Notes from Ms. Nita

Welcome to the first newsletter of the New Year, 2014. If you’re like most people, you’ve probably experienced the burst of motivation that comes early in January. During this time of the year most resolutions can place a lot of pressure on you to fill these challenges.

When choosing many resolutions, failure is sometimes inevitable. The trick is to choose the right resolution, for the right reasons. Give some thought to what you really want and why you want it. Next decide how difficult to make your resolution. Aiming high is generally what makes people work harder, however, make sure you can be reached.

Write the goal down on paper and make commitment to yourself. Try to stay on track, but realize everyday may not be perfect and you can always modify your goals. So as long as we build flexibility into our expectations, we can simply adjust things as we go.

I suggest that all of us strive to work harder in our school, jobs, social life and with our families. We can only empower each other when we all work together as a team.

Nelson Mandela passed December 2013, but his words will last forever.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

Parents and students, if you have any questions about the Upward Bound Academic Program please e-mail us at ub@binghamton.edu anytime. We look forward to your comments, suggestions and questions!!

FAFSA

Some of you may have already received acceptance letters from colleges and universities; this is an exciting new adventure! You may be asking yourself, “How can I afford college?” The first step to applying for financial aid is to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid). Note the word FREE; if a website asks for money, they are not the official U.S. government website. The correct web address for explaining how to fill out the FAFSA is: http://studentaid.ed.gov/fafsa/filling-out.

You will need a Federal Student Aid PIN (Personal Identification Number) that serves as your identifier and acts as your digital signature on some online forms. You can get your PIN as you fill out the FAFSA, but you can also request one ahead of time at www.pin.ed.gov. Because you will use your PIN for future FAFSAs (you will file one for every year you are in college) and for many different actions regarding your student aid records, be sure to make it one you can easily remember and keep it in a safe place; if you give it to your AC, it can be put in your UB file.

The FAFSA will ask for personal information: in addition to your name, address and date of birth, you will be asked for your Social Security Number and your parents’ Social Security Numbers. For a full list of documents and information you will need to complete the FAFSA, check the website.

Scholarships are another good source of financial aid. You can get scholarship information from your high school guidance office; just be sure to read the eligibility requirements and application directions carefully, and watch out for deadline dates. The success to finding scholarship money is to apply early and often to as many scholarships that are applicable to you.

The guest speaker at the March 8 meeting will be Ms. Wanda Blackman from Educational Talent Search to talk about sources of financial aid. She will be able to answer many of your questions.
**James Fuentes**

James is an Upward Bound scholar from Johnson City High School. In addition to his involvement in Upward Bound, he is involved in many different activities at Johnson City. He is a member of the swim team as well as a saxophone player in the award winning Marching Band, Concert Band, Jazz Band, and Teen Jazz Project. He does this while maintaining a challenging class schedule that includes Advanced Placement (AP) European History.

James credits much of his success so far to his parents Alfredo and Rina Fuentes as well as his traditional Hispanic heritage. He states that this combination has given him “a very ravenous work ethic” that has allowed him to continue to achieve. He credits much of his success so far to his parents Alfredo and Rina Fuentes as well as his traditional Hispanic heritage. He states that this combination has given him “a very ravenous work ethic” that has allowed him to continue to advance. He also states that he continues to “live life to the fullest.”

**Attention Juniors: SAT Exam**

**Saturday, March 8, 2014**

Registration Deadline February 7, 2014

Ask your Guidance Counselor for a Fee Waiver.

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**Course Scheduling Tips**

From AC Nick

During the next couple of weeks Guidance Counselors will be scheduling students to come to their office to go over which courses they will take next school year. It is important that students go in to these appointments understanding which courses are the right fit for them. The Upward Bound Academic Counselors are here to help students and parents with this process.

We encourage everyone to challenge themselves but not to overload. Maintaining a good Grade Point Average (GPA) is one of the most significant factors in college admissions. Many of the college representatives that we have talked to have said that the colleges first look at high school records. Employers and colleges both look at high school records. There are many different pathways to success that might not always include Advanced Placement (AP) or other college level courses. We recognize that this can be a difficult and confusing process but we are here to help. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Wishing everyone the best in the New Year! Stay strong for the last two marking periods. We have already started planning for the summer program. It will be here before you know it!