

## 4th Session: The Journey Starts Here

### Setting the Stage

Today's session is the last one in the UCanGo2 Student Workbook. Students will learn about resources that are available to them as they plan for college and beyond. Remember that many middle school students convince themselves they aren't college material before they've given it much thought. Our goals are to affirm that they CAN go to college and to cultivate ideas that will help turn their desire to go to college into a reality.

#### Goal

This section will show students that it's not too early to begin thinking about going to college. Students will be given information about the financial aid options available to them to help them pursue a higher education.

#### Estimated Time

- 45 – 50 minutes

#### Objectives

- Emphasize the importance of school work/homework in middle school and high school.
- Show students the value of college savings accounts.
- Introduce basic concepts of financial aid.
- Encourage students to do whatever it takes to make their dreams come true.

#### Materials

- Student workbooks
- Copies of *Test Your Knowledge*
- Instructor's guide

Note: If possible, you may want to consider contacting a student who is currently enrolled in college and ask him/her to attend the last session. Ask this student to be prepared to share a little about his/her college experience and to answer questions about college in general.

### Show Time

#### Welcome Everyone

Welcome students and thank them for taking an interest in their future. Tell them you appreciate their participation and their great comments in each session.

(Before this session, you may want to think back on some of the comments made by students in prior sessions. Mention a few of them to the students today and tell them what YOU learned from their comments and questions.)

#### Introduce yourself and any other presenters

Introduce yourself. Also introduce your visiting college student if applicable. Advise the students to be thinking about questions they may want to ask the visitor later on.

### *Go over instructions for the day*

- There's no such thing as a silly or stupid question.
- Always show respect to the person speaking, whether it's you, another presenter or a student sharing information.
- Stay on topic with questions and answers.
- Don't talk over each other.
- Sensitive and personal questions should wait until after the session.
- Participation and questions are encouraged, but you won't be forced to take part.
- Have fun and learn!

### *Start with an ice breaker*

Remind students that in the previous session they were asked to jot down one or two study habits from *The Perfect 10* they would try this week. Ask volunteers to share which habits they chose to work on and any changes that resulted from their efforts. Ask if anyone enlisted their parents' help. Emphasize that parents, teachers and counselors want them to succeed and are all eager to help in any way they can.

## Workbook Content

How to handle the student workbook is up to you. You can encourage the students to read the content and fill in the worksheets before or during the session. The workbook can be read silently or aloud.

### *The Road from Middle School to High School and The Road from High School to College*

Give the students time to read both segments on page 14 of the student workbook. Be prepared to give information about classes offered in middle school and high school that will best prepare them for college.

If a college student is present, this may be a good time for him/her to speak for a few minutes about college life. Be sure to allow time for questions from your students.

Ask students to write down two or three college choices on the lines provided in the workbook. If parents are present, allow time for discussion between parents and students before joining the conversation.

### *Paying for College*

1. **Save whatever you can.** Briefly cover the information about Oklahoma 529 plans. Some students may wonder if they can use their 529 funds at an out-of-state college. 529 beneficiaries can use the funds at thousands of eligible colleges nationwide and abroad. Point out the charts that show how different savings plans can grow over time, and explain how compounded interest works.
2. **Learn all you can about financial aid.** Explain that most college students need some type of financial aid. Mention the four general categories of aid that are listed, and explain that they're covered in more detail in the glossary at the end of their workbooks.
3. **Free money first, loans last.** Explain grants and scholarships. If students have internet access, direct them to the [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org) and [StudentAid.ed.gov](http://StudentAid.ed.gov) websites to research grants and scholarships that may be available to them. [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org) also has information about the average costs of attending various types of colleges in Oklahoma.

Be sure to mention many colleges have their own scholarships, which they award to students for various reasons, especially to incoming freshmen.

Be ready to answer questions about Oklahoma's Promise. Advise students to give information about Oklahoma's Promise to their parents, including the appropriate website, [okpromise.org](http://okpromise.org). Some students may assume their families make too much money to qualify for this program, but tell them only their parents will know for sure. Stress that students are first able to apply for Oklahoma's Promise in the 8th grade, but they can also apply in the 9th or 10th grade. Applications postmarked after June 30 at the end of their sophomore year will not be accepted. Oklahoma's Promise scholarship funds must be used at approved colleges within the state of Oklahoma.

Advise students to keep their workbooks, since the list of websites in this section can be used for scholarship searches later on. Stress that it's not too early (or too late) to develop the study habits necessary to earn the grades they'll need for college scholarships. This may be a good time to show them the glossary in the back of their workbook and point out important financial aid terms. A glossary is also available online in the 'Paying for College' section at [OCAP.org](http://OCAP.org).

Distribute copies of the *Test Your Knowledge* handout or have students find it in their workbooks. Allow students time to complete the exercise.

Answers to *Test Your Knowledge* quiz:

1. L   2. A   3. D, N   4. J   5. E, F, H   6. G   7. B   8. C   9. I   10. O   11. K   12. M

## Wrap-Up

Thank the group for their attendance, and praise them for having the desire to go to college. Also remember to give a word of thanks to any other visitors who may be present, including your guest college student and parents who may be attending.

Remind students that every one of them has a fan club full of people devoted to them and to helping them achieve their goals and fulfill their dreams, and that you're one of their fans. Leave them with positive feelings about going to college and knowing they have the resources they need to learn more about planning, preparing and paying for college right at their fingertips. Also remind them of the staff at their school who can help them at any time.