

The image features three vertical bars of different colors: teal on the left, orange in the middle, and yellow on the right. The teal bar is the tallest, extending from the top to the bottom of the frame. The orange bar is shorter, starting from the top and ending at the level of the text 'THE STRUGGLE'. The yellow bar is the shortest, starting from the top and ending at the level of the text 'THE PURPOSE'.

**THE STRUGGLE**

**THE PURPOSE**

**THE LIGHT**

# THE STRUGGLE THE PURPOSE THE LIGHT



NCCEP/GEAR UP ANNUAL CONFERENCE: JULY 19-21, 2021

MON | JULY 19

TUE | JULY 20

WED | JULY 21



**Registration opens on May 5th!**

The NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference is the largest national convening of professionals, parents, students, policymakers, and community partners who support GEAR UP programs and the students they serve nationally. You will gain ideas, strategies, and tools to better serve GEAR UP students through inspiring plenary sessions, concurrent sessions, and networking opportunities.

All sessions are live and will be recorded for any attendee to view for 1 year following the event.

**11:00 am - 12:15 pm**  
Pre-Conference Event

**1:00 pm - 1:55 PM ET**  
Plenary

**1:55 PM - 2:00 PM ET**  
Quick Break

**2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET**  
*Concurrent Sessions*  
10 in total

**3:00 PM - 3:15 PM ET**  
Exhibit Hall/Networking Break

**3:15 PM - 4:15 PM ET**  
*Concurrent Sessions*  
10 in total

**4:15 PM - 4:30 PM ET**  
Exhibit Hall/Networking Break

**4:30 PM - 5:30 PM ET**  
*Concurrent Sessions*  
10 in total

**5:30 PM - 6:30 PM ET**  
Virtual Social Engagement

**11:00 am - 12:15 pm**  
Pre-Conference Event

**1:00 pm - 1:45 PM ET**  
Plenary

**1:45 PM - 2:00 PM ET**  
Exhibit Hall/Networking Break

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Plenary

**1:45 PM - 2:00 PM ET**  
Exhibit Hall/Networking Break

**2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET**  
*Concurrent Sessions*  
10 in total

**3:00 PM - 3:15 PM ET**  
Exhibit Hall/Networking Break

**3:15 PM - 4:15 PM ET**  
*Concurrent Sessions*  
10 in total/Directors' Meetings

**4:15 PM - 4:30 PM ET**  
Exhibit Hall/Networking Break

**4:30 PM - 5:30 PM ET**  
*Concurrent Sessions*  
10 in total/Directors' Meetings

**5:30 PM - 5:45 PM ET**  
Closing

All times are Eastern Time. The schedule will be updated as needed.

05/04/21



Monday, July 19th, 2021

**The Struggle: Lessons for the Search for Meaning**

Emily Esfahani Smith

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the very foundations that GEAR UP rests upon. While we have previously explored the pandemic's profound impact on students, families, and our education systems, this keynote will explore how to make sense of what the pandemic has meant for us as individuals. After 16 months of widespread suffering and grief, isolation, and burnout, each of us are challenged to reflect on who we are. What has the struggle meant? How will we emerge from this crisis whole? Join acclaimed author and journalist Emily Esfahani Smith, as she shares her research and insights from science, history, and literature to help each of us more effectively find meaning and fulfillment in our lives.



Tuesday, July 20th, 2021

**The Purpose: Reflections on the Opportunity Agenda**

Jelani Cobb

GEAR UP has always been an investment in opportunity, equity, and democracy. The founders of GEAR UP believed that as we increased the numbers of students pursuing and succeeding in higher education, we could also improve the wellbeing of our communities and the country. Yet today, we find ourselves in an era of deepening polarization, in which seemingly everything related to our politics, society, and culture is in dispute. In light of the times we are in, what are we to make of the prospects for the opportunity agenda that we all work so hard to pursue? As one of the most vital voices in America, we are thrilled to host author, journalist, and historian, Dr. Jelani Cobb as he reflects on the current state of our democracy, the future awaiting our students, and the urgency of our work moving forward.



Wednesday, July 21st, 2021

**The Light: Tending the Fire Within**

Dolores Huerta

As each of us prepares for the academic year ahead, we count on the wisdom and generosity of others to help us overcome the inevitable challenges we will face. In each other, we find community, but our commitment to the GEAR UP movement is deeply and uniquely personal. Our passion for educational opportunity and equity is a flame that burns within us, providing light and warmth as we guide our students and families to success. Yet when times are tough, sustaining our passion and focus requires great care. We are joined by legendary civil rights leader Dolores Huerta, who at the age of 89, remains as vibrantly focused on advancing social justice as ever. Through her remarkable and historic experiences, Dolores will share her perspective on how to better understand, nurture, and mobilize the strength within each of us to fully realize our ambitious goals.

# Monday, July 19th, 2021

11:00 am - 12:15 pm	Pre-conference Sessions
1:00 pm - 1:55 pm	Opening Ceremony, Welcome, & Plenary <b>Sponsor: Student Success Agency</b>
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Monday - Block 1 Concurrent Sessions
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	Monday - Block 2 Concurrent Sessions
4:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Monday - Block 3 Concurrent Sessions
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Virtual Social Engagement

Please visit the Exhibit Hall during breaks!

## Monday - Pre-conference Sessions | 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

### Exploration Lab

#### Navigating the GEAR UP Match

While the COVID 19 pandemic-related GEAR UP match waiver provides us with some much-needed temporary relief, the GEAR UP match is certainly here to stay. As we prepare for the post-pandemic recovery, there is no doubt that the GEAR UP match will remain a stubborn challenge for every GEAR UP program. While the federal regulations describe the contours of what qualifies as match, how to value match, and how to document match; the on-the-ground realities are not so cut and dry. Navigating the maze of compliance issues, questions about allowable sources, and implementation barriers is hard work. Come join this Exploration Lab to engage in a lightly facilitated, peer-driven forum to exchange challenges and solutions with your like-minded peers. This Exploration Lab is ideally suited for GEAR UP Directors, deputies/program coordinators, budget and finance staff, or anyone who helps comply with the GEAR UP match requirement.

**Lois Bramwell**, Project Director, GEAR UP 4 LA

**Summer Steele**, Director, Bernardino, GEAR UP Program

**Marcie Mills Sample**, Associate Director for College Access and Support, Washington Student Achievement Council

**Alana Simmons**, Program Director, GEAR UP Dougherty

**Janeé Williams**, Associate Director of Operations, NCCEP

#### How Has the Pandemic Impacted Financial Aid

The pandemic has amplified the urgency of addressing financial aid and the restoration stages within higher education institutions, state agencies, and federal government offices. Changes in financial aid application processes, student funding allocations, and financial aid award packaging directly impact student and family college application, admission, and enrollment decisions. How has the pandemic changed financial aid? What short-term adjustments and long-term alterations can we expect? What are the strategies for comparing financial aid award letters and final college selection based on the financial fit?

Join a panel of financial aid experts from various colleges and universities as they discuss critical insights, key trends and explore how GEAR UP can position students for success.

**Alicia Keaton**, Director of Financial Aid, University of Central Florida

**Mike Dear**, Director of Financial Aid, MiraCosta College

**Mary Nucciarone**, Director of Financial Aid, University of Notre Dame

**Tammi Durham**, Assistant Vice Provost and Executive Director of Financial Aid, University of Michigan

**April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, NCCEP

## Navigating College Access Today: An Orientation to GEAR UP

Are you new to the GEAR UP community? This is the session for you! No matter your role, gain a grounding of the purpose, history, and structure of GEAR UP at the national, state, and local levels. We will help you connect the dots between all of the diverse programs, roles, and unique partnership structures and models that power the GEAR UP movement and contribute to its success. Stories from the field will be featured throughout this session to help you connect the big picture to the impact GEAR UP is making in communities across the country. This session is for anyone new to the GEAR UP community, regardless of role.

**Emily Jeffries**, Associate Director of Government Relations, NCCEP

**Lauren Foley**, Associate Director of Professional Development, NCCEP

## What's the Damage? How GEAR UP is Using Evidence-Based Practices to Combat COVID Learning Loss

This interactive session will share how a GEAR UP program used local, student-level data to identify the specific circumstances for which students will experience greater COVID learning disruptions. The session will demonstrate how GEAR UP schools can create customized, evidence-based remediation plans stemming from these results. Attendees will share issues they are observing around COVID learning impact and engage in discussions regarding how to use evidence-based strategies to develop learning recovery plans. The session is for any educators who want better to understand how COVID has impacted student learning and how to utilize local data to improve student outcomes and learning renewal.

**Shawn Bergman, Ph.D.**, K/C Distinguished Professor & Area Research Director, Center for Analytics Research and Education at Appalachian State University

**Austin Melzer**, Research Assistant, Appalachian State University

**Sam Nelson**, Director, Capacity Management Illinois Student Assistance Commission

**Jacqueline Moreno**, Managing Director, College Access Initiatives, Illinois Student Assistance Commission

**Chrissy Tillery, Ed.D.**, Vice President of Research and Evaluation, NCCEP

## Monday - Block 1 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Session #: 1

### Staying Isn't Settling: Raising Aspirations of Rural Middle-Level Students While Valuing the Community's Culture

Washington County is the proud home of the iconic lobster, blueberry, and paper industries in Maine. Like so many of our GEAR UP communities, the industries have changed dramatically over time and our youth have vastly different career opportunities than prior generations. Come to this session ready to explore a program that sought to raise student aspirations, mentor students, and create a college-going culture in schools by bringing community partners together with a local middle school. Through a facilitated dialogue, participants will explore ways in which their GEAR UP programs can similarly partner with local entities to inform middle school students about career opportunities and raise aspirations while lifting up the community.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Evaluate the benefits and barriers of GEAR UP Maine's postsecondary education aspirations project for middle school students, using the findings of our three year evaluation study.
2. Apply lessons learned from GEAR UP Maine to participants' local context/schools.
3. Discover ways in which a middle school college immersion program could be a foundational experience/precursor to college match and fit experiences for high school students.

**Sally Beaulieu**, Pilot Coordinator, GEAR UP Maine/Syntiro

**Maria Frankland Ph.D.**, School Counselor, Narraguagus Jr/Sr High School

**Susan Dow**, Jr. High Teacher, Narraguagus Jr/Sr High School

**Robin Newman**, Jr. High Teacher, Narraguagus Jr/Sr High School

## Session #: 2

### No Wifi? No Problem. How to Reach Rural Students Where They Are (Their Phones)

In this panel discussion, Berea College and Signal Vine will discuss the unique challenges that rural students face, and describe how a two-way text messaging platform has the capabilities to build a personalized connection to those students. Beginning with an overview of parent and family engagement grants and then exploring Berea's theory of change and measurements of success, we will move into the GEAR UP framework and how Signal Vine's service assists the students, staff and family that Berea serves. The presentation will end with a demonstration of the Signal Vine platform.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the unique challenges of rural students.
2. Explore the capacity of using two-way texting to build connections with students.
3. Identify the holistic student through their academic journey.

**Andrew Kuhn**, Strategic Account Manager, Signal Vine

**Colleen Callahan**, Director of Programs, Berea College

## Session #: 3

### Building Bridges: Creating Partnerships to Improve Student Success

In this mix-methods, interactive presentation lecture, we will explore effective methods for creating stronger partnerships with corporate sponsors, businesses, and key stakeholders, along with community partners and families that support the mission and vision of GEAR UP. We will share practical strategies to help GEAR UP scholar-practitioners (site- and program-coordinators, and administrators) build a solid foundation for strengthening or developing stronger ties with key partners.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Learn how to develop strong partnerships with corporate/business sponsors outside of the schools we serve.
2. Identify best practices for building stronger ties within the communities we serve, including school stakeholders, and existing partnerships.
3. Discover engagement efforts to promote student success during students' first-year of college.

**Jose Morales Diaz M.Ed.**, GEAR UP Counselor, GEAR UP Utah

**Roxy Luna**, GEAR UP Statewide Assistant Director, GEAR UP Utah

**Helen Patterson**, GEAR UP Counselor, GEAR UP Utah

**Mariana Ramiro-Gomez**, GEAR UP Counselor, GEAR UP Utah

**Tiegan Vogeler**, GEAR UP First-Year Services Coordinator, GEAR UP Utah

## Session #: 4

### Learning Can be Fun

Are you struggling with engagement? Do you have difficulty with keeping the attention of your students? For many programs, countless distractions and barriers stand in the way of effective student engagement. During this session, Eastern Oklahoma GEAR UP will showcase activities that can be easily adapted to any classroom setting. Every participant will take away tools and resources to confidently engage with students at the Middle School and High School level. Join us to learn how you can turn every lesson or workshop into a fun experience for your students!

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Engage in activities that will be both interactive and educational.
2. Use materials in fun interactive ways to reach and teach students.
3. Give new and experienced educators tools to help keep their students engaged in the learning process.

**LaDonna Baldwin**, Education Coordinator, Eastern Oklahoma State College GEAR UP

**Michael Crittenden**, Education Coordinator, Eastern Oklahoma State College GEAR UP

## Session #: 5

### Icing Summer Melt Through Photovoice: A Participatory Method to Assist Underrepresented Students' Transition into College

Summer melt affects first-generation, low-income students at disproportionate rates, leading to deferment or cancellation of college enrollment. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with nationwide social justice protests, is speculated to lead to an increase in summer melt due to a lack of in-person advising and interventions. The Photovoice project gives voice to historically underrepresented students while providing insight into the effects of COVID-19 and the simultaneous protests on college-going decisions. In this workshop, we will explore Photovoice and how such a project can be used to engage students in a meaningful examination of their lives and the world around them.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Explore the concept of Photovoice and how to incorporate such a project into their programming menu.
2. Identify ways that Photovoice can serve to mitigate summer melt and encourage engagement, particularly during the COVID pandemic.
3. Engage in planning their own Photovoice project to engage students virtually, as well as when we eventually return to in-person service.

**Tonya Waller, Ed.D.**, Director, University of Kansas GEAR UP: Topeka

**Meghan Ecker-Lyster, Ph.D.**, Director, University of Kansas

**Laura Kingston**, Communications Coordinator, University of Kansas

**Dalton Allen**, Site Coordinator, University of Kansas GEAR UP: Topeka

## Session #: 6

### Breaking Barriers: Dispelling Career Misconceptions

If 2020 has taught us anything, it is that what we think we know may not be a holistic truth. This includes the ways in which we think our GEAR UP students perceive career paths. Contexts like culture, background, skills, and interests can have a profound impact on student career aspirations. In this interactive presentation, we will explore common misconceptions around careers and how these barriers can hinder students' aspirations for a wider range of career fields. Participants will discuss and explore virtual activities that will help reshape student beliefs and develop a plan that will forge a path to a more enlightened college and career awareness program.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Explore career misconceptions.
2. Planning virtual career events/activities that dispel misconceptions.
3. Implement virtual career exploration strategies in their program.

**Alex Holmes**, Mentoring Coordinator, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP for the FUTURE

**Ayanna Wheeler**, Student Experiences Coordinator, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP OKC

**Jami Henson**, Mentoring Coordinator, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP for MY SUCCESS

**Will Markham**, Mentoring Coordinator, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP for the FUTURE

## Session #: 7

### Repurposing our Schools to Develop 21st Century Learners for College, Career and Life Success

The automatization of the workforce will require students to adapt to a global economy for careers that don't yet exist. It is our responsibility as educators to prepare students to meet these changing demands. Schools must go beyond the traditional metrics of academic success. At the Anaheim Union High School District, Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Compassion (5 Cs) are the drivers to democratize the preparation of our students for college, career and life success. In this session, you will learn about how to implement the 5 Cs within in-person and remote instructional days and CSUF GEAR UP services.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand and identify instructional shifts of traditional metrics that need to occur beyond accessing college but to also thrive in college & career.
2. Understand the importance of 5 Cs as it relates to college, career, and life success.
3. Understand the Anaheim Union High School District journey on how the 5 Cs support the democratization of college and career access within Anaheim Union High School District.

**Jaron Fried, Ed.D.**, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services, Anaheim Union High School District

**Brad Jackson**, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, Anaheim Union High School District

**Adriana Badillo**, Director for Educational Partnerships, CSUF GEAR UP

**Michael Matsuda**, School District Superintendent, Anaheim Union High School District

**Amanda Bean**, Program Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction, Anaheim Union High School District

### **Session #: 8**

#### **Being the Bridge for Black and Brown Girls**

How are you engaging black and brown girls? What do you know about their experiences? Join West Wichita GEAR UP in this fast-paced and interactive session, as we share the data, true stories, and trends of black and brown girls' experience in education. WWGU serves a diverse population of students, that spans racial and cultural identities. This diversity was a catalyst for a process that leans into the learning experiences of our students. In this session, we will provide each participant a step-by-step process for effective interventions and supports that cumulate into a Call to Action. Participants will learn about the challenges faced by black and brown girls during their educational experiences, explore tools to connect with black and brown girls, and empower service providers to be dynamic bridges for black and brown girls during the secondary and early college experiences. You do not want to miss this eye-opening, informative, and life-changing experience.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the challenges that black and brown girls face.
2. Equip you with tools to connect with black and brown girls.
3. Empower you to be the bridge for black and brown girls.

**Janice Wright**, GEAR UP Project Director, West Wichita GEAR UP

**Alondra Bustamante**, Educational Facilitator, Paradigm Shift

**Dena Mossop**, Educational Facilitator, Paradigm Shift

**Neha Ghelani**, Project Manager, Paradigm Shift

### **Session #: 9**

#### **When Data Meets Connection: A Data-Informed Model for College-Access Coaching through the 7th Year**

As student advocates, college access professionals are driven to support each and every student in their journey toward making their post-secondary plans a reality. This interactive workshop session will introduce participants to a data team model, tools, and strategies for collecting, disseminating, analyzing, and leveraging data to assist college access professionals in breaking down barriers for all students. Session participants will work collaboratively to make data-informed decisions to maximize student outcomes.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Detect and understand the stories within datasets and extract insights from that data.
2. Analyze data to create plans to address student barriers to individual post-secondary plans.
3. Reflect on individual site goals to transfer concepts and tools to various GEAR UP contexts.

**Megan Breaux**, Partnership and Data Coordinator, Lafayette GEAR UP

**Cy Dugas**, College and Career Readiness Coach, Lafayette GEAR UP

**Traci Aucoin**, Director, Lafayette Parish School System



## Session #: 10

### Drones: Making the Leap From STEM to CTE

Drone mania is sweeping the nation and educators are embracing drones as a new platform for STEAM education. Learn the latest drone regulations, ethics, and real-world applications as well as practical ideas for incorporating drones into your program to prepare young pilots to enter the wild west of winged robots. Our presentation will share with attendees our GEAR UP students' experiences in their after-school drone club. Attendees will walk away with tips for developing and running a successful drone program.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Learn about the Career Opportunities for Students in UAV field.
2. Gain ideas for integrating drones into existing STEM curriculum.
3. Be able to implement safe, legal, and highly engaging drone programs for students using the information presented.

**Doree Thilmony**, GEAR UP Program Director/High School Science Teacher, Thompson Falls Schools

**Suzanne Haislip**, STEM Program Specialist, PCS Edventures

## Monday - Block 2 | 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

## Session #: 11

### GEAR UP Staff Go to College

In this session, GEAR UP Berea will provide specific guidance to other GEAR UP programs in developing a first-year college (Year 7) program that empowers their staff to serve as mentors to those students on area college campuses. Presenters will describe their 7th year pilot program and provide participants a framework for initiating their own program. Our College and Career Guides will offer practical advice to the attendees concerning best practices in assisting students during their postsecondary experience. GEAR UP Service Coordinators and Directors are invited to engage in thoughtful discussion on topics and tools that will greatly benefit their programs.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify critical components for an effective Year 7 program.
2. Use data to design a robust Year 7 mentoring program.
3. Engage in an interactive discussion regarding pilot programs and pandemics.

**Doug Coats, Ed.D.**, Project Director, GEAR UP Promise Zone and Partners for Education

**Amy Whitt, Ed.D.**, College and Career Guide, GEAR UP Promise Zone and Partners for Education

**Buffy Dunnville**, College and Career Guide, GEAR UP Promise Zone and Partners for Education

**Lori Stathers, Ed.D.**, College and Career Guide, GEAR UP Promise Zone and Partners for Education

## Session #: 12

### The COVID Opportunity: Using Virtual Tools to Make Access a Permanent Priority

In this session, we will discuss the importance of prioritizing access throughout COVID and beyond by talking about best practices, giving insight into virtual pivots, and providing space to dream up new and continued virtual engagement. What lessons have we learned about access in designing services students can utilize from home? How can we bring these lessons with us as we prioritize access moving forward? We'll give examples of virtual supports that have shifted our own practices, how to continue building supports with accessibility in mind, and easy ways to welcome newly-virtual folks into the world of online student supports.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Engage and plan strategies to continue advancing virtual services.
2. Commit to accessibility in student services throughout the duration of COVID and beyond.
3. Prioritize new ways to virtually engage with students as support services begin to shift back to our in-person norm.

**Annie Pocklington**, Program Associate for Student Support Services, The Washington Student Achievement Council

**Adrienne Enriquez**, Program Manager, Oregon GEAR UP

### Session #: 13

#### Essential Math for College and Careers: Creating a math course to Improve Access and Equity

Vermont GEAR UP grant, the Vermont State Colleges System, and the Vermont Agency of Education have teamed up to create a math course so that students will leave High School math-ready. As a result of this partnership, EMC2 is being made available to all VT high schools. This session will describe the development of EMC2, the support provided to teachers (including PD, mentoring, virtual community), and our evaluation plan for measuring success. Join our presentation as we share our experiences from the first 2 years piloting the course, sample the open-source SREB materials, and explore the steps we've taken to develop a cross-institutional partnership.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Explore and address the issue of students falling through the math gap between 12th grade and college.
2. Identify evidence-based practices to improve students' math foundational skills while they are still in high school.
3. Develop statewide leadership in creating a space for conversations across institutional systems to support student success.

**Anita Long, Ed.D.**, Academic Support Coordinator, VT State GEARUP

**Anna Prescott, Ph.D.**, Senior Evaluation and Research Analyst, VT State GEARUP

**Jason Adair**, Program Director for Literacy and Math, Southern Regional Education Board

### Session #: 14

#### Nurturing a Learning Community that Supports Reflection and Motivates Growth

This presentation is designed to support GEAR UP professionals in building a learning community through analysis of formative feedback. In the absence of a learning community, staff may feel isolated, unmotivated, distrusting, and directionless. Research has shown that learning communities build continual improvement and growth by developing shared goals, fostering motivation, strengthening support, and addressing real needs. By learning about participatory analysis of findings for collaborative meaning-making, participants will gain an understanding of how to build a learning community.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify best practices and potential pitfalls for building a learning community.
2. Explore ways to create space for authentic reflection.
3. Experience participatory data analysis.

**Teresa McCaffrey**, Director of Research, Evaluation and Innovation, UC Santa Cruz, Educational Partnership Center

**Jesse Pikorz**, Evaluation Analyst, UC Santa Cruz, Educational Partnership Center

### Session #: 15

#### Paying It Forward: The Role of Summative Evaluations in Planning Subsequent Programs

Many GEAR UP programs have closed out a grant while beginning a new program. Along with the Department of Education-required final reporting tasks, some programs also conducted an in-depth summative evaluation to examine the ultimate program outcomes of college enrollment and persistence. Directors and their evaluator will discuss highlights from their final evaluations and how those findings have impacted planning and decision-making for their current program. Session attendees will have opportunities to discuss and plan their own evaluations with an emphasis on the questions they will want answered at the end of their program.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Learn about evaluations conducted by other grantees who have previously completed a program.
2. Discuss how summative evaluation results can inform current/future grants.
3. Plan evaluation activities to support their own program.

**Keren Brooks**, Director of Evaluation, CoBro Consulting  
**Lois Bramwell**, Project Director, GEAR UP 4 LA  
**Joe LeDesma**, GEAR UP Project Director, Palomar GEAR UP  
**Laurie Miller, Ph.D.**, State Grant Director, GEAR UP Utah  
**Jacque Deahl**, State Coordinator, Idaho State Department of Education GEAR UP Program

### Session #: 16

#### Harvesting Resilience During a Pandemic: Providing Mental Health Support for Youth and their Educators

The pandemic has exacerbated mental health disparities and proven to be a devastating time for children and families. While this has spurred increased awareness about mental health and the need to do more to support this vital ingredient to students' success, the transition to virtual services has posed novel challenges for educators. Districts are increasingly incorporating mental health policies, practices, and services for students and employees. In this session, attendees will explore intentional systems built within AUHSD to identify timely interventions for the growing demand for mental health supports that leverage partnerships with CSUF GEAR UP and other community organizations.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the statistics and demographics of at-risk youth and the link to academic struggles or failure.
2. Understand the broad inequities that exist across the student population and how the transition to virtual learning highlighted how deeply rooted and vast these inequities are.
3. Develop an awareness of the importance of addressing mental illness within the educational system, the strong connection it has to academic success in both the in-person or in a virtual setting, and strategies for leveraging partnerships with GEAR UP and beyond.

**Adela Cruz**, Coordinator for School Mental Health, Homeless Education programs, and Internship Training Institution, Anaheim Union High School District  
**Jackie Counts**, Coordinator, Professional Learning, California State University, Fullerton

### Session #: 17

#### Let's Talk! ¡Vamos a Platicar!

Do you hear what I hear? Join us for a conversation about what matters most to the parents in your programs. Is it post-secondary readiness, employment, finances, safety, or just everything? In this session, we'll be flipping the script on the traditional parent meeting to introduce an interactive structure that allows parents to lead the discussions that directly impact their circumstances and the overall well-being of their children. While our focus is GEAR UP, sometimes our parents need additional supports that we don't often get to talk about. So, let's talk about it!

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify and discuss strategies to utilize parents as partners.
2. Develop an action plan for a program Parent Advisory Council.
3. Discuss the importance of parent feedback in the program planning process.

**Sylvia Vargas**, Education Specialist, Region One ESC GEAR UP: College Now-Career Connected! Partnership Grant

**Ricardo Lopez**, Education Specialist, Region One ESC GEAR UP: College Ready, Career Set! Partnership Grant

**Esperanza Rodriguez**, Education Specialist, Region One ESC GEAR UP: College Now-Career Connected! Partnership Grant

### Session #: 18

#### Using Game-Based Learning to Provide Virtual College and Career Services

Game-based learning (GBL) is an evidence-based method of engaging students in content and improving critical thinking and problem-solving skills. GBL can also be an effective way of providing virtual GEAR UP services to students. The K20 Center has developed "Get a Life" as an interactive and fun way for students to learn about the cost of college, educational requirements for careers, and the impacts of postsecondary decisions. "Get a Life" is completely free, compatible with learning management systems and comes with a teacher guide and at-home lessons. Participants will play the game and leave with free resources!

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify the benefits of game-based learning, particularly in online or blended learning environments.
2. Play "Get a Life" and experiment with problem-solving and decision-making skills facilitated in the game.
3. Develop a strategy to implement Get a Life in individual GEAR UP grant projects.

**Jackie Mania-Singer, Ed.D.**, Director of Research and Evaluation, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center  
**Javier Elizondo**, Game-Based Learning Coordinator, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center  
**William Thompson**, Instructional Game Designer, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center

### **Session #: 19**

#### **FAFSA Growth that Defied the Odds: How Our FAFSA Numbers Grew Despite a Global Pandemic**

The GEAR UP Iowa Cohort's senior year ended with a pandemic. FAFSA numbers across the nation dropped, however, our cohort saw growth in their FAFSA numbers. In this presentation you will learn about the resources, framework, and innovation that lead to growth despite a global crisis. Attendees will get resources to use to guide their FAFSA data collection, a toolkit that has a detailed framework to structure their FAFSA efforts, and materials that can be used to educate students and families.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Acquire knowledge of the role of the FAFSA as a marker of persistence through "summer melt."
2. Identify data sources and how they can be used to track their FAFSA Growth.
3. Recognize and incorporate a structured consistent approach to FAFSA support.

**Graci Zeiger**, Coordinator, Iowa College Aid  
**Nathan Svare**, Facilitator, Iowa College Aid  
**Karmon Long**, Coordinator, Iowa College Aid

### **Session #: 20**

#### **Social and Emotional Learning: A Key Piece in Supporting Well-Being for All**

This session will focus on the integration of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into systemic practices. We will address how to integrate a growth mindset to design and implement resources that support student, family, and educator needs. This will include sharing of practices that support SEL in the classroom to enhance the culture in the school system and tools to support parents' efforts at home. It is pivotal that college and career readiness programs consider the well-being of all stakeholders in educational environments to ensure evolving needs are met. Resources will be based on the SEL foundational work by CASEL.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Analyze social and emotional practices that will best support students' academic success, as well as families' and educators' well-being.
2. Identify and discuss best practices for integrating SEL in a college and career readiness program.
3. Experience SEL activities that will increase well-being for all stakeholders.

**Nicole Saenz**, Partnership Director, Region One ESC GEAR UP: College Ready, Career Set!  
**Norma McCormick**, Partnership Director, Region One ESC GEAR UP: College Ready, Career Set!

## **Monday - Block 3 | 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm**

### **Session #: 21**

#### **Turns Out GEAR UP Does Work: How Effective Mentoring Influences Student Success**

In an era of impersonalization rife with online "personas," relationship-building is not prioritized. Therefore, young people are more disconnected than ever. As educators and professionals, it is our job to create connections with young people who are suffering from disconnectedness. This workshop will explore philosophies of engagement that go beyond traditional means to bridge the gaps keeping us at odds with the young people we serve. Using research to establish a framework for effective interaction, this interactive session will examine the importance of relationships and trust-building required to truly engage young people in academic and social settings.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn the value of personal connections as a precursor to relationship development.
2. Explore concepts related to relationship-building as an impetus for academic & personal success.
3. Develop action plans for infusing intentional relational concepts throughout academic and social interactions.

**Tonya Waller, Ed.D.**, Director, University of Kansas GEAR UP: Topeka

**Riccardo Harris**, Director, Wichita State University GEAR UP

**Session #: 22****Hands-on STEM Activities to Enhance Virtual Learning for GEAR UP Students**

Overwhelmed with requests to help students get hands-on with STEM remotely? Presenters will share how they leveraged their partnership to ensure GEAR UP students didn't lose traction with hands-on STEM learning as a result of distance learning. We took advantage of this "new normal" to ignite GEAR UP students' passion for STEM exploration and problem-solving with an easy-to-implement, hands-on experience! Every GEAR UP student, even those without any previous coding experience, learned to create digital colors and sounds/music on a microcontroller during our two-hour virtual experience. Participants will leave with the resources to build a virtual STEM enrichment program!

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Empower participants with actionable real-world knowledge to open GEAR UP students to the power of STEM.
2. Strategies for effectively addressing student/family engagement and participation issues.
3. Provided a step-by-step toolkit for implementing a quality, hands-on STEM engagement program.

**Julie Johnson**, Director, MiraCosta College

**Brian Dunningcliff**, Educational Technology Consultant, Texas Instruments, Inc.

**Omar Canseco**, GEAR UP Coordinator, MiraCosta College

**Session #: 23****The 8 Domains of the Entrepreneurial Mindset; GEAR UP MA & NFTE Virtual Entrepreneurship Camps**

Are your GEAR UP students prepared for the entrepreneurial revolution? Millennial Branding states that 33% of U.S. employers look for entrepreneurial experience in new hires. This highly interactive session will show how GEAR UP MA partnered with the Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) to lead a 3-week virtual entrepreneurship camp where students launched their own businesses! Join the GEAR UP MA team as we share implementation strategies for the NFTE Virtual Entrepreneurship camp, designed for staff with NO prior business experience, that will unlock the entrepreneurial mindset of students as they pitch innovative business plans around ideas of their own.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the 8 Domains of the Entrepreneurial Mindset.
2. Build and pitch a short business plan around an original business idea of their own.
3. Learn implementation strategies for the NFTE Virtual Entrepreneurship camp designed for staff with no prior business experience.

**Robert Dais**, Statewide Director, GEAR UP Massachusetts

**Jennifer Green**, Regional Director, New England, Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)

**Amanda Braga**, Founder & NFTE Fellow, Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE)

**Maria Paredes**, GEAR UP Advisor, GEAR UP East Boston/ASA

## Session #: 24

### Building and Performing a Seven Year Evaluation Plan: Lessons from GEAR UP Iowa

Join us for an information-packed session to learn about evaluating GEAR UP Iowa 2.0. We will share positive, exciting outcomes from systematic research of our program as well as methods you can use to replicate our research design. We will also describe the development of our comprehensive evaluation plan with a focus on the challenges of evaluating the seventh year. Attendees will learn how to build critical components of an evaluation plan including a logic model, research questions, and data analysis plans. We will engage in discussion of your program evaluation efforts and brainstorm strategies to examine your own program.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Gain knowledge of processes to create a continuous and systematic evaluation plan.
2. Develop an understanding of the unique challenges of seventh-year evaluation.
3. Walkaway with practicable strategies to implement in their evaluation efforts.

**Wade Leuwerke, Ph.D.**, Research and Training Director, Iowa College Aid

**Laura Ingleby, Ph.D.**, Statistical Research Analyst, Iowa College Aid

## Session #: 25

### Connecting the Disconnected: A Targeted Mentoring Approach

During the lifetime of a GEAR UP partnership grant, patterns of student participation in project services begin to emerge within a cohort. Many grant activities are attended by a faithful few, but there often exists a significant number of eligible students that never participate in a single GEAR UP service. To ensure equity and access for all cohort students and their families, it's critical to examine the characteristics of non-participants to better meet their needs. In this interactive session, participants will learn how a research-based targeted mentoring approach can increase engagement and improve outcomes for even the most disconnected students.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Use data to identify students that would benefit most from a targeted mentoring approach.
2. Develop an intervention strategy for identified students.
3. Determine how to implement targeted mentoring within the context of their GEAR UP project.

**Laura Buxton**, Project Co-Director, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP OKC

**Chalonda Branch**, GEAR UP College Coach, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP OKC

**Quintin Hughes, Sr., Ph.D.**, GEAR UP College Coach, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP OKC

**Claudia Rivas-Taylor**, GEAR UP College Coach, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP OKC

## Session #: 26

### GEAR UP GUIDES: Short, Animated Videos That Speak for You

Creating animated videos can help you reach different audiences in an effective and fun way. This workshop will give you an overview of the easy-to-use program that USU STARS! has found and resources to help you create short video messages to connect with your partners and engage students and families alike. Learn how to identify audiences and messages in your program that would benefit from this targeted communication approach. This workshop is ideal for anyone in your organization that communicates with partners, schools, students, and families.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Explore why and how short animated videos support the GEAR UP mission by communicating targeted information to different audiences.
2. Increase connection with your GEAR UP community through creating animated videos.
3. Develop techniques to identify audiences and messages that animated videos could effectively serve.

**Jeannine Huenemann**, Marketing Manager, USU STARS! GEAR UP

**Zachary Stocks**, Webmaster, USU STARS! GEAR UP

**Jenne Talbot, Ed.D.**, Coordinator, USU STARS! GEAR UP

## Session #: 27

### Plug and Play NSC College Enrollment Reports Using Excel

Are you looking for a low tech-solution to make sense of your National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) college enrollment data? In this workshop, participants will learn how to use a free, homegrown Excel tool designed to produce simple student-level and aggregate college enrollment reports from raw NSC data files. Participants are welcome to download the free tool and sample data prior to the workshop to follow along, or use their own NSC files.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify at least one reason for using the Excel College Enrollment Report tool, and where to download it.
2. Become oriented with the different sections of the tool and their uses.
3. Practice inputting NSC files into the tool and producing a report.

**Natalie Smith**, Data Manager, Oregon GEAR UP

## Session #: 28

### Collaborating with University Partners to deliver Experiential Learning Programs that Increase Postsecondary Access and Success

In this facilitated dialogue, participants will learn about Connect2Success (C2S), Louisiana GEAR UP's newest initiative involving partnerships with four universities to deliver outstanding year-round programming to increase the number of students who apply for, enter, and succeed in postsecondary education. Louisiana's GEAR UP students engage with university faculty, staff, and students via experiential learning activities that enhance students' academic and career development. In this session, facilitators will discuss the evolution of the C2S partnership, discuss their process for adaptive problem-solving, and share the lessons they've learned while developing innovative methods of engagement.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify ways of fostering relationships with university partners, including using formative/summative assessment.
2. Understand the perspectives of university partners and the ways in which universities can help meet GEAR UP goals.
3. Learn how to engage university partners in planning innovative face-to-face and virtual programming that increases GEAR UP students' preparation for and success in post-secondary education and careers.

**Steven Gruesbeck**, Executive Director, Louisiana GEAR UP/Connect to Success (C2S) at Northwestern State University of Louisiana

**Tireka Cobb, Ph.D.**, Project Director, Louisiana GEAR UP

**Jenny Moran**, Academic Content Manager, Louisiana GEAR UP

**Thomas Rudd**, Secondary to Post-secondary Career Transition Specialist, Louisiana GEAR UP

## Session #: 29

### Caring at Scale: High-Impact Peer Success Coaching in the 7th Year

This panel will illustrate how peer success coaching can be used as a 7th-year strategy to help GEAR UP students transition, acclimate, and thrive in college. The First-Year Success Center (FYS) at Arizona State University provides individualized and holistic peer coaching for over 8,000 freshmen. Students who utilize coaching are more likely to persist, and the impact has been particularly significant for first-generation students. This session will highlight how FYS provides caring at scale, with a highly diverse student body. Presenters will share findings from a recent study of FYS along with best practices related to data and evaluation.



### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Gain tangible ideas they can apply to develop or adapt a peer coaching or peer mentoring program to the changing needs of their students inclusive of in-person and virtual delivery models.
2. Learn how technology can be leveraged to provide outstanding student service at scale.
3. Identify strategies and best practices to assess peer coaching or peer mentoring programs.

**Sylvia Symonds, Ph.D.**, Associate Vice President, Educational Outreach and Student Services, ASU  
GEAR UP

**Kevin Correa, Ed.D.**, Director, First-Year Success Center, Arizona State University

### **Session #: 30**

#### **A Grand Slam Plan for Higher SAT and ACT Scores**

Join us on the mound as we pitch ideas and cover all the bases to bring your cohort the scores they need for an SAT/ACT home run! In this interactive group discussion, participants will learn from the presenters and the GEAR UP community effective strategies that they can add to their "Playbook" to develop a long-term, multi-level and sustainable plan for game-winning SAT/ACT test scores. This session is a "base hit" for all individuals involved with improving test scores for college admissions.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the importance of SAT and/or ACT scores to students and GEAR UP.
2. Collaborate and discuss strategies for improving SAT and/or ACT scores.
3. Develop a systemic and sustainable plan for improving SAT and/or ACT scores.

**Kristin Seay**, Project Director, Central Carolina Consortium GEAR UP Project

**Traci Aucoin**, Director, Lafayette Parish School System

**Craig Gehring**, President/CEO, Mastery Prep

### **Session #31**

#### **The Numbers Crunch: GEAR UP Data Compilation and Management**

In this panel, we will be exploring different usages and types of databases that can be tailored and implemented for various usages to effectively track data types for GEAR UP Programs. The audience target for this panel includes program directors and administrators of GEAR UP programs expecting renewal or in Years 1-4. Participants will receive a packet and online information link providing comprehensive knowledge on different database types to consider when either purchasing or requesting creation of a data management system. This session should help individuals effectively find the best data management strategy for their specific program.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will learn the difference in database types that can be utilized alone or together
2. Participants will see distinguishable pros and cons between different database types.
3. Participants will consider their programmatic needs compared to different database types to either improve upon their systems or consider new database creation.

**Wyatt Dunaway**, Administrative Associate IV, Texas A&M University-Kingsville

**Justin Salinas**, Program Specialist I, Texas A&M University-Kingsville

## **Monday - Virtual Social Engagement | 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm**

### **Join the Party and Zumba!**

This is for everybody and every body! Let's take the "work" out of workout and move our bodies to the beat. Zumba is one of the most fun and engaging ways to get your heart pumping, and is suitable for all fitness levels. Come join the party!

**Kelly Pappas**, Director, Career & College Clubs, NCCCP



## Let's Get Trivial!

Are you someone who loves games? Do you have lots of random facts and knowledge bouncing around in your brain? Are you ready to put that knowledge to the test?! Great! Then this is the Social Engagement session for you. Come and play Trivia with the GEAR UP crew.

**Lauren Foley**, Associate Director of Professional Development, NCCEP

**Janeé Williams**, Associate Director of Operations, NCCEP

## Tuesday, July 20th, 2021

11:00 am - 12:15 pm	Pre-conference Sessions
1:00 pm - 1:45 pm	Welcome & Plenary <b>Sponsor: CoBro Consulting</b>
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Monday - Block 1 Concurrent Sessions
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	Monday - Block 2 Concurrent Sessions
4:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Monday - Block 3 Concurrent Sessions
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Virtual Social Engagement

Please visit the Exhibit Hall during breaks!

## Tuesday - Pre-conference Sessions | 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

### Exploration Lab

#### Securing Buy-In at the School-Level

Creating and sustaining buy-in with the schools that your GEAR UP program works and partners with is a critical component of grant success and, ultimately, student success. Without strong partnerships with teachers, counselors, and administrators, it can be tough (or downright impossible) to implement the GEAR UP services that students and families need. So, how can we cultivate buy-in at the school-level? What is it that GEAR UP practitioners at all levels and in all roles can do to contribute toward these efforts? In this Exploration Lab, we will create a space to share ideas, potential solutions, what has worked, and ask one another questions.

Not your typical pre-conference, this session will be attendee-driven in conversation and content. An Exploration Lab is a session format that brings together people by topic, problem, or role-group. This specific topic-based Lab is for anyone interested in creating and sustaining buy-in with the schools that your GEAR UP program works and partners with.

**Lauren Foley**, Associate Director of Professional Development, NCCEP

**Danielle Walker**, Associate Director of Programs, NCCEP

### Exploration Lab

#### Strengthening GEAR UP Budget Compliance and Operations (Part 1)

Creating and sustaining buy-in with the schools that your GEAR UP program works and partners with is a critical component of grant success and, ultimately, student success. Without strong partnerships with teachers, counselors, and administrators, it can be tough (or downright impossible) to implement the GEAR UP services that students and families need. So, how can we cultivate buy-in at the school-level? What is it that GEAR UP practitioners at all levels and in all roles can do to contribute toward these efforts? In this Exploration Lab, we will create a space to share ideas, potential solutions, what has worked, and ask one another questions.

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**Samantha Elliott Briggs, Ph.D.**, Project Director, GEAR UP Alabama

**Jamie M. Lewis**, Associate Director of Programs, NCCEP

**Erin McGrath**, Director, GEAR UP Virginia

**Lakeshia Paton, Ed.D.**, Director, Fayetteville State University

**ChaunteL Campbell**, Program Associate, Fayetteville State University GEAR UP

**Kristin Brubaker**, Program Director, USU STARS!

**Janeé Williams**, Associate Director of Operations, NCCEP

### **One-Pagers: An Effective Tool for Telling the GEAR UP Story**

GEAR UP programs work so hard delivering programming to students, families, and educators. However, we often hear the question, What is GEAR UP? or What do you do again? Telling the story of your work is just as important as doing the work. One-page reports, or one-pagers, are effective tools for telling the GEAR UP story. Additionally, one-pagers are easy to digest and can be used to foster reflection, archive the work, and highlight specific areas of the program. During this session we will introduce a step-by-step process for creating one-pagers to facilitate conversation among stakeholders. Our session is fully aligned with all of the NCCEP strategies: Excel, Prove, and Mobilize. Excel: The session provides a process for creating one-pagers, helping stakeholders develop a mindset of continual improvement to maximize programmatic impact. Prove: The process for creating one-pagers requires grants to take a deep dive into the program's data, and it fosters data-informed decision making. Mobilize: One-pagers are easy to digest tools to tell the story of GEAR UP locally and nationally, bringing sustainability to the work.

**Virginia Bolshakova, Ph.D.**, Executive Director, Purdue University

**Julie Jaramillo, M.S.**, Director of Data and Analytics, Xcalibur

**Tabitha Cinowski**, Director of Operations, Purdue University

**Thomas Cech**, Associate Director of Research and Evaluation, NCCEP

### **Exploration Lab**

#### **From Newbie to Pro--Mapping the GEAR UP Journey (Part 1)**

**This is an invitational meeting and pre-registration with NCCEP is required to access the meeting.**

If you talk with a veteran GEAR UP Director, it is not uncommon to hear that it took years of leading a GEAR UP grant for the program to fully realize its potential. Once the elation of winning a GEAR UP grant subsides, a daunting reality sets in: how are we going to meet the needs of our students, our partnership, and make a lasting impact on our community? GEAR UP's success is not grounded in a single expertise, but rather, requires a high degree of competency across a diverse array of administrative, implementation, and leadership domains. With the maturation of GEAR UP programs requiring time and intentionality, it begs the question: what can be done to shorten the learning curve? Tuesday's Exploration Lab is the first of two linked sessions designed to bring together GEAR UP leaders to co-create a GEAR UP journey map, exploring the critical needs, challenges, and barriers that GEAR UP programs face as they mature from start-up to veteran.

**Robert Dais**, Statewide Director, GEAR UP Massachusetts

**Jacque Deahl**, Project Director, Idaho State Department of Education GEAR UP

**Alex Chough**, President, NCCEP

## The Trauma is Universal, the Grief is Personal, the Healing and Health are Collective (Part 1)

The interconnectedness of worldwide pandemics, nationwide civil unrest, statewide discord, and community-wide friction has inadvertently situated the K-12 and higher education sectors in a traumatic, grievous, unhealthy state. As education front-runners, we can serve as the leaders in unpacking, reconfiguring, and rebuilding college and career readiness programming that integrates trauma-informed care. With this call placed upon us, let us come together, learn how to recognize trauma and triggers, understand grief, and welcome healing and health. We invite you and your colleagues to join us as we reset our paths of resilience and recovery toward the meaningful lives we all seek and desire for ourselves and the students and families we serve. We invite you and your colleagues to join Amelia Roeschlein as we reset our paths of resilience and recovery toward the meaningful lives we all seek and desire for ourselves and the students and families we serve.

**Amelia Roeschlein, DSW**, National Council for Mental Well Being, Trauma-informed Services  
**April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, NCCEP

## Tuesday - Block 1 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

### Session #: 31 To 7th-Year and Beyond!

Join GEAR UP Maine on an adventure to the 7th-year and beyond! Through a facilitated discussion, discover strategies to assist students as they travel from high school to postsecondary education. Participants will fly away with research findings that GEAR UP Maine used to scale their 7th-year implementation model from 45 to 350 first-year college-going students. Unearth the benefits and the process to build your team's capacity as college access professionals through earning a micro-credential. Explore where you are, where you want to be, and how you can utilize what you've learned from Maine to get there.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify strategies to prepare their cohort for postsecondary education based on Maine's research.
2. Reflect on Maine's 7th-year implementation model.
3. Discover the benefits and process of earning micro-credentials for college access professionals.

**Sally Beaulieu**, Pilot Coordinator, GEAR UP Maine/Syntiro  
**Chris Young**, Scholar Coach, GEAR UP Maine/Syntiro  
**Mary Freeman**, Scholar Coach Manager, GEAR UP Maine/Syntiro  
**Tricia Brainard, Ed.D.**, Director of Evaluation and Research, Xcalibur

### Session #: 32 Training and Certifying College and Career Readiness Advisors to Meet the Needs of Students

There's been a staggering 29% drop in low-income students enrolling in America's colleges this year over last (National Clearing House). Myriad factors have contributed to this crisis: cost, distrust of higher education, and COVID 19. While long on causes, we're short on ways to leverage disruption and ensure that the opportunity of college is a reality for all children. This session will provide an effective solution to this crisis: a team of college and career readiness advisors that all GEAR UP programs can develop and implement. This session will show participants how to build a college/career readiness advisor training program.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the role of a college and career readiness advisor and the support an advisor provides underserved students.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how they can create a training for college and career readiness advisors in their school communities.
3. Engage in interactive activities with their constituents to help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to advise and mentor underserved students so that they become college and career-ready.

**Tara Smith**, Project Director, CFES Brilliant Pathways GEAR UP

**Jon Reidel, Ed.D.**, Director of Programs & Online Content, CFES Brilliant Pathways GEAR UP

**Ron Rix**, Program & Services Coordinator, CFES Brilliant Pathways GEAR UP

**Rick Dalton, Ed.D.**, Principal Investigator, CFES Brilliant Pathways GEAR UP

### **Session #: 33**

#### **What Does the Data Tell Us? The Connection Between Services and Postsecondary Enrollment**

In this interactive discussion, participants will explore the relationship between GEAR UP services and 2-year and 4-year postsecondary enrollment, including whether certain services provided enhanced benefit to students from specific backgrounds. Using a real study as an example, the session will highlight how service delivery and evaluation efforts were used to increase student outcomes in an iterative cycle. The session will feature lessons learned, with multiple opportunities for participants to ask questions and dig deeper into the study, the services, and the outcomes. The session is intended for GEAR UP personnel at any level interested in learning more about evaluating GEAR UP services and the long-term impact of GEAR UP services on postsecondary enrollment.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify which GEAR UP services are linked to 2-year and 4-year postsecondary enrollment.
2. Learn which GEAR UP services provide the most benefit to students from various demographic and academic backgrounds with regard to 2-year and 4-year postsecondary enrollment.
3. Demonstrate how the alignment of service delivery and local and CCREC evaluation efforts support the overall goals of GEAR UP and increase student postsecondary success.

**Shawn Bergman, Ph.D.**, K/C Distinguished Professor & Area Research Director, Center for Analytics Research and Education at Appalachian State University

**Mirenda Mason**, Research Assistant, Center for Analytics Research and Education at Appalachian State University

**Charles Matthews**, Research Assistant, Center for Analytics Research and Education at Appalachian State University

**Corinne Smith**, Director, GEAR UP at Appalachian State University

### **Session #: 34**

#### **Next Steps to Your Future: A Statewide Summer Virtual Advising Initiative**

In Summer 2020, as a response to COVID-19, GEAR UP Hawaii worked with the University of Hawaii Community Colleges and other partners to implement "Next Steps to Your Future", a summer advising initiative for the Class of 2020. Join us for a discussion on how the program provided transitioning GEAR UP seniors the essential advising and counseling support to reach their postsecondary plans. This session will provide best practices on creating a virtual advising program, guidance on how to design an interactive nudging/texting campaign, and feature insights from counselors who worked directly with participating students over the summer.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn best practices on creating a comprehensive virtual summer advising program for graduating high school seniors.
2. Learn how to design an interactive nudge/texting campaign to reach students and parents.
3. Gain insight from high school counselors as they share their stories and experiences working with high school students through our Next Steps program.

**Lesli Yogi**, Communications and Engagement Specialist, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education  
**Lynsey Bow**, Counseling Program Manager, Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education  
**Alana Haitzuku Fernandez**, Honokaa High & Intermediate School Curriculum Coordinator  
**Travis Nakayama**, Konwaena High School, College and Career Counselor

### **Session #: 36**

#### **Access for All: Simultaneously Supporting GEAR UP Students' In-Person and Virtual Learning in 2021-2022**

This interactive session will showcase the vision, planning, and collaboration necessary to create effective GEAR UP programming highlighting access and equity for all. MiraCosta College GEAR UP and Study Smart Tutors partnered together to ensure that students and families would be able to participate in the full "menu" of GEAR UP services regardless of their chosen modality to access academic and enrichment programming. Participants will develop their own implementation plans for equitable virtual and in-person delivery, and learn to leverage staff and technology to ensure engagement and participation for students and families both in-person and online.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Acknowledgment of the potential challenges in service delivery.
2. Increase student engagement, participation, and learning.
3. Develop plans for multiple delivery service models.

**Julie Johnson**, Director, MiraCosta College

**Jack Friedman**, Founder & CEO, Study Smart Tutors

### **Session #: 37**

#### **Zooming for Success: Creating a Virtual Community for Family Engagement**

In this facilitated dialogue, participants will develop an understanding of a research-informed educational model and resources available to strengthen the connection and partnerships between parents and children, and parents and schools. This program model promotes collaborative and inclusive interaction between families and school staff and recognizes the importance of positive family dynamics as a strong component of students' success. The goal of this workshop is to provide participants an opportunity to explore the program model and resources and consider the potential for replication at their site.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will develop an understanding of the research-informed educational tools and resources available to strengthen the interaction and partnerships between parents and children, and parents and schools during distance learning.
2. Participants will engage in hands-on learning activity to learn how to use adult education methods and principles in virtual workshops with GEAR UP parents to help support school success.
3. Participants will engage in small group discussions on how they can implement these strategies into their own GEAR UP programs.

**Lucia Mendez**, GEAR UP Program Supervisor, Minnesota Office of Higher Education

**Felipa Cespedes**, GEAR UP Outreach Associate, Minnesota Office of Higher Education

**Mary Jo Katras, Ph.D.**, UMN Extension Program Leader, University of Minnesota Extension

**Silvia Alvarez de Davila, Ph.D.**, UMN Extension Associate Educator, University of Minnesota Extension

## Session #: 38

### Things We Wish We Knew: The Beginning Years

In this facilitated dialogue, we will explore the difficulties of being a first/second-year program within your first grant cycle. Attendees will learn to navigate what seems to be failure within a developing program. We will explore two case studies targeting ASU GEAR UP schools during the same grant cycle. We will utilize these case studies as support tools to display the hardships and success in the beginning stages of GEAR UP. Participants will have the opportunity to share experiences with other programs as well as pain points to support in the success and progress of future programs.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify and discuss with peers, the areas where success is necessary for the betterment of the grant and participants.
2. Articulate and define an annual plan targeting specific area where growth may be achieved.
3. Engage and strategize on how to track and find success in the small accomplishments.

**Jasmine Dean**, Program Coordinator, ASU GEAR UP

## Session #: 39

### Parents + Leadership = Success

Research consistently shows that family engagement in schools improves student academic performance and achievement, reduces absenteeism, and most importantly, elevates parents' and students' confidence in education and themselves. This remains true regardless of social or economic background. In this session, presenters will showcase how the Chicago GEAR UP parent advocate model uses best practices in parent engagement to improve students' academic performance. Participants will hear real-world parent-student success stories from parent advocates/presenters, explore and map resources for executing successful strategies for family engagement, and learn about tools and resources to replicate these innovative parental engagement initiatives.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Explore innovative parent-led projects, including mapping a school community to best execute your goals and objectives
2. Learn through active participation how to develop parent leaders.
3. Master the pivotal role of technology in re-engaging families, parents, students, allies, and school staff.

**Victor Montañez**, Parents Students Services Specialist, Center for College Access and Success - Northeastern Illinois University

**Dioselina Guzman**, Parent Advocate, Center for College Access and Success - Northeastern Illinois University

**Maribel Gomez**, Parent Advocate, Center for College Access and Success - Northeastern Illinois University

**Kimberly Thomas**, GEAR UP Parent Advocate, Center for College Access and Success - Northeastern Illinois University

## Session #: 40

### How to Build A Virtual Education Environment to Deepen School Partnerships

Last March, tens of millions of students transitioned to remote learning, making school leaders across the country ask themselves hard questions: What does learning look like in a virtual setting? How do I offer services seamlessly across multiple learning formats? How do we rethink an educational environment that is flexible, safe, and effective that aligns with our school's culture when we are in the building? In this session, GEAR UP Jefferson County and the Student Success Agency break down how GEAR UP leaders can enable their school communities to build, maintain, and manage a virtual environment that fosters student success.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Collaborate with audience members to share experiences and tactics from the Fall 2020 school year that they can take back to their staff, schools, and communities.
2. Showcase their virtual education environment and implement ideas and strategies that they learned from the session to improve their model.
3. Develop skills that enable their school communities to build, engage, and lead a virtual environment that fosters student agency of their learning experience.

**Jenny Ceesay**, GEAR UP Director, The University of Montevallo

**Blair Husted**, Director of School Success, Student Success Agency

## Tuesday - Block 2 | 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

**Session #: 41****GEARing UP for 7th Year: A Virtual College Advising Framework for Student Engagement**

Whether in-person or through virtual services, GEAR UP professionals need to use proactive advising and empathic listening strategies to build successful relationships with students. Come join us as we share our advising best practices with first-year college students, designed to help them engage and succeed in this crucial transition year. Learn what we are doing in our program and leave with a framework for yours! Be ready to participate in this highly interactive session.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Review 12th-grade and 13th-grade activities designed to increase students enrolling and succeeding in post-secondary education.
2. Explore best practices in virtual advising services to ensure student success and retention in post-secondary programs.
3. Discuss the importance of building college and community partnerships as a way to leverage key resources for first-year college students.

**Lorena Gasca**, Senior Program Manager, Chicago GEAR UP, NEIU

**Daisy Guzman**, College Access Coordinator, Center for College Access and Success, NEIU

**Willie Correa**, College Access Coordinator, Center for College Access and Success, NEIU

**Robert Siler**, College Access Coordinator, Center for College Access and Success, NEIU

**Session #: 42****We're Here for a Good Time, Not a Long Time: Preparing Seniors for Success**

Through strong partnerships, advance planning, and high-impact practices, CSUF GEAR UP implemented and supported experiences designed to achieve success in spite of challenges presented by the pandemic. Embracing the opportunity to innovate, CSUF GEAR UP created sustainable programs that will persist in value and effectiveness even after students and schools return to in-person learning. Participants will learn about our collaborative approach to implement and support a variety of virtual services for high school students -- including seniors navigating the college application process. Participants will be invited to share common obstacles and lessons learned when planning and implementing virtual programming.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Discuss programming that is vital during senior year for preparing students for college, career, and life success.
2. Discuss obstacles and best practices for planning and implementing virtual programming.
3. Share strategies that have been successful in recruiting and keeping students engaged in a virtual platform.

**Clarissa Rodriguez**, Special Projects Coordinator, CSUF GEAR UP

**Amanda Bean**, Program Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction, Anaheim Union High School District

**Ryan Ruelas**, Teacher, Anaheim Union High School District

**Kasey Spencer**, Teacher, Anaheim Union High School District

**Lulu Suarez**, Academic Coordinator, CSUF GEAR UP

### **Session #: 43**

#### **Three Strategies to Make Your School's Student Support System More Equitable and Efficient**

Every year, particularly the past year, schools are challenged to reach students in new and creative ways. In this session, participants will learn three key strategies based on an award-winning, innovative student support model. The analysis of the model indicates these strategies can reduce student anxiety, improve trauma recovery, and boost test scores by 10%. Find out how to move from a deficit-based support model to one that builds on student strengths. Discover new ways to engage your students to help one another. Leave with a social and emotional activity that you can use right away with your colleagues and students to start narrowing equity gaps.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify 5 overlooked ways that equity gaps creep into the way we support students.
2. Understand 3 research-based, social-emotional strategies to narrow equity gaps.
3. Be prepared to facilitate an activity to help students and staff narrow gaps.

**Bryan Taylor**, President, EduGuide

### **Session #: 44**

#### **A Collective Effort: A High Impact Family and Community Engagement Model**

Collaboration is the key! In this facilitated discussion, presenters will share strategies to build capacity in families, staff, and community partners that positively affect school-wide change. CSUF GEAR UP and AUHSD have partnered together to develop and implement a model framework for creating an environment that is intentional, strategic, and effective to engage families and community partners -- both virtually and in-person. Since March 2020, CSUF GEAR UP and AUHSD have prioritized family engagement by expanding on the current systems in place through the creation of the Virtual Parent Leadership Academy curriculum, and the community schools model to holistically promote students' and families' success. Every participant will leave this session with adaptable tools to elevate your family and community engagement.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of key steps from a toolkit for implementing a quality parent/family engagement program.
2. Identify and discuss with peers strategies to effectively address the most challenging parent/family engagement issues.
3. Experience an interactive activity to teach CSUF GEAR UP parents/families the essential elements of college fit and financing.

**Araceli Chavez**, Coordinator, Family Engagement, CSUF GEAR UP

**Araceli Huerta**, Interim Coordinator, Family and Community Engagement, Anaheim Union High School District

**Carlos Hernandez**, Director, Curriculum & Instruction, Anaheim Union High School District

**Cristal Sanchez**, Family Engagement Coordinator, CSUF GEAR UP

**Natalie Gonzalez**, Family Engagement Coordinator, CSUF



## Session #: 45

### **Adapt, Innovate, and Excel: Supporting Students' High School Transition in a Distanced Learning Environment**

A successful transition to high school is crucial to a student's overall High School success and can impact a student's decision to pursue post-secondary education. With the abrupt closing of schools in March, many of the activities planned to facilitate eighth graders' transition to High School was either canceled completely or significantly modified. In this presentation, we will showcase UT Austin GEAR UP's response to embracing distanced learning and our strategies to supporting our students through their High School transition. Our strategies include our new and innovative Virtual Summer Camp opportunities and our new High School 101 virtual asynchronous course.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the importance of supporting students through high school transition and the impact the pandemic has had on providing supports and activities.
2. Examine innovative ways to provide transitional support to students in a distance-learning environment.
3. Connect transition goals to innovative strategies for effective and engaging transition programming.

**Chelsea Fernandez**, College and Career Readiness Specialist, UT Austin GEAR UP

**Noe Benavidez**, Post Secondary Liaison, UT Austin GEAR UP

## Session #: 46

### **A GEAR UP Roadmap to Your College Application Campaign: Years 1 to 7**

A single GEAR UP High School in North Carolina hosted a college application completion event in 2005. Today, 7000+ high schools in every state host American College Application Campaign events. Four GEAR UP professionals, who also serve as their state's ACAC coordinator, present this session. Learn activities you can implement in Years 1-5 of your grant to prepare your students so they're ready to apply in Year 6. Discuss ideas for in-person and virtual activities. Practice a few! Learn how to connect with your state's official campaign. Leave with a roadmap for building your own college exploration and application event.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will discover how to build a college application completion campaign across all years of their GEAR UP grant.
2. Participants will experience activities they can do with students.
3. Participants will connect with their ACAC state coordinator.

**Adrienne Enriquez**, Program Manager, Oregon GEAR UP/Oregon State University

**Erin McGrath**, Director, GEAR UP Virginia

**Heather McChesney**, Coordinator of Curriculum and Professional Development, West Virginia GEAR UP

**Brandi Lyndall**, Director of GEAR UP Outreach, GEAR UP Mississippi

## Session #: 47

### **Utilizing Digital Portfolios to GEAR UP Students for College, Career, and Life Beyond High School**

Let's elevate your student portfolios! Accurate documentation and communication are essential components to student success. In this interactive session, we will explore the process for using Google Slides to make an interactive portfolio for your students. Every participant will learn how to pack your portfolio with tools, engaging videos, and resource links. All attendees will receive a Digital Portfolio Copy, complete with templates, demos, and everything you will need to increase the value of your student portfolios!

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of revising, utilizing, and implementing digital portfolios through Google Slides for GEAR UP students by altering the Master Slides.
2. Identify and discuss strategies to adapt the digital portfolios to meet the needs of students/parents to include resources, hyperlinks, etc.
3. Experience an engaging activity designed to teach GEAR UP students and/or families the importance of budgeting and/or assess financial income needed based on lifestyle wants/needs.

**Brandi Frazier**, GEAR UP Site Facilitator, ESC Region 12  
**Kristi Burke**, GEAR UP Site Facilitator, ESC Region 12  
**Elizabeth Dunlap**, GEAR UP Site Facilitator, ESC Region 12  
**Julie McPherson**, GEAR UP Site Facilitator, ESC Region 12

#### **Session#: 48**

### **Beyond the Numbers: The Influence of Student Perspectives on Summer Bridge and Year 7 Programming**

A key benefit of evaluation is its ability to inform programming. PA GEAR UP has seen this benefit grow exponentially as a result of the inclusion of student focus groups. The perspectives of students are essential when designing summer bridge and 7-year programming, particularly when virtual programming is needed. Using a multi-perspective approach, this session will review PA GEAR UP's summer bridge and Year 7 programming, as well as the added value of student focus groups to data collection and evaluation methods. In this panel-led discussion, participants will have the opportunity to discuss, in small and large groups, programming ideas for summer bridge, 7th-year supports, and how student feedback can be used to inform programming.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Discuss the perspectives of students participating in PA GEAR UP's summer bridge and Year 7 programming
2. Brainstorm and share programming ideas for summer bridge and Year 7 programming
3. Discuss how focus group feedback can be used to inform programming

**Christy King**, Internal Evaluation/Data Coordinator, PA State Gear Up

**Pam Carter, Ph.D.**, Associate Director of Research, FHI 360

**Andrea Kirshman, Ed.D.**, Associate Provost for Retention & Student Success, Kutztown University

**Katrina Eady**, PA GEAR UP-3 State Grant Director, PA State GEAR UP

#### **Session #: 49**

### **Using Research to Build a Scalable Program**

During this workshop, directors, coordinators, and evaluators will discuss ways to leverage research to develop a scalable program. Participants will be provided with strategies for asking data-based questions, methods to incorporate various stakeholders' perspectives, approaches to foster engagement and examples of how to present findings to different audiences. Research methodology will be discussed as it applies to program development rather than in a theoretical manner. Group discussions will allow participants to reflect upon their programs to identify areas for research-based enhancement and to incorporate strategies. Participants will receive templates to use in their programs to share with various audiences.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Generate research-based questions to identify program components and to build a scalable program.
2. Discuss with peers how to develop research strategies aimed at incorporating the perspective of various GEAR UP stakeholders into program development.
3. Integrate findings into programming to foster research-based program development, and to bolster stakeholder engagement and buy-in.

**Jennifer Grossman, Ph.D.**, Coordinator of Research & Evaluation, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV HEPC)

**Samantha Spinney, Ph.D.**, Senior Manager, Youth & Adult Education, ICF

#### **Session #: 50**

### **Expanding Social Emotional Leadership in Every Student**

"Are you being your best self?" "Are you doing your best work?" Our social-emotional leadership system sparks a transformation in how our students, staff, and families communicate. Participants are empowered to reflect on personal and academic habits, daily attitude, and the skills necessary to manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Attendees will learn how to expand leadership capacity by empowering students to become advocates for change by increasing self-esteem, inspiring confidence, and strengthening inner purpose in a fun, interactive way.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Gain personal leadership skills and understand the importance of peer influence.
2. Learn how to inspire students to become advocates for change.
3. Discover how to create a sustainable social-emotional leadership system supporting the whole child.

**Vickie Evans**, Project Director, LETS GEAR UP Lufkin

**Monique Nunn, Ed.D.**, Coordinator, LETS GEAR UP Lufkin

**Kris Menon**, Partner and Co-Founder, Ignite Nation

**Courtney Tensley**, Project Manager, Ignite Nation

## Tuesday - Block 3 | 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

**Session #: 51****Campus Visits as Predictors of Postsecondary Enrollment**

This interactive presentation explores the relationship between college visits and exposure to college campuses and the relationship between these visits and rates of post-secondary enrollment. We discuss the relationship between the timing of visits in a student's academic career and discuss findings from student surveys on selected trips. The presentation of findings will be followed by an interactive session with questions from the audience. This session is intended for GEAR UP personnel at any level who are interested in learning more about college visits and college exposure as it relates to postsecondary enrollment.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn how the number and timing of college visits in a student's middle school and high school career affects the likelihood of postsecondary enrollment.
2. Learn how college exposure and visits are related to postsecondary enrollment when other academic and demographic factors are taken into account.
3. Learn how student questionnaire responses from selected college visits yields insights into students' experiences with college visits.

**Ross Gosky, Ph.D.**, Professor, Center for Analytics Research and Education

**Molly Martin**, Research Assistant, Center for Analytics Research and Education

**Corinne Smith**, Director, GEAR UP at Appalachian State University

**Session #: 52****When in Doubt, Theme the Month Out! Creating Themed Toolkits to Enhance your College-Going Culture**

The New Hampshire GEAR UP Alliance uses their theme month toolkits as a key feature of their strategy for serving rural schools (and students). The intervention is an innovative and creative way to engage students while increasing their awareness and mastery of 21st Century Skills, College Knowledge, national campaigns, colleges in their state, or anything else a GEAR UP program deems important--and the themes and toolkits can be done virtually if needed. The flexible intervention uses a three-step approach (Stall Street Journals, Bulletin Boards, and Social Media) that can be recreated to fit the needs of any program or school.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn how to create a theme month toolkit program with stall street journals, bulletin board templates, and more.
2. Identify 10 key themes that participants might explore and use to create their themes for the 2021-2022 school year.
3. Interact with an online graphic design platform that will make the creation of toolkits quick and easy.

**MaeAnna Edwards**, Director of Postsecondary Access and Success, GEAR UP New Hampshire

## Session #: 53

### Creating the Next Generation of Leaders

Let's face it. We are leading in a time of crisis. The pandemic has made us all more vulnerable, however, how we lead is critically important to the future of our students. How can we be intentional in setting up the next generation of leaders so no matter what happens the work continues? In this interactive session, talk to others about how to cultivate leadership within your organization leaning into the power of the ask. Hear from a new leader in the GEAR UP community whose work is to bring people together to strengthen the GEAR UP community.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Engage in conversation and become aware of their leadership style.
2. Receive real-life situations to discuss and identify their leadership legacy.
3. Gain an understanding of this movement to create future leaders.

**Lois Bramwell**, Project Director, GEAR UP 4 LA

**Traci Aucoin**, Director, Lafayette Parish School District

**Martha Cantu, Ed.D.**, Director, University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley

## Session #: 54

### Ready, Set, Action Plans: Developing New School Initiatives Using Logic Models

Your data can drive long-term change! Join this session to learn how you can elevate school voice and choice by leveraging logic models. The GEAR UP Oklahoma team will take you through the process of organizing data, developing leveraging logic models, designing action plans, and making the best decisions for your students and families.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Learn the K-20 process for developing a logic model.
2. Understand the process for analyzing school-level data, barriers for student success, researching, and developing SMART goals.
3. Develop activities and interventions that mitigate potential program issues and challenges.

**Bradly Cusack**, Instructional Technology Specialist, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP for MY SUCCESS

**Danny Mattox**, Project Director, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center, GEAR UP for MY SUCCESS

## Session #: 55

### Becoming Competitive through STEM Partnerships and Dual Enrollment Programs: A Bronx Institute Student Showcase

One size doesn't fit all. Join this session to learn how Bronx GEAR UP Network Journey is leveraging partnerships for the purpose of preparing students for higher education. Participants will learn how Bronx GEAR UP Network integrates STEM classes with college advisement to boost college readiness. Through engaging use of social media technologies, Bronx high school students will share their experiences in programs that sharpen their skills and address their individual needs and academic goals.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Describe from high school students' viewpoints, the impact of internship experiences provided in collaboration with partnering science institutions.
2. Describe from high school students' viewpoints, the impact of a variety of dual enrollment programs on their thinking about college selection and application. In particular, they will explain how their expectations of the college learning experience changed over the years and how they used their knowledge to make high school a stronger academic experience.
3. Present strategies by College Academic Readiness Coaches to integrate college awareness activities into workshops, advisement, college visits, educational field trips, and afternoon/Saturday/summer intensive seminars to increase college expectations and improve college fit.

**Martha Atencio, Ed.D.**, Assistant Director, The Bronx Institute at Lehman College

## Session #: 56

### How Good is Good Enough? Monitoring GEAR UP Grants Using More than a Checklist

2 CFR section 200.331 requires grant entities to evaluate each sub-recipient's risk of non-compliance to ensure that the sub-award is in compliance with terms of the sub-award and federal regulations. During this guided discussion, presenters will outline steps in developing an instrument for measuring and validating partner risk, using fidelity measures that assess service implementation, grant administration activities (including fiscal functions), and data responsibilities. Furthermore, this session will assist participants in determining what to measure, what types of collection processes are needed to score the rubric, and how to use the tool to improve grant evaluation and management.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify areas of risk/fidelity for GEAR UP grants and the responsibility to monitor risk as stated in 2 CFR section 200.331.
2. Compare and contrast approaches to grant management, evaluation, and monitoring in terms of risk vs. fidelity.
3. Learn how to develop a fidelity rubric and examine the processes needed to correctly measure and utilize the assessment tool.

**Melissa Gattuso**, Director of Implementation, Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

**Comfort Afolabi, Ph.D.**, Internal Evaluator, GEAR UP Georgia

**Tricia Brainard, Ed. D.**, Director of Evaluation and Research, Xcalibur

## Session #: 57

### Readiness From the Inside Out: Establishing Relationships to Elicit Behavior Change

In this highly interactive facilitated dialogue, we will explore existing research behind relationships, relevance, and the connection of both to student success. Participants will gain a working understanding of relationship-building strategies as well as the principles of Motivational Interviewing (MI) to better recognize change talk in students, parents, and colleagues. This exposure to MI principles will support participants as they engage in interactive activities and exercises that will solidify their collaborative conversation skills with students, parents, and colleagues to elicit behavior change (academic and personal-social).

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Explore existing research behind relationships, relevance, and the connection of both to student success.
2. Gain a working understanding of relationship-building strategies as well as the principles of MI to better recognize change talk in students, parents, and colleagues.
3. Engage in interactive activities/exercises that will solidify/enhance collaborative conversation skills with students, parents, and colleagues to elicit behavior change (academic and personal-social).

**Jennifer Murphy, Ph.D.** Director, School Partnership Grants/Faculty, ASU GEAR UP

## Session #: 58

### Building the Bridge: Successful Transition for Students with Disabilities

Researchers regard the transition from middle school to high school as one of the most stressful events for young adolescents. In this interactive session, we will explore research-based concepts that will promote a successful transition from middle school to high school and from high school to post-secondary success for students with disabilities. Through the exploration of real-world scenarios and first-hand accounts, we will delve into best practices to create a culture of a successful transition for all.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Engage in interactive opportunities to learn key concepts.
2. Collaborate to identify key challenges and solutions to today's transition for students with disabilities.
3. Create goals for future implementations in their schools.

**Vanessa Salazar**, College Transition Support Specialist, Region One ESC

**Ruben Garcia**, GEAR UP Facilitator, Region One ESC

**Session #: 59****Inspired by STEM: Immersive STEM Career Exploration Experiences**

Students are disengaged with STEM at a time when they need it most. Learn about an interdisciplinary partnership to address this concern via a self-directed, online STEM career exploration 'boot camp' to help middle schoolers build STEM skills and mindsets, and help facilitators inspire engagement. The session will begin with a fun activity to understand the broad applications of STEM. Next, participants will participate in a "9 Second Challenge" to explore a comprehensive STEM career exploration platform. Participants will then apply learnings to their own GEAR UP programs via inquiry-based action planning with individualized feedback from presenters and peers.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the importance and broad applications of STEM as a set of skills, as a mindset, and as an instrument of engagement.
2. Identify and explore a comprehensive, immersive, longitudinal STEM-based career exploration platform.
3. Try it! Apply key understandings via hands-on activities, combining STEM, career exploration, and college readiness structures within your GEAR UP program.

**Benjamin Breault**, Program Coordinator, CT GEAR UP Alliance

**Ashley Pereira**, Owner, Career In STEM by Greater Good Consultants LLC

**Session #: 60****Mission Impossible: Planning a Successful Virtual Summer Camp During a Global Pandemic**

Your mission, if you choose to accept it, is to plan a virtual summer camp students actually want to attend and inspires them to overcome all obstacles, even a global pandemic. In this session, we will explore how WSU Tri-Cities GEAR UP transformed their face-to-face summer camp into a virtual camp that brought together students from across Eastern Washington and transformed them into educational success teams. In this fun, interactive workshop, participants will discover techniques and activities that they can use to promote virtual resilience and educational success. This description will self-destruct in five seconds.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the benefits of developing a common, shared culture and norms, even virtually, that ensure successful programming.
2. Experience and participate in virtual activities that can help foster individual and collective purpose, resiliency, and servant leadership in GEAR UP students.
3. Learn the key elements and tools necessary to create a successful virtual summer camp.

**Michelle Parvinen**, HOH Program Director, WSU Harvest of Hope GEAR UP

**Carlos Ojeda Jr.**, CEO & Creative Force, CoolSpeak

# Tuesday - Virtual Social Engagement | 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

## Meet the GEAR UP Pets!

Let's be honest, who doesn't love showing off their pet. Well, here is your chance. Come and introduce your furry (or scaly) friend to GEAR UP. Even if you don't have a pet, but love animals, this is the session for you.

- Nola Jeffries**, CEO of Dogs, Dogs N' Company
- Ricky Bobby**, President of Dogs, Dogs N' Company
- Danielle Walker**, Associate Director of Programs, NCCEP
- Emily Jeffries**, Associate Director of Government Relations, NCCEP

## Take A Break and Breathe

A popular song released by Q-Tip in 1999 entitled "Breathe and Stop" may carry a subliminal invitation to pause and recognize the value of the breath. Often, we willingly and unwillingly set high standards for our personal and professional lives that require determination, drive, and deliverables. We cannot let our stress hormones serve as a source of energy; it is unsustainable. Without a commitment to recharge, refresh, and renew, we run the risk of losing time, focus, and concentration, leading to tension, fatigue, and potential health consequences. Let us join together, "break" this vicious cycle, and learn how to incorporate breathing exercises and techniques that are easy, uplifting, and revitalizing.

**April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, NCCEP

# Wednesday, July 20th, 2021

11:00 am - 12:15 pm	Pre-conference Sessions
1:00 pm - 1:45 pm	Welcome & Plenary <b>Sponsor: SEEDS</b>
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Monday - Block 1 Concurrent Sessions
3:15 pm - 4:15 pm	Monday - Block 2 Concurrent Sessions
4:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Monday - Block 3 Concurrent Sessions
5:30 pm - 5:45 pm	Closing <b>Sponsor: CoolSpeak</b>

Please visit the Exhibit Hall during breaks!

# Wednesday - Pre-conference Sessions | 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

## Exploration Lab Strengthening GEAR UP Budget Compliance and Operations (Part 2)

Creating and sustaining buy-in with the schools that your GEAR UP program works and partners with is a critical component of grant success and, ultimately, student success. Without strong partnerships with teachers, counselors, and administrators, it can be tough (or downright impossible) to implement the GEAR UP services that students and families need. So, how can we cultivate buy-in at the school-level? What is it that GEAR UP practitioners at all levels and in all roles can do to contribute toward these efforts? In this Exploration Lab, we will create a space to share ideas, potential solutions, what has worked, and ask one another questions.

Not your typical pre-conference, this session will be attendee-driven in conversation and content. An Exploration Lab is a session format that brings together people by topic, problem, or role-group. This specific topic-based Lab is for anyone interested in creating and sustaining buy-in with the schools that your GEAR UP program works and partners with.

**Samantha Elliott Briggs, Ph.D.**, Project Director, GEAR UP Alabama  
**Jamie M. Lewis**, Associate Director of Programs, NCCEP  
**Erin McGrath**, Director, GEAR UP Virginia  
**Lakeshia Paton, Ed.D.**, Director, Fayetteville State University  
**Chaunteal Campbell**, Program Associate, Fayetteville State University GEAR UP  
**Kristin Brubaker**, Program Director, USU STARS!  
**Janeé Williams**, Associate Director of Operations, NCCEP

## Exploration Lab

### From Newbie to Pro--Mapping the GEAR UP Journey (Part 2)

**This is an invitational meeting and pre-registration with NCCEP is required to access the meeting.**

If you talk with a veteran GEAR UP Director, it is not uncommon to hear that it took years of leading a GEAR UP grant for the program to fully realize its potential. Once the elation of winning a GEAR UP grant subsides, a daunting reality sets in: how are we going to meet the needs of our students, our partnership, and make a lasting impact on our community? GEAR UP's success is not grounded in a single expertise, but rather, requires a high degree of competency across a diverse array of administrative, implementation, and leadership domains. With the maturation of GEAR UP programs requiring time and intentionality, it begs the question: what can be done to shorten the learning curve? Tuesday's Exploration Lab is the first of two linked sessions designed to bring together GEAR UP leaders to co-create a GEAR UP journey map, exploring the critical needs, challenges, and barriers that GEAR UP programs face as they mature from start-up to veteran.

**Robert Dais**, Statewide Director, GEAR UP Massachusetts  
**Jacque Deahl**, Project Director, Idaho State Department of Education GEAR UP  
**Alex Chough**, President, NCCEP

### The Trauma is Universal, the Grief is Personal, the Healing and Health are Collective (Part 2)

The interconnectedness of worldwide pandemics, nationwide civil unrest, statewide discord, and community-wide friction has inadvertently situated the K-12 and higher education sectors in a traumatic, grievous, unhealthy state. As education front-runners, we can serve as the leaders in unpacking, reconfiguring, and rebuilding college and career readiness programming that integrates trauma-informed care. With this call placed upon us, let us come together, learn how to recognize trauma and triggers, understand grief, and welcome healing and health. We invite you and your colleagues to join us as we reset our paths of resilience and recovery toward the meaningful lives we all seek and desire for ourselves and the students and families we serve. We invite you and your colleagues to join Amelia Roeschlein as we reset our paths of resilience and recovery toward the meaningful lives we all seek and desire for ourselves and the students and families we serve.

**Ann Chapman**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, National Council for Mental Well Being  
**April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, NCCEP

## Exploration Lab

### Engaging Disengaged Students

The challenges of 2020 and 2021 continue to reveal themselves in a conversation many are familiar with. How can we engage our disengaged students? How can we best support students that have struggled to stay engaged and in-touch? And, how does this situation look for you, in your community? In this Exploration Lab, we will create a space to share ideas, potential solutions, what has worked, and ask one another questions.

Not your typical pre-conference, this session will be attendee-driven in conversation and content. An Exploration Lab is a session format that brings together people by topic, problem, or role-group. This specific topic-based Lab is for anyone who wants to discuss how to engage students with other GEAR UP professionals.

**Lauren Foley**, Associate Director of Professional Development, NCCEP  
**Danielle Walker**, Associate Director of Programs, NCCEP



## The How Are You Doing? Really, How Are You Doing? Let's Talk About Our Mental Health

There is light at the end of the tunnel! In this workshop, we will share information on strategies you can use to improve your self-care. Join Carlos Bing, a licensed professional counselor and GEAR Ohio Director, to explore the year 2020, define self-care and why it is important, introduce strategies to improve your self-care, and participate in reflection time to develop your self-care plan.

**Carlos Bing**, Director of Strategic Partnerships, National Council for Mental Well Being

**Emily Jeffries**, Associate Director of Government Relations, NCCEP

## Wednesday - Block 1 | 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

### Session #: 61

#### "Where Does This Activity Go?" Building a Framework for Localized Activity Categorization and APR Mapping

Most GEAR UP grants agree that categorizing services is an essential task. However, not all grants agree on what defines a service category. Using a participatory evaluation framework, this interactive session will empower participants to take ownership of their data to advance their mission to Prove GEAR UP's effectiveness. Participants will learn about dynamic tools and strategies that can be used to facilitate staff conversations around service categorization.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the importance of intentionally categorizing services.
2. Understand the participatory/utilization-focused framework for evaluation.
3. Practice a framework for facilitating strategic conversations to define services locally.

**Meghan Ecker-Lyster, Ph.D.**, Director, University of Kansas

**Julie Jaramillo**, Director of Data and Analytics, Xcalibur

**Lauren Coleman-Tempel, Ph.D.**, Assistant Director of Research, Evaluation, & Dissemination, University of Kansas

### Session #: 62

#### me3@: An Interactive Tool to Help Students Explore Career Interests and Envision Their Futures

Do you work with students who are unsure about their future career path? Or those who wonder which careers and degrees best match their skills and interests? Then me3 powered by ASU is for you! In this facilitated dialogue session, the me3 team will walk attendees through the history of me3, the benefits of the tool, and provide an interactive demo where attendees can try out me3 for themselves and learn how to use the tool with their students. This session is open to anyone who is interested in helping students explore their career interests and map their academic path!

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Learn the history of the tool and how it has already been embedded with schools.
2. Experience an interactive activity to teach GEAR UP students about career exploration and charting an academic pathway.
3. Consult with peers on ways to increase career exploration with students of all grades.

**Alex Brown**, Assistant Director, Arizona State University

**Lisa Flesher**, Senior Director of Enterprise Response and Implementation, Arizona State University

**Erin Chastain**, Director, School Partnerships, Arizona State University

**Sylvia Symonds, Ph.D.**, Associate Vice President, Educational Outreach and Student Services, ASU  
GEAR UP

### Session #: 63

## Improving Programming From the Inside Out: Systematic Collection of Internal Data to Improve External Services

In the busy-ness of collecting data for federal reporting and evaluating services for outcome data, GEAR UP staff and evaluators often don't have the opportunity to conduct internal evaluations with the goal of improving internal processes or core programs and services. In this session, the K20 Center will share one experience with using evaluation methods to systematically collect internal data to improve GEARUP services for external stakeholders. Participants will leave this session with ideas to implement internal evaluations, tips, and tricks for using internal data to improve services, and some important lessons learned.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the process of program evaluation and discuss the benefits of program evaluation.
2. Determine how program evaluation can be used internally for GEAR UP processes, programs, or services.
3. Design a program evaluation plan for an existing process, program, or service.

**Jackie Mania-Singer, Ed.D.**, Director of Research and Evaluation, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center

**Scott Wilson, Ph.D.**, Director of Innovative Learning, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center

**Aaron Coffey**, Data Systems Engineer, University of Oklahoma, K20 Center

### Session #: 64

## Strategies Targeting Unfinished Learning in GEAR UP School Communities

Educators and GEAR UP Programs have teamed up and adapted to the unique challenges of 2020 in extraordinary ways, implementing effective virtual learning strategies while supporting students and staff through uncertainty caused by the pandemic. Join us for a panel discussion with district and GEAR UP leaders who will share lessons learned -- not only how they've assessed students' most urgent college-readiness and academic needs and how they've provided support virtually, but also how these experiences will shape future thinking.

### Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss and understand the role that persistence plays in excelling behavior and activities that reflect Kaizen (continuous improvement) for GEAR UP staff and students.
2. Define fidelity of implementation that proves through quality data continually informs your grant's changing direction and purpose.
3. Develop strategies based on the effective use of technology and social media to drive, enhance, and mobilize collegial and student support employing different modalities.

**Roel Piseno**, Area VP, K-12 Programs, Central Region, The Princeton Review

**Martha A. Cantu, Ed.D.**, Director, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

**Chelsea R. Fernandez**, College and Career Readiness Specialist, UT Austin GEAR UP

**Juliette M. Caire**, Executive Director, The University of Texas, El Paso

**Jill Manning**, Program Coordinator, GEAR UP 4 LA

### Session #: 65

## Adapting Social Emotional Learning in a COVID-19 World to Support GEAR UP Students and Teachers

This interactive session will discuss why delivering student social-emotional learning (SEL) and educator professional development during a pandemic is challenging, but critical. The session will share how a GEAR UP program used evidence-based practices to provide SEL in 2020-2021 and how the evaluation results will inform their 2021-2022 efforts. Attendees will share their experiences around student and educator SEL and will engage in discussions regarding how to effectively deliver SEL through an online format. The session is intended for GEAR UP personnel who are interested in learning how to use formative evaluation and evidence-based practices to provide effective SEL.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify the elements that comprise successful social-emotional learning program for both students and educators.
2. Learn evidence-based strategies to adapt social-emotional learning training, programs, and resources to an online format.
3. Demonstrate how GEAR UP schools and programs can use local data, evidence-based practices, and formative evaluation to track and improve school-wide social-emotional learning interventions.

**Shawn Bergman, Ph.D.**, K/C Distinguished Professor & Area Research Director, Vela Institute /Appalachians State

**Taylor Lundy**, Research Assistant, Appalachian State University

**Jacqueline Moreno**, Managing Director, College Access Initiatives, Illinois Student Assistance Commission

### **Session #: 66**

#### **Leveraging GEAR UP Partnerships: Increasing Equity and Access Through an Early College Program**

Highlighting GEAR UP Milwaukee, we will describe how to create sustainable programs through partnerships. The creation and implementation of M3 (m-cubed) College Connections, a dual enrollment program agreement between the Milwaukee School District, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). We will explore best practices to build lasting partnerships focused on data-informed equity-centered programs & initiatives, troubleshoot complex issues between IHE's and school districts, and engage students and families to participate in these programs.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Demonstrate knowledge of key steps to create sustainable partnerships with IHE partners.
2. Identify and discuss with peers strategies to effectively address equity in postsecondary readiness and opportunities for students.
3. Learn the processes and challenges of creating a district-wide dual enrollment program.

**James Sokolowski**, Postsecondary Engagement Coordinator, Milwaukee Public Schools

**John Hill, Ph.D.**, Director of College & Career Readiness, Milwaukee Public Schools

### **Session #: 67**

#### **Take Action! Reach, Teach & Empower GEAR UP Families**

During this hands-on learning experience, participants will learn how UTRGV GEAR UP and CoolSpeak engaged both parents and students together during multiple 2-hour virtual settings that can also be delivered face-to-face. The workshop will provide examples of the parent and student's participation while also taking the participants through an array of activities that showcase how to achieve their learning objectives. Participants will leave with a better understanding of how to engage our families as a unit, the importance of cultural relevance, and the ability to present in both English and Spanish when needed.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify a new approach to engage our GEAR UP Families, involving both the parent/guardian and student in each session in order to be connected in their college journey.
2. Understand how to deliver content that is applicable to both parents and students simultaneously.
3. Experience activities that open the doors to more meaningful discussions between parents and students.

**Ernesto Mejia**, Vice President, CoolSpeak

**Monica Padron**, Family Engagement Specialist, UTRGV GEAR UP

**Cristina Castillo**, Assistant Director, UTRGV GEAR UP

**Brisa Cenicerros**, GEAR UP Parent/Participant of Families in ACTION!, UTRGV GEAR UP

## Session #: 68

### Developing Student Ownership: How Parents and Caregivers Can Help Their Children Become Life-Long Learners

Every parent wants their child to succeed. Every guardian wants their child to grow academically. Every caregiver wants their child to build a sustainable future. The best way to do this is to ensure that all children become life-long learners. We know that parents and caregivers have a crucial role in ensuring that their children become life-long learners. But many parents and caregivers don't know how to support their children in this endeavor. Learn how to develop effective and efficient learning opportunities for families that will build their capacity to empower their children to be as successful as possible.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Examine research-based practices that foster the development of student ownership in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and climate.
2. Analyze the phases of an engaging, effective, and efficient learning opportunity for parents and caregivers.
3. Reflect on strategies, tools, and techniques that support a systemic effort for increasing family support and student achievement, in order to determine an implementable plan.

**Robert Crowe**, CEO and Administrator Coach, Elevated Achievement Group

**Jane Kennedy**, CFO and Instructional Coach, Elevated Achievement Group

**Summer Steele**, Director, California State University San Bernardino, GEAR UP Program

## Session #: 69

### Supporting Student Learning Via Distance Learning Methods: The Aggie Homework Helpline

Like many GEAR UP programs, the Texas A&M GEAR UP program was tasked with navigating the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19. Implementing online learning, anticipating the needs of our students and families, and identifying new methods of engagement required an innovative method of service. The Aggie Homework Helpline, launched within seven weeks at the beginning of the fall 2020 semester, was our response to these challenging times. We seek to share our progress, as well as capture ideas of participants, on efforts to ensure that marginalized populations have access and can fully benefit from the online tutoring provided by the Aggie Homework Helpline. Join us to learn about the development of the Aggie Homework Helpline, explore the benefits of this tutoring model, and share implementation tools that can be utilized by any GEAR UP grant.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify essential steps needed to launch an online tutoring program such as the Aggie Homework Helpline in response to the needs of the schools, families, and communities.
2. Connect previous experiences and knowledge in response to their understanding of our ongoing Aggie Homework Helpline project.
3. Describe the benefits of an online tutoring program.

**Marcia Montague, Ph.D.**, Clinical Assistant Professor, Texas A&M University

**Monica Neshyba, Ph.D.**, Family Engagement Specialist, Texas A&M University

## Session #: 70

### Implementing Through Disruption: Responses to COVID and Other Unforeseen School Closures

Spring 2020 GEAR UP services were significantly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. COVID-19 disruptions impacted all aspects of GEAR UP programming, closing schools, mandating social distancing, and disrupting the collection of student data and outcomes. In this session, we will share our strategies to address recent disruption to program services, discuss the strengths and weakness of these approaches, and present findings from program activity data and stakeholder interviews.

**LaKeshia Payton, Ed.D.**, Director, Fayetteville State University-GEAR UP

**Rangel Moore**, Academic Coach, Fayetteville State University-GEAR UP

**Antoinette Fisher**, Academic Coach, Fayetteville State University-GEAR UP

**Felix Fernandez**, Principal Research Scientist, FHI 360

## Wednesday - Block 2 | 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

### Session #: 71

#### College Persistence: Five Common Challenges & How to Solve Them

Among students from low-income backgrounds who enroll at a 4-year college, only 40% will obtain a bachelor's degree within six years. Recognizing that an acceptance letter doesn't guarantee a diploma, there's more we can do to support students along the journey and make sure they reach graduation day. In this lecture, we will discuss five common challenges for advisors when supporting college persistence and the solutions that will help keep students on track.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify college persistence challenges that are common to their student population.
2. Explore approaches to student data collection and persistence reporting.
3. Discuss scalable support strategies to ensure students reach college graduation.

**Oscar Sweeten-Lopez**, President & Founder, GradSnapp, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

### Session #: 72

#### Overcoming the Challenges of Delivering Academic Tutoring to Underserved Students

In this interactive presentation, we'll explore best practices for overcoming the myriad obstacles GEAR UP programs face when delivering academic tutoring to entire cohorts. Geographically isolated and urban districts alike face numerous challenges for recruiting, training and retaining tutors. Every school district struggles to manage the logistics of availing underserved students to academic tutoring. The Princeton Review with Tutor.com partners with GEAR UP programs nationwide to remedy this conundrum by providing students with the help they need when they need it. Tutor.com's 3,100 English- and Spanish-speaking tutors, available 24/7, conduct up to 5,000 tutoring sessions a day in 200+ subjects.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Identify and explore strategies to effectively address the most challenging issues pertaining to academic tutoring.
2. Learn about implementing an exceptional academic tutoring service.
3. Explore how to maximize a program's impact by using data to make informed decisions around resource allocation.

**Dan Howarth**, Executive Director, Educational Partnerships, The Princeton Review with Tutor.com  
**Ed Ceja**, Area Vice President - West, TPR Education, LLC

### Session #: 73

#### BYOA: Build Your Own App to Engage Students and Families!

In this interactive and hands-on workshop, you will learn how to turn your ideas into REAL products and BYOA (Build Your Own App). Learn how to empower student entrepreneurs, techpreneurs, and apppreneurs while you experience a rapid-fire round of design-thinking and Mobile App Development, using MAD-learn. The app you build can also be used to engage with families and communicate your #GEARUPworks magic. We will provide best practices of how to engage students with STEM during the year using examples of GEAR UP programs that have already done so.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Learn how to build a simple mobile app and see it immediately on their phones.
2. Explore how other GEAR UP programs have used app development to engage students in STEM.
3. Brainstorm a variety of ways to engage parents and stakeholders using a mobile app for their GEAR UP program.

**Alefiya Master**, Founder, MAD-learn

**Gregg Stone**, Director of Curriculum and Implementation, MAD-learn

## Session #: 74

### Examining How to Proactively Implement a College-Going Culture

What do you need to build a strong college-going culture? Join this interactive panel as we engage in thoughtful discussion focused on the nine-principles of a college-going culture. Whether you are a seasoned GEAR UP professional or new to the world of GEAR UP, this session is for you! In addition to diving into the details of each principle, panelists will share their best practices and recommendations for building effective college-going cultures. Every participant will leave this session confident in their abilities to build a college-going culture in their school or strengthen their already existing college-going culture.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Define college-going culture.
2. Examine the nine principles of a college-going culture.
3. Brainstorm ways to implement the nine-principles of a college-going culture.

**Carrie Hodge, Ed.D.**, Senior Associate, Data & Advanced Analytics CPE, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

**Cody Davidson**, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

## Session #: 75

### How to be TikTok Trendy to Reach More Students

We all know that fast-paced videos with graphics, filters, and animations are what students consume daily. But did you know, research shows that these short videos with quick information are incredibly effective for education? Learn how KU GEAR UP Topeka has created a large following on TikTok and utilizes TikTok-style videos across all social media platforms to relay important college-going information during COVID-19.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Experience KU GEAR UP Topeka's TikTok journey and lessons learned.
2. Understand the potential of TikTok-style videos to communicate crucial GEAR UP information.
3. Practice making a TikTok and walk through the complicated new platform.

**Laura Kingston**, Communications Coordinator, Center for Educational Opportunity Programs

**Dalton Allen**, Site Coordinator, KU GEAR UP Topeka

## Session #: 76

### Unlocking the Future: Leading Students to College, Career, and Life Success

During this session, participants will learn how AUHSD combines a successful career pathways program and a mentoring and internship program developed in partnership with CSUF GEAR UP to implement a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of the local workforce. By reverse-engineering career pathways based on input from industry, students will gain the skills, certifications, and knowledge necessary for success. Despite COVID-19, our students continue to access these opportunities through virtual internships and courses. Participants will leave with strategies and sample materials for developing high-quality career pathways, mentoring and internship programs, business partner recruitment letters, internship agreements, and more.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Develop strategies for collaborative educational planning that integrate career pathway completion, completion of college entrance requirements, dual enrollment and work-based learning grounded in students' college & career plans.
2. Discuss and explore ideas to meet the needs of your local workforce using a reverse-engineering approach to design career pathways and work-based learning experiences.
3. Identify and discuss strategies for developing a work-based learning program, including business outreach, career event planning, and implementing internships that function both virtually and in-person.

**Scott Reindl**, Program Administrator for Career Education, Anaheim Union High School District

**Maryjo Cooke**, Director of Innovative Mentoring Experience, Anaheim Union High School District

**Oscar Garcia**, Academic Coordinator, CSUF GEAR UP

## Session #: 77

### SEL in the Time of COVID: Developmental Trends and Lessons Learned

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is key for success in education, work, and life. The ongoing COVID pandemic, coupled with social inequities, has revealed gaps in addressing the needs of underserved learners. Programming focused on SEL may be especially beneficial for these learners to achieve more equitable outcomes. This session covers (1) developmental trends on SEL skills during COVID showing that intentional programming can impact these skills; and (2) lessons learned from GEAR UPs across the U.S. where implementation of key pillars of SEL resulted in a range of intended outcomes and systemic practices that drive positive conditions for learning.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the importance of social and emotional skills for enabling positive academic, work, and life outcomes.
2. Identify developmental trends in SE skills and describe how intentional programming can promote these trends.
3. Evaluate the lessons learned from other GEAR UP programs to help apply successful SEL practices in their own programs.

**Alex Casillas, Ph.D.**, Principal Research Psychologist, ACT, Inc.

**Jill McVey, Ph.D.**, Research Scientist I, ACT, Inc.

**Dana Murano, Ph.D.**, Research Scientist I, ACT, Inc.

## Session #: 78

### Preparing Students Entering High School for High School Math

Students entering 9th-grade math without all the necessary math skills to be successful in Algebra 1 is a growing concern throughout the United States. The superficial or incomplete understanding of important middle school math concepts often leads to unsuccessful outcomes in their 9th-grade math course. In this session, participants will experience an authentic math task designed to re-engage students in an important middle school math concept. Participants will see how this concept fits within a larger series of lessons and units designed to equip underprepared incoming ninth-grade students with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in Algebra 1. Finally, participants will hear from a GEAR UP coordinator implementing these lessons and units in their schools.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the philosophy of the Ready for High School Math course.
2. Experience the mathematics of the course as it was intended to be taught.
3. Identify ways the course materials can be utilized to support underprepared students as they enter high school.

**Jason Adair**, Program Director for Literacy and Math, Southern Regional Education Board

**Anita Long, Ed.D.**, Academic Support Coordinator, VT State GEARUP

## Session #: 79

### Staying Connected: The Importance of Surveying Seniors and Grads

What are effective strategies and challenges with staying connected with our high school graduates? What happens to our students after they graduate? What can we learn from our high school graduates on how schools can better prepare students for postsecondary education? What are college students struggling with? These and other questions will be answered in this interactive session where we will share and discuss the content, methodology, potential challenges (and solutions), and results of the Oregon GEAR UP Senior Exit and Life After High School surveys. Survey materials will be shared with participants and presenters will facilitate a discussion of how these results may be used to inform GEAR UP's services at the schools and GEAR UP's efforts to engage with first-year college students.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Learn about the purpose, content, and methodology for administering senior exit and life after high school surveys.
2. Better understand common challenges when designing, administering and analyzing data from these surveys, as well as potential solutions to address these challenges.
3. Translate findings from these surveys into practical strategies to enhance GEAR UP services provided to students while in high school and when transitioning to postsecondary education.

**Julia Alemany**, Senior Associate, Metis Associates

**Jennica Vincent**, Research & Evaluation Specialist, Oregon GEAR UP

**Session #: 80****Building and Mobilizing an Alumni Community to Ensure Sustainability**

What happens to GEAR UP students after the life of a grant? Although postsecondary persistence efforts are improving, how are we mobilizing students after the 7th year? In this session, we will outline steps to create a sustainable alumni program that utilizes alumni knowledge, expertise, and experience to support students through higher education. Attendees will interact with peers to reflect on what GEAR UP can do to implement sustainable practices that engage alumni and strengthen the community.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify ways to engage GEAR UP alumni to mentor current students.
2. Learn how to build your own framework for a self-sustaining GEAR UP alumni network.
3. GEAR UP Directors/Administrators

**Casey Weld**, Site Coordinator, GEAR UP 4 LA

**William Ruiz**, Program Coordinator, CSU Dominguez Hills GEAR UP - Compton

**Blandina Flores**, Board President, GEAR UP Alumni Association

**Jack Friedman**, Founder & CEO, Study Smart Tutors

**Partnership GEAR UP Directors' Meeting | 3:15 PM - 5:30 PM**

**This is an invitational meeting and pre-registration with NCCEP is required to access the meeting.**

The **Partnership** GEAR UP Directors' meeting is entirely led and organized by GEAR UP Partnership Directors to convene, network, and discuss critical issues. Please note that this meeting is invitation-only and should only be attended by GEAR UP Partnership Directors and/or Principal Investigators who have been designated as such by the U.S. Department of Education.

**State GEAR UP Directors' Meeting | 3:15 PM - 5:30 PM**

**This is an invitational meeting and pre-registration with NCCEP is required to access the meeting.**

The **State** GEAR UP Directors' meeting is entirely led and organized by GEAR UP State Directors to convene, network, and discuss critical issues. Please note that this meeting is invitation-only and should only be attended by GEAR UP State Directors and/or Principal Investigators who have been designated as such by the U.S. Department of Education.



## Wednesday - Block 3 | 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

### Session #: 81

#### Preparing for the Storm: Using Digital Media Strategies to Develop your College Access Prep Kit

In this session, attendees will: REFLECT on technological, communication, and/or student challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic; DISCOVER how to condense college planning resources and package college admissions information to create a holistic approach that guides students through their high school years; EXPLORE digital media strategies to construct a communication mock-up or role-play exercise based on what they have learned. To successfully promote and excel the GEAR UP brand and its services, Communications, and College Access Professionals will learn to utilize digital media strategies to reach students instantly to condense and successfully promote the college-going process.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. REFLECT on technological, communication, and/or student challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. DISCOVER how to condense college planning resources and package college admissions information to create a holistic approach that guides students through their freshman to senior year of high school.
3. EXPLORE digital media strategies to construct a communication mock-up or role play exercise based on what they have learned.

**Brittany Francis**, Public Information and Communications Director, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

**Darren Smith Jr**, Media Specialist, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

**Kayla Gros**, Public Information Officer, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

**John Square, III**, Aspire to Inspire Mentor, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

**Isabel Reyes**, Communications Coordinator, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

### Session #: 82

#### Rigor and Relevance Begins in Middle School

A University of Chicago study (HS Graduation and College Readiness Indicator Systems, 2018) highlighted the importance of using early warning indicators. If students are not on target for college and career readiness by the time they reach 9th grade, the impact may be irreversible. Master a system of multi-year benchmarks to measure the progress of a GEAR UP cohort if we are to 1) get students into college, 2) meet academic standards, 3) deliver academic skills on schedule, and 4) meet milestones. Participants will create a take-home 7-year cohort model based on research-proven practices providing rigor and relevance.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Show attendees a system of multi-year benchmarks to measure progress, and catch up academically, for a lost year of college and career readiness skills and classroom instruction.
2. Demonstrate to participants an initiative that helps compensate for COVID learning loss.
3. Focus on a subset of middle and high school education--those CCRS skills needed to be admitted and graduate college on time.

**David Waldherr, Ph.D.**, Cambridge Grant Award Program

### Session #: 83

#### Leveraging the Crisis to Improve Internal and External Organizational Impact

With student enrollment, persistence, and completion down across the nation, we must be innovative and creative about how to best serve students now impacted by COVID. For some of us, the practices needed to excel, prove, and mobilize the power of our GEAR UP programs were simply insufficient. This presentation describes practices needed to leverage the impact of COVID. The primary learning objective is for participants to recognize the opportunities for innovation in programs and services. Design thinking and strategic planning; use of technology; and culture-shifting will be applied in an interactive format supporting participants in improving student outcomes.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Participants will identify and share innovative program and service opportunities that can be enhanced or sustained post-COVID.
2. Participants will begin a strategic planning process leveraging lessons learned during Covid.

**Michele Scott Taylor, Ed.D.**, Chief Program Officer, College Now Greater Cleveland

**Session #:84****Building and Mobilizing an Alumni Community to Ensure Sustainability**

What happens to GEAR UP students after the life of a grant? Although postsecondary persistence efforts are improving, how are we mobilizing students after the 7th year? In this session, we will outline steps to create a sustainable alumni program that utilizes alumni knowledge, expertise, and experience to support students through higher education. Attendees will interact with peers to reflect on what GEAR UP can do to implement sustainable practices that engage alumni and strengthen the community

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify ways to engage GEAR UP alumni to mentor current students.
2. Learn how to build your own framework for a self-sustaining GEAR UP alumni network.

**Casey Weld**, Program Director for Literacy and Math Site Coordinator, GEAR UP 4 LA

**William Ruiz**, Program Coordinator, CSU Dominguez Hills GEAR UP-Compton

**Jack Friedman**, Founder & CEO, Study Smart Tutors

**Blandina Flores**, Board President, Study Smart Tutors

**Session #: 85****One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: How to do Better When You Don't Know Better**

It is often easier to focus on failure than success. We often feel that every time we move one step forward, we take two steps back. You are not alone! In this facilitated discussion, we will be providing a space for leaders to share their experiences and ideas, with those of us who understand, from across the country within our programs. We will be discussing solution-focused mindset, collaborate strategies for improvement with one another, and ways to implement changes within our positions.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Acknowledge and discuss problems with a solution-focused mindset.
2. Learn different strategies to improve their programs by collaborating with others.
3. Deliberate ideas and thoughts on how to implement changes within their positions.

**Jana Burd**, GEAR UP College Coordinator, Nevada State GEAR UP

**Nicola Opfer**, GEAR UP First Year College Advisor, Nevada State GEAR UP

**Andrea Saavedra-Nieto**, GEAR UP First Year College Advisor, Nevada State GEAR UP

**Session #: 86****Activity Remix: Adding a Virtual Spin to Your Existing College Readiness Activities**

This interactive session will provide attendees with the opportunity to explore online virtual tools that will help create an authentic learning experience for students. We will share how we created engaging and interactive college and career learning experiences using online educational resources, including how virtual scavenger hunts can be used to bring awareness to post-secondary opportunities both near and far. Participants will be introduced to online educational resources and identify ways to adapt their current activities to fit a virtual environment. Participants will leave with a plan to modify one of their current post-secondary readiness activities from in-person to virtual.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify online learning needs.
2. Explore online learning resources.
3. Devise a plan for the next steps to adapt a current activity to an online format.

**Lacy Pennington**, Lead Student Experiences, University of Oklahoma, K2O Center, GEAR UP for MY SUCCESS

**Christiana Horn, Ph.D.**, Student Experiences Coordinator, University of Oklahoma, K2O Center, GEAR UP for the FUTURE

**Ayanna Wheeler**, Student Experiences Coordinator, GEAR UP OKC



**Wednesday, July 21st | Closing Session**

**Be Heard! Elevating Our Students and their  
COVID-19 Experiences**

We've heard stories, seen the events firsthand, even written publications about our students' experiences navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic. But how can we empower our students and elevate their stories for generations to come? How do we capture their voices in a way that inspires, energizes, and moves us all? Be sure to join us as we prepare to launch into the upcoming school year with students first and the aim of fostering hope and resiliency.