

The Basics of a University-Model® School

Trinity of Fairview Academy seeks to partner with parents to educate disciples for Christ and prepare them to walk in their Kingdom calling with excellence. The University-Model® School is an excellent method of schooling that assists us in fulfilling this vision in several ways. This short essay explains the basics of the model and how it serves as a vital part of our school mission.

What is a University-Model® Education?

University-Model® Schooling is a structure of education trademarked and supported by University-Model® Schools International (UMSI). Trinity of Fairview Academy is a member school of UMSI and is appreciative of the support of this outstanding organization, and that of our sister schools who have come before us. UM schools take the best aspects—the choice aspects—of traditional full-time public and private schools, as well as home schools, to give students from kindergarten all the way to high school a highly successful, college preparatory education. Students spend a portion of their schooling in a classroom at a central location learning with their peers from highly qualified trained professionals. A separate and most vital portion of their education is spent at home under the supervision of a parent. Specifically, elementary students attend school two days a week, and continue their education at home with a parent on the alternate days of the week. For middle school students, it is three days in the central classroom. Once a student is in high school, they attend class at school on the days in which their classes are offered. Ultimately, when students graduate from a UMS, they are exceptionally prepared for the academic, organizational, and extra-curricular demands expected of them in college and in the real world.

The original University-Model® Test School was founded by a group of parents who were looking for options for educating their children that incorporated their Christian values. And thus UM schooling was developed to fulfill two basic purposes: to offer students the opportunity to acquire a high degree of academic achievement and to preserve and strengthen the God-ordained family relationship in which the Christian faith is most effectively fostered. The goal is to cooperate with parents who aspire to raise up children to live like citizens of God's kingdom in a world that desperately needs to experience the blessings of God through faith-filled people.

Partnering with Parents

The Bible gives parents authority and responsibility of raising their children with the goal of becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. In certain matters, such as that of education, that parental responsibility and authority, although not surrendered, may be shared with an educational institution when the parents consider it desirable or necessary. In such a case, a UMS will assist, and not supplant, parents in their work of training and educating their children. One of the most significant aspects of UM schooling is its ability to utilize parents in partnership with highly qualified professional instructors. This partnership fosters the opportunity for parents 1) to spend more time with their children at the age in which boys and girls come to a saving faith, 2) to be involved in the out-of class instructional responsibilities, and 3) to be encouraged, supported and equipped with the skills necessary to educate their children.

1. More time with their children

According to information gathered by well-known pollster George Barna, the most critical period when 94% of all boys and girls come to a saving faith in Christ is before the age of 18; 90% before the age of 14! Since parents are the most influential factor in this decision, it is vital that models of education exist that recognize the significance of keeping parents involved with their children during the early, critical years of a child's education. When parents do not see their children, relationships are difficult, and their role in the education of their children can be eroded. The more hours a parent has face-to-face with his or her child, the more naturally involvement in education will flow out of that relationship.

2. Involvement in out-of class instructional responsibilities

UMS use instructional designs that effectively integrate the educational responsibilities of parents with those of teachers. At Trinity of Fairview Academy, parents will receive digital instructions from the classroom teacher on a regular basis outlining home-day assignments for academic classes, follow-up study over covered material, and preparation/review needed for the next class. In some subjects, responsibilities are divided between the classroom teacher and the parent-teacher at home. In Language Arts, for example, the responsibility for spelling review and testing may be turned over to the parent, whereas the classroom teacher will introduce and initially dictate new spelling lists. In other courses, particularly those that require most of the teaching to be done in the

classroom— art, physical education, music—there will be very little time required of the parent. However, the importance of their involvement cannot be understated. The primary responsibility of the parent here is to track the progress of their child, monitoring how they are doing. Is their child becoming discouraged? Are they enjoying the class? What are they learning? Parents must show and express an interest even in these subjects to their children. If problems develop for their child, students can be led to notify the teacher much sooner than they would have done on their own. Critically important to understand is that on days that students are not in class, they are still “in school,” under the tutelage and/or supervision of a parent. The student enrollment process asks parents to confirm two statements: a) First, ***parents are asked to accept primary responsibility for the behavior and character development of their own children.*** b) Second, since UM students spend less time in the central classroom at school, ***parents are asked to ensure the proper supervision of their own children when they are in their classrooms at home.***

3. A community of support and encouragement

Even parents who understand and appreciate their God-ordained responsibility of being the primary spiritual and academic guides for their children can become overwhelmed in the world of education, especially when it involves children who have surpassed the age in which they do not remember a certain subject area, or when they have multiple children in multiple grades studying several different levels of curricula. UM schools provide a community in which parents receive much needed encouragement, confidence, time with their children, and practical tools for some of the most important work they will ever do.

The UMS model was designed to bring together the best attributes of home schooling with the best attributes of private Christian schools to provide a quality, cost-effective, college preparatory education in way that would give parents more time to impart the faith and values they held most dear to them. The ultimate goal is that of producing wholesome, competent men and women of character who make a positive difference in the next generation. At Trinity of Fairview Academy, we join other UM schools in this mission and trust that this model, in conjunction with the other components of our philosophy, will assist us in partnering with parents to raise the next generation to be Kingdom builders.