

Director's Letter

There are many different bridges one must cross in order to successfully transition to college. One of those bridges is a college entrance exam. Student's scores on these tests, the ACT or SAT, are one of the factors college entrance boards look at in determining whether to admit applicants and because of this they can be disturbing and intimidating to students. However, there are several ways that students can prepare themselves to perform their best on these exams. The following paragraphs will give you more information about exactly what these tests are, why they are used, and what are the best ways to prepare for taking them.

There are differences between the ACT and the SAT that students need to be aware of. Traditionally, the ACT was more widely used in Midwestern states and the SAT was more common on the East and West coasts, and was also preferred by more private and Ivy League institutions. In the past, colleges were very strict about which test was accepted for entrance into their schools. However, now both tests are widely accepted at most institutions – with the ACT beginning to be preferred by more college institutions than the SAT.

There are other differences between the two exams. First, they are scored differently. The SAT scores the test as a whole for a maximum of 1600. The ACT scores each subject on a scale of 1 – 36 and then averages those scores together for a composite score. Second, the exams test different levels of knowledge in subject areas. For example, SAT's highest math level is Algebra and basic Geometry while the ACT's is Trigonometry. Third, the SAT deducts points for wrong answers while the ACT does not deduct points for incorrect answers. The main difference to keep in mind about the two tests is that the ACT is focused on curriculum (testing what a student should have learned in school) and the SAT is focused on abilities (testing skills a student has).

Students in the Upward Bound Program are required to complete the ACT exam. This should not be as stressful and disquieting as many of the students feel it is because, as mentioned above, this exam is directly correlated with the basic curriculum for college bound high school students. Therefore, you can prepare for the ACT with help kits and preparation guides, but the best and most consistent way to prepare is to learn - and retain that knowledge - in all your high school level classes. There is a common misconception among students today that preparation for college and the ACT begins in the senior year of high school. This is false. Students should be thinking of a successful college career in their freshman year. The major reason that students do not do well on the ACT is because students are not taking challenging course work. Students are advised when entering high school to complete four years of English, three years of Math (after entering Algebra 1) and three years of Science, including Physics. ACT results have shown that students who complete this suggested curriculum score significantly better than those who do not. This is why it is important for students to actively participate in the Upward Bound activities, especially tutorials, and complete the ACT for the first time during junior year.

Many students have heard that standardized testing is unfair and not constructed for minority students and studies have shown that this may very well be true. However, the completion of this test is mandatory for all college bound individuals. While those in the college entrance exam business work to construct less culturally biased tests, students are still required to take the test. Therefore, they need to begin preparing now! If students push themselves by taking challenging classes and stay in contact with Upward Bound staff, advisors, or counselors getting accepted to their dream college will be much a much easier and rewarding accomplishment. All students have to realize that college preparation does not happen overnight and there are decisions that have to be made today that will effect them greatly in the future.

For more information about ACT preparation, please contact Upward Bound staff members.

The 2004 Iowa Caucus – A First Step

Though the 2004 Iowa Caucus was held on January 19 there are still a lot of people who would like to know what all the excitement was about. The word caucus is a North American Indian word that means the process of gathering all of the ruling chiefs of a tribe together. The current political use of this term has a quite similar meaning. The Iowa Caucus is a process in which members of political party, either Democrat or Republican, gather together to make decisions on policies and to select candidates. Since the current President, George Bush, is a Republican, Democrats had to select a person or a candidate to run against him for President. The Caucus is the important first step in choosing a challenger for this November's election.

Caucuses are held every two years. In off-presidential years there are caucuses held to talk about political policy and party platform (a.k.a. what is important to the members of that party). In presidential election years the caucuses are better attended and receive a lot of media attention. On Caucus night this year Democrats met at schools, churches, and community centers to literally stand up to support their favorite candidates. This years Democratic candidates competing in the caucus were: Dick Gephardt, Howard Dean, John Edwards, Wesley Clark, John Kerry, Dennis Kucinich, and Al Sharpton.

People present at the caucus vote by moving to the section of the room set aside for their candidate or undecided. Then the number of people in each group is added to the number of caucus forms from people who have chosen the same candidate or are undecided. The percentage of votes and caucus forms received for each candidate or undecided determines how many state convention delegates and alternates that group can elect. Next each group elects delegates and alternates to represent them at the state convention. Any Democrat present can be elected --- including you. Any person, 18 and older, who is a registered Democrat or Republican and can prove that they live in Iowa can participate in the caucus of their party. These state delegates will decide who is sent to the Democratic National Convention. When the delegates decide who can be sent to the Democratic National Convention, another vote is held. These are called the primaries and this vote

determines which one person will compete against President Bush in the Presidential Elections in November of 2004.

The Iowa Caucus is an important event because Iowa has what is known as “first in the nation” status - which means that it is the first statewide test for presidential candidates in the nation. The caucuses are an exciting first step in the yearlong race for a new President.

For more information on the 2004 Presidential Elections you can visit the following websites:

www.memory.loc.gov

www.politics1.com

www.vote-smart.org

<http://www.mtv.com/chooseorlose/>

Drugs and Today's Youth

We have made many advances in today's society. We have broken many of the stereotypes that people used to face. Some would argue kids are smarter than they have ever been before. However, with social advances comes social pressures. Today, children are under more stress to “fit in” and to be cool and these desires sometimes come with a high price to pay. Unfortunately, experimenting with drugs is very common among adolescents. Teenagers sometimes do not see that the decisions they make now will have consequences in the future. That is why it is the responsibility of parents, friends, and mentors to help keep kids off drugs.

Due to peer pressure and other factors, all teenagers are at risk for using drugs, but those with the highest risk of developing a serious drug problems are those who are depressed, have low self esteem, and feel like they don't fit in. Also, teenagers who have a family history of substance abuse are at high risk. Just because a parent does not drink or use drugs does not mean that his/her children are home free. All teenagers feel depressed and out of place at some point in time - that is a part of growing up. However, adults need to be conscious of the activities of the children in their life, both at home and at school.

Teenagers abuse a variety of drugs, legal and illegal. The most commonly abused drug among teens is tobacco. Although tobacco may not seem as harmful as other drugs that are prevalent today, we know that tobacco in both smoking and chew form contains many carcinogens (cancer causing agents) that guarantee health problems in the future. Also, kids who smoke are “three times as likely to use alcohol, eight times as likely to use marijuana and 22 times more likely to use cocaine. Smoking is also associated with other risky behaviors, such as fighting and engaging in unprotected sex” (www.focusas.com). Drug use (tobacco, marijuana, inhalants, alcohol, and club drugs) is linked to a variety of negative outcomes, including school failure, violence, unplanned and unsafe sex, and suicide.

Indications of drug use tend to fall into five different categories: physical, emotional, family, school and social problems. Physical clues may be a lack of interest in personal appearance, the smell of alcohol or frequent use of breath mints or cologne. A change in eating or sleeping habits may be an indication of drug use. There are more outward signs, like a persistent runny nose, red eyes, coughing, wheezing, bruises and needle marks. Emotional signs of usage may be a personality change, mood swings, irritability, irresponsible behavior, and/or low self-esteem. The family category may include starting arguments, lack of cooperativeness or hostility, breaking rules or withdrawing from the family altogether. School indications may be decreased interest, negative attitude, drop in grades, many absences or trancies and discipline problems. Finally, there is the category concerning social problems. Social problems may include isolation or depression or a heightened secrecy about actions or possessions. Teens may lose friends, or gain new friends who are not interested in school or other constructive activities. They may have problems with the law or they may change to a more unconventional style of dress and music.

All of these are common indicators of drug use, however teenagers all exhibit some of these characteristics at one point or another with or without drug use. A combination of several of these clues may better warrant concern. Blatant signs like needle marks or alcohol on the breath always calls for questioning. However, a better way to prevent kids from turning to drugs is to be proactive rather than reactive:

1. Talk to teenagers before they begin to partake in these activities.
2. Take note of mood changes or depression, and make yourself available for kids.
3. Know who adolescents in your life are friends with, and where they go for social activities.
4. Keep in touch with teachers and administrators at school, this lessens the chance of trancies, and it also lets the kids know that you care.
5. Think about using a kid contract (www.2ndbyte.org/program). These are forms that kids agree to concerning not using drugs or any type of destructive activity. These contracts make kids feel like they are playing an active part in their future. Another form of contract is give and take, if there is a behavior that a child does not like in a parent, for instance smoking or swearing, agree to give up these things if the child agrees to not use drugs or alcohol. This is another method of talking to your child and making them feel like part of the decision making process.

Parents, teachers, friends and mentors all have a responsibility to help the teenagers of today deal with social problems. We should all educate ourselves on the signs and behaviors of drug use, and the different types of drugs that children are faced with while growing up. The best way to prevent children from drug dependency is to talk with them and let them know that someone cares about them and their future.

For more information you can contact Upward Bound Staff, Allen EAP at 319/235-3550, or the following websites:

www.focusas.com

www.2ndbyte.org/program

www.kidscontracts.com
www.theantidrug.com

Classic Upward Bound Book Club Underway

The Classic Upward Bound Book Club began in January 2004 with our first book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. Interested students meet once a month to discuss a new book. Selections are purchased for the participant's use by the Classic Upward Bound Program. Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month from 5:00-6:30 p.m. at UNI-CUE. Following is the meeting schedule for the remainder of the 2004 Academic Year:

March 1	<i>1984</i>	by George Orwell
April 5	<i>The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven</i>	by Sherman Alexie
May 3	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	by Sandra Cisneros

Book Club Meetings are informal discussions of the novel and open to all.

2004 Classic Upward Bound Summer Enrichment Program

Planning is underway for the 2004 Classic Upward Bound Summer Enrichment Program. If you have not already turned in your participation form – or submitted your application for the various Math & Science Programs if you are interested – you need to do so as soon as possible.

We look forward to another fun, productive, and educational summer!

Upward Bound Birthdays

January

2 Tyrone Smith Jr.
2 Samantha Pickard
4 Charles King
8 Jamesia Gary
10 Aysha Davis
19 Ashley Samington
26 Breanna Cain
29 Kiedra Stuelke

February

1 Robert Abben
11 Saturno Hechavarria
12 Kurtis Foley
18 Dominique Starks
23 Aunamesha Henley

March

14 Tabitha Beck
30 DeCarlos Carey

Director's Honor Roll (Semester GPA of 3.5 or above)

Corey Alexander	Leana Montgomery
Rocio Ayard	Andrea Morgan
Dionte Byrd	Andrew Nielsen
Breanna Cain	Elliott Petersen
Tavia Clark	Samantha Pickard
Mandy Fauser	Ashley Ratute
Zechariah Henninger	Steven Shumaker
Charles King	Molly Stuber
Lisa Kuo	Kiedra Stuelke
Patrice Mayo	Habie Timbo
Teaya Minks	

There were an additional eleven students with GPAs above 3.0 for the semester.
Congratulations!

Words of Wisdom

“I've always felt it was not up to anyone else to make me give my best.”
-Akeem Olajuwon

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it comes dressed in overalls and looks like work.”
-Thomas Edison

“No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.”
-Anna Eleanor Roosevelt

“I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it.”
-Maya Angelou