Pre-College Programs’ (UB) Upward Bound project continues to be funded through a grant from the United States Department of Education. Upward Bound’s task is to promote the academic and personal growth of traditionally underserved students by offering educational programs that foster and sustain an environment that provides academic excellence, value differences, and inclusiveness. Its core values are consistent with those in the Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan.

We continue to provide academic support to four target high schools (Blanche Ely, Boyd H. Anderson, Coconut Creek and Dillard) in the Broward County School District and 2/3 of all participants must be low income, potential first generation college graduates and/or demonstrate academic need. Participants generally represent traditionally underserved races and ethnicities.

**Last year only 30% of our participants attended our six-week summer program. This is typical during the summer, due to the fact that families travel during the summer break. However, we encouraged students to take advantage of these wonderful six weeks filled with educational opportunities. During this time, we were able to promote the development of student’s academic skills, as well as, explore their practical skills. In addition, students were able to participate in other creative activities while on our campus. For the most part, students who attended** were provided academic instruction in Math, English, Science and Foreign Language and several comprehensive co-curricular workshops.

During the academic school year, Upward Bound focused on providing students with tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, and services designed to improve their financial and economic literacy. Also, our participants received a stimulating (ACT) test preparation that was directed by JLP who are experienced leaders in the field of education and test-preparation. For six weeks, they helped our students successfully prepare for the ACT exam that was administered in October. These preparatory sessions are necessary to increase the student’s ability in gaining postsecondary admissions and the exam, and serve as a concordant score for those who have not passed the state’s required standardized test and as a result are not eligible to receive a high school diploma.

FAU Upward Bound participants participated in cultural and educational trips aimed at helping them to become well rounded, increase program retention, and exposure to different educational institutions. Students were afforded an opportunity to participate in at least one special event or activity per month, if weather permitted. For example, they participated in FAU’s Homecoming Parade, visited the Art Gallery’s Deadly Medicine Exhibit, and in the community, helped families at VITAL FLIGHT’s Fun Day just to name a few. Finally, students attended Fall and Spring college tour to state universities throughout the state of Florida where they received an information session and campus tour.
One major accomplishment for our FAU Upward Bound program was starting the year off by forming a Parent Advisory Committee known as (PAC). The plan was to increase the buy-in from the students' families, increase student retention and participation in the program. The PAC members are a group of parents who students are participants in the Upward Bound program. They met once a month or as needed. The committee was charged with creating and sharing ideas and addressing their student's needs while in the program. In addition, parents were resourceful when it came to making sure students had transportation during after school tutoring and ACT test preparation; they provided after-school snacks and fundraiser items such as food and drinks. Most of all, these parents were instrumental by continuously giving feedback and suggestions in ways to recruit, retain and motivate students in order to improve the program. On March 21, PAC raised money by hosting a car wash at the International Longshoreman Association for students attending the overnight college tour. PAC was able to equally distribute money to each participant that helped. Lastly, parents volunteered to assist with the Senior Awards Banquet which is held every year in May. A few PAC members came out early to help set up the banquet, which required that they take FAU’s food safety training and received a Certificate of Training.

Another milestone for FAU Upward Bound, as the program director, I was able to sit on a committee to help plan a TRiO Day at the Miami Dade College to commence the 49th anniversary of TRiO programs nationwide. The event featured a college expo and educational workshops to prepare students and parents for college, as well as scholarship and financial aid opportunities. Also in attendance were students and program staff from MDC, College Summit, Florida International University, Florida Memorial University, and the Miami Museum of Science. Also notable, we held our first UB Retreat in our Fort Lauderdale office were staff members focused on the program’s objectives, challenges and sustainability. Lastly, we graduated 21 seniors from our program. These students applied to various universities throughout the state of Florida. They received acceptance letters from the University of Florida, University of Central Florida, Florida State University, University of South Florida, Florida A&M University and Florida Atlantic University. Astoundingly, this year there was an increase in the number of our participants who applied to FAU and were admitted.

Pre-College Programs was headed in the right direction and the scope of the UB program never changed despite having a new director. However, the program did have a major challenge ahead of it--no transportation (activity bus) at Coconut Creek High School. This is a major problem for our UB students staying after school for tutoring. The activity bus is an important resource in which UB has always relied on. Now the problem at hand is how to get 25 participants home from their afterschool program? This mission seems impossible and even more so after meeting with the high school’s principal who gave suggestions but these would only lead to many other uncertainties. Thankfully, PAC stepped in and devised a carpooling system where each and every student that stayed after was able to get home safely. In the upcoming year, UB will look to secure transportation for students attending after school tutoring sessions.