



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
**Community and Education
Partnerships**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Peter Stephens

202-530-1135

peter_stephens@edpartnerships.org

Joy Langley

202-530-1135

joy_langley@edpartnerships.org

NCCEP Hosts Successful GEAR-UP Capacity-Building Workshop

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, February 11, 2009: Dr. Hector Garza, President of the National Council for Community Education Partnerships (NCCEP), gave the closing remarks to an overflow crowd of 1,300 people at NCCEP's annual Capacity-Building Workshop in the ballroom of the Hilton Riverside Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. Speaking to a group of GEAR UP education professionals from across the U.S. and a delegation from Mexico, Dr. Garza thanked them for their hard work and commitment to improving college readiness for low-income students.

Over three days of workshops, seminars and information sessions, professionals from the GEAR UP community exchanged ideas, were briefed by the U.S. Department of Education, and met with their colleagues to share successes and discuss solutions as they work to meet the educational needs of at-risk college-bound young people. As Dr. Garza explained, "the GEAR UP program provides a critical bridge to those young people for whom college access is most difficult. Without the dedication, creativity and passion of the GEAR UP family, many at-risk young people would not make it to college."

The three-day conference began with a warm welcome from Louisiana Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu who remarked on the size of the group, a record-breaking 1,300 in attendance, and the gratitude he felt for NCCEP's desire to host the event in New Orleans as they rebuild from the effects of hurricane Katrina. NCCEP Vice President Betty Paugh Ortíz told the crowd that "NCCEP and GEAR UP wanted to send a message of support to the people of Louisiana."

GEAR UP was recently identified as "the most promising of all federal college readiness programs" by a report from the New America Foundation. Although challenged to meet the changing needs of a diverse, geographically disperse constituency, evaluators of the program have indicated that GEAR UP is having a long-term significant impact. The authors of the report suggest that an increase in funding would dramatically and positively increase the scope and impact of GEAR UP efforts to raise the academic achievement and aspirations of low-income students to prepare them for success in college.

Today, back in Washington, DC, Dr. Garza welcomed the news that despite the negative impact of the recession, an increase has been proposed to GEAR UP programs for FY2009. In the FY2009 Omnibus Bill released by the Appropriations Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, GEAR UP will benefit from an increase of \$9.789 million bringing the total funding for the program to \$313.2 million this year. Garza stated, “NCCEP wishes to express our deepest heartfelt thanks to Congressman Chaka Fattah of Pennsylvania and Congressman Mark Souder of Indiana, the capable members of their respective staffs, and the countless others who tirelessly advocate for quality programs like GEAR UP, ensuring college access for low-income students.”

NCCEP’s commitment to serving the GEAR UP community from its Washington, DC, office is further strengthened with two additions to its staff. Executive Vice President Peter Stephens and Director of Government Relations Joy Langley have recently joined the NCCEP team. Together, they bring over 25 years of professional experience and are dedicated to increasing NCCEP’s advocacy for the GEAR UP community.

About the Company: The mission of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) is to develop and strengthen broad-based partnerships throughout education from early childhood through postsecondary education. Using research findings to create successful frameworks for action, NCCEP aims to invigorate the principle of equal educational opportunity for all students. Toward this end, NCCEP brings together colleges and universities with local K–12 schools, parent groups, businesses, government agencies, foundations, corporations, and community-based organizations to create systemic change in education.

NCCEP maintains offices in Washington, DC, and Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, and leads education reform efforts in both countries. NCCEP works with education partnerships funded by the U.S. federal government, the government of Mexico, public and private foundations, and corporations from both the United States and Mexico.

For more information about NCCEP, please contact us at (202) 530-1135.

###