

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 1991 to 1998), and all future programming serving low-income Cambridge youth. The federal Upward Bound program was created under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and is one of the US Department of Education's (DoE) TRIO Programs. The MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound Program has operated at MIT since 1966. This year, the program was sponsored by the DoE, MIT, and Wellesley College.

MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound Program

The MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound Program is a year-round, coeducational, multicultural college preparatory program for high school youth who reside in Cambridge, Massachusetts and attend Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Community Charter School of Cambridge, or Prospect Hill Academy Charter School. The 2020 academic year marked the program's 53rd year, and with the financial support of the Department of Education, MIT, and Wellesley College, the program continued to serve academically promising young men and women from families with low-income backgrounds and/or whose parents have not had the opportunity to attend college or graduate with a bachelor's degree. The goal of Upward Bound is twofold: to motivate client high school youth to continue on to postsecondary education and to provide them with the fundamental skills necessary for success at the collegiate level.

Enrollment Statistics

A total of 60 students—49 women and 11 men—were enrolled in the 2020 program year. Of this number, 44 were both low income and first-generation students, while six were only low income and 10 only first generation.

Summer Session

The 2019 summer session, which was housed at Wellesley College and ran from June 23 to August 2, provided participants with a rigorous academic and residential college-like experience. Forty-three of the total 60 students who were served during the 2020 academic year participated in the summer session.

Classes and Academic Support

During the summer program, students enrolled in courses taught by experienced high school teachers from school districts in the Greater Boston area. Each participant enrolled in a mathematics class, an English class, and an elective in social studies or science. Courses offered included grade 9–12 English; algebra I, algebra II/trigonometry, geometry, precalculus, and calculus; physics, biology, and chemistry; world history, United States history, and the African-American experience. Through a longstanding agreement with the Cambridge Public Schools, four students were enrolled in no more than two classes in an effort to receive summer school credit for courses that they had failed during the 2019 academic year; credit was granted. Classes were held Monday

through Friday from 9 am to 12 pm, with accompanying study halls held from 3 to 6 pm Monday through Thursday. In addition, students received specialized tutorial assistance on an as-needed basis in the evening from 7 to 9:30 pm.

Wellesley College Summer Course Experience

Five rising juniors were given the opportunity to take a college-level course through Wellesley College Summer School. Three students excelled in their course and were granted college credits.

Workshops

Students participated in educational, recreational, and cultural workshops Monday through Thursday from 1:30 to 2:30 pm. Each student enrolled in two workshops that were designed to expose them to new and creative interests or to strengthen their knowledge in more familiar areas. Workshops included arts and crafts, dance, event planning, female empowerment, fitness, improvisational theater, poetry and rhyme, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation, senior seminar, swimming, talent showcase, team sports, and yearbook.

College Advising

The program hosted its annual College Day event on July 10 at Wellesley College. Representatives from 49 colleges and universities participated and over 200 students were in attendance, including those from five visiting TRIO Upward Bound programs from the Greater Boston area.

School-year Session

The school-year session, located at MIT and conducted from September 1, 2019 through June 11, 2020, played an important role in participants' educational development and provided assistance and support with coursework for students' regular classes at school. All program services were offered in person until March 10, 2020, when we were required to transition to virtual/remote programming via the Zoom platform due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Services offered included homework supervision, academic advising, workshops, college and career advising, and field trips.

Homework Supervision

The Upward Bound office was open for study/homework supervision on a drop-in basis four days a week, Monday through Thursday, beginning on September 30. Part-time employees and volunteer tutors from MIT and other local institutions were available to assist participants with homework problems and to meet with individuals or small groups for specific content-area tutoring.

Enrichment Workshops

Saturday enrichment workshops, which helped to address more specialized participant needs such as study skills development, Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) preparation, SAT preparation, the college application process, computing skills, time management, and job-readiness skills, were held on November 2, December 7, January 11, February 1, April 4, and May 9.

Academic Advising

Students received academic advising through monthly class meetings that took place in conjunction with the enrichment workshops on the dates noted above. The meetings provided students in each respective class an opportunity to learn new material and/or strengthen their knowledge in the following areas: understanding current academic status, course selection requirements (high school and college), the college application process and the college experience, career advising and assessment, managing personal finances, goal setting (academic and personal), leadership development, current affairs such as local and national elections, and community service/engagement.

College Advising

Weekly individual meetings were held with senior students to monitor them through the college admissions and financial aid processes. In addition, all students were required to attend and participate in the annual Cambridge Rindge and Latin School College Fair (October 2). Additionally, a representative from Boston College facilitated a “College Application Process Workshop” for senior students and their parents on October 22. Financial Aid Night was held on November 6 to assist parents of seniors with the financial aid application process. A financial aid counselor from MIT facilitated the workshop. A representative from the Stephen Phillips Scholarship Program visited Upward Bound on December 10 to share information about their scholarship opportunity and the application process. Furthermore, representatives from the following institutions visited the program office to make in-house presentations: Lesley University (November 19) and Becker College (December 11). Lastly, students visited Salem State University during the New England Educational Opportunity Association’s (NEOA) Annual TRIO Day Celebration (February 20) and also had the opportunity to meet with representatives from approximately 75 institutions of postsecondary education at their college fair (February 21). The final face-to-face presentations were Suffolk University (February 25) and Fitchburg State University (March 3).

As a result of Covid-19 in-person restrictions, virtual information sessions were provided by representatives from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (March 31), Clark University (April 7), Fisher College (April 15), Georgia State University (May 12), North Carolina State University (May 20), and Washington State University (May 26).

Career Advising

The career advising component of the program offered students exposure to career options through the career presentations program, as well as through research on the internet and follow-up inventories and assessments. Professionals from the following companies/positions participated on the dates noted: MIT/pediatrics (December 4), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs/nurse practitioner (December 17), Syndax Pharmaceuticals/finance business partner (January 14), Massachusetts General Hospital/transplant cardiologist (February 5), SCL Advisory Services/CEO and employment law consultant (February 26), and Harvard University/administrative assistant (April 29).

Activities and Events

The students participated in the following activities and events: a community service project (school supply drive to benefit the Cambridge Community Center's after school program) and the NEOA TRIO Day celebration in Framingham, MA (February 20–21). During the TRIO celebration, in addition to the college visit and college fair activities, students were able to benefit from workshops on all aspects of college and career readiness as well as financial literacy.

Class of 2020

All three of the program's graduating seniors were accepted into postsecondary education institutions. Students from the program's class of 2020 will enroll in the following colleges and universities in September 2020: Bunker Hill Community College, George Washington University, and University of Massachusetts-Boston.

Postgraduate Involvement

The Office of Educational Opportunity Programs strongly encourages its alumni to stay connected to the program and to serve as role models and mentors for current students. Alumni from the classes of 2013, 2018, and 2019 volunteered as speakers on the alumni panel (December 19).

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