



Thursday, February 26, 2004

## Upward Bound conference empowers parents of teens

By **Dawn Pauli**, contributing writer

Parents from throughout Michigan will gather on Oakland University's campus for OU's Project Upward Bound's sixth annual Parent Empowerment Conference, the only one of its kind in Michigan.

The conference, scheduled for Saturday, March 6, in the Oakland Center, provides parents of Project Upward Bound high school students with information, methods and tools to effectively interact with their teens and prepare them for college. Eighty-five people are registered to attend.

Geri Graham, director of OU's Project Upward Bound, says programs like this are important for parents. She cites research studies that find students whose parents are more involved than average have academic achievement rates a full 30 percent higher than other students.

This year's conference features the theme, "Parents – Giving Flight to Achievers," with keynote speaker Arnold Mitchem, president of the Council for Opportunity in Education. Breakout sessions include the new student process, the changing role of parents as children transition to college, understanding learning disabilities, and relaxation and nutrition.

This year, parents with children in other pre-college educational opportunity programs throughout Michigan were invited, and parents from Eastern Michigan, Grand Valley State and Michigan State Universities also are planning to attend.

"We consult with parents to find out what types of information they need," Graham said. "We have grown from one 'Intro to Computers' course to a full-day of speakers and workshops."

In addition to OU's Project Upward Bound, many representatives from throughout campus will be speaking to the group, offering advice and information, including Director of Learning Resources Lynn Hockenberger and Vice President of Student Affairs Mary Beth Snyder.

Workshop presenters include Director of New Student Programs Dawn Aubrey, Assistant Director of New Student Programs Kristy Chene, Assistant Director of the Academic Skills Center Ivy Horn, Assistant Professor of Psychology Sylvie Lombardo and Maxine Shawver of OU's Project Upward Bound.

Project Upward Bound prepares high school students for successful post-secondary education completion. The federally funded program provides academic, social, cultural and career enrichment to students. Participants attend the Summer Academy, a six-week residential university simulation experience, and the Academic Year Academy, featuring Saturday enrichment sessions, college clubs (on-site tutorials), monthly meetings and student leadership conferences.

The conference is sponsored by OU's Project Upward Bound, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Office of the Director of Learning Resources.

### SUMMARY

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