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**An Administrator's Guide for Involving Parents in the Education of
Students Enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College
Upward Bound Project**

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An Administrator's Guide for Involving Parents
in the Education of Students Enrolled in the
Yakima Valley Community College
Upward Bound Project

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education in Administration

by
Marcus S. Coomer
February 1998

ABSTRACT

An Administrator's Guide for Involving Parents
in the Education of Students Enrolled in the
Yakima Valley Community College
Upward Bound Project

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The purpose of this project was to develop a director's guide for involving parents or primary care-givers in the education of students from underrepresented populations enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) Upward Bound project. To accomplish this purpose, a review of current literature and research was conducted. Additionally, materials and related information from selected Upward Bound projects were obtained and analyzed.

Acknowledgments

Going through the process of obtaining a Master's degree, particularly while working on this project, I developed a much greater appreciation for the people who support me. While the project bears my name, it reflects the efforts of many family members, colleagues and friends who provided encouragement and assistance.

Thank you to my wife, Joan, and my three children, Christian, Bryce and Teddy. The time required to complete this project had a significant impact on all of us. Without their patience and loving support this project would not have been completed.

I would like to thank Dr. Jack McPherson, whose guidance and assistance in preparing for this project were invaluable. I sincerely appreciate his ready willingness to assist at every turn. I would also like to thank Dr. Joe Schomer and Dr. Frank Carlson for participating on my graduate committee.

Finally, I thank my Upward Bound colleagues who contributed valuable information and inspired me through their anticipation of seeing the final project.

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CHAPTER ONE

Background of the Study

Introduction

“More than three decades of research has confirmed that children with caring, concerned and involved parents feel better about themselves and are more successful at everything they do than children who lack that kind of adult participation. That finding is consistent regardless of a family’s socio-economic status, ethnic background, or the parent’s level of education.”

--Joan Dykstra, President National PTA
(National Press Club, 1997, paragraph 2)

In the above statement, Dykstra pointed out the importance of parental involvement in students’ education. Students were more successful academically and in general when their parents were active participants in the students’ education and when they were concerned for their child’s well-being. Regardless of the level of education, socio-economic status or cultural background of the parent, research indicated student success correlated directly with these parental characteristics.

Several researchers (Brian, 1994; Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Henderson, 1987; Keith & Lichtman, 1992; Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE), 1989; Ziegler, 1987) found parental involvement in students’ education improved academic achievement. Henderson wrote, “Programs designed with strong parent involvement produce students who perform better than otherwise identical programs that do not involve parents as thoroughly, or that do not involve them at all.” (p. 1) Lontos

(1991) concurred that family involvement in the educational process was linked with academic and social success. The U.S. Congress (1994) substantiated the importance of parental involvement by including it as one of the eight primary goals in Goals 2000: Educate America Act.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to develop a director's guide for involving parents or primary care-givers in the education of students from underrepresented populations enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) Upward Bound project. To accomplish this purpose, a review of current literature and research was conducted. Additionally, materials and related information from selected Upward Bound projects were obtained and analyzed.

Limitations of the Project

For the purposes of this project, it was necessary to set the following limitations:

Research: The preponderance of literature reviewed for the purposes of this project was limited to the past ten (10) years. Information from selected Upward Bound projects was also analyzed.

Scope: The guide was designed for use at the YVCC Upward Bound project at Yakima Valley Community College, Community College District 16, Yakima, Washington.

Target Population: The guide was designed to assist the director of the YVCC Upward Bound project, that serves grades 9 - 12, in designing and implementing strategies to enhance parental involvement in the project.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined to provide a clear understanding of the ideas and information presented in this project:

First generation college student - “a student, both of whose parents did not earn a baccalaureate degree.” (Higher Education Act of 1965 -- Title IV -- Student Support Services, Chapter 1, Sect. 402a(g)(1)(A))

Goals 2000: Educate America Act - a resolution approved “To improve learning and teaching by providing a national framework for education reform; to promote the research, consensus building, and systemic changes needed to ensure equitable educational opportunities and high levels of educational achievement for all students; to provide a framework for reauthorization of all Federal education programs; to promote the development and adoption of a voluntary national system of skill standards and certifications;”. (House Resolution 1804, 1994, sect. 102.8)

House Bill 1209 -- Education Reform Act - a bill approved by the house “To increase student achievement, the legislature finds that the state of Washington needs to develop a public school system that focuses more on the educational

performance of students, that includes high expectations for all students,..."

(House Bill 1209, 1993, sect. 1)

Low-income individual - "an individual from a family whose taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150% of an amount equal to the poverty level determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census." (Higher Education Act of 1965 - Title IV - Student Support Services, Chapter 1, Sect. 402a(g)(2))

Parent - "One who begets, gives birth to, or nurtures and raises a child." (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1993, p. 992)

Parental involvement - the active role parents accept in their child's education "as first educator in the home, as partners with the school, and as advocates for all children and youth in society." (National PTA, 1996, paragraph 1)

Primary caregiver - the person who is mainly responsible for "attending to the needs of a child or dependent adult. (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1993, p. 212)
This term was used synonymously with parent for this study.

TRIO - a group of federal programs developed in 1965 to supplement educational services to students from underrepresented backgrounds to help them overcome social, class and cultural barriers to success in post-secondary education. (National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations (NCEOA), 1997)

Underrepresented populations - "populations such as minorities, the poor, and persons with limited-English proficiency." (US Code, 1996, 2202.14)

Upward Bound project - federally funded project “to generate skills and motivation necessary for success in education beyond high school among low-income and potential first-generation college students and veterans. The goal of the program is to increase the academic performance and motivational levels of eligible enrollees so that such persons may complete secondary school and successfully pursue postsecondary educational program.” (Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2, Sections 402C, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 1070d-1a.)

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related literature and Information Obtained from Selected Upward Bound Projects

Introduction

The writer reviewed literature on parental involvement in schools published during the past ten (10) years. Because of the diverse demographic nature of the population served by the Yakima Valley Community College Upward Bound project, literature was selected in which researchers addressed parental involvement in general, parental involvement at the middle and high school levels, and parental involvement of Hispanics or Native Americans. Information from selected Upward Bound projects was also obtained and analyzed. Accordingly, the review of literature and information summarized in Chapter Two has been organized to address:

1. The benefits of parental involvement.
2. Parental involvement at the high school level.
3. Parental involvement in underrepresented populations.
4. Developing strategies to increase parental involvement.
5. Information obtained from selected Upward Bound projects.
6. Summary.

Literature reviewed in Chapter 2 was obtained through the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), searching educational resources on the internet, and a hand-search of various other sources.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

“The evidence is beyond dispute: parent involvement improves student achievement.” (Henderson, 1987, p. 1) In a study examining two types of parental involvement models, Leier (as cited in Henderson) found no negative effects on academic achievement in either model type. Both the parent-impact model, in which parents received training on reinforcing what children learned in school or training of parenting skills, and the community-impact model, in which parents were guided and encouraged to participate in as many educational roles as possible, were found by Leier to either increase or maintain student’s academic performance. Cotton and Reed-Wikelund (1989) indicated all types of parental involvement were beneficial to all types and ages of students. Furthermore, the more parents were involved, the greater benefits were for students.

By showing interest in their children’s attitudes towards school and by having high educational aspirations, parents promoted attitudes that were key to academic achievement, noted Henderson (1987). Parent involvement positively effected students’ attitudes and behaviors (Cotton & Reed-Wikelund, 1989). Dauber and Epstein (as cited in Alkin, 1992) concurred that regardless of grade level, students did better academically, had higher aspirations, better attitudes and behavior if their

parents were knowledgeable and involved in what was happening in school. Keith and Lichtman (1992), after studying academic achievement of eighth grade Mexican-American students, also indicated parents' interest and aspirations for their children were important factors of academic success. The most accurate predictor of student achievement was the extent to which the student's families created a home environment conducive to learning, expressed high expectations of the student, and were involved in the student's education and the community. These factors were found to be more influential than income or social status (Wherry, 1997; San Diego County Office of Education, 1997).

Students from low-income and minority families had the most to gain from parental involvement, according to Henderson (1987). Flaxman and Inger (1991) found parent involvement led to improved student achievement and school attendance, while it also reduced the dropout rate of students regardless of socio-economic, cultural or racial background. Similarly, Ziegler (1987) suggested "at-risk" students were most likely to benefit from parental involvement. Keith and Lichtman (1992) claimed Mexican-American parents who talked to their children about school and had high aspirations for them, had students who achieved better academically than those who did not do those activities.

Parents, schools and educational programs also benefited from parental involvement (Brian, 1994). Parents who were involved in their children's education felt ownership and responsibility to the school, which according to Dauber and Epstein (1989), led to more positive views and active parental support of instructional

programs. Parents were gratified to discover how much they were able to help (Cotton & Reed-Wikelund, 1989). Findings by the SCCOE (1989) indicated simply maintaining communication with parents was likely to reduce home-school tensions. Also, Scaringi (1994) found efforts by school staff to communicate with non-English speaking parents developed feelings of empowerment in those parents. Ascher (1987) pointed out that regardless of how parental involvement directly impacted student achievement, schools could not operate effectively without parent support. Involving parents decreased parent alienation.

Parental Involvement at the High School Level

Parental involvement at the high school level was as desirable as it was at the elementary level, according to Brian (1994). Henderson (1987) summarized, "there are strong (positive) effects from involving parents continuously throughout high school." (p. 9) Specific benefits of parental involvement at the high school level include higher graduation rates and increased enrollment in post-secondary education (Wherry, 1997). Brian found the only benefits not evident at high school level as a result of parental involvement that were occurring at elementary level, were improved parent self-concept and improved stability in the home.

Students, parents and administrators agreed that parents should be involved in their children's education (Brian, 1994; Chavkin & Williams (as cited in Chavkin), 1993). Teens wanted their parent's support of their educational efforts, indicated Brian, but did not want their parents to be overbearing. Similarly, parents wanted to

support their children's academic efforts, and at the same time allow them to be independent. Parents also said they wanted to be better informed of their children's achievement and behavior at school, according to Brian.

Much of the research indicated a need for increased parental involvement in high schools (Chavkin & Williams; Dauber & Epstein, 1989; Henderson, 1987; SCCOE, 1989; Nicolau & Ramos, 1990). A survey by the US Department of Education (1993), indicated the number of parents highly involved in their children's education was forty-two percent (42%) in grades 3-5, but dropped to twenty-four percent (24%) in grades 6-12).

Low levels of parental involvement at middle and high school levels were attributed to several reasons. Parents did not understand the material their children were studying and felt unable to help them (Brian 1994; Chavkin & Williams (as cited in Chavkin), 1993; Dauber & Epstein, 1987). Parents also said, time spent working and taking care of their other children prevented them from participating in their children's education, according to Chavkin and Williams. Another reason for lack of parental involvement beyond elementary school was that parents seldom were asked to participate, observed Brian, and Dauber and Epstein. As Dauber and Epstein explained, if educators did not encourage parental participation, parents were involved less often in activities that supported their children's education. Parents often were not aware of their significance in their children's education according to Nweze (1993), and, therefore, did not become involved in their children's education. Wehlburg-Hickman (1996) and Nweze indicated that educators needed to provide guidance for

parents, guiding them in their potential roles that could improve their children's academic achievement.

Many of the reasons parents were not involved in their children's high school educations were attributed to the practices of school and educational program staff. Teachers and administrators needed to receive training on teaching parents specific ways in which they could be involved in the educational process (Epstein & Dauber, 1987). According to Keith and Lichtman (1992) and Scaringi (1994), by keeping parents informed of school events and their children's academic achievement, educators encouraged parents to become more involved in their children's education. Brian (1994) and Keith and Lichtman suggested grade reports and newsletters as effective tools for keeping parents informed of students' progress. Educators should also offer a variety of ways for parents to be involved in their children's education, recommended Henderson (1987), which would accommodate parental involvement of a wide range of parents. Improving educators' practices for involving parents would reduce barriers that dissuade parental involvement at middle and high school levels.

Parental Involvement in Underrepresented Populations

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1994) forty-seven percent (47%) of Hispanics have not graduated from high school and only 6.4% of Hispanics earned baccalaureate degrees. The total national high school dropout rate was 12.7% in 1992 (U.S. Bureau of the Census), whereas 38% of Native American students dropped out of high school, according to Auerbach (1994). There was a direct statistical

relationship between income and level of educational attainment (“Education and Earnings”, 1991). Consequently, a large number of Hispanic’s and Native American’s education have suffered because of low socio-economic status.

Keith and Lichtman (1992) found that parental involvement did not negate totally the effect of socio-economic status on educational achievement, but the influence of socio-economic status was reduced through parental involvement. When parents from underrepresented populations participated in their children’s education, those students showed greater increases in achievement than students from more advantaged populations (Ziegler, 1987). Additionally, Cotton and Reed-Wikelund (1989) found that beyond improved academic performance, parental involvement improved students' attitudes towards school and classroom behaviors. Consequently, students from underrepresented populations had the most to gain from parental involvement according to Henderson (1987).

Parental involvement was influenced strongly by socio-economic status and educational level of the parents, according to Keith and Lichtman (1992). Low socio-economic status and low levels of educational attainment were associated directly with low levels of parental involvement. Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, and Dornbusch (as cited in Chavkin, 1993) found this relationship particularly significant to Hispanics, since Hispanics had the lowest completion rate for high school or college of all ethnic groups (US Bureau of the Census, 1994). Whereas, schools serving high socio-economic areas tended to have high levels of educational attainment and high parental

involvement, schools serving low socio-economic areas had low parental involvement and low educational attainment (Ascher, 1987).

Though parents from underrepresented populations seemed involved less in their children's education (Dauber & Epstein, 1989), they were not concerned less about them. Dauber and Epstein additionally found, while teachers in schools with high percentages of Chapter 1 students felt parents did not want to be involved, those parents felt they were involved, but needed more and better information on how to be involved at home. "Our findings clearly refute the stereotype that minority parents are not concerned with their children's education," wrote Ritter, Mont-Reynaud, and Dornbusch (as cited in Chavkin, 1993, p.118). Sipes (as cited in Chavkin, 1993) identified education of youth as a high priority of parents in American Indian culture.

While parents of students from underrepresented populations were concerned for their children's education, there were several factors that reduced the level of parental participation. Sipes (as cited in Chavkin, 1993) emphasized cultural and family values as the main factors creating low levels of parental involvement by Native Americans. Ritter, Mont-Reynaud and Dornbusch (as cited in Chavkin, 1993) attributed lower involvement of Hispanic parents in their children's education to two factors: Hispanic parents were less comfortable interacting in schools because of their level of educational attainment and Hispanic parents trusted the schools to provide students' education. The inability of some parents to speak English well also contributed to lower levels of parental involvement for Hispanics (Cotton & Reed-Wikelund, 1989; Keith & Lichtman, 1992). According to Nicolau & Ramos (1990),

impoverished Hispanic parents often felt powerless and intimidated, so they left the education of their children to teachers and administrators who were “experts” in education. This was also frequently true of poor and minority parents, regardless of their culture (Liontos, 1991).

Parents lack of participation in their children’s education often resulted because parents were unsure of what was expected of them by school staff (SCCOE, 1989). It was difficult for first-generation Hispanic parents to understand their role, because the roles of schools and parents were more clearly delineated in their native countries, according to Nicolau and Ramos (1990). Ascher (1987) suggested the efforts to improve the tenuous link between schools and low-income, minority parents was a critical need in improving parent involvement.

Developing Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement

School programs and teacher practices that encouraged and guided parents were the most consistent factors that led to parental involvement, according to Dauber and Epstein (1989). Thus, it was important for educators to develop and implement programs that offered parents opportunities to be involved in their children’s education. While programs to increase parental involvement varied, staff of effective programs were committed to involving parents from underrepresented populations; programs originated, were sponsored by and evaluated by outside organizations; had public and private sector support; focused on reducing the gap between school and

home cultures; and empowered the parents, according to Fruchter, Galletta and White (1992).

In developing strategies for increasing parental involvement, a critical consideration was assessing the needs of the community. Parental involvement programs needed to address the specific needs of each school's population, according to Brian (1994). Sipes (as cited in Chavkin, 1993), referring to Native American culture, indicated educators developing programs and strategies for parental involvement needed to take into account the interests and needs of the family. As Henderson (1987) summarized, educators must examine how the home and school connect with each other when developing parental involvement activities.

Henderson (1987) found it was important to offer a variety of parental involvement activities to serve a wide range of parents. Cotton and Reed-Wikelund (1989) suggested these activities emphasize the importance of parents modeling behaviors and attitudes towards education, providing encouragement and support towards homework, and consider parents integral partners of the school. Brian (1994) pointed out, while the basis of successful parental involvement programs were similar, the appearance of programs varied considerably because of the diverse needs of different communities.

Communication between parents and educators was another key in maintaining parental involvement programs. Nicolau and Ramos (1990) suggested home visits, in which parents could interact individually with program staff, were the most effective way to initiate parental involvement among Hispanics. Inger (1992) found home visits

were more comfortable for Hispanic parents than written or phone communications, and allowed staff members to understand better the needs of families. According to Ziegler (1987), informing parents promptly when educators had concerns regarding students' education increased parental involvement and positively impacted academic achievement. Program or school newsletters and grade reports were two good ways of keeping parents informed of what their children were doing in school (Brian 1994; SCCOE, 1989). Communications needed to be consistent and ongoing, indicated Scaringi (1994), to establish rapport with parents and maintain parental involvement.

“Successful programs help parents identify what they're capable of doing and how to overcome barriers,” claimed Liontos (1991, p. 1-2). It was the responsibility of educators to provide parents with guidance regarding their roles in their children's education (Wehlburg-Hickman, 1996; Brian, 1994; Keith & Lichtman, 1992; SCCOE, 1989). Therefore, it was necessary for educators to receive training that offered specific methods on providing guidance for parents regarding their roles and responsibilities in their children's education.

Dauber and Epstein (1989) stated, when teachers used specific practices to guide parent involvement, both the types of parental involvement and the amount of time involved increased. Some districts have employed programs to train parents how to improve their communication skills and improve their children's study habits (Inger, 1992). However, Cotton and Reed-Wikelund (1989) pointed out programs that implemented small parent training components were more successful than those that had large parent training components, which lost parents through attrition.

Henderson (1987) found “parental involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, long-lasting, and well planned.” (p 9) Staff who were committed to the goal of increasing parental involvement and who devoted considerable time to parent outreach had programs for involving Hispanic parents that worked, indicated Nicolau and Ramos (1990). Inger (1992) also found that programs that emphasized making it easy for parents to participate increased involvement of Hispanic parents. Parental involvement programs were most effective when staffs were flexible and creative enough to adapt the program to the needs of the community, according to Nicolau and Ramos. The National PTA suggested parent involvement programs develop a process for continual evaluation and revision (National PTA, 1997).

Information Obtained from Selected Upward Bound Projects

In response to a request for information from selected Upward Bound projects (Appendix), nine directors submitted information regarding parental involvement in their projects (see p. 22). An analysis of these projects was conducted based on information received, which revealed four characteristics generally common to the projects. They were:

1. The Need for Parental Involvement -- All nine directors identified the need for parental involvement in their projects to improve students' achievement and retention. In each project, activities were developed specifically to address the issue of increasing parental involvement.

2. Multiple Means of Communication -- All nine directors used at least two means of maintaining communication with parents. Newsletters, phone contacts, flyers, letters, local media and face-to-face meetings were used to keep parents informed of events and to encourage parent participation.
3. Community Collaboration -- Directors formally established collaborative relationships between their Upward Bound projects and other community organizations. Collaborative efforts increased visibility of the projects and their students in the communities, which led to improved support for the projects among businesses and parents.
4. Parent Advisory Boards (PAB) -- Five of the directors maintained parent advisory boards. The purpose of the advisory boards varied, including fund raising for scholarships; organizing student activities; and providing input regarding operations of the projects. By having significant foci, parents were empowered and stayed involved with the projects.

Summary

The research and literature summarized in Chapter Two supported the following themes:

1. Parental involvement improves students' academic achievement and attitudes towards education.
2. Research has confirmed a need for increased parental involvement at the high school level.

3. Parents from underrepresented populations are concerned about their children's academic success, but lack understanding of how to become effectively involved in their children's education.
4. Developing successful parental involvement programs requires identifying the needs of families and implementing well organized plans that address those needs.
5. Upward Bound projects that have effective parental involvement programs maintain continual communication with the parents using a variety of methods to insure all parents are reached.

CHAPTER THREE

Procedures of the Project

The purpose of this project was to develop a director's guide for involving parents in the educations of students from underrepresented populations enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College Upward Bound project. To accomplish this purpose, a review of current, related literature was conducted. Additionally, materials and information from selected Upward Bound projects were obtained and analyzed.

Chapter 3 contains background information describing:

1. Need for the Project
2. Development of support for the Project
3. Procedures
4. Planned implementation and assessment

Need for the Project

The idea of developing a guide for involving parents or the primary caregiver in the education of students enrolled in the YVCC Upward Bound project was influenced by the following considerations:

1. The writer of this project (Marc Coomer) observed the need outside the classroom for reinforcement of student learning and positive role modeling. When reinforcement was occurring during the residential summer session, students were

achieving higher grades. The writer considered parents the most readily available resource to meet these needs during the academic year.

2. Research for this project provided information concerning improvement in students' academic achievement through parental involvement.
3. Undertaking this project coincided with the writer's graduate studies in educational administration at Central Washington University.

Development of Support for the Project

The writer has been an Upward Bound program manager for eight years, during which time several colleagues expressed concern about the lack of parental involvement in Upward Bound projects. Additionally, the director of the YVCC Upward Bound project (Robert Chavez) encouraged the writer to develop strategies for getting parents involved in the project. Anticipation of Goals 2000 and House Bill 1209 have raised expectations of academic achievement and created a sense of urgency for parental support, as students from underrepresented backgrounds will need this resource to achieve these higher expectations.

Procedures

A survey of literature on parental involvement in the education of middle and high school students from underrepresented populations, published between 1987-1997, was conducted. The majority of the selected literature was based on studies of parental involvement at the middle or high school level and parental involvement of

low-income or ethnic minority populations. Studies regarding parental involvement in the education of Hispanic or Native American students were considered relevant sources of information due to the high rate of participation by both groups in the YVCC Upward Bound project.

Information on parental involvement activities and assessment data for existing parental involvement programs were solicited from all Upward Bound staff subscribing to the national TRIO listserv. The request for information (see Appendix) specifically addressed:

- Parental involvement objectives written in each project's proposal.
- Activities each project director uses to involve parents.
- Evaluation data of each project director's success in achieving objectives, carrying out activities, or impact on student achievement.

Information was submitted for analysis by directors of the following Upward Bound projects:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| • California State University - San Marcos: San Marcos, CA | • Lemoyne College Upward Bound: Memphis, TN |
| • Cameron University: Lawton, OK | • South Seattle Community College: Seattle, WA |
| • Chicago State University: Chicago, IL | • University of Texas - Arlington: Arlington, TX |
| • Georgia State University: Atlanta, GA | • University of Utah: Salt Lake City, UT |
| • Highland Community College: Freeport, IL | |

The information received from these Upward Bound projects was reviewed and the findings were noted in Chapter II - Survey of Related Literature.

Based on information obtained through the survey of related literature and information received from other Upward Bound projects, the writer developed an administrator's guide for involving parents of students enrolled in the YVCC Upward Bound project in their children's education. The guide includes background on the YVCC Upward Bound program; information regarding benefits to expect for the students, the parents and the program when parental involvement occurs; what strategies are effective for involving parents in education; and a model program outlining effective strategies for parental involvement in the YVCC Upward Bound project.

Planned Implementation and Assessment of the Project

In March, 1998, copies of An Administrator's Guide for Involving Parents in the Education of Students Enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College Upward Bound Project, which was the subject of this project, will be submitted to Robert Chavez, director of the Yakima Valley Community College Upward Bound project, and members of the YVCC Upward Bound Advisory Board, to be considered for adoption and implementation. It was the writer's intention that the strategies outlined in the guide would be implemented, thereby enhancing parental involvement in the project. The guide will be reviewed at the end of each four year grant cycle to

determine which strategies have proven effective. After each review, revisions will be made to ensure the guide contains information that meets the needs of the YVCC Upward Bound students and parents.

The writer intends to present this project at the Northwest Association of Special Programs (NASP) Spring Conference (1998) to provide information on parental involvement to Upward Bound colleagues. While this graduate project was limited to application in the YVCC Upward Bound project, it was the writer's intention that the information in the administrator's guide could be adapted to meet the specific needs of students and parents in other Upward Bound projects.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Project

The Administrator's Guide for Involving Parents in the Education of Students Enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College Upward Bound Project, which was the subject of this project, has been presented in Chapter Four. The guide, which includes specific strategies for involving parents, has been organized into three parts, including:

PART 1. Parental Involvement in YVCC Upward Bound

PART 2. Parental Involvement: An Orientation

PART 3. Model Program for Parental Involvement

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in the Education of Students Enrolled in the
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Yakima Valley Community College
Upward Bound
Yakima, Washington

February 1998

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PART 1.

Parental Involvement in YVCC Upward Bound

Introduction

Mission & Goal Statement

Need for Parental Involvement at YVCC

References: Part 1

Introduction

“Parental involvement is our best predictor of student success. As policy makers struggle to find ways to improve the educational achievement levels of students, we cannot overstate the importance of having parents involved in any attempt to reform education.”

-- Lisa Graham Keegan
(Arizona State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
1997, paragraph 2)

In the above statement, Keegan pointed out the driving force behind increasing parental involvement nationwide; student success. She also emphasized that if reforms in education are going to be successful, they must include involving parents. It was these ideas that led to the development of this guide.

The purpose of Yakima Valley Community College (YVCC) Upward Bound is to facilitate student success. Therefore, it is essential that the project director ensures every effort be made to involve parents in the project and in participants' educations. In this guide, the writer reiterates the intent of Upward Bound (UB) and why parental involvement is needed. The writer also addresses barriers to parental involvement, how to overcome those barriers and suggests a plan for involving parents in the YVCC Upward Bound project.

Mission & Goal Statements

YVCC UPWARD BOUND MISSION

The YVCC Upward Bound staff, as a committed and cohesive team, seek to improve access to educational opportunities and success rates in programs of post-secondary education for students from underrepresented backgrounds by providing quality services and offering an extensive array of educational, cultural and recreational experiences. The Upward Bound staff recognize the importance of parental involvement in supporting this mission.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT GOAL

Parental involvement is a critical component of the education of students participating in the YVCC Upward Bound project. It is the goal of the Upward Bound staff to increase the level of parental involvement in the project, thereby improving the likelihood of success for our participants. The purpose of this guide is to provide a plan of practices and activities that foster positive, on-going parental involvement in the YVCC Upward Bound project.

Need for Parental Involvement at YVCC

Forty-seven percent of Hispanics do not graduate from high school and only 6.4% of Hispanics earn a baccalaureate degree (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1994). The total national high school dropout rate was 12.7% in 1992 (U.S. Bureau of the Census), whereas 38% of Native American students drop out of high school, according to Auerbach (1994). There is a direct statistical relationship between income and level of educational attainment ("Education and Earnings", 1991). Consequently, a large number of Hispanics and Native Americans suffer low socio-economic status.

The YVCC Upward Bound project serves a high number of Hispanics and Native Americans (nearly 87%). Approximately eighty-three percent of these students are low-income. Keith & Lichtman (1992) found that parental involvement did not negate totally the effect of socio-economic status on educational achievement, but the influence of socio-economic status was reduced through parental involvement.

Parental involvement in the YVCC Upward Bound project has been very low. During the 1994-95 project year, four events in which parental participation was encouraged were held; an open house, a summer program orientation meeting, a summer program barbecue and an awards banquet. At the YVCC Upward Bound Open House one parent attended (2%), and parents of only 12 students attended the Family Picnic/Summer Orientation (20%). The summer program Kickoff Barbecue, held at the beginning of the program when parents drop-off their children for the

summer program, was attended by about 75% of the parents. The Summer Awards Banquet was held at the end of the 6-week summer residential program when parents were coming to move their children back home was also well attended, nearly 78%.

Food was advertised for all of these events. Thus, it was unlikely food was the key factor influencing parent attendance. The high level of parental involvement in the latter two activities, when compared to the level of parental involvement in other events, seemed to reflect the parents need to transport their children, rather than a distinct effort to participate in their childrens' educations. However, parent involvement was slightly higher for the awards banquet in which students were recognized for their achievements. Attendance at summer orientations averaged 7% during the four years prior to combining it with a family picnic. Only twelve parents (20%) contacted the project staff during the 1994-95 project year. Efforts over the past two years to involve parents have yielded similar results.

According to Dauber & Epstein (1989), when parents perceived educators were working to involve them, parents became involved more frequently in their childrens' educations at school and at home than when parents perceived educators to be unconcerned about parental involvement. Additionally, Phillips (as cited in Henderson, 1987) stated "...parent involvement is associated with higher school performance regardless of the income level of families served, the grade level of the school, or the location of the school." (p.50) Given these findings, this guide was developed to improve parental involvement in the YVCC Upward Bound project.

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PART 2.

Parental Involvement: An Orientation

Parental Involvement is ...

Benefits of Parental Involvement

Overcoming Barriers to Parental Involvement

Work & Child Care Obligations

Language

Limited Educational Experience

Insufficient Staff Training

Inadequate Communication Between Upward Bound and Parents

Unfamiliarity with the Educational System

Parental Involvement is...

Parental involvement is a very broad term that can be interpreted many ways, yet nearly all levels and types of parental involvement in students' education are beneficial for students. For the purposes of this guide, the writer addresses three components in defining parental involvement, as set forth by the National PTA (1996). Parental involvement is the active role parents play in their child's education as:

- first educator in the home.
- partners with the project.
- advocates for all youth .

Parents, generally being the adults that spend the most time with their children, need to be viewed as a key part of the educational process. Parents can reinforce and supplement the efforts of educators. Showing interest in their child's education, assisting with homework, and monitoring activities such as watching television, playing video games and going to parties, are some of the roles parents fill as first educators in the home.

Partnerships must be formed between parents, Upward Bound and the schools. All three groups are concerned with the academic success of students, yet each offers different resources. Through collaborative efforts these groups can help students achieve their maximum potential.

Teens face many difficult challenges in education and throughout society. Parents, in standing up for their children, can help them negotiate obstacles that come up in both the educational process and everyday life. By advocating for their own child, parents may also break down barriers for other students and families.

When defined using these three components, parental involvement is inclusive of many parental activities. Several activities parents may participate in to enhance their child's educational success are outlined in parts two and three of this guide.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

“The evidence is beyond dispute: parent involvement improves student achievement.” (Henderson, 1987, p.1) Parental involvement, regardless of what form it takes, improves students' academic achievement. Assisting with homework, attending parent conferences, volunteering in schools, asking students how school is going or any other form of involvement enhances student performance.

Parental involvement also influences students attitudes and aspirations towards education. Students whose parents encourage their children in education and show high aspirations for them, exhibit positive attitudes towards education and have high educational expectations of themselves. Graduation rates for students whose parents are involved in their educations are higher, as well as enrollment rates in post secondary education, than for students whose parents show little interest in their

children's education. Additionally, students' classroom behavior, attendance, self-concept and communication with parents improved when parents were involved in the students' education.

Benefits of parental involvement occur regardless of cultural backgrounds or socio-economic status of students and their families. Improved academic achievement as a result of parental involvement is even more pronounced in underrepresented populations.

Benefits are not limited to students. Parents, educational programs and communities benefit as well. Parents gain improved communication with their children and educators, self-esteem, decision making skills, and attitudes towards education. Advantages for programs include parents alleviating some duties staff have assumed and having students that perform better and require less reactive intervention. Both enable program staff to spend more time developing and implementing more proactive activities. Educational communities in which parents are actively involved and youth perform better in school have fewer conflicts to resolve and are more productive.

Parental involvement is clearly an asset to students, parents and the educational system. This is true at all levels of K-12 education (and possibly beyond), for students from all backgrounds and in all socio-economic situations. Why then isn't more parental involvement taking place in schools and programs? The next section

addresses many of the barriers to parental involvement and offers suggestions for overcoming them.

Overcoming Barriers to Parental Involvement

While parental involvement is very beneficial to students, there are many factors that discourage parents from becoming involved, particularly within underrepresented populations. This section suggests techniques for addressing some common barriers.

Work & Child Care Obligations

Parents from underrepresented population, often have jobs in which they are paid on an hourly basis. Consequently, it costs them to take time off to be involved in their childrens' educational activities. For low-income families, this creates additional strain on an already minimal income that many cannot afford. For families with more than one child, work schedules are usually tightly scheduled around availability of child care. For activities other than work, parents will often choose to stay home and watch the children themselves rather than spend more money on child care.

Suggestions --

- Schedule activities at times that are convenient for parents. Usually evenings or Saturdays work best.

- Offer a choice of times for individual meetings, such as home visits, so the parents can choose a time that works best for them.
- Scheduled activities well in advance and inform parents about them early. Given enough advance time, parents may be able to schedule work or other commitments around the activity.
- Offer free child care if possible at Upward Bound events. If there is not additional cost associated with participating, parents are more likely to attend.
- Plan activities that siblings may attend also.

Language

Working with parents from various cultural backgrounds sometimes introduces language barriers. If parents are non-English speaking, they may be uncomfortable interacting in an English speaking environment. Consequently, these parents may avoid participating in their children's education.

Suggestions --

- When possible, hire bilingual staff. Having staff members that can communicate with parents in their first language enables better communication and relieves intimidation that may be a factor discouraging them from participating.

- Publish communications in English and the predominate language (Spanish at YVCC) of the target population. Then parents can stay informed with less effort.
- At activities for parents or families, have an interpreter present information in Spanish to accommodate the non-English speaking parents.
- Encourage parents to have a bilingual friend interpret for them at Upward Bound functions. Besides interpreting, bringing a friend may reduce intimidation in unfamiliar situations, as well as introducing Upward Bound to more of the community.

Limited Educational Experience

Because parents from underrepresented populations typically have less exposure to education, they are often intimidated by the educational environment. The jargon used by educators frequently adds to apprehensive feelings, especially for parents from other cultural backgrounds.

Parents who have limited educational experience may also find it difficult to assist their children with homework. New technology and emphasis on critical thinking often make it difficult even for parents with high levels of education to assist their children. Parents having less education, who are likely to be apprehensive about schoolwork, face a much greater challenge in trying to assist their children at home.

Suggestions --

- Plan events at neutral sites. A community center or park may provide the necessary facilities for activities and allow parents to be more comfortable.
- Make home visits. Though time consuming, home visits allow parents to be more comfortable, alleviate transportation concerns for the parent, and let you get a better sense of the student's home environment.
- Plan some recreational activities at the school. This helps relieve the tension of being in an academic setting and breaks down negative associations parents from underrepresented backgrounds may have of school environments.
- Emphasize to parents that encouraging students can be as important to home involvement as actually assisting with homework.
- Arrange workshops for parents that expose them to technology. Even a little hands-on time with computers will help them relate to their child's learning experiences.
- Discuss curriculum and learning expectations with parents. Better understanding of what the schools and Upward Bound are trying to teach students enables parents to support that learning.

Insufficient Staff Training

Staff members need to be informed about the importance of parental involvement. Many staff members do not understand how greatly parental involvement can effect student achievement. Staff members are responsible for specific duties, such as counseling or teaching, and often believe if they do their job the students will succeed. Parental involvement is a key factor in student success.

Suggestions --

- Send staff to TRIO conferences. Invariably, workshops are offered on parental involvement that offer ideas and training on how to involve parents, as well as emphasizing its importance in student success.
- Write objectives in the grant proposal that address parental involvement. Efforts to involve parents are more likely to occur and be considered important if they are formal objectives.
- Provide diversity training to staff. Staff will be more sensitive to the needs of parents if they understand the different backgrounds and cultures represented among students.

Inadequate Communication Between Upward Bound and Parents

Though communication between Upward Bound and parents should be the responsibility of both parties, it is the obligation of the project, and is seldom initiated by parents. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of project directors to ensure

communication is frequent and effective. More immediate duties, such as counseling students, planning and coordinating activities, and maintaining accurate records, often supersede making parent contacts. However, maintaining strong links with parents enhances the impact Upward Bound has on students.

Suggestions --

- Publish a monthly newsletter and circulate it to students and parents. Features highlighting events, students and the project, circulated on a regular basis, keep everyone abreast of important information and interested in what's happening.
- Talk individually with parents (the more often, the better). Phone calls, home visits, or one-on-one meetings let's parents know their involvement is important.
- Establish a Parent Advisory Board (PAB). PAB's encourage interaction between project staff and parents, generate a service or services that benefit students, and empower parents.
- Send quarterly progress reports to parents addressing the students performance in their high school and in Upward Bound.
- Offer English and Spanish versions of written communications and ensure verbal communications with parents are in a language in which they are comfortable conversing.

Unfamiliarity with the Educational System

Frequently, parents do not have enough information to know how their child is doing in their education. If information is not provided to the parents, many assume everything is going well. Parents may also lack information on how to be involved in their child's education. Our education system is continually evolving, and parents may not be familiar with changes in the system or how they effect their child. Parents from other cultures may not be aware of the expectation of parents to be the primary educator of their child, and look to the school to provide their child's education.

Suggestions --

- Offer workshops for parents that provide information on the school system and the parents' roles in students' education.
- Advertise Upward Bound as a resource for parents as well as students.

Upward Bound is funded to provide services that help students succeed in education. One of the more important services that can be provided is assisting parents in understanding the educational system and their roles in their students' educational success.

PART 3.

Model Program for Parental Involvement

Objectives

Program Design

Parent Advisory Board

Parent Activities

Communication

Evaluation

Budget

References

Model Program for Parental Involvement

Based on findings from an extensive review of literature and investigation of other Upward Bound projects, this model has been developed with the intent of increasing parental involvement in the YVCC Upward Bound Project.

Objectives

1.	The director will establish a parent advisory board (PAB) that will meet once a month to plan and coordinate activities directed towards advisory board defined goals.
2.	At least 70% of the parents will demonstrate interest in their childrens' educational efforts, as evidenced by participating in two or more Upward Bound activities each year.
3.	Project staff will contact the parents of all participants at least twice per quarter using more than one method of communication.
4.	At the end of each project year, the director will evaluate the extent to which parental involvement objectives have been achieved and report findings to the Upward Bound Advisory Board

Program Design

The stated objectives provide direction for involving parents in the Upward Bound project, thereby increasing opportunities for students to succeed in education. To accomplish these objectives, the Upward Bound director and staff will perform the subsequent duties.

Parent Advisory Board

The director will establish a parent advisory board (PAB) that will meet once a month to plan and coordinate activities directed towards advisory board defined goals.

A review of Upward Bound projects revealed, programs that have PAB's have greater numbers of parents that participate more frequently and in more active roles than projects that don't. Projects with PAB's even reported more parental involvement than projects that claimed to have mandatory parent participation. These findings indicate a PAB is an effective way to get parents involved in Upward Bound and the education of their children. Therefore, the YVCC Upward Bound director will develop a PAB through the following means:

Actions --

- The director will send a letter to all parents of Upward Bound participants by Sept 15th announcing a meeting to develop a PAB and inviting parents to participate. Upward Bound staff will make follow-up calls reminding parents of the meeting and inviting them to participate. The staff will conduct calls in the language most comfortable for the parent (English or Spanish).
- The director will assist the PAB in developing a mission and plan. Suggested focal topics may include fundraising for scholarships, sponsoring activities for students, establishing a mentoring program, or developing a student recognition program.

- An Upward Bound staff member will be available at all PAB meetings and activities to provide information regarding project policies and procedures that may be pertinent to the activities of the PAB.

Parent Activities

At least 70% of the parents will demonstrate involvement in their childrens' educations, as evidenced by participating in two or more Upward Bound activities each year.

While the project staff will strive to involve all participant's parents, achieving seventy percent parent participation will be considered a successful effort. The project director will plan and implement a variety of activities to encourage parental involvement.

Actions --

- The director will schedule at least one activity per quarter designed to include and inform parents. The activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Upward Bound project orientation and workshop
 - b) Parent/student picnic
 - c) Summer kickoff family barbecue
 - d) Student recognition banquet
 - e) Parent/student career labs - featuring mini-workshops for parents on such topics as:

- * Parent Support in Education
 - * Choosing & Financing College
 - * Planning & Managing a Family Budget
 - * Talking About Tough Issues with Teens
 - * Community Resources (Guest speakers)
- Upward Bound staff will print a calendar of events each month in the newsletter (UB News), which will be mailed to all participants and their parents.
 - Upward Bound staff or PAB parents will call all participant's parents the week prior to events for parents to invite them to attend.
 - Upward Bound staff will attend NASP conference workshops that focus on involving parents to generate innovative ideas. Staff will obtain information directly related to parental involvement, as well as network with colleagues to discuss parental involvement strategies.
 - PAB co-chairs will be invited to attend Northwest Association of Special Programs (NASP) conferences to develop a better understanding of Upward Bound and its mission. Information gathered at conferences will help guide the efforts of the PAB.

Communication

Project staff will contact the parents of all participants at least twice per quarter using more than one method of communication.

As with any endeavor, communication is essential to success. Therefore, in the interest of students' success, the Upward Bound director and staff will maintain regular contact with parents. These contacts will be done in various methods and will be recorded in the students' files to provide quantitative data for evaluating levels of parental involvement.

Actions --

- A newsletter, UB News, will be published monthly. The newsletter will include features such as a calendar of events, PAB news, outstanding student interviews, tips & timeline for seniors applying to college, and other informational and human interest stories. Newsletters will be sent to all participants and their parents.
- Upward Bound staff will conduct at least twenty home visits per quarter. This rate will enable the staff to make at least one visit to each participant's home during the academic year. During home visits staff will share information about the project and discuss the academic progress of students with their parents.
- Participants will have mid-term reports from their teachers signed by their parents. Copies of the signed reports will be collected by Upward Bound

staff and areas of concern or marked improvement will be discussed with the students and parents.

- When a staff member has concerns or wants to share positive observations of a student, they will call the parents.
- The director will maintain regular contact with the PAB and the parents involved.

Actions to accomplish these three objectives will be carried out by the Upward Bound director and staff as described above. The fourth objective concerns measuring how well the preceding objectives were met. It is addressed in the following section, "Evaluation".

Evaluation

At the end of each project year the director will evaluate the extent to which parental involvement objectives have been achieved.

To ensure the continual involvement of parents in the project, the director will evaluate the extent to which parental involvement objectives have been achieved. The evaluation will contain both quantitative and qualitative measures and will be presented to the Upward Bound Advisory Committee (UBAC) for review and recommendation.

Actions --

- Upward Bound staff will collect and analyze quantitative data regarding parental contacts from the students' files. The data will indicate whether sufficient contacts were made with each parent and whether seventy percent of parents participated in at least two events.
- The director will meet with the PAB at the end of the academic year to recount their activities and discuss possible modifications for the following year.
- Following the summer awards banquet, the director will ask parents to complete a brief survey regarding parental involvement in the project.
- At the fall meeting, the director will report to the UBAC regarding the extent to which parental involvement objectives were met. The director and UBAC will modify the parent involvement model as necessary to meet the needs of participants and parents in the Upward Bound project.

While the above process will be used to measure the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved, this evaluation cannot measure the impact of parental involvement on student achievement due to the many variables involved. However, student achievement will continue to be measured after implementing the parental involvement program and an informal comparison of levels of parental involvement and student achievement will be kept.

Budget

The cost to implement the parental involvement model is minimal in relation to the anticipated benefits for participants. Most of the expenses are already included in the project budget because they involve activities that are currently taking part to some degree. The additional expenses for supplies and services needed to operate the PAB total less than \$4000. These costs have been outlined in Table 1 to graphically illustrate expenses (Refer to page P-27). The funds can be procured by accessing monies available from the proposed personnel budget that cannot be used currently because of institutional restrictions. The director will submit the proposed project change for fall 1998 to the project officer at the Department of Education.

Table 1: Model Parental Involvement Program Budget

	Current Expense	Additional Expense
<u>Staff Conference Travel</u> 3 full-time staff to attend regional NASP conference Registration: \$250/participant x 3 Transportation: 500 mi x .35/mile Per Diem: \$100/day x 4 days x 3 staff	750 175 <u>1200</u> \$2125	
<u>Staff In-district Travel</u> Home visits: 50 miles x 60 visits x .35/mile	\$1050	
<u>PAB Expenses</u> Conference Travel In-district Travel Phone & Postage Printing		1475 500 950 <u>1000</u> \$3925
<u>Office Supplies & Service</u> Phone: \$188/mo x 12 Postage Printing	2265 750 <u>1450</u> \$4465	
Guest presenters	\$1500	
Total expense	\$9140	\$3925

Summary

The YVCC Upward Bound director believes that implementing this program in the project will improve parental involvement in the education of project participants. Consequently, the director expects improved parental involvement will result in increased student achievement, enhanced parent-student communication and improved project-parent relations.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this project was to develop a director's guide for involving parents or primary care-givers in the education of students from underrepresented populations enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College Upward Bound project. To accomplish this purpose, a review of current literature and research was conducted. Additionally, materials and related information from selected Upward Bound projects were obtained and analyzed.

Conclusions

Conclusions reached as a result of this project were:

1. Parental involvement in childrens' educations improves academic achievement and attitudes towards education regardless of families cultural backgrounds or socio-economic levels.
2. Barriers that prevent parents from being involved in students' education can be overcome by using strategies that take into account the needs of the population being served.
3. Communication in varying modes is a critical factor in establishing and maintaining parental involvement.

Recommendations

As a result of this project, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. The YVCC Upward Bound director should increase parental involvement in the project to improve student achievement and attitudes towards education.
2. The YVCC Upward Bound director should implement strategies outlined in the guide developed as a result of this study to overcome barriers that prevent parents from becoming involved in their children's education.
3. Upward Bound staff should use various methods, including written materials, phone calls and home visits, to maintain effective, on-going communication with parents.
4. Other Upward Bound directors seeking to increase parental involvement may wish to adapt the model plan outlined in this study or undertake further research on this subject to meet the unique needs of the populations they work with.

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Appendix

Letter of Request for Information from Selected Upward Bound Projects

Date: Thu, 11 Sep 1997 16:21:21 -0700
From: Marc Coomer
To: TRIO@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU
Subject: Seeking info on parental involvement in Upward Bound

Dear TRIO Colleague,

I am in the process of completing my Master's in Educational Administration at Central Washington University. I am writing to request your assistance in gathering information for my master's degree project entitled "An Administrator's Guide to Involving Parents in The Education of Students Enrolled in the Yakima Valley Community College Upward Bound Project".

The purpose of my project is to develop an administrator's guide that highlights the benefits for students, parents and programs when parents participate; what strategies are effective for involving parents; and how can we implement those strategies. Hence, I am collecting information from Upward Bound projects regarding parental involvement.

Specifically, I would appreciate copies of any materials you have detailing:

- Guidelines for initiating parent involvement.
- Objectives and activities designed to involve parents in your project.
- Formal or informal evaluations of parental involvement activities or programs used in your project.

Any materials you can provide will be extremely valuable. All responses will be treated as confidential. Feel free to make any additional comments, or suggest other resources, that you believe would be beneficial.

Thank you for your assistance.

Marc Coomer
Yakima Valley Community College
Upward Bound Program Manager