

Kou Vue

Fourth-year Global Studies major at University of Minnesota–Twin Cities
Speech
Minnesota TRiO Congressional Reception
Thursday, April 8, 2010
Metropolitan State University Great Hall

Before the Upward Bound program at my high school came into existence, I had already heard about Upward Bound from my friends who attended schools in the St. Paul school district. I heard about a great program that could help me excel in school. I heard about a great program that took me on college tours and even occasionally on weekend tours where I would get a chance to sleep at the colleges. I heard about a great program that helped me to better my chances of getting into the colleges I wanted to get into. I heard about a program where I would get to meet people, or more specifically, cute girls. I heard about all these great things before I even knew there was a stipend.

I immediately wanted to be in this program. Unfortunately for me, it did not exist at my high school during my freshman year. It was not until my sophomore year that I started seeing flyers about Upward Bound around school. I immediately applied and was accepted. Once I actually became a member of Upward Bound, I realized it was so much more than what I had heard and learned about.

At Upward Bound, I found a home outside of my home. I found a family outside of my family. Lacking the confidence and the ability to approach, talk to others, and manage a close friendship, Upward Bound gave me the interaction I needed to be a more friendly and approachable person. I was able to form so many great relationships with other students and with my advisors that I came to love the program not just for the services it provides, but also for the people. I was never one to need much assistance academically but I feel Upward Bound has given me the people skills needed to succeed in our world today. My experience as a student in Upward Bound made such a great impact on me that even after high school, I still wanted to be a part of Upward Bound.

In the summer of 2008, I worked as a Residential Advisor for the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities' Upward Bound program and I am currently working as a Teaching Assistant and Office Assistant for the program.

I was not the only member of my family to take part in the Dakota County Technical College Upward Bound program. My brother Tsimnuj joined the program the same time I did and was a part of Upward Bound until 2007. He is currently enrolled at Inver Hills Community College and looking to transfer to a university. My sisters Kaohlee and Mailu were members of the program from the fall of 2004 until the spring of 2008. They are currently sophomores at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities.

Currently, I have three siblings who are still in Upward Bound. My brothers, Tongso and Tushua, are both sophomores at Henry Sibley High School. My sister, Maizong, is

currently a senior at Sibley, but she has been a PSEO student at Metro State University and Inver Hills Community College throughout this year. She will graduate this spring. She has been accepted to the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities and will enroll there this upcoming fall.

As for me, I will be receiving my Global Studies degree from the University of Minnesota in May. Shortly afterwards, I will travel to Thailand and Laos as part of a global seminar followed by another program in Hong Kong. It will be the perfect way to end my undergraduate career. I have plans to attend graduate school and take part in the Peace Corps sometime in the near future but as of now, I would like to take some time off to give my mind some rest. I will not rest for long though because Upward Bound has taught me that the world has a lot to offer. I just need to do my best at whatever it is I do and keep searching.