Does GPA and Homework Really Matter?

Because of the great increase of open admissions colleges and community colleges throughout the United States, many high school students believe their GPA and homework is not that important. All that is important to these students is graduating with a high school diploma. They assume their high school performance does not have much of a bearing on their future plans. Here are some common misconceptions high school students have regarding GPA, homework, and performance and the actual reality behind them.

**Misconception: There is no connection between success in college and high school performance. Reality: In a 1992 national survey, 84% of all the high school students had expectations of going to and succeeding in college by earning a degree, yet of those students who had college degree expectations but had a C average or lower, only 21% of them were able to earn an associate’s degree or higher. The survey also found that these same low GPA students...**

**Kimberly-Clark Scholarship**

Carl Short, a former Academic Enrichment Upward Bound student, was a recipient of a nation-wide scholarship awarded by the Kimberly-Clark Corporation. The scholarship is worth $20,000 over four years. A few of the items that made Carl’s application stand out over others included 500+ hours of community service and the many leadership positions that he held at his school. Carl was one of the 78 recipients of the award from the many applicants throughout the nation. Carl is currently studying at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.
Questions for an Admissions Counselor

AEB knows that high school students have many questions regarding the process of admissions; so we took some time to ask Eric Stokes, Assistant Director of Admissions at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, some questions that we often hear asked by students.

Q. How important is sending an application before the early admissions deadline?
A. Deadlines are the most important aspect of any admissions process. Colleges and Universities can only admit so many students in their freshman class, and only have so much scholarship money to award students. If you miss a deadline, you could miss out on a lot of money or even your chance to attend that college.

Q. What are some of the common mistakes people make on their applications?
A. Misspelled words and illegible handwriting are among the most common mistakes I’ve seen. Misspelled words in admission letters and essays reflect badly on a student’s writing ability. Also, poor handwriting will cause application processors to enter incorrect names, social security numbers, or even high schools. If someone can’t read the writing, then they have to give a best guess, and sometimes they’ll guess wrong.

Q. As an admissions counselor, what things can make a student’s application stand out to you over others?
A. The more information in a student’s admission file the better. Send in letters of recommendation from teachers, guidance counselors, or principals. Also, a resume of jobs, school organizations, or community service groups always adds some shine to your file, and don’t forget to type and proofread your admission essay.

Q. When examining students’ transcripts, is it better for a student to have a few honors or AP courses with B’s or have regular, less challenging courses with A’s?
A. In my opinion, it’s always better to have a few honors courses only if you make B’s in them. If you are going to make less than a “B” then I recommend taking the general class and do well in it. Colleges are different in their freshman GPA scale, some will award academic rigor while others will not. Be sure to check around with your colleges of interest to find out what they require.

Q. What tips do you have for writing the application essay?
A. PROOFREAD! Nothing is worse than sending an essay to UT and your opening sentence states, “I always dreamed of going to Florida State University...” Using the same letter is ok, just be sure to proof read before turning it in. Also, write about your skills and what you can bring to the university. If you are a star poet, singer, athlete, student leader, or whatever you’re good at, let the college know.

Q. In what ways do extracurricular activities, community service, etc. play a part in the application decision?
A. It depends upon the institution. Some schools will only look at your GPA and standardized test score. Others may have a holistic approach to admission, which takes into consideration things beyond your GPA and test score. Things such as: rigor of courses, school activities, community service, leadership roles in organizations, and several other factors.

Q. Who are the best people to have write a student’s recommendation letters?
A. Teachers, guidance counselors, or principals. I’m sure your uncle or neighbors know you very well, but they can’t speak on the quality of your academic ability and performance. It’s always best to get support letters from your english, math, and science teachers.
AEUB Student “Quotes”

“Academic Enrichment Upward Bound is a great program to be included in... AEUB not only gives you the knowledge to succeed, but... They give you a path to reach success”

DEVIN

“Upward Bound has, by far, been the most rewarding program I have been a part of. With the helpful and considerate staff, and the comfortable and safe atmosphere... Upward Bound has helped me academically, culturally, and socially as well.”

PAMELA

“AEUB has helped me tremendously, academically and socially. Since AEUB has been part of my life my grades have increased... AEUB is not only a grade saver, but a life saver”.

MATTHEW

“I believe Upward Bound is a great program to help children like myself fulfill all the dreams and goals we want and have... This program is great!”

VELICITY

“Coming in you’ll think there will be controversy because you’ve got different schools in the programs. But the first day I was there I met a lot of people...now they are my friends... Come to AEUB and see what you are missing.”

JORDAN

And what parents are saying:

“My son is in the Academic Enrichment Upward Bound Program. Since he has been in the program they have given him tools to help him study so he can get better grades. When he is having problems with any of his subjects they will tutor him until the problem is fixed.

Mrs. Edwards

“...Since he is in this program, he will have a better chance of going to college.”

“This program is a God send, there are so many struggling single moms and Upward Bound comes along and saves the day and I am very much appreciative...I wish that everyone knew about the program...”

Ms. Brown

“I think Academic Enrichment Upward Bound has been very good for our son. The Saturday Sessions, college trips, and community service has broadened his knowledge... He has grown and matured very much.”

Mr. & Mrs. Justice

“This program has been a great learning tool for my son. Without Upward Bound he would not have been able to financially achieve this goal... I appreciate this program and all the people that make it a success. The staff are great role models and very efficient and helpful in any area that occurs.”

Mrs. Davies
students had only a 50% chance of earning even one college credit.

**Misconception:** Homework done in high school *really has nothing to do with college success.* **Reality:** Many students do not see any connection between homework done in high school and success later in college, but research says otherwise. Research has found that students who do not do homework in high school will have 1.2 less years of postsecondary education and 19% lower annual earnings than the average student. Those students who spend 15 or more hours a week doing homework will have 1.5 more years of postsecondary education and 16% higher annual earnings than the average student. Spending quality time on homework dramatically increases a student’s chances of attaining a higher level of education and earning a higher salary in a career.

**Misconception:** It really does not matter what courses I take in high school just as long as I earn my diploma. **Reality:** The strength of coursework a student takes turns out to be an even better predictor of a student’s college success than GPA. Therefore, it is imperative that students consider taking challenging coursework that will prepare them for future rigors of college work.

Does GPA matter? Is doing homework that important? Absolutely! Challenging yourself to do your best by completing homework, by raising your GPA, and by taking challenging classes will help increase your chances of succeeding at college and in your future career.

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**Some Do’s And Don’t’s...**

*Test-Taking Tips from the Professor*

Tests are in the same category as Monday mornings and root canals, but like other unpleasant events, they can be managed. If you’re well-prepared, you can turn a potentially unpleasant event into a good experience.

Tests are a part of academic life, so resolve to get the best of them. Begin to prepare for tests on the very first day of class by careful note-taking and studying. Schedule test preparation time well in advance and avoid last minute cramming!

Here are some strategies education experts suggest to increase your test-taking effectiveness:

**Before the Test**

- Try to predict test questions as you take notes.
- Review all notes taken in class and those developed when reading texts.
- Recite aloud any facts that you need to learn.
- Avoid rereading text books before a test.

- Consider studying with a partner or in a small group.
- Get a good night’s sleep.
- Concentrate on important information that you have highlighted or summarized.

**During the Test**

- Be sure you understand all the directions.
- Pace yourself. Don’t spend a lot of time on a few questions. Answer questions you know first then go back to those you are less sure of—but be sure to answer all questions.
- Write legibly and/or be sure your answers are recorded in the right place.
- Stay calm and avoid changing answers. Your first choice is most often correct.
- Finally, don’t second guess your performance. The actual results may be very different from your expectations.

By using these tips you’ll be well on your way to success in testing. If you feel you need outside help to improve your test taking, ask your teacher or advisor for an appropriate referral.

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James E. Rosenbaum (2004, Spring)

“It’s time to tell the kids,” *American Educator.*

Ernest W. Brewer
Professor and PI/Director of TRIO Programs
Congratulations to the 2007 Bridge Scholars

AEUB would like to congratulate the 2007 Bridge Scholars. The recipients of this year’s Bridge Scholarships are Martha Bell, Pamela Dossey, Devin Justice, Jeffrey Marusa, and Carl Short. Each of these students filled out an application, wrote essays, and went through an interview to be scored as one of the top five of all the scholarship applications. They were rewarded the scholarship through their hard work, academic rigor, and commitment to the AEUB program. As a part of their $5,000 scholarship, each of them had the opportunity to attend The University of Tennessee, Knoxville this summer and take 8 credit hours of college classes. AEUB covered all their expenses including tuition, room, board, books, and fees. In this learning community environment, these Bridge Scholars had an opportunity to excel in these courses so that they could enter the fall semester of their freshman year with a solid foundation and the needed preparation to succeed throughout their postsecondary career. Congratulations, 2007 Bridge Scholars!

AEUB Students Visit Florida

This year’s trip to Orlando, Florida was one of Academic Enrichment Upward Bound’s most anticipated summer trips to date. The 3 day, 4 night trip included 2 college visits, and other educational and recreational activities for the students to enjoy as a reward for their great effort in summer classes.

Eagerly loading onto a 55 passenger coach bus, AEUB staff and students headed straight to Tallahassee, FL where they toured Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, a Historically Black College / University more commonly known as FAMU. Then, just a few miles away, students toured Florida State University. AEUB’s next destination was Cape Canaveral, FL where students toured the Kennedy Space Center. At the third destination stop, students were excited to experience Daytona Beach, especially those who were visiting a beach for the first time. The highlight of the trip and the final day of excitement was a day-long visit to Universal Orlando Resort.

AEUB students visited both the Islands of Adventure and the Universal Studios theme parks.

This year’s trip to Florida was well worth the wait and effort students put forth into the summer program. It was a great experience to be remembered by all.

A Reason to Come Back

What keeps the students coming back year after year to the Academic Enrichment Upward Bound Summer Program? Well, the answer could be a multitude of things including the exceptional staff, evening activities, friends, dorm life, food, but what about the classes? AEUB summer classes are not just typical classes that you find in a high school curriculum; they vary in structure and are designed for fun, engagement, and advanced learning. The summer classes are the core of the summer program and prepare the students for the upcoming school year and beyond.

This year, the AEUB program joined efforts with the Pre-College Upward Bound Program and Math and Science Regional Center in order to offer 64 different class choices in the areas of ACT Prep, Humanities, English, Foreign Language, Science, Computer Science, Math, and Research. The classes were expanded this year to help meet the academic needs of 150 Upward Bound students. This

Cont’d on p. 8
UB Staff Spotlight: Leigh Ann Campbell

Ms. Leigh Ann Campbell is the newest member to the Upward Bound staff. Leigh Ann began her TRIO career at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in August of 2000 as an Educational Specialist for Educational Talent Search. In November 2002, she became the Head High School Counselor and continued to work with Knox County high school students until December of 2006. During this time, Leigh Ann has continued her education at the University of Tennessee, pursued a master’s degree in Education Administration and Supervision which she completed in May 2007!

Leigh Ann’s TRIO career has been very rewarding and exciting and when given the opportunity to work with AEUB in January 2007, she enthusiastically accepted the new challenge. As an AEUB Educational Specialist, Leigh Ann works primarily with students of Central and Anderson County High Schools. “Working with TRIO students has been a dream for me, I enjoy watching the students learn and grow into their full potential. My goal is to work with the students and help them gain the tools needed to succeed in life; academically, socially, and emotionally.” Leigh Ann has made Upward Bound her new home and is excited about all the new adventures that lie ahead.

MOUNTAIN CHALLENGE

Every summer, the students from Academic Enrichment Upward Bound set out for Maryville College to face the Mountain Challenge. When we arrive at Maryville, we load on the bus spray and head out into the woods. As we hike, we play icebreaker games to help us get to know each other better, one of those includes sharing our most embarrassing moments. Then we play a game with ropes where we have to pass our teammates through a ropes web without touching the ropes. Next, we have to pass our teammates over a fourteen-foot wall. This task is very difficult, but we learn how to trust each other. After we complete these tasks, we move on to the most challenging task of all the Alpine Tower. It is 60 ft. tall and you have to trust a fellow teammate to rely for you and hold your weight. Almost all of our students attempt to climb and to delay.

I asked AEUB students what they thought about the Mountain Challenge experience. One said, “It is difficult and challenging”. He also said it was “an experience that I might never do again but I am grateful for the opportunity that I had to participate in it”. Another student said it showed him his fears and limitations. Before Mountain Challenge, he was afraid of heights, but this experience helped him to face his fears. As a result, he almost made it to the top.

Although this experience is challenging, we all work together and get to know each other a lot better. The Mountain Challenge is definitely a huge success every summer.

AEUB Student
A Summer Full of Activities

After a morning and afternoon full of enriching classes, AEUB students continue their college experience by unwinding through the social aspects college life has to offer. Adapted to be goal appropriate, students participate in various supervised, evening activities.

Some of these summer activities are one-time events for students to challenge themselves, learn from, and compete in. Mountain Challenge is one of the summer kick-offs, which challenges students to test themselves in various low-ropes courses. The highlight of this experience is the challenge of climbing a 50-foot alpine tower. Scholars Bowl is a summer tradition, in which 4 AEUB students compete against students from two other UT Upward Bound Programs for the renowned Scholars Bowl Cup. The Chemistry Magic Show is a student-conducted Magic Show where students apply the lessons learned in their chemistry class to mystify and amaze fellow summer participants. A final annual activity is Career Night. Career Night is an informative evening in which students hear from various Knoxville professionals about their journey through college and into their profession.

There are also ongoing activities that our students participate in. Weekly activities include an evening at the UT Aquatic Center Pool, equipped with 3 diving platforms, lap lanes, and plenty of opportunity to catch some sun. Another favorite is the University Center’s Down Under Bowling Alley. Students can bowl in the 10 lanes, watch TV on one of the two big-screen TV’s, play in the arcade, or rack up and shoot pool.

Student competitions are also a summer favorite. Students are divided into 4 Greek Teams for the duration of the summer. They work as a team through various activities including athletic competitions, cheers, skits, t-shirt design, karaoke, as well as UT tradition of painting The Rock. Auctions are also a weekly favorite. AEUB students use their “Brewer Bucks” earned during class and evening activities to bid on various items from snacks to free Smokey’s Baseball Tickets!

All in all, student activities are a large part of the summer program. They offer opportunities for learning, fitness, challenge and growth, and overall fun.

Managing Your Time

Do you know where your time goes? Why do some people seem able to accomplish so much? They usually follow a system of time management.

In order to manage time, you need to know what you usually do. One way to accomplish this is to keep a time log. Briefly jotting down what you are doing every 15 - 30 minutes for a week will give you important information. Once you have this, ask yourself:

- Did I get everything done?
- Was I rushed for time?
- Did I meet deadlines?
- What habits interfered with reaching my goals?
- Did I accomplish more at a certain time of day?
- At what times of the day did I accomplish the least?

Now, make a list of the activities you have to do. Mark those that are scheduled at definite times and those that can be arranged according to your own time. Then, prioritize the list:

I. the most crucial activities
II. activities that can wait until after those in group I
III. the least crucial activities

Then, prepare a schedule using the prioritized list. Use your list and schedule daily. Remember to plan for your peak times and your low-energy times.

Effective time management frees you to do your best and to succeed. But the schedule isn’t your master. You control it.

Ernest W. Brewer
Professor and PI/ Director of TRIO Programs
Every summer AEUB ventures out into the community to lend a helping hand to local organizations. This year's Community Service Day sent four groups of AEUB student volunteers to the Boys and Girls Club of the Tennessee Valley, Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County, Knoxville Zoo, and Ijams Nature Center. Each location was eager to have helping hands for the day, and the AEUB students showed enthusiasm and willingness to get out and serve, or in most cases, get down and dirty. The day's activities included cleaning up a nature trail for Ijams Nature Center, organizing group play and reading groups at the Boys and Girls Club, painting boxes for the Knoxville Zoo penguins, and putting on the finishing touches of a Habitat House. At the end of the day the students were impressed with what a hard day's work can accomplish and the difference one group can make.

The group of volunteers at the Habitat for Humanity site was privileged to work on one of their fellow AEUB student's home. This occasion made for a special day of extra hard work and concentration to make the house beautiful. One group of students began the day sweeping, vacuuming, and wiping down walls in order to spend the rest of the day painting. The second group of students spent the day in the crawl space of the house shoveling dirt and laying out a vapor barrier in order to keep out the moisture and mold. One day was not enough to finish the house, but the students made a significant difference. They learned that a house would not be possible without the continuous help of volunteers just like them.

For more information on how you can help:
Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County - http://www.hfhac.org
Boys and Girls Club of the Tennessee Valley - http://bgcvtv.org
Ijams Nature Center - http://www.ijams.org
Knoxville Zoo - http://www.knoxville-zoo.org

The AEUB Chronicle

AEUB Students Lend a Helping Hand

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UTR Printing Authorization: 801 1500 006 06