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Measuring the Effectiveness of Rural Wisconsin Upward Bound Programs

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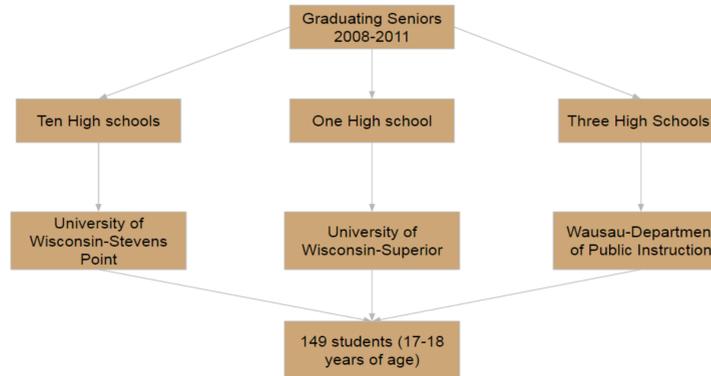
Research Question

What is the impact and effectiveness of the rural Upward Bound programs of Wisconsin on low-income/first generation college students likelihood to attend college?

Abstract

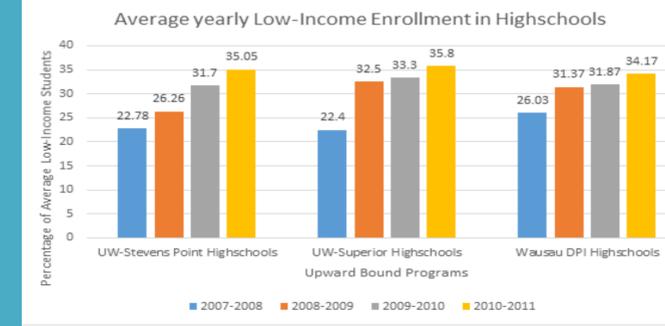
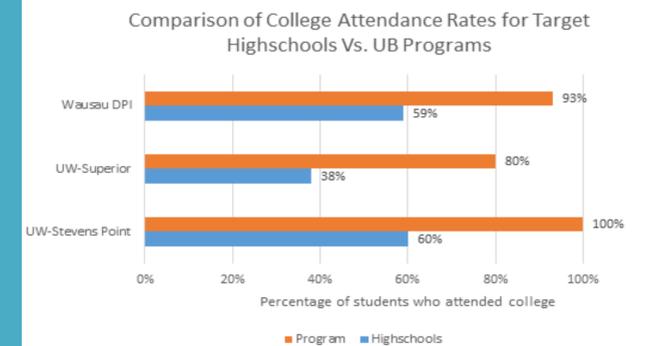
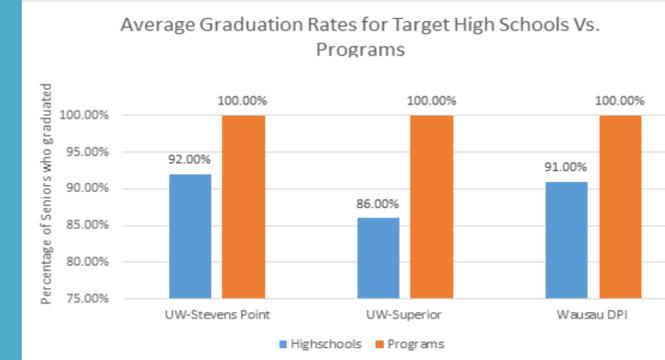
This research evaluates the effectiveness of the rural TRiO Upward Bound programs of Wisconsin, namely University of Stevens Point, University of Wisconsin Superior and Wausau Department of Public Instruction. This evaluation focuses on how effectively the programs assist low-income and first-generation potential college students in completing their high school education and enroll in postsecondary education. The sample consists of 149 senior students between the ages of 17 and 18 from the three Upward Bound programs previously indicated, who graduated between the years of 2008 and 2011. The results indicate that the three Upward Bound programs produced higher graduation rates and a greater college attendance rates than their target high schools. The data collected regarding low-income status of the high school seniors provided evidence showing that if the funding was available, a greater number of eligible students would be able to be served. In sum, this research finds that based on data collected from 149 senior students who are participants in the Upward Bound and on data from their high schools that the three Upward Bound programs of Wisconsin are indeed effective.

Sample

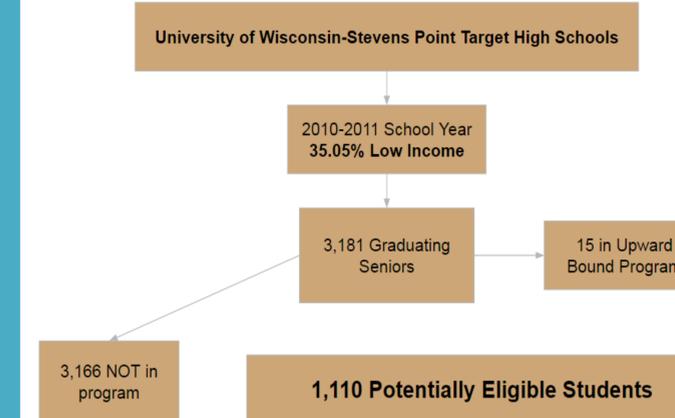


- Sample of 149 students (ages 17-18)
- Graduating seniors of the Upward Bound program between 2008-2011
- Data collected from three Upward Bound Programs:
 - UW-Stevens Point
 - UW-Superior
 - Wausau DPI
- This time frame was chosen so that the students who have been fully graduated from high school and in their post-secondary education or careers.
- Programs were asked to provide information on all graduating seniors between 2008-2011 and their program structure. This information predominately included:
 - Graduation rates
 - Low-Income rates
 - College attendance rates
 - Program funding
- Information concerning the graduation rates, college attendance rates, and low-income rates of target high schools was also collected from the Wisconsin Informational System for Education Data Dashboard (WISEDASH).

Data



What does this mean?



Next Steps

- Continue research on effectiveness of program by conducting further studies on site working as a tutor/advisor at the Upward Bound program of UW-Stevens Point
 - Observational Study
 - Interviews of students and staff
 - Long term study of some first year students
- Discuss with director and advisory staff possible ways to improve program structure, funding, and outreach of program.

FINDINGS

- 1 The Upward Bound Program is effective.** The three programs evaluated successfully mastered their goals, and had a majority of their students graduate high school and become enrolled in college.
- 2** Between the years 2008-2011 the three programs had 100% high school graduation rate, compared to the 89% average graduation rate of the target high schools.
- 3** Graduates of the program have a nearly 40% better chance at attending college than their non-program peers. On average target high schools only have 51.3% of their students attend college in comparison to the nearly 90% enrollment rate of the Upward Bound programs.
- 4** Each year the rate of low-income student enrollment in high school increases. Many of these students could be eligible for the program, yet are not receiving the necessary opportunities to join as there are limited spots due to funding.
- 5** Only 2.6% of low-income students are being served by the Upward Bound programs in Wisconsin.

What is Upward Bound?

- Federally funded (TRiO) College preparatory program.
- Serves students from low-income families, and/or from first generation backgrounds.
- Consists of a summer program where high school students take college prep classes and learn necessary skills needed for college at a college campus for six weeks.
- Each program must provide instruction in math, laboratory science, composition, literature, and foreign language.
- Information on the full range of Federal Student Financial Aid programs and benefits
- Goal of the program is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in/attend a college or university.

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