olaf Upward Bound, St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057-1098.