

Office of Educational Opportunity Programs

The Office of Educational Opportunity Programs was created in January 1992 to organizationally locate the MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound Program, the MIT Educational Talent Search Program (which operated from September 1991 to FY1998), and all future programming serving low-income community youth. The Upward Bound Program, which was created under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and is one of the US Department of Education's TRIO programs, has operated at MIT since 1966.

Upward Bound provides college admission and preparatory information, academic support, advising, career information, and college and career exploration opportunities to economically and/or educationally disadvantaged youth.

MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound

The MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound Program is a year-round, coeducational, multicultural college preparatory program for high school youth who reside or attend school in Cambridge. Currently in its 40th year, the program serves 75 academically promising young men and women. The goal of Upward Bound is twofold: to motivate client high school youth such that they persist on to postsecondary education, and, at the same time, provide them with the fundamental skills necessary for success at the collegiate level.

On August 12, 2006, the program held its 40th anniversary celebration on the MIT campus at the Sala de Puerto Rico. The event was well attended by current students and parents, alumni students and their parents, current and former staff members, and colleagues from other TRIO programs and academic institutions in the greater Boston area. Our special guests included Cambridge's Mayor Kenneth Reeves and Patrick Ewing, former NBA player and Upward Bound alumnus (1981). Highlights of the celebration were the receipt of proclamations from Mayor Reeves and Congressman Michael Capuano (MA-8th District), and the presentation of the program's first Distinguished Alumni Award to Mr. Ewing.

The following is an overview of the program's operational phases.

Summer Program

The six-week summer program, conducted in residence at Wellesley College, is designed to provide participants with a rigorous academic experience. Classes are taught by experienced high school teachers and by graduate and undergraduate students from MIT, Wellesley, and other local colleges and universities. Each participant is required to enroll in a mathematics course, an English course, and an elective course in social studies, science, or world languages. (Through an agreement with Cambridge Public Schools, students may receive summer school credit for up to two major courses failed during the preceding school year.)

School-year Program

The school-year program, located at MIT, plays an equally important role in the participants' educational development. Building on the motivation and enthusiasm developed during the summer, the program is designed to assist and support the students while in school. To accomplish this task, several programs and services, staffed primarily by MIT and Wellesley students (when appropriate) have been developed. We continually strive to maintain MIT and Wellesley student participation through our continued involvement as a prepracticum site for the Wellesley College Teacher Certification Program and through various outreach efforts.

The Upward Bound office is open for study on a drop-in basis four days a week. Tutors are available to assist participants with homework problems and to meet with individuals and/or small groups for specific content-area tutorials.

The program offers monthly workshops to address more specialized participant needs, such as SAT preparation, computing skills, study-skills development, time management, and job-readiness skills.

Also, in an effort to help participants cope with the myriad academic, social, family, and other problems they face, the program offers support in the areas of guidance, college, career, and personal adjustment. The college advising component includes campus visits to many local colleges and universities as well as to historically black institutions, and participation in at least two local college fairs. The program hosted its annual College Day in July during the summer session at Wellesley College. Approximately 75 colleges and universities, as well as nine visiting Upward Bound programs from the greater Boston area, were represented. The career advising component offers exposure to career options through our Career Presentations Program as well as through research on the internet.

Lastly, the program provides numerous field trips, such as to the Museum of Science, the New England Aquarium, and dramatic productions, as well as skiing, bowling, and roller-skating to further the students' intellectual, social, and cultural development.

All of the program's graduating seniors have been accepted into postsecondary education institutions. Students from the program's Class of 2007 will enroll in Bunker Hill Community College, Curry College, Denison University, Emmanuel College, Georgia Institute of Technology, Mount Holyoke College, Newbury College, Northeastern University, Regis College, Suffolk University, Trinity College, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, University of Massachusetts at Boston, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, University of Massachusetts at Lowell, and Wentworth Institute.

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