

What's Up with GEAR UP

Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs – Summer 2006

Summer in the City: From Washington State to Washington, D.C.

Lakes High School Principal Brian Laubach, along with Clover Park High School Assistant Principal Ed Judie, and the GEAR UP staff participated in GEAR UP's annual conference, held in Washington, D.C. and sponsored by the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships. We shared our accomplishments by leading three different conference presentations and participating in the "Gallery Walk" of effective practices and exemplary models.

Brian Laubach co-presented with GEAR UP Educational Specialist Ada Daniels. Their session, "**An Integrated Approach to Transitioning Students to Ninth Grade,**" played to a standing-room only house. They described Lakes' comprehensive program to introduce students to high school,

and talked about the ways it promotes academic excellence, builds student leadership, and demonstrates a collaborative GEAR UP/School/College process.

A second session, "**College Student Leaders,**" was co-presented by Educational Specialists Larry Crowley, Ada Daniels, and Carletta Garraway. They outlined the development of GEAR UP's leadership program for high school students, where students learn college-related information and share it with their peers. The program was well-attended by practitioners eager to hear details of how the program was put together.

"**More Than a College Tour: Engaging Students, Changing Attitudes**" was co-presented by Kathe Taylor, Director; Holly Colbert, Evergreen's Special Assistant to the Vice President for Finance and Administration; and Brad Burnham, Educational Specialist. Despite being scheduled in the last program slot on the last day of the conference, over 70 people attended to hear about the seventh grade campus visits GEAR UP staff designed to introduce students to college learning.



Brian Laubach presenting a session on middle to high school transition at the GEAR UP National Conference in July.

Have a Question? Contact GEAR UP staff:

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The Evergreen State College

GEAR UP Staff at
the National GEAR
UP Conference.
L to R:
Phyllis Lane
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Where Did the Summer Go?

One minute it was July, and the next minute students were returning to school. Where did the summer go?

We know where! GEAR UP provided \$69,000 in direct funding and \$42,000 in College Preparation Assistant (CPA) staff support to assist three summer schools, a Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) Learning Academy, and a credit retrieval academy. We also paid for forty-four (44) students to attend three, week-long, summer programs on college campuses: Cougar Quest at Washington State University, Washington Business Week at Pacific Lutheran University, and the Pre-college Workshop for Native American Students at the University of Puget Sound.

Lakes High School Lancer Academy

Eighty (80) ninth grade students attended the Lancer Academy. In addition to providing funding support, GEAR UP placed six College Preparation Assistants (CPAs) at the school to offer academic assistance in math and writing. GEAR UP staff also designed and coordinated four days of enrichment experiences, including field trips to the State Capitol, Museum of Flight and Point Defiance Zoo; workshops by the Pacific Science Center, Mad Scientists and MESA; and workshops on communication styles (True Colors), managing finances and transitioning to high school.

Clover Park High School Warrior Academy

Forty (40) ninth grade students attended the Warrior Academy. GEAR UP provided funding support and six College Preparation Assistants (CPAs) to work with the students. One highlight of the Academy was a four-day, overnight field trip to Elwha, where students took part in a field science program run by the Olympic Park Institute. The other two weeks of the program were spent in academic skill building, introductory college preparation, and personal development activities such as conflict resolution, team building and goal setting.

Oakville High School

GEAR UP provided funding to support 18 Oakville sophomores to participate in four-week summer internships where they gained practical job experience and designed an academic research project based on their work placement. Students worked in settings as varied as the Lucky Eagle Casino, a local greenhouse and nursery, city recreation, news media, and Chehalis River enhancement work sites.



A student displays the completed drum he made during a summer workshop at Oakville High School.

They will continue to work with teachers on their research projects until January, 2007. The purpose of the program is to provide an opportunity for students to collect and collate data, publish their findings and present their papers and/or exhibits at the annual spring science fair. Ultimately, the record of their experience will appear in their graduation portfolios. In addition to this support, GEAR UP staff also designed an enrichment experience for the regular summer school. Students learned how to make hand drums, stretching the hides, mounting them onto drum frames and painting the skins with a symbol of their choice.

Washington State University Cougar Quest

The chartered bus left at 7:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning in July, with 33 sleepy teenagers and two chaperones on board. Destination? Pullman, Washington. This week-long summer academic camp gave students an opportunity to explore career interests on the campus of one of Washington's largest universities. Twenty-two students from Clover Park High School and 11 from Lakes High School participated in the program, with GEAR UP funding all expenses. As one student reported, "At Cougar Quest, I learned that college can be fun and not just all work. I learned what happens on a day-to-day basis."

See "Summer" continued on back.

Teachers and Students Agree: GEAR UP's College Preparation Assistants (CPAs) Make a Positive Difference



Students who attended the Clover Park School District's WASL Learning Academy will recognize these college students (CPAs) who worked with them

Student Comments

Students' opinions of the CPAs are reflected in these comments:

Mr. ___ helped me understand more about writing an excellent paper. Sometimes I get frustrated with writing but he always told me to have confidence in myself. He helped me so much.

Mr. ___ helped me out a lot. He made problems easy to understand by putting it in ways I could break the problem down into things I already know.

Ms. ___ talked to me and gave me a real big helpful packet of scholarships and taught me about FastWeb.

Miss ___ was a really big help. She really challenged us and truly made us think about our answers.

Coming this Fall

Binders! Backpacks! Portfolios! (Oh my!)

GEAR UP will give students school supplies to put college information and awareness at their fingertips.

College is a choice. GEAR UP urges students to *choose* to be college-ready.

College Preparation Assistants (CPAs) are college students hired and trained by GEAR UP to provide academic assistance to students. GEAR UP targets college students and calls the CPAs *College Preparation Assistants* because we want our high school students to meet people like them who are actively pursuing their education and career goals. This summer, 23 CPAs worked in summer programs in Clover Park and Oakville School Districts.

GEAR UP asked students and teachers to give us feedback about the work of the CPAs. Both students and teachers were very positive about the CPA's impact on learning.

Student Feedback. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the 245 students who returned surveys agreed that "having CPAs in the classroom helped us learn." Conversely, almost two-thirds (63%) disagreed with the statement that "The CPAs made it easy for me by giving me the answers." About half (48%) of the students talked with a CPA about college.

Teacher Feedback. All 24 teachers from the WASL Learning Academy, Lakes Lancer Academy, and Warrior Academy said they would be willing to have a CPA in their classrooms again. Twenty-one (88%) agreed that "CPAs helped students focus on academic tasks."

Teacher Comments

Comments such as these were typical:

[My CPA] was simply superb. I could not be more pleased with her. She showed exceptional skills in working with some pretty difficult students at times.

[My CPA] was a delight. I usually don't like having assistants in the classroom because it is extra work to figure out what they can/will do – especially student tutors. However, ___ has changed my mind about this mainly due to his insight in recognizing students who need help and the initiative he takes in approaching them without waiting for me to give him the "OK."

“Summer” continued

Washington Business Week at Pacific Lutheran University

Washington Business Week “allows students to run a simulated business and compete with other participants from around the state. Each Company of 10-12 participants is matched with a volunteer mentor from the Business Community to help guide the Company through the week.” This past summer, ten students (seven from Lakes High School and three from Clover Park High School) took advantage of GEAR UP’s offer to support students who wanted to attend. Students reported different kinds of learning that would help prepare them for college, including the experience of meeting and getting along with new people. “I know at school or just in the ordinary world, I wouldn’t have challenged myself to be around people I normally wouldn’t. But my group really inspired me a lot.”

In Memory



Morris Perry

On May 31, 2006 we lost a valued colleague and friend. Morris Perry, one of GEAR UP’s Educational Specialists, was a former social worker and parenting trainer who took the position with GEAR UP because he cared about helping students. A proud father, he would often talk about his teenage daughter. He had a great sense of humor and loved to laugh. We honor Morris’ memory by remembering the caring and the laughter he brought to our lives.

College Knowledge Corner

College Sounds Good—But What If We Can’t Afford It?

Many students worry that they won’t be able to afford college. But financial aid is readily available. Financial aid is money that the government, private organizations, or colleges *loan* or *give* to help students attend school.

Pre-college costs, such as fees for taking admissions tests, submitting college applications, or getting test scores sent to colleges, can add up quickly. But there are ways to cut these costs.

Here are two money-saving tips.

1. Ask about fee waivers.

Some people think a free lunch is just a free lunch. But if your family qualifies for free and reduced lunch (and you have applied for that benefit), you may be able to get fee waivers for:

- college admissions tests (SAT, ACT)
- college application fees

Students should ask their high school counselors, “Is there a way to get a fee waiver?”

2. Identify 4 colleges students might attend.

Why four? It pays to think ahead. Students who plan to attend a four-year, baccalaureate college or university will need to take college admissions tests (SAT, ACT) in the spring of their junior year or fall of their senior year.

When they apply to take the tests, the application will ask them to identify 4 colleges to receive their test scores. The cost of sending their scores to those 4 colleges is included in the test application fee. In other words, you’ve prepaid.

If students decide later to apply to colleges that they didn’t originally have scores sent to, they will need to pay for each additional request—usually about \$8 to \$10 per college. With a little “4-thought,” families can save money!

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally-funded grant program designed to help students prepare for college. The five-year, \$5 million Evergreen State College GEAR UP Project has been working with three grades of students in the Clover Park & Oakville School Districts since 2002. This year’s GEAR UP students are in the 9th, 10th and 11th grades.