



GEAR Update

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

Volume I, Issue II

March / April 2008

Calendar of events

APRIL

- **8th:** Advisory Board Meeting@ REI
- Oklahoma School Testing
- **12th:** ACT Testing Date
- **16th:** Super Wednesday @ SOSU
- **30th:** Final Monthly Reports due

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SOSU GEAR UP 2008

Meeting the challenges in southeastern Oklahoma

Over the last 7 years, the SOSU GEAR UP program has served over 2100 students in southeastern Oklahoma. An entire village that includes site coordinators, GEAR UP coaches, parents, and partners have contributed to the process. The goal was to increase the college-going rates in this area and to prepare students to enter and succeed in college.

Was it a challenge? Yes. Were we prepared for this challenge? Yes.

Key elements for implementation of GEAR UP programs on the local level involve planning, implementation, and evaluation of GEAR UP programs. Accolades to the site coordinators in

each school district for spearheading this endeavor and for documenting each and every event. Local teams are responsible for meticulous record-

“Monthly reporting made it possible to stay up-to-date and current on documenting programs and in-kind matching...”

keeping and monthly reports on activities as well as assisting with local in-kind matching responsibilities. Through professional development programs, training events, and attendance/participation in the an-

nual RETREAT, our GEAR UP teams met the challenge.

The greatest challenge was meeting the dollar for dollar in-kind matching responsibility. With education and information on exactly how to gain the needed matching, school teams met this responsibility in a great way. The SOSU GEAR UP team met over 8 million dollars of in-kind matching services in a 6 year period thanks to our parents, partners, and school districts .

Monthly reporting made it possible to stay up-to-date and current on documenting programs and in-kind matching...and that made it much easier to meet the challenges of the program.

Spotlight on School Site Coordinator Janie Jones, Colbert Public Schools

Janie Jones, a long-time public school teacher, is the site coordinator at Colbert. For the last 5 years, Ms. Jones has worked with GEAR UP students in after school programs for academic enrichment, coordinated local career fairs,

tracked students in preparing for the ACT test, and participated in numerous professional development and training programs that benefit GEAR UP students. Above all, her contributions for the in-kind matching are astronomical!

What a great example for others to follow! Thanks to Ms. Jones and her GEAR UP team at Colbert for demonstrating the skills needed to implement a successful program.

WAY TO GO!

Sandy Decker, SOSU GEAR UP Director

“GEARing UP for the spring...Seniors Beware...”



As you may know Congress has allocated 303.4 million dollars to the GEAR UP program without

any increases in funding. The great news is that last year, GEAR UP was included in the President's budget. At this time, SOSU has submitted a proposal to begin a Phase II GEAR UP program. Readers are reviewing grants at this time and grant awards are expected in June or July. Please keep your fingers crossed that the SOSU GEAR UP program can continue with business as usual by making a difference for students, parents, and

teachers. Our main focus is to finalize all reporting for the year with a submission of the Annual Performance Report due April 15 and the Final Performance report due in early August

Several upcoming events should be noted. On Wednesday, April 16th, GEAR UP seniors are invited to a special day on campus at Southeastern. Parents and students are invited to attend. Please read the article about the Super Wednesday!

Scholarship applications were due on March 1. Please be watching your mail for notification of scholarship awards. Many GEAR UP stu-

dents applied for foundation, President's Leadership class and other scholarships. Please respond promptly to acceptance letters and meet all required deadlines. On Super Wednesday we will be giving away a scholarship to one of our GEAR UP students! You must be present to win.

Soon it will be spring and "senioritis" will probably appear quite suddenly. Be extra careful and attentive to your studies as you complete your last year. We hope that everyone enjoyed their Spring Break. Have fun at your celebrations and remember to get in line for the college experience!

From the Desk of Paula Moore, Partnership Coordinator

“Concurrent sessions offer a variety of ideas and perspectives...”



Members of the Southeastern Oklahoma State University

GEAR UP Partnership attended the 2008 State GEAR UP Conference in Tulsa in January. Attending were Sandy Decker, GEAR UP Director, Kyle Stafford, Dean of Enrollment Management and Marketing, Melody Stanley, Achille Site Coordinator, Cheryl Conditt, Durant Site Coordinator and Paula Moore Partnership Coordinator. The conference was hosted by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and designed to help participants learn innovative approaches to increase college access and to showcase best practices in preparing students for college.

During the luncheon address, Chan-

cellor Glen D. Johnson shared his vision for GEAR UP and the need for continued success in preparing students for college.

Conference concurrent sessions covered a variety of issues designed to build best practices for preparing students for college. Topics included: the impact of engaging business and community leaders in an aggressive statewide education initiative; how GEAR UP activities and partnerships have assisted in increasing the number of students who are successful in their postsecondary endeavors; and how student satisfaction with high school experience can have a significant relationship on student preparation for college and success in college.

Other sessions featured ideas on how school districts can sustain GEAR UP programs and college preparation activities after grant

money is depleted; a futuristic look at the work world as it will be in 10 to 20 years; the basics of fundraising; and information from the U.S. Department of Education specific to partnership grant directors.



Five Key Skills for Academic Success

Organization

Time Management

Prioritization

Concentration

Motivation



OHLAP is now OKLAHOMA'S PROMISE

Though the name has changed, the PROMISE IS STILL IN PLACE...

During the 2007 legislative session, the Oklahoma Legislature made several important changes to Oklahoma's Promise with Senate Bill 820. One of the most significant changes was the authorization of a dedicated funding source for the Oklahoma's Promise scholarship beginning in 2008-09. This change will ensure that the scholarship is fully funded each year. Other important changes include a second family income limit requirement when the student enters college, new minimum college GPAs, a new college conduct requirement, and eligibility for homeschool students to participate in the program. A further change restricts the eligibility of undocumented immigrant students to receive the scholarship. Each of these changes is discussed in more detail below.

- **Dedicated Funding:** Beginning in 2008-09, Oklahoma's Promise will be funded "off the top" from the state's General Revenue Fund. This change ensures that the program will be fully funded each year from a stable source of revenue.

- **Second Income Limit Requirement:** For students receiving the award for the first time in 2009-10 (primarily high school graduates of 2009 and thereafter), the income of the student's parents may not exceed \$100,000 at the time the student goes to college. To enroll in the program in the eighth, ninth, or 10th grade, a student's family income still must be under \$50,000 at the time of application.

- **Minimum College GPA Requirement:** Also effective for students receiving the award for the first time in 2009-10, a minimum college GPA of 2.0 will be required for courses taken during the sophomore year and a minimum 2.5 GPA required for courses taken during the junior year and thereafter.

- **College Conduct Requirement:** Effective Jan. 1, 2008, an Oklahoma's Promise college student that is suspended for more than one semester for conduct reasons will lose the scholarship permanently.

- **Undocumented Immigrant Students:** Beginning with students enrolling in 2007-08, students must be U.S. citizens or lawfully present in the United States to receive the award in college. Undocumented immigrant students can still enroll in the program in the eighth, ninth, or 10th grade but must attain lawful status before they can actually receive the award in college. Undocumented students already enrolled in the program by the end of 2006-07 are "grandfathered" into the program and not subject to this requirement.

Eligibility for Homeschool Students: Homeschool students are now eligible to participate in Oklahoma's Promise and receive the scholarship. Homeschool students must apply between the ages of 13 and 15. Like students attending non-accredited schools, homeschool students must also achieve at least a 22 ACT composite score on a test given on a national test date.

NCCEP CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP LAS VEGAS, NEVADA February 10-13, 2008

GEAR UP team members attended this year's conference in Las Vegas, February 10th-13th celebrating the 10th year of the GEAR UP program's enactment in Congress. This year's conference was hosted by the Flamingo Hotel and Conference. There were several workshops from: Leadership Development to Engaging Parents and Families for Student Success.

We were greeted Monday morning of the conference by the Governor of Nevada, The Honorable Jim Gibbons, along with the Nevada state Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Keith W. Rheault giving their full support of the GEAR UP Program and reminding us of just how important this program is to not only their state, but to all the states that work the

GEAR UP program. Remember: "What happens in Vegas, WON'T stay in Vegas" because GEAR UP talks the talk!



GEAR UP Spotlight: Janet Neal, Site Coordinator, Broken Bow High School



Janet Neal has been a Site Coordinator with the SOSU GEAR UP Partnership since the beginning of the GEAR UP Grant. Ms. Neal has always put forth the greatest effort, not only with the GEAR UP students, but as a counselor as well. Ms. Neal has been a superb Site Coordinator and has always been willing to do whatever it takes for the future of our students. Ms. Neal has implemented great after-school programs, coordinated outstanding career fairs for Broken Bow Students, encouraged students to use the ACT online prep GEAR UP provides to assist students in raising their ACT scores, along with many other student-involved activities. The GEAR UP Staff at SOSU has only outstanding things to say about Ms. Neal and we appreciate all the hard work and dedication she has had in making this GEAR UP Partnership a success! Thank you Ms. Neal!

ADVISORY BOARD

An integral part of the SOSU GEAR UP's administration is the SOSU GEAR UP Advisory Board, a group of community leaders who meet together with the SOSU GEAR UP staff on a regular basis to provide a field perspective on SOSU GEAR UP and offer feedback and input on the program's direction and activities.

This year's advisory board consists of the following people: Butch Arnett, Arnett Insurance Group; Lori Hamilton, Chickasaw Nation; Joy Culbreath, Choctaw Nation; Kathy Robinson, Schoolware; Mike Goodwin and Rhonda Collier of the Kiamichi Technology Center, Durant; Gladys Skinner, Community Leader; Beth Bailey Jones, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education; Mindy House and Shelly Childers, Parents of SOSU GEAR UP students; Kim Marlow, Silo ISD; Dr. Terry James, Durant ISD; Susan Stepp, Hugo ISD; Amanda Garner, Durant High School student, Sandy Decker, Paula Moore, Jennifer Ince, Kyle Stafford, SOSU GEAR UP staff. Many thanks to our advisory board members for their commitment and effort to SOSU GEAR UP!

Upcoming Meeting: April 8th, 2008

GEAR UP Spotlight: Achille High School--ACT Online Prep

Achille Public Schools, one of the 14 GEAR UP schools in the grant, has implemented in to their curriculum an ACT preparation class. From the last two school years the juniors and seniors at Achille have been able to enroll in a preparation class for ACT. This class allows them to use the ACT online prep program provided by GEAR UP through our partner, Schoolware® as well as other ACT prep resources. Achille students have seen the results of using ACT prep resources as their test scores have been improving as a result of this class. We appreciate the Achille School District implementing GEAR UP Programs in to their curriculum and allowing their students the opportunity to better their scores and help them in the future.

**GREAT JOB
ACHILLE**



**Don't Forget our
Super Wednesday**

April 16, 2008

at

**Southeastern Oklahoma
State University**

Our Super Wednesday will start at 8:30 that morning with an introduction, then we will break up into groups to tour the campus, learn about financial aid, and school activities that SOSU offers. This will be a great day to get familiar with the campus and get any questions answered about your upcoming college experience. GEAR UP will be presenting one lucky student with a scholarship. Afterwards, we will be serving lunch.

SOSU GEAR UP Schools host GEAR UP Celebrations



Valliant GEAR UP Celebration

The 14 GEAR UP School Districts in Southeast Oklahoma have been busy the last couple of weeks. Each school district has been having a Spring Fling, GEAR UP Celebration, for their seniors. Each school has taken ownership of their GEAR UP Spring Fling and done some fun things with their students. At Valliant, Kay Collins reserved the local park and the Valliant seniors got an afternoon of cooking hamburgers, playing games and celebrating their careers as Valliant GEAR UP students. Silo students got a day off from the cafeteria food and ate sandwiches and reminisced with Site Coordinator, Paula Slawson.

Achille students also had lunch with their Site Coordinator, Melanie Stanley, and ate sandwiches and cake and celebrated their years at Achille.

The GEAR UP Spring Fling Celebrations were a great success and we hope that the GEAR UP Seniors enjoyed their last local GEAR UP event before graduating and going on with their futures.



Durant GEAR UP Celebration



Achille GEAR UP Celebrations

ROCK CREEK SENIOR RECIEVES THE PARSONS SCHOLARSHIP

Chrissy Dill is the senior daughter of Chris and Cheryl Dill. She was recently selected as one of four prestigious Parson's Scholars. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Who's Who Among American High School Students, Student Council, FCA, BPA where she serves as Treasurer, FFA Reporter, and the Lady Mustang Softball Team. She has been chosen as Student of the Month and attends Bokchito Church of Christ. Chrissy plans to eventually become a successful journalist.



