May 20th, 2020

Hello TRIO participants, parents and family members,

Let me begin by saying that I can only imagine what you must be going through with regards to this unprecedented COVID-19 situation. It’s been a tough month or more for all of us. I pray and hope that everyone is safe and following the safety precautions issued by the State, and the federal Center for Disease Control (CDC).

The novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, continues to impact communities locally and regions across the globe. We are listening to parents and students questions and concerns and we continue to update actions and decisions based on communications with the University of Delaware, the Department of Education and the state’s Department of Health.

As a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) Pandemic, the University of Delaware has issued a cancellation of all planned activities on all campuses, and recommended that staff, faculty and other personnel to work remotely from home. And after long and careful consideration—we have made the very difficult decision to postpone our traditional “face to face” June, summer Academy program, and possibly move it to virtual Summer Academy.

The campus is not scheduled to reopen for some kind of normalcy until August. As a result of this mandate, the TRIO, Upward Bound Classic program is actively expanding our services to include remote services for all of our participants and their families.

As we navigate a new normal, our thoughts are with you and your students. We understand that getting settled into a new type of supportive, virtual, learning environment amid a pandemic is a huge lift. To help support you and your student during this period of transition, the Upward Bound Classic program wants to assure you that our core focus is providing uninterrupted service to you as our valued student, while also ensuring the well-being of our employees and their families.

We fully understand the disappointment you feel about the turn of events that has disrupted our summer program. The summer program is without doubt one of Upward Bound Class’s most cherished moments. But given the current state restriction prohibiting large gatherings and the likelihood this restriction will be extended, we have made the soundest decision possible. If you normally participate in the summer program, Ms. T will keep you informed about summer planning.

In order for these efforts to be successful, the Upward Bound Classic staff will be reaching out to you to discover the remote capabilities that exist and your access to the internet, cell service, and the device that these platforms operate on. Please respond to all questions as soon as possible so that we can begin to implement planned services to the best of our capabilities.
We will continue to provide services as scheduled but remotely and will make ourselves available to you for specific hours during the work day. It is extremely important that if you are scheduled for a phone date and time, that you adhere to that specific schedule. Staff will only be available from 9:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. and will be adhering to this time-frame.

Currently we are working on many resources and updated information on a daily basis as we receive it from the Department of Education and the University of Delaware so that you can remain aware of planned weekly Upward Bound program services/activities; receive updated information on the COVID-19 virus and steps you need to take to remain safe via specific links; educational resources you can use while at home; and the availability of Upward Bound tutors, teachers and staff to assist you with tutorials and help to understand and complete information on the Google platform, which will be used by the Department of Education in their remote education.

Ms. T, is available to students seeking tutorial assistance in all subjects. Ms. T will evaluate a student’s tutoring needs and direct them to one of the content area tutors, or provide direct assistance. Ms. T is available for meetings via email, phone, and 9:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. We are currently working on receiving our own Zoom access to have virtual interactions with our students. Alternate meeting times are available, including evenings with advance notice. She may be reached by phone or via email.

For the class of 2021, we will reach out to you all to see how we can better celebrate all of your success in the near future. Ms. T, and I miss you all, and cannot wait to see each other again.

This is an unprecedented public health situation and we can’t wait until we’re in the middle of it to slow it down. We’ve got to get ahead of the curve. One main defense is to reduce the interaction of people in our lives. Please, continue to remain positive, wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds under warm water, stay inside and practice social distancing. Our combined efforts will help to get us over this epidemic. We need to follow these rules to prevent the spread of the virus in our communities. Please call staff cell phones and not the office because no one will be there. Continually check your e-mail and respond. We will get through this! Thank-you.

Sincerely,

John K. A France, Ed.D
Academic Program Director