

Why emphasize UIL academics?

Students' point of view

What are the benefits of building a competitive UIL academic program? We will allow students to answer that question.

UIL stresses that success comes from hard work.

- UIL has:
 - given me confidence
 - allowed me to build a relationship with my coach
 - taught me that practice does pay off
 - encouraged me in my education
 - shown me that there are others out there like me
 - brought me new friendships
 - but most of all, UIL has challenged me to be the best that I can be and shown me that that may not always be first place.
- Thanks to UIL, my will to succeed helped me become valedictorian.
- I realized that winning and succeeding don't come by luck. I had to go out there and earn every medal I got.
- UIL taught me one lesson that I hope to always remember: procrastination may get you through the initial stages but it will never work in the long run.
- I learned that I might have been good in my event, but there were hundreds of others just like me. I had to go the extra mile to distinguish myself.
- Hard work brings great rewards. Not just the school-paid meals and medals, but the feeling you get from being first place. Even if you only experience that once, you have it forever. That reward gives you the strength to put forth the hard work to excel in other areas of your life.
- UIL competition taught me life lessons. It's not about knowing that Theodore Dreiser wrote Sister Carrie, or being able to write the perfect lead for an editorial. It's about working hard, spending lunch hour flipping through flash cards with Literary Criticism teammates, and being open and prepared to learn and grow.
- My UIL experience helped me to understand that people never realize how much potential they have until they work hard toward a goal and achieve it.

- UIL has helped me to deepen my level of knowledge, to set goals and to achieve them through hard work. My UIL experience kept me on track during high school and helped me to develop study skills.

- Because of UIL academics, I know that hard work pays off, no matter if or where you place when the competition is over. Winning isn't just about medals but about getting something out of everything you do, and I have.

UIL teaches students how to get along with all types of people.

- Having to work with 15 people, all of whom have different ideas, beliefs and characteristics, has taught me how to get along with all types of people.

- During my UIL career, I was able to meet many people. I realized what an elite group it was when I saw the area valedictorians and salutatorians in the newspaper. I knew most of them from UIL competition.

- I used to think of the UIL participants as nerds, but after spending a year with them, I learned that they are a fun group to be with.

- What stands out to me in my four years of UIL competition is the incredible sense of community that developed between the competitors in my school. We ate meals together, shared cramped bus seats together; we encouraged and cheered each other on; we waited on the edges of our seats for the results of our friends' competitions. UIL was truly unique in that it made a group of very strong individuals into a fully functioning team.

- UIL contests have taught me how to work together as a team to reach our ultimate goal of winning a state championship. The team bonded every time we had to.

UIL ignites a thirst for knowledge.

- When I first started competing in UIL academic contests, I was little more than a misguided imp filling in as a substitute in a journalism contest. But I caught the fever quickly, and I fought to be the best in these events. Soon, journalism wasn't enough and before I finally got out of there, I had close to 10 events under my belt.

- I competed in UIL accounting, calculator, current issues and events, mathematics, number sense, spelling and science. Every one of these areas gave me the unique opportunity to apply what I had learned in a classroom to a competition, which caused each subject to come alive.

- By motivating me to study science and many other subjects, UIL has helped me learn far more than what was taught in high school.

- UIL allowed me to discover new information that sparked a love for learning.

UIL unlocks students' potential and expands their horizons.

- The UIL academic experience is about much more than just competing. It's about making new friends with similar interests, and traveling to places you otherwise may have never gone. My experiences in the UIL academic contests have taught me the value of preparation and practice that is necessary for success.
- To succeed in the UIL science contest, you need to understand, not memorize. This skill of understanding will help me throughout the rest of my life.
- My particular UIL experience has not just offered academic challenges and long-lasting friendships, but it has provoked thoughts of literature, society and values that have led to the solidification of who I am and what I believe.
- UIL challenged me as a human being. It had to look inside myself and find something I didn't even know was there.
- UIL academics helped me realize my strengths and weaknesses. I learned that I do have talents and strong ones. I also found out that studying can be fun and exciting.
- Through UIL, I learned that I am my hardest competition. Every year, I tried to beat my previous record and ultimately reinvent myself.

Through UIL, students find practical applications for what they learn in regular class.

- I also became a better speaker. I am now able to refute arguments logically and can think on my feet, much to the chagrin of my parents.
- Through my participation in UIL, I have learned the value of the art of communication. I have learned that I must be prepared and have confidence. Because of the confidence I have gained, I have taught myself to be a ventriloquist.
- UIL has been an extremely important aspect of my high school career. It taught me discipline, showed me fun, and most importantly taught me a deep love of literature.
- Over the past two years, UIL has been a place for me to learn and grow intellectually. It has been challenging, but I have enjoyed every minute of it.

- Participating in UIL events has made me a more well-rounded person. Being in extemporaneous speaking gave me a chance to stay up with what was going on in the world and then present my views on some of the biggest current events and issues.
- UIL has allowed me to push myself in areas that class work does not normally include. This has allowed me to do and learn things most high school students never dream of.
- UIL gave me a chance to go above and beyond what is taught in regular class. Everyone learns algebra and geometry, but UIL takes those concepts and applies them to challenging problems.

UIL academics prepare students for college and work.

- Who knew studying vocabulary words would result in a better overall understanding of the English language? As I read complex literature in preparation for college, words I would not have otherwise known jumped out of me on every page. I comprehend the multiple meanings of each word, and I have no one but UIL to thank for that.
- Participating in UIL academic competition meant fun trips, big medals, spending quality time with great friends, and the satisfaction of knowing that the knowledge I gained from competition has laid the foundation for a successful career.
- Lit Crit gave me a plethora of knowledge, and I earned important test-taking strategies and leadership responsibilities. The knowledge I have obtained gives me an advantage over others, and this means better chances for scholarships and more of an insight as I prepare for college. I feel I am adequately prepared for the challenges ahead.
- UIL academics represented an extraordinary experience for me. I gave me an education in itself because it exposed me to higher-level calculus and hard sciences. I knew that in order to be successful, it was necessary to improve my understanding of these concepts. My UIL experience will not only be remembered, it also gave me a foundation to begin college.

Competing in UIL teaches students the importance of commitment, sacrifice and perseverance.

- My UIL experience also taught me the value of perseverance, dedication and sacrifice. The State Meet was on the same day as my senior prom.
- Being in speech and debate has presented me with the opportunity to experience never being home on a Friday or Saturday and instead getting no sleep and dressing up in a suit and choking tie while heaving around six full boxes, each the size of a stand-alone tool box, only to arrive in a classroom where I sat for 90 minutes and write and read and

speaking in front of a crowd to bring home a little trophy or medal. AND I HAD THE BEST TIME OF MY LIFE DOING IT!

- I always wanted to be an athlete. Through my involvement in UIL academics, I proved to myself that I possess those same characteristics that make an athlete successful: dedication, stamina, zeal and poise. No gold medal could be more valuable than that.
- My UIL academic experience has challenged me to be better than just “average.” It made me strive to be the best, no matter how much I had to give up. It opened the door to many new opportunities and experiences, and for the most part, I learned how to have fun while studying.
- Through the UIL science competitions, I have been very driven to work hard and absorb as much knowledge as possible, and without the competitive factor of UIL, I would not have gone nearly as far in my studies.
- In competition, the best may not always win, and if you find yourself in that position, you have to keep trying. Competitions and meets are a lot like life in that sometimes it’s hard, frustrating and requires a lot of work, but in the end, it was worth it. Ultimately, UIL academics emphasizes “requires minimal talent and relentless dedication.”
- Being involved in UIL academics taught me that competition is important, not only on the football field and basketball court, but also in the classroom. Competition enriches students’ lives by giving them exciting goals and challenging them to work hard toward those goals.
- Competing in UIL academics has given me the chance to prove our school can excel in anything. It’s just a matter of who is devoted enough and has the willpower to get up Saturday mornings, get on the bus and work toward a goal.

UIL academics build student self-confidence.

- All the commitment and studying proved to me that with a little self-motivation, that I can achieve anything I put my mind to. I feel secure in entering my first year of college and know that deep inside, I will succeed and do excellent.
- Throughout my four years in high school, I have had the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities and organizations. However, no other extracurricular activity has meant more to me or had a greater impact on my life than UIL. My participation in UIL has rewarded me with wonderful memories, special friendships, the development of valuable skills and a sense of self-worth.

- UIL academics gave me the chance to push myself to the limit and see how far I could go. Now I know my limit is sky high and I should follow my dreams.
- I am more confident, articulate and self-assured because of UIL speaking events. I would not trade my UIL experiences for anything.
- To me, UIL has shown that through hard work and believe in yourself, great things can happen.
- UIL gave me a sense of empowerment, a freedom noting in high school could give me.
- Through UIL, I have developed confidence in myself, confident to try new challenges, meet new people, perform under pressure and strive for goals that seemed out of reach. Whether I won or lost, I always walked away with a little more confidence in myself.
- UIL taught me that I am not alone in the world and that I must be ready to compete to reach my goals. I also learned, conversely, that I have the ability to compete and make a name for myself.
- Competing in UIL academics means sacrificing time and energy so that success may be achieved. I don't mean just winning trophies and scholarships. My experience has given me invaluable test-taking skills and great confidence on any written exam.

Students learn to win and lose with grace and dignity.

- I learned at my last state contest the most important lesson —something my parents and teachers had told me for years. Being a winner doesn't mean winning first place. It's doing best and being proud of what you've done.
- Along with the pride and satisfaction in my accomplishments, UIL taught me that my fiercest opponent is myself.

UIL recognizes students for their intellect.

- I learned it's okay to be smart.
- UIL has been a place where I felt I belong, where it's not weird to be intelligent, where it's not considered "uncool" to study. UIL is a place where I have been challenged and have learned to persevere to achieve my goals.
- (UIL academics) has given me a chance to realize that I can do more than just play sports.

- It is our minds that separate us from the animals and makes us human. Therefore, what better celebration of the human spirit than a competition of the mind?
- High school serves to teach you things. UIL provides a way to prove that you know them.
- There is no arena of endeavor more competitive, where victory is more rewarding than the arena of the mind.
- Being rewarded for something you love to do is an unforgettable experience. Long after my medals are packed in a box marked “keepsakes,” UIL will be encouraging a new generation to believe and succeed.
- It is important to have competitions in which problem-solving and critical thinking are the key ingredients instead of physical tools such as speed or strength. It gives more people the chance to compete and belong to a team.

Students build lifelong friendships through UIL competitions.

- I have enjoyed preparing for my UIL events just as much as the actual competition itself. Competing in academic UIL has been as much fun as competing in sports in that you share fellowship with students from your own school as well as other schools. I will never forget these UIL trips.
- I could never describe the feeling I had as I stepped onto the stage in Austin. As our cast of “You Can’t Take It With You” began to perform, we began to feel less like the high school students we came as but more like the family we were portraying.
- UIL has consumed my after-school times, my weekends, my nights and my thoughts. There were times that I felt a bit overwhelmed, but UIL has given me confidence in my abilities, friends whom I will never forget, and teachers who were my inspiration.
- The time spent studying and competing has given me knowledge and drive essential to my major. More importantly, I have gained friends and mentors whose influences and lessons cannot be forgotten.
- The greatest thing that UIL has allowed me to do is meet new people. At every UIL meet I attended, I would make new friends from different schools.
- UIL academics allowed me not only to learn more outside of school, but provided the opportunity to travel with a great bunch of kids. My favorite memories of high school are from UIL.

- UIL academic competition has shown me what it means to be a part of a team. We all learned how to work with each other, and great friendships were formed during that process. What drew me to UIL math team was the competition and my desire to do my best for me, but what kept me there was the love and support and hard work given by those competing with me, and I great to try to do my best for them.

UIL academics provide some students with a direction in life.

- When I first began high school, I never really considered pursuing my education farther beyond the high school years. Until that point, school had not been particularly enjoyable for me and the thought of another four years didn't interest me very much. However, my feelings changed completely after I became involved in UIL one-act play.

- Being a competitor in calculator applications has been a true and great challenge. Coming from another country at a late stage in life was a somewhat difficult experience. Yet the UIL competitions have not only opened up new horizons academically, they have also helped me socialize and exposed me to many different perspectives.

- My experience and success in UIL debate and speaking has created a desire to pursue a career in law.

- Participating in UIL made “a world of difference” in my life. The skills I learned and developed helped me accomplish many goals. I hope to continue utilizing my speaking and analysis skills to make a difference for others and our world.

UIL provides today's students with a sense of vindication for their generation.

- In our society, the news and media is covered with stories of high school and junior high students committing terrible crimes. the Texas UIL system allows Texas youth to shine.

- Those who are concerned with the direction of our country in the hands of “Generation X” should look to the students in UIL. There they would find the dedication, integrity, innovation and intelligence possessed by the true leaders of the future.

Former UIL Director Dr. Bailey Marshall had an expression — almost a mantra — “We do it for the kids.”

He's right. We do. These dedicated young people — Texas' best and brightest — deserve it.