

# UPWARD BOUND PARENT NEWSLETTER



SUNY Plattsburgh

FALL 2017

Division of Student Affairs

We often say that we cannot help our students get to college without your support. But, the proof of how well we work together is in the number of our students who actually get to college **and** complete their education.

Here are some figures that tell the story:

From the Class of 2017, **92%** are currently enrolled in college. This compares to the general population of 18 year olds, for whom enrollment is only **37%**. That is an amazing statistic! We obviously selected your UBER because we believed in all that potential. Working together with each of you shows we can get there!

Since 2007, our college graduation rate is **57%**. This, as compared to **26%** for similar students nationwide is pretty amazing as well. The reason we are able to put together these great numbers is support! Support from you, support from the Upward Bound staff, and financial support from the Department of Education. We have a proven track record of success in getting our students into, and through college. We would like to see the college graduation number continue to grow, because without finishing the degree, students are not able to reap the benefits of that important piece of paper.

As we always say, reach out to us with any concerns you may have—any time! We are in this together and will do whatever it takes to get your student on the pathway to success.



## *Student News*

### **NYS Scholars Bowl 3rd Place Winners!!**

Eight of our Upward Bound students recently represented us in the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual New York State Scholars Bowl. The event was held on the beautiful Binghamton University campus and featured an academic quiz-show style challenge. The competition hailed from SUNY Adirondack, SUNY Binghamton, SUNY Brockport, and Genesee Community College. After the dust settled, our team brought home the 3rd place trophy! The teams included: **Jonathan-Cliff Djomnang Mbougang, Jacqueline Duval, Brandon Eldredge, Bridget Frenyea, Liam Roberts, Gideon Rock, Samantha Shaw and Emma Stewart.** Nice work guys!





## What is TRIO?

**TRIO** is a set of federally-funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. More than 840,000 low-income, first-generation students— from sixth grade through college graduation— are served by more than 2,900 programs nationwide.

The original “trio” of programs include **Upward Bound**, Talent Search and Student Support Services. They have grown to include Educational Opportunity Centers, McNair Post-baccalaureate program, Upward Bound Math-Science and Veteran’s Upward Bound.

Upward Bound at SUNY Plattsburgh is celebrating its 51st year on campus! The original legislation was drafted in 1964 as part of Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty.



51 Years and Counting!



## The College Major...what it is and how to choose one

A major is a specific subject area that students specialize in. Typically, between one-third and one-half of the courses you’ll take in college will be in your major or related to it. At some colleges, you can even:

- Major in two fields.
- Have a major and a minor (a specialization that requires fewer courses than a major).
- Create your own major

### When to Choose a Major

At most four-year colleges, and in the case of many majors, you won’t have to pick a major until the end of your sophomore year. This gives you plenty of time to check out various subjects and see which ones interest you. Some majors — like areas of engineering — are exceptions to this rule. You have to commit to these fields of study early so you have time to take all the required courses.

### Majors and Professions

If you specialize in something like nursing, accounting or engineering, you’re learning a specific trade. Many majors, however, prepare you to enter a range of careers once you graduate. For many students, picking a college major is not the same as choosing a job. It will be up to you to pick a career path you like. For example, a degree in English literature might lead you to a job in publishing, teaching, advertising, public relations or law, among other fields.

## *Free College in New York?*

*Here are the details of the much talked about Excelsior Scholarship:*



### **An applicant must:**



- be a resident of NYS and have resided in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to the beginning of the term;
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- have either graduated from high school in the United States, earned a high school equivalency diploma, or passed a federally approved "Ability to Benefit" test, as defined by the Commissioner of the State Education Department;
- have a combined federal adjusted gross income of \$100,000 or less;
- be pursuing an undergraduate degree at a SUNY or CUNY college, including community colleges and the statutory colleges at Cornell University and Alfred University;
- be enrolled in at least 12 credits per term and complete at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program;
- if attended college prior to the 2017-18 academic year, have earned at least 30 credits each year (successively), applicable toward his or her degree program prior to applying for an Excelsior Scholarship;
- be in a non-default status on a student loan made under any NYS or federal education loan program or on the repayment of any NYS award;
- be in compliance with the terms of the service condition (s) imposed by a NYS award that you have previously received; and execute a Contract agreeing to reside in NYS for the length of time the award was received, and, if employed during such time, be employed in NYS.

A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship may receive up to \$5,500.

To determine the award amount, the resident tuition rate charged by SUNY (currently \$6,470) or CUNY (currently \$6,330) will be reduced by the amount of certain other student financial aid awards which an applicant has or will receive for the academic year, including a NYS Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) award and/or federal Pell grant. The Excelsior Scholarship will cover any remaining tuition liability up to \$5,500; and a tuition credit will cover any remaining tuition expenses not covered by the Excelsior Scholarship.

***\*Note:** Any award payment received may have tax implications. Any questions regarding this should be directed to a tax professional, the Internal Revenue Service, or the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance.*

### **Duration**

A recipient of an Excelsior Scholarship is eligible to receive award payments for not more than two years of full-time undergraduate study in a program leading to an associate's degree or four years of full-time undergraduate study, or five years if the program of study normally requires five years, in a program leading to a bachelor's degree.

### **Payment**

To receive payments each subsequent year (after the initial application year), Excelsior Scholarship recipient must annually complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) and the [TAP-on-The-Web Application](#) each year.

## *Financial Aid Glossary – Learn the Lingo*

FAFSA, net price, merit aid — you may come across some unfamiliar terms as you start looking into and applying for financial aid. Here's a glossary to help you make sense of it all.

**Award Letter-** The document you receive from a college that explains the terms of the financial aid that the college is offering you. The information includes the types and amounts of financial aid offered, what you're expected to do to keep the award and a deadline for accepting the award.

**Bursar-** The college official responsible for handling billing and payments for tuition, fees, housing and other related expenses.

**College Credit-** When a college grants credit for a course, it means that passing that course counts toward a degree. Colleges may also grant degree credit for scores on exams.

**Cost of Attendance-** The total amount of college expenses before financial aid. Cost of attendance includes money spent on tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and living expenses.

**Demonstrated Need-** The difference between your expected family contribution (EFC) and the total cost of attendance for a particular college.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC)-** A measure of your family's financial strength. States and colleges use this number to help determine your financial aid award. The EFC is calculated using information you supply about your family's financial circumstances.

**Financial Aid-** Money given or loaned to you to help pay for college. Financial aid can come from federal and state governments, colleges, and private and social organizations.

**Financial Aid Officer-** College employees trained to help students and families apply for and receive grants, loans, scholarships and work-study employment. They can answer questions about ways to make college more affordable.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)-**The free application form you submit to apply for federal financial aid. It is required for all students seeking federal student grants, work-study programs and loans. Most colleges require it as well. The FAFSA may also qualify you for state-sponsored financial aid.

**Grant-** A kind of "gift aid" — financial aid that doesn't have to be paid back. Grants are usually awarded based on need.

**Loan-** Money you borrow from the government, a bank or another source. Loans need to be paid back, usually over an agreed period of time. You will most likely also have to pay interest on a loan — a fee for borrowing the money.

**Merit Aid-** Financial aid given to students based on their personal achievements. Most scholarships are considered merit aid, as they are generally awarded for success in school, the arts, athletics or another area.

**Need-based Financial Aid-** Financial aid (scholarships, grants, loans and work-study opportunities) given to students because they and their families are not able to pay the full cost of attending a certain college. This is the most common type of financial aid.

**Net Price-** The full cost of attendance at a college minus the amount of gift aid a student receives. This is the true amount of money a student will pay to attend a college.

**Net Price Calculator-** An online tool that gives you a personalized estimate of what it will cost to attend a specific college. Most colleges are required by law to post a net price calculator on their websites.

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**Checkout our website at: [www.ubplattsburgh.org](http://www.ubplattsburgh.org)**

### **Holiday Gift ideas?**

**UB Hoodies- \$30**  
**UB Duffel Bags- \$25**



### ***Upcoming Events***

**November 11**– Adopt-A-Highway/Paul Smith’s visit

**November 18**– SUNY Financial Aid Day– Clinton Community College

**November 18**- SUNY Plattsburgh Open House

**December 1**– SUNY Canton/St. Lawrence University Visit