The Upward Project

A career development program for gifted, college-bound Boston-area youth

The Upward Project helps first-generation college students and students from low-income families take full advantage of the career opportunities afforded by attending a selective college or university. Our work is based on the observation that simply attending a competitive school does not guarantee access to these opportunities. To improve access, we provide ambitious students with financial resources and career development training. We guide students through the on-campus recruiting process, help them cultivate valuable professional networks, and teach them how to position themselves for careers in competitive and lucrative fields. We strive to elevate students who are talented and driven but may lack the financial resources and family-based networks that help some of their college classmates advance.

Currently we are recruiting six, college-bound, high school seniors to participate in our four-year career development program. Applicants should be ambitious, academically high performing students who will matriculate into selective colleges or universities* in the fall of 2018. Applying students should have a high school GPA of at least 3.5 (unweighted, out of 4.0) and competitive standardized test scores. The Upward Project will preferentially select for students who are first-generation college students or who come from low-income families.

During the four-year program, The Upward Project will:

- Help students create personalized career development plans,
- Organize career days with leading employers in a variety of industries,
- Provide financial resources, such as summer internship stipends,
- Guide students through the on-campus recruiting process,
- Introduce students to mid-career professionals who serve as mentors, and
- Place students in competitive internships.

Students accepted into the program will start working with The Upward Project during the summer after their senior year of high school. Students who successfully complete the summer program will receive:

- A laptop,
- Professional attire for interviews, and
- A $500 book stipend.

* By “selective” we mean universities ranking in the top 100 of the U.S. News and World Report list of national universities, liberal arts colleges ranking in the top 40 of the U.S. News and World Report list of national liberal arts colleges, and all HBCUs.
Students who successfully continue in the program for four years will also benefit from:

- $1,000 per academic year Opportunity Stipend,
- Access to an Emergency Fund, and
- Access to The Upward Project’s Summer Internship Fund.

Throughout our four-year career development program, we will draw on a network of professionals for career advancement advice and internship opportunities. Our network includes professionals in finance, law, business, management consulting, education, journalism, medicine, tech, academia, entertainment, and intelligence.

Accepted students should expect to dedicate a dozen full days to the program during the summer of 2018, as well as half a dozen partial days. By the end of the summer, students will have met leading executives in several competitive industries and will have created cover letters, resumes, and career development plans—preparing them to take full advantage of recruiting opportunities as soon as they arrive on campus.

For more information, please contact The Upward Project’s founder Michael Damiano at mjdamiano@mac.com.