

# SEMESTER REVIEW

## | Upward Bound Math-Science |

### Where Are They Now?



**Basant R.  
Kandel**

Class of  
2012

Basant graduated from Upward Bound and Middletown High School in 2012 and is currently attending the University of Connecticut, Storrs pursuing a major in Physics.

While at UConn, Basant has become heavily involved with the U.S. Air Force Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC). He has been appointed both Wing Mission Support Group Commander and Wing Vice Commander, and is the first ever recipient of the Major General Joseph S. Ward Award.

Basant has been selected as a Combat Systems Officer for the United States Air Force. Following graduation, he will be attending Undergraduate Combat Systems Officer Training, and will commission into the U.S. Air Force as a 2nd Lieutenant.

Basant says that what he misses most about high school and UBMS are organized sports, small classes, lunch at Usdan, and of course, hanging out with Miguel.

When asked if he had any advice to pass along to current UBMS students, here's what he had to say:

**"Show up everyday with a positive attitude and avoid doing the bare minimum because you get out of life what you put in."**



*Upward Bound at the Lincoln Memorial in D.C.!*

## From the Director's Desk

Happy Holidays. It has been a pleasure serving as the new Director for the Upward Bound Math and Science program for the last year. I cannot believe it has already been a year, however, I have learned so much and I am thoroughly enjoying the experience. It is so rewarding knowing that you are helping to shape the lives of our future leaders.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Wesleyan University for its unwavering commitment to the Upward Bound program.

*UBMS on the steps of the U.S. Capitol Building in D.C.*





## Class of 2015 Profile

This graduating class included the Valedictorians of both Middletown High School & Maloney High School.

Where are the 2015er's now?

- Trinity College (Hartford, CT)
- Harvard University (Cambridge, MA)
- Brown University (Providence, RI)
- United States Military Academy Preparatory School (West Point, NY)
- University of Connecticut, Storrs (6) (Mansfield, CT)
  - 1 in the Honors Program
- Southern Methodist University (Dallas, TX)
- Sacred Heart University (Fairfield, CT)
- Central Connecticut State University (2) (New Britain, CT)
- University of Hartford (Hartford, CT)
- University of Connecticut, Hartford (Hartford, CT)
- Eastern Connecticut State University (3) (Willimantic, CT)
- Keene State University (Keene, NH)
- Middlesex Community College (11) (Middletown, CT)
- Stonehill College (North Easton, MA)
- University of Connecticut, West Hartford (West Hartford, CT)
- Baldwin Wallace University (Berea, OH)
- Roger Williams University (Bristol, RI)
- Salve Regina University (Newport, RI)
- Delaware State University (Dover, DE)
- Post University (Waterbury, CT)

I would also like to take a minute to reflect on all we have accomplished this fall. We have made some exciting changes to the program and I am elated with the direction we are moving towards. Some notable accomplishments are the creation of the Parent Group. It is so important to have parents involved in the process. I am also excited about the work we have been doing with the seniors in our program, meeting one-on-one with every senior and their parent(s). We want you all to know how much we care about your future and are investing time in preparing you for the next chapter of your journey. Another accomplishment has been updating our website. Please feel free to visit as we have up to date information on what is happening in the program.

I am also looking forward to what is ahead of us. We have partnered with Invisible Men and Women of Color Collective to bring to fruition a mentorship program, My Brother and Sisters Keeper. This collaboration will be beneficial to both Wesleyan and Upward Bound students as we explore leadership opportunities for Wesleyan students and guidance and role-modeling for Upward Bound students. We also have more exciting and enriching opportunities ahead this spring, stay tuned...

Teshia Levy-Grant '00

*Sophomores Angel Rivera and Chelsea Anthony work on snap circuits during our Engineer Your Career Saturday Session in November*



## College Visits 2015

Throughout the summer and fall, we took our seniors and juniors to various college campuses to gauge their interest during the application process. These trips included tours, information sessions with the admissions office and current students, as well as some that included over night stays in the dorms.

- Wesleyan University (Middletown, CT)
- University of Connecticut, Storrs (Mansfield, CT)
- Western Connecticut State University (Danbury, CT)
- American University (Washington, D.C.)
- Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.)
- Mitchell College (New London, CT)
- University of New Haven (New Haven, CT)
- Southern Connecticut State University (New Haven, CT)
- Connecticut College (New London, CT)
- University of Saint Joseph (West Hartford, CT)
- Trinity College (Hartford, CT)
- Mount Holyoke College (South Hadley, MA)

## Visiting Colleges



*University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, CT*



*Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA*



*Trinity College in Hartford, CT*



*Connecticut College in New London, CT*

## Saturday Sessions

This semester we held a variety of Saturday Sessions that ranged from interactive activities with outside organizations, to simply providing a vehicle in which our students could be productive and get their schoolwork done with the assistance of some of our tutors. Here is a look at a few of our Saturdays throughout the course of the semester.

### Saturday Homework Jam Sessions



One of our brand new initiatives is a program called Saturday Homework Jam Sessions in which we invite our students to come to Wesleyan campus on a Saturday for about 4 hours to do their homework. It sounds quite simple, but we have found that when we provide our students with the space and the resources to do their homework on a Saturday afternoon...they will do it!

We reserved 3 lecture halls in a Wesleyan academic building and allocated each room to a specific purpose — collaborative work with other students, one-on-one tutoring and silent individual work space. We had six of our tutors there proctoring and assisting students with their homework when they needed it. And most importantly, we provided pizza and beverages. It was a blast and we're looking forward to more homework jam sessions next semester!

### Common App Bootcamps

Another resource we offered multiple times this semester were Common App Bootcamps for our seniors. The Common Application can be tricky, especially when you find yourself applying to many schools with different supplementary materials. So we make sure to always be available to guide our seniors through the application process and ensure that everyone has all of their materials into their prospective colleges on time.



### Engineering Your Career

Each year the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) visits Wesleyan University to partner with the Upward Bound Math-Science Program and host a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) day. Their mission is to “Stimulate women to achieve full potential in careers as engineers and leaders, expand the image of the engineering profession as a positive force in improving the quality of life, and demonstrate the value of diversity.” In our case, they come in and inspire **both young men and women**. With their help, we hope many of our students will go on to many exciting careers.



## New Parents Information Session

Being new to any program or organization can be a whirlwind — especially when that program is centered around your child's education and future. But no need to worry! The UBMS staff are always available via phone, email or scheduled appointment to meet with you and answer any and all questions you may have. But in addition to that, we hosted an information session for all of our new parents to come together and share their inquiries, concerns and hopes for the upcoming year.



While the students were having a blast being creative with their collaborative engineering skills, we hosted a panel discussion in an adjacent room. We had three expert panel sessions — one with former UBMS parents, one with college admissions officers or employees of the state's education department, and one with former UBMS students. We were thrilled to have over a dozen alumni, and current Wesleyan students from Invisible Men and Women of Color, participate!

Perhaps most wonderful about this new parent session were all the eager participants who traveled to campus to impart their wisdom and share their positive experiences with our program. We found this new parents session to be a huge success and extremely helpful for all of our families new to the UBMS family.

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## Off-Campus Trips

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### Focus on Diversity Summit, Mount Holyoke College

Two of our senior students — **Gifty Mensah** and **Frhana Mariya** — were nominated and then selectively invited to participate in the Focus on Diversity summit hosted by Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Mount Holyoke is one of the finest all-women liberal arts colleges in the country, and to be nominated for this program, students had to be “exceptional female seniors of a culturally diverse background who have demonstrated outstanding academic performance, leadership skills and co-curricular involvement.”



The Focus on Diversity summit was an overnight program for prospective Mount Holyoke students of color who have “championed diversity causes at their school.” During the program, students

were hosted by a current Mount Holyoke student, and had the opportunity to attend workshops, cultural performances and everyday college classes. We are so proud of Gifty and Frhana for being invited to participate in such a prestigious event and for representing UBMS up in Massachusetts!

## Plays



We think it's very important to introduce our students to the arts, so each semester we'll take trips to see plays put on by professional actors around Connecticut. Last Spring we took about a dozen students to dinner, and then see "Brownsville Song" at the Long Wharf Theatre in New Haven. More recently, we had four students, juniors Mickayla Joseph and Te'Rell Knox, and Sophomores Denia Campbell & Nasim Aouji, accompany us to "Indian Joe" at the Norma Terris Theatre in Chester, CT and had a wonderful lunch at Amici's on Main Street.

We believe that these experiences can serve as a much-needed break from the weekend homework grind, as well as a reward for all our students' hard work and determination. Additionally, we think that exposure to the arts is essential to guaranteeing a well-rounded education.

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## Celebrations

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### Culture Potluck

This December, we hosted a potluck for all of our UBMS families — students and parents — in which we invited everyone to bring a dish that represented their own culture. Students and their families brought food from all over the world. It was amazing to get a taste of everyone's diverse culture — and of course it was delicious!



### Holiday Party

And of course, we couldn't close out the semester without a holiday party for our hard-working students! We reserved a lecture hall on Wesleyan

campus, where the winners of this semester's biography competition (see below) were able to present their work and won a Kindle Fire!

Afterwards, we moved to the private Wesleyan dining hall for a big brunch feast and had a variety of fun holiday activities that our students participated in for prizes. Best of all was the competition in which students had to dress their classmates like a human Christmas tree! It was a great time with lots of fun and laughter; and a wonderful way to end the semester and kick off the holidays.



## Tutoring

### When?

Every Tuesday & Thursday

2:30 – 5 PM

### Where?

UBMS Office on Wesleyan  
University Campus

41 Lawn Avenue

Middletown, CT 06457

### Transportation

Transportation can be arranged to and from tutoring sessions. For more information, visit the website at <http://www.wesleyan.edu/ubms/>.

## Tutoring Sessions

*“Through out the last few years of high school, I started losing my pace and ambition to be successful, with the help and resources of Upward Bound, I was able to exceed my expectations and abilities to learn. I am currently enrolled in a criminal justice program and waiting to enlist in the Army to pursue my career. What really helped me move forward was the resourcefulness and kindness of the faculty and tutors at the Upward Bound office. I became really close to all, especially the tutors, so they could have a full understanding of how to best help me pursue my future. The 3 to 4 hour sessions became more than just learning — it gave me an unforgettable bond with everyone I encountered. And that is something I will never forget and will always recognize.”*

— Nick Vargas, Class of 2012



Tutoring sessions are an integral facet of the UBMS program. We selectively hire tutors of various backgrounds and academic fields of study who are currently attending Wesleyan University. We highly encourage all of our students to take advantage of such a great (and free!) resource at their disposal.

### Virtual Tutoring

This year we implemented a brand new initiative into our tutoring program called Virtual Tutoring. If students are unable to attend our twice-weekly tutoring sessions, or if they seek homework help on assignments that are due before a student can get help in a tutoring session, we now offer virtual tutors for

students to consult with.

Tutors are available at specific times on Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays — usually after dinner time from around 7:30 - 10:30 PM. Students can reach out to them via email, instant message or Skype for homework help.

Additionally, students can reach out to the tutoring coordinator, Emmakristina Sveen, at ANY TIME and she will attempt to set you up with a virtual tutor for whenever you need one. Her contact email is [esveen@wesleyan.edu](mailto:esveen@wesleyan.edu) and the subject line of your email should read: “Virtual Tutoring.”

Our tutors offer essay editing services outside of the tutoring sessions, however we do require that students follow up with the tutors, either in session or via virtual tutoring to understand the tutor’s edits and how to better their writing skills in the future.

It truly is a great opportunity to have knowledgeable tutors at your disposal for whenever you need help with your schoolwork. We highly recommend that parents encourage their students to utilize this resource as much as possible!

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## Meet Your Tutors

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### Thafir Elzofri

**Math (all subjects) & Spanish**

**Available during Thursday tutoring sessions from 2:30-5 PM.**

Wesleyan, Class of 2019

Major: Math

Hometown: Oakland, California — but attended school in Berkeley, California

*When he’s not doing schoolwork or working at UBMS, Thafir enjoys writing comedy and sitcoms, as well as performing stand-up comedy. He is involved in various extracurricular clubs at Wesleyan such as Middle Eastern Perspectives and the Muslim Student Association, and volunteers for Paper Airplanes. In addition to UBMS, Thafir volunteers as a tutor for Syrian refugees.*



Taisa Vasilkova

**Science (all subjects) & Spanish**

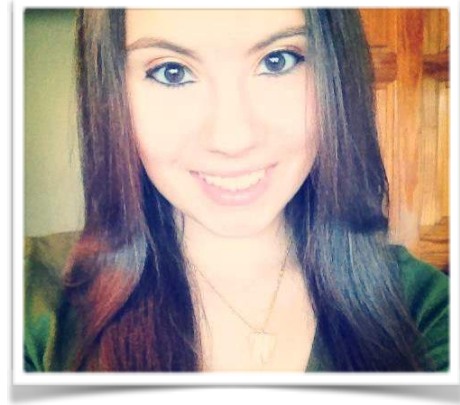
**Available during Tuesday tutoring sessions from 2:30-5 PM.**

Wesleyan, Class of 2018

Major: Neuroscience & Behavior

Hometown: New York City

*During her free time, Taisa enjoys singing, as well as coordinates events for first class, first generation students at Wesleyan University.*



Helen Karimi

**Can tutor in any subject!**

**Available for virtual tutoring via appointment, just reach out via email.**

[hkarimi@wesleyan.edu](mailto:hkarimi@wesleyan.edu)

Wesleyan, Class of 2019

Double Major: Neuroscience and Molecular Biology & Biochemistry

With a Certificate in Molecular Biophysics

Hometown: Boston, Massachusetts

*Outside of the classroom, Helen is involved with the Best Buddies program on Wesleyan campus. She also enjoys playing volleyball and watching TedTalks.*

Emmakristina Sveen

**English, Social Studies, Civics, French, Spanish, Essay Writing, & Public Speaking**

**Available for virtual tutoring at any time, just reach out via email.**

[esveen@wesleyan.edu](mailto:esveen@wesleyan.edu)

Wesleyan, Class of 2017



Major: Government, Concentration in American Politics

Minor: Romance Languages, Concentration in French & Spanish Language Studies

Hometown: Denver, Colorado

*In addition to working with UBMS, Emmakristina is actively involved in politics — on campus and at the state and national level — in which she delivers many speeches and contributes to various political publications about the importance of youth engagement in politics. Additionally, she is currently in the process of publishing her first academic research for the Wesleyan Government Department and volunteers as an English teacher for Congolese refugees. Emmakristina was recruited to play varsity lacrosse at Wesleyan, so she is a good resource to reach out to if you are interested in playing sports in college. She also was admitted to Wesleyan with a Common App Arts Supplement for performing in guitar, ukulele and singing and musical theatre, so she is also a good contact if you have a talent you want to pursue in college.*

Other tutors include: Hannah Bolotin, Chloe Qiu, Maya Dorn and Adi Gandhi

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## Redesigned Tutoring Spaces

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*Collaborative work space*



*1-on-1 work space & computer lab*



*Denia Campbell hard at work in the silent library*



Over the summer, we redesigned and remodeled our tutoring spaces drawing from studies on productive work environments for students. We designated 3 different spaces to different academic purposes (from left to right): collaborative work space, one-on-one tutoring work space and the silent library. Each is equipped with our extensive supply of text books, novels and other academic references, as well as are designed with colors and images to stimulate the mind and induce focus.

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## Ascend

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The Ascend Program is an exciting program designed to help students prepare for future educational goals through tutoring, hands-on enrichment projects, cultural field trips, and special events. The Ascend students are required to meet after school twice each week with a Wesleyan student who will assist with homework assignments, schoolwork, hands-on enrichment sessions in math, science, music, art, social studies, language arts, music, and technology.

The Marshmallow Challenge was a fun, creative, and collaborative activity enjoyed by both the Wesleyan and Ascend students. They had to build the tallest free standing structure out of 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape and one marshmallow.




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## Biography Competition

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This semester we asked our students to partake in an assignment in which they wrote the biography of one of their classmates using a unique and personal literary style. We were blown away by everyone's pieces, but specifically wanted to recognize the 2 winners of the competition and share their amazing work here.

### Winning Author: Melanie Tirado

*Christopher Tewksbury was born in 1998 in Meriden, Connecticut and is currently a senior at Middletown High School. When he had asked his dad about the story of his birth he said that he missed it. The nurse told his dad that his son wouldn't be born for a while so he left and got pizza. While he was eating it a nurse walked up to him and told him that his son was already born. Christopher currently has two dogs but once had another. In his spare time he listens to music, reads or plays video games. When he's not doing that he's either wrestling or playing on the golf team, he even got his varsity letters for both. He said that his favorite genre is rock and even though difficult to pick he says his favorite song at the moment is Boston by Augustana.*

*His earliest memory is between two since he didn't know which one came first. The first one was on his 3rd birthday party where he was playing with his friends. His second memory was going to see the chef Emeril live with his mom and brother. He and his brother were called up to the front to get ice cream because they were being too loud. His happiest memory was during his 8th birthday. He was down in Maryland with his aunt and family. She took them to a jousting match and Chris got a crown and everyone ate chicken with their hands. The match was kind of like a play, there was a black knight and white knight with others and they were all trying to win the hand of the princess.*

*His favorite place is his old house. It's right by Wesleyan and the only house on the street. He's had many great memories in the house.*

*When it comes to best friends Chris has had many. His first best friend was Michael Elizabeth. They went to preschool together they were the best of friends. In elementary school he had two best friends named Matt and Frank. They were all somewhat of misfits which is why they got along great. Once he moved they didn't really hang out as much. He current best friend is Carolyn. She's a interesting girl who's kind and gets along with everyone.*

*When he's older he wants to be some kind of scientist or engineer and hopes that when he grows up he will discover, invent or do something to change the world in some significant way. He also hopes that when he retires he and his wife will move back to his old house so he can spend his last few years in the house where he grew up. His definition of happiness is doing the things you love with people you love. He's learned that if you try your best at something you will succeed and you might not be the best but you'll do well. His grandfather always told him how important friends are because you always need someone there you can trust and who looks out for you.*

*He considers himself Catholic but that's because that's how his parents raised him as. He believes in Heaven and Hell but doesn't like religious history because it was the cause of so many wars. So many people have been murdered or are persecuted for who they are and what they believe in. Chris believes that in the end no matter what someone believes everyone has their own unique belief system, even if they belong to a formal religion or are atheist.*

*He cares about preserving the planet and taking care of the animals but also cares about the people who are suffering that don't need to. He cares about advancing society. He says that he is egotistical and that he thinks he's pretty much the best at everything he's good at, but at the same time he's not a very courageous person. He would like to switch those two aspects and be more humble about the things he's good at and more willing to do new and different things. Patience is another thing he'd want to change about himself, he would like to learn how to be more patient.*

*Chris looks up to Albert Einstein because he really wasn't too intelligent but he thought about the world differently than everyone else. Certain things that have shaped Chris as a person would be the friendships he's made, almost getting mauled by a raccoon and having his brother save him, Powder Ridge closing and then joining wrestling instead of learning to snowboard, moving halfway through fourth grade and adjusting to a new school, and getting accepted to UBMS back when they still had Prospect. Christopher Tewksbury said, "I'm both intellectually mature for my age and the most childish person you'll ever meet."*

## **Winning Author: Anonymous**

### *The Bible To Pick Up Denia Off Her Feet*

*First off, throw pick up lines out of your head. Do not start a conversation with; you must be Jamaican, because Jamaican me crazy. This is not the proper way to approach Denia. In order to get smooth you must not be reckless and imbibe these steps.*

*To start off you need to understand her background. Jamaica, country of culture. Considered a cultural superpower, having well know music and culture spread throughout the world. Denia is proud to be part of such a nationality. (When you see Denia always connect by starting of with Jamaica in this way you connect easier.) She was*

*born in Meriden Connecticut on December 16, 2000. (Remember this date and bring her flowers and Jamaican food). She lived in Jamaica as a little girl. Her parents, Keisha and Dean, are from the capital of Jamaica, Kingston. She also has three younger sisters and a younger brother.*

*Denia attends Platt High School in Meriden. In school, Denia loves math — it's her favorite subject. Due to having such a strong interest in math, her favorite teacher is also a math teacher. Mrs. Ringrose is one of her favorite teachers in school and she teaches 9th grade and 10th grade geometry. During conversations with Denia — if they go blank — just talk about math. During this time, math pick up lines can come in handy. Such as, "my love for you is like pi... never ending." Or, "are you a 45 degree angle? Because you're acute-y." Denia is an academically motivated student. She works hard and strives to perform with excellence in all of her classes, but she tends to procrastinate a little. Even though she may procrastinate, she still does well in school*

*Moreover, Denia is an interesting individual. She is a shy girl and a quiet person. But building a strong relationship can overcome this roadblock. This is where you need to pay attention and do well in order to date her. Make sure that you keep all the attention on her when you're alone. One key fact to remember is- she begins to become comfortable with you once you understand her better. She becomes a completely opposite person. She begins to talk, laugh and is much more open than before. So keeping this in mind, remember to build a connection and then ask her out. Don't go in straight in with a cheesy pick up line. And remember to make her laugh. After following these steps, you're ready to move on to the date portion.*

*Furthermore, here are some ways to connect with Denia on a date. Denia has interests in music and food. When you're out at a restaurant, order her favorite food, which is Ackee and saltfish and fried dumpling. Say this to her, "Jamaica's national dish is on point like you." During the whole date, remember that music is the essential part to get smooth. Pay the DJ extra cash to play Reggae or dancehall. That way, she'll be ready to dance with you instantly.*

*Taking in all this knowledge, information and steps, you should now score yourself in the picture with Denia. Biographically remember to go in and talk about Jamaica and connect with her on that level. Remember to break the ice with her and break her comfort zone. Then finally, remember to bring in the music and food. After incorporating all these steps, you can learn to score a date with Denia and truly pick her up off her feet.*