



# 2022

# Capacity-Building Workshop

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February 14-16  
Online



**EXCEL**



**PROVE**



**MOBILIZE**

# NCCEP/GEAR UP CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

Feb. 14-16, 2022



Online

## EXCEL • PROVE • MOBILIZE

	MON   FEBRUARY 14	TUE   FEBRUARY 15	WED   FEBRUARY 16
  <p>The 2022 Capacity-Building Workshop is coordinated by the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), the national association of the GEAR UP program.</p>	<p><b>11:00 AM - 12:30 PM ET</b>  <b>Navigating College Access Today: An Orientation to GEAR UP</b></p>		
	<p><b>1:00 pm - 1:45 PM ET</b>  <b>WELCOME REMARKS &amp; BURST SESSION</b></p>	<p><b>1:00 pm - 1:45 PM ET</b>  <b>BURST SESSION</b></p>	<p><b>1:00 pm - 1:45 PM ET</b>  <b>BURST SESSION</b></p>
	<p><b>1:45pm - 2:00 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>	<p><b>1:45pm - 2:00 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>	<p><b>1:45pm - 2:00 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>
	<p><b>2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET</b>  <b>Excel, Prove, Mobilize Workshops - Part 1</b></p>	<p><b>2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET</b>  <b>Excel, Prove, Mobilize Workshops - Part 1</b></p>	<p><b>2:00 PM - 3:00 PM ET</b>  <b>Excel, Prove, Mobilize Workshops - Part 1</b></p>
	<p><b>3:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>	<p><b>3:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>	<p><b>3:00 PM - 3:30 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>
	<p><b>3:30 PM - 4:30 PM ET</b>  <b>Excel, Prove, Mobilize Workshops - Part 2</b></p>	<p><b>3:30 PM - 4:30 PM ET</b>  <b>Excel, Prove, Mobilize Workshops - Part 2</b></p>	<p><b>3:30 PM - 4:30 PM ET</b>  <b>Excel, Prove, Mobilize Workshops - Part 2</b></p>
	<p><b>4:30 PM - 4:45 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>	<p><b>4:30 PM - 4:45 PM ET</b>                      Exhibit Hall Break</p>	<p><b>4:30 PM - 4:45 PM ET</b>  <b>CLOSING SESSION</b></p>
	<p><b>4:45 PM - 5:45 PM ET</b>  <b>Skill-Building Seminars</b></p>	<p><b>4:45 PM - 5:45 PM ET</b>  <b>Skill-Building Seminars</b></p>	
	<p><b>5:45 PM - 5:50 PM ET</b>                      Break</p>	<p><b>5:45 PM - 5:50 PM ET</b>                      Break</p>	
	<p><b>5:50 PM - 6:30 PM ET</b>  <b>Open Labs</b></p>	<p><b>5:50 PM - 6:30 PM ET</b>  <b>Social Engagement</b></p>	

# Monday | February 14

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11:00 am – 12:30 pm ET

Pre-Conference



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

**Speakers:** **Emily Jeffries**, Director of Government Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** 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.

**Objectives:**

- Develop an understanding of the need of college access interventions in communities across the country.
- Learn more about the core tenets of GEAR UP and how GEAR UP is implemented.
- Understand how GEAR UP is administered from a national level to your local communities.

1:00 pm – 1:45 pm ET

## WELCOME REMARKS AND BURST SESSION

### The Power of Hope, Opportunity, and Second Chances

**Speaker:** **Alex Chough**, President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Craig Pooler**, Director of the GEAR UP and TRIO Talent Search Division, U.S. Department of Education



**Brandon Fleming**, Founder / CEO & Assistant Debate Coach, Harvard Diversity Project & Harvard University

It's no secret that our students face barriers that at times, can appear insurmountable. As much as we often focus on equity gaps in educational outcomes, we cannot overlook the underlying opportunity gaps as well. Yet, we know with the right orientation and supports, we can change the narrative.

In this Burst Session, hear Brandon Fleming's remarkable journey and the lessons and tools he uses to transform underserved youth into global debate champions and Ivy League scholars. With a focus on hope, continuous improvement, and the power of voice, Brandon will help reveal insights into how we can help our students excel, succeed, and realize their dreams.

1:45 pm – 2:00 pm ET            **EXHIBIT HALL BREAK**

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET            **WORKSHOPS (Part 1)**

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm ET            **EXHIBIT HALL BREAK**

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm ET            **WORKSHOPS (Part 2)**



**EXCEL WORKSHOP:    From the Ground Up: Building Strong Partnerships**

**Speakers:**        **Katie Hill**, Ph.D., Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
                              **Melissa Lopez**, Administrator, Office of College, Career and Life Readiness at Region One Education Service Center

**Overview:** We all know that partnerships are a central element of GEAR UP programs. Each grantee is required to have school and community partners that support student success. Yet, just because it is required doesn't mean it is easy. It takes time, intention, and strategy to build strong, meaningful partnerships that stand the test of time.

In this workshop, we will collaboratively explore the foundation of partnerships and practice applying strategies to build relationships. Attendees can expect ample time for individual reflection, group discussion, and engaging exercises for deeper learning.

**Objectives:**

- Explain the key elements of partnerships.
- Explore the partnership mapping process.
- Review the foundation of creating a shared vision.
- Obtain strategies to begin the partnership building process.



**EXCEL WORKSHOP:    Preparing New GEAR UP Leaders for Success, Part 1: Compliance and Administration**

**Speakers:**        **Lois Bramwell**, GEAR UP Project Director, Los Angeles Unified School District  
                              **Kevin B. Hall**, Director of Programs, Partners for Education at Berea College  
                              **Carlos Bing**, State Director, GEAR UP, Ohio Department of Higher Education  
                              **Marcie Mills Sample**, GEAR UP Director, Washington Student Achievement Council  
                              **Alex Chough**, President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Do you have administrative responsibilities for your GEAR UP grant at the program or site level? Come hear from experienced GEAR UP leaders about the fundamentals of managing your GEAR UP program, key compliance issues related to the legislation and regulations, and join a forum to discuss solutions to challenges you may be facing.

This workshop will be packed with opportunities to take a deep dive into key issues related to grant management, audit readiness, and compliance. Attendees will have a chance to reflect on their own practices, discuss practices with others, and leave with ideas to enhance their grant management

practices. While this session is ideal for those who are new to GEAR UP, it can be a great refresher for seasoned professionals, too.

**Objectives:**

- Learn about key compliance issues in GEAR UP.
- Discuss key issues and solutions with peers.
- Plan for enhancing your grant management practices.



**EXCEL WORKSHOP: Take Your Pick: Deciphering Financial Aid Packages for Students and Families**

**Speakers:** **Ron Felder**, Higher Education Access Partner, Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency  
**Jenny Moran**, Academic Content Manager, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance  
**Britt Kelly**, Financial Aid & Career Development Specialist, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance  
**Danielle Walker**, Associate Director of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Every college bound student will consider many factors as they finalize their postsecondary education options. Of these factors, the financial aid package can be the most daunting. During Part 1 of this workshop, participants will hear from state financial aid agencies and GEAR UP representatives as they discuss the ins and outs of aid packages, dispel common myths, and share relevant tools to assist students and families with solid financial planning for school. During Part 2, participants will engage in financial aid activities to support student engagement and increase families' understanding of financial knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing.

**Objectives:**

- Become familiar with common financial aid terms and regulations.
- Learn about eligibility for financial aid and other factors that can impact a student's financial aid package.
- Learn tools and exercises to help students and families understand financial aid packages.



**PROVE WORKSHOP: Enhancing "E"valuation – Moving from Emerging to Established to Evolved**

**Speakers:** **Chrissy Tillery**, Ed.D., Vice President of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Thomas Cech**, Senior Data Scientist, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Join Chrissy Tillery, NCCPEP's vice president of research and evaluation, and a panel of GEAR UP directors in this unique workshop that will cover the evolution of evaluation in GEAR UP grants. The spectrum of GEAR UP evaluation is vast, ranging from emerging, established, and evolved with grantees at differing points depending on their grant year, resources, focus, and other factors. As we work to build capacity in this area, spend some time with seasoned GEAR UP directors who represent each of these areas.

For those of you wondering how to evolve your evaluation efforts, this session should illuminate the core steps to take, places to focus, and hurdles along the way. This facilitated discussion will engage the audience to participate so they can optimize their own evaluation growth.

**Objectives:**

- Review influencing factors in evaluation, including grant year, resources, and focus.
- Discover core steps to focus evaluation on what matters in your GEAR UP program.
- Explore and discuss ways to grow and improve evaluation efforts.



**MOBILIZE WORKSHOP: Follow Your Heart: Grow Your Communications Passion**

**Speakers:** **MaeAnna Edwards**, Director of Postsecondary Access and Success, New Hampshire GEAR UP Alliance  
**Melissa Fast**, Communications Manager, Arizona GEAR UP  
**Laura Kingston**, Communications Coordinator, KU Center for Educational Opportunity Programs  
**Jeannine Huenemann**, Marketing Manager, USU STARS! GEAR UP  
**Missy Ross**, Associate Director, Communications & Outreach, GEAR UP Kentucky  
**Emily Jeffries**, Director of Government Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Do you love communications or just flirting with future planning? Look no further than this engaging workshop that combines successful communication strategies with innovative ideas and fun tactics to freshen up your communications approach. Learn about topics like using the phone in your pocket for the best photos, Canva template transformation, persuasive online writing, strategies for GEAR UP TikTok, and animated video creation.

After attending three of five breakout sessions, you will leave this session smitten and with a renewed passion for your messaging, strategies, and new skills. Whether you're budding or blooming, if you are a GEAR UP professional who works in communications for your grants, this session is for you.

**Objectives:**

- Explore different skills and approaches that will help you perfect your passion for communication and allow your GEAR UP program to thrive.
- Learn how to incorporate strategies into your everyday GEAR UP work to bolster your new or existing communications plan.
- Maximize your time and resources to advance your communications efforts to effectively engage with your audience in new and creative ways.



**MOBILIZE WORKSHOP: Our Stories Matter: How to Mobilize GEAR UP Students, Educators & Families through Storytelling**

**Speakers:** **Richard Reyes**, Executive Director, PLUS ME Project  
**Agustin Vasquez-Lopez**, Director, Alliance GEAR UP, Alliance College-Ready Public Schools  
**Janeé Williams**, Associate Director of Operations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** It's vital that we learn how to create inclusive cultures within GEAR UP communities where students, educators, and parents feel like all their voices are being heard. When we understand the importance of storytelling, human connection, and how to build a culture that includes everyone's story, we build stronger teams.

This session will cover a six-step process on how to build a storytelling culture in a GEAR UP community, school, or classroom that connects and inspires all members. We will listen to each other's stories and learn how to mobilize our students to share their stories by understanding how to create safe spaces and implementing inclusive storytelling strategies. If you are looking for support on how to build connections, empowerment, and empathy between staff, students, and parents through a virtual or in-person space, then this session is for you!

**Objectives:**

- Learn how to create inclusive cultures within GEAR UP communities through storytelling.
- Explore a six-step process on how to build a culture of storytelling.
- Develop tools to cultivate storytellers in your GEAR UP community.



**EXPLORATION LAB: Motivating Students to Attend GEAR UP Programming**

**Facilitators:** **Dana Beck**, Director of Practice, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Jasmine Dean**, Middle Grades Manager, Northern Arizona University

**Overview:** We've all been there: you spent time and money to design important GEAR UP programming for students – and then no one shows up. Why aren't students motivated to attend? What are strategies to increase participation in your GEAR UP activities?

Join your peers to share challenges, promising practices, and potential solutions to increase student attendance at GEAR UP programming in this collaborative session.

*What is an Exploration Lab?*

Exploration Labs are one of NCCEP's strategies to encourage peer networking, sharing, learning, and problem-solving. Facilitator(s) will guide you through exercises and/or conversations on a specific topic or challenge. The collective input of the group will be compiled in a brief "Lab Report" after the conference.

*Who should attend?*

Anyone who works directly with students and wants to share their experiences and learn from others.

*What should I expect?*

Come ready to participate! We encourage you to have your camera on to foster connection and conversation.

4:30 pm – 4:45 pm ET                      **EXHIBIT HALL BREAK**

4:45 pm – 5:45 pm ET                      **SKILL-BUILDING SEMINARS**



**SEMINAR: An Essential Ingredient to Student Success – GEAR UP Parents**

**Speakers:** **Betty Paugh Ortiz**, Vice President of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Frieda Belton**, GEAR UP Grandparent, University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley GEAR UP  
**Jennifer Cannon**, GEAR UP Parent, Eastern Oklahoma State College GEAR UP  
**Arienne Frazier**, GEAR UP Parent, Louisiana GEAR UP

**Overview:** Family engagement is a shared responsibility among families, schools, and communities, and is an essential ingredient to the success of GEAR UP students. While for decades GEAR UP practitioners have noted that it is a critical AND challenging part of the work, it has never been more demanding than during the global pandemic.

During this seminar, you will hear from GEAR UP parents and caregivers about their experiences, what keeps them engaged, and what lesson from the pandemic they wish to keep. This seminar is ideally suited for family engagement specialist, coordinators, advisors, GEAR UP leaders, and anyone helping to engage families.



**SEMINAR: Brain Defense: Practices for Improving Mental Health and Resilience**

**Speaker:** **Greg Evans**, Founder & Executive Director, Seeds Training  
**Janeé Williams**, Associate Director of Operations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** If learning is your brain on offense, how does your brain play defense?

Every day you face a relentless barrage of negativity, manipulative messages, and attempts to influence your behavior. An unprepared brain can be very affected, resulting in stress, anxiety, mixed emotions, distraction, and low levels of productivity.

Learn how to defend your brain. Take control of your energy to restore both your mental health and productivity. In this seminar, you'll learn about your brain's filtering system. Take home three strategies about how to "clean your filters" to remove the negativity, reset your learning capacity, and re-program yourself to be better, feel better, and get better results.



**SEMINAR: Career Discovery in Middle School**

**Speaker:** **Andrea González Sotelo**, Assistant Director, Arizona GEAR UP  
**Jasmine Dean**, Middle Grades Manager, Northern Arizona University  
**Kelly Pappas**, Director of Career & College Clubs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** The moment a student enters high school, grades, courses, and college aspirations play a role in college admissions and career decisions. This is why it is so important to take the time to explore careers in middle school, preparing students to enter high school with their long-term goals in mind.



In this interactive seminar, explore what career discovery can look like in middle school, identify elements of career discovery activities, and brainstorm practices you can implement in your GEAR UP program. Leave with actionable ideas to start career discovery with your middle school students.



**SEMINAR: Rural Schools: Breaking Down Barriers**

**Speaker:** **Aarron Dupuis**, Community Relations Coordinator, New Hampshire GEAR UP Alliance  
**Thomas Cech**, Senior Data Scientist, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Rural GEAR UP programs and schools are faced with a multitude of issues like geographic isolation, under-representation, and a lack of resources. These barriers do not have to define these vibrant and resilient students.

In this seminar, we will talk about how to thrive in spite of barriers to rural students and communities. Rural communities are brimming with the right ingredients for success, GEAR UP professionals just need to find those solutions that empower students. The goal is to share best practices, so programs do not have to reinvent the wheel.



**SEMINAR: Success Strategies for First-Year College Students**

**Speaker:** **Joni Webb Petschauer**, Former Consultant, American College Application Campaign  
**Jackie Mania**, Ed.D., Director of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Even though GEAR UP programs have been serving students in their first year of college for many years, there is still much to learn about how to optimize our strategies for this very important year in a students' educational path. Join Joni Petschauer in this seminar to learn about her lifelong journey in first-year student success.

This seminar will focus on strategies that can bolster the work we do with students in their first year of college, bringing a perspective from an institution of higher education, as well as national work in this area.



**SEMINAR: The Ball is in Your Court: Empowering Opportunities for Student-Athletes**

**Speaker:** **Devon Johnson**, Program Manager, GEAR UP Philadelphia, School District of Philadelphia  
**Danielle Walker**, Associate Director of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** One of the most underserved and often overlooked populations of students are student-athletes. Student-athletes are faced with a unique set of circumstances that may prevent them from realizing their dreams of continuing their education and athletic careers at the collegiate level.

In this seminar, GEAR UP Philadelphia will teach you how to identify and serve your student-athletes, share pertinent information concerning NCAA eligibility, and show you how to advocate for the needs of your student-athletes.



**SEMINAR: The Rise of Test-Optional Admissions: Students' Are Asking, Let's Have the Answers**

**Speakers:** **April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Jon Westover**, Associate Vice Provost & Director of Admissions, North Carolina State University  
**Jimmy Tadlock**, Program Director, CollegeBound Foundation, Baltimore, MD

**Overview:** Today's top headlines in education news are reading, "*Colleges are Making Their Case for Test-Optional Admissions*," "*Mixed Reports on Test-Optional Admissions*," and "*Is Test-Optional Admissions Here to Stay?*" With the overabundance of new stories and the ever-growing list of colleges now implementing test-optional admissions, our GEAR UP students and families are still wondering what all of this means today and for the future. As GEAR UP educators, we will continue to have the answers our students and families need, including successfully guiding the test-optional admissions process.

Let's rise above the definition of test-optional, the roster of test-optional colleges, and their varying admission policies. Today's mission is to support our students, guide them through the test-optional admissions terrain, and secure students' future college admissions. We as a community will continue to ensure that our students enroll in a college that is the best academic, financial, and social fit through the current and future admissions policies, including test-optional admissions.



**SEMINAR: You've Gotta See It, To Be It: Incorporating Work-Based Learning Opportunities in Education**

**Speakers:** **Andrea Messing-Mathie**, Ph.D., Director, JFF's Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning  
**Jonathan Payne**, Ph.D., Senior Program Manager, JFF's Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning  
**Katie Hill**, Ph.D., Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** In the GEAR UP 2019 and 2021 application for new awards, the U.S. Department of Education made work-based learning (WBL) a competitive priority. When WBL is incorporated into educational programming from middle school through to postsecondary education these experiences help young people explore their future opportunities, make better decisions, and be more successful - in short, "You've gotta see it, to be it!"

This session, led by [JFF's Center for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning](#), will share their [Framework for Work-Based Learning](#) and examples from communities around the country and give practitioners a chance to ask questions, engage one another, and

identify clear strategies for incorporating work-based learning into GEAR UP programming.

5:45 pm – 5:50 pm ET

**BREAK**

5:50 pm – 6:30 pm ET

**OPEN LABS**

*Open Labs are an opportunity for networking and informal conversations. Through a series of small group breakouts, you will debrief what you've learned so far, ask questions or share a challenge, and spotlight one of your successes.*



**OPEN LAB: Excel**

**Speakers:** **Dana Beck**, Director of Practice, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Kelly Pappas**, Director of Career & College Clubs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Do you run programs for students, families and/or educators? Get to know others in the national GEAR UP community and share ideas to help you continuously improve your efforts.

Are you registered to attend an Excel workshop (like *From the Ground Up: Building Strong Partnerships*; *Strengthening College Transitions for Underrepresented Students*; or *The Struggle Against Cultural Hegemony*)? You may want to join this Open Lab!



**OPEN LAB: Mobilize**

**Speakers:** **Alex Chough**, President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Emily Jeffries**, Director of Government Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Calling all those that communicate about and advocate for GEAR UP (hint: that's everyone)! Join this Open Lab to get to know others who do similar work across the country.

Are you registered to attend a Mobilize workshop (like *Our Stories Matter*; *Developing and Delivering a Dynamic GEAR UP Message*; or *Cut the Jargon*)? You may want to join this Open Lab!



**OPEN LAB: Prove**

**Speakers:** **Jackie Mania**, Ed.D., Director of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Thomas Cech**, Senior Data Scientist, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Get to know others in the GEAR UP community! Whether you love data or want to get inspiration from those that do, join this Open Lab to connect with peers from across the country.

Are you registered to attend a Prove workshop (*Enhancing “E”valuation; Data and Evaluation 101; or Using Data to Inform, Educate and Advocate*)? You may want to join this Open Lab!

## Tuesday | February 15

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1:00 pm – 1:45 pm ET

### BURST SESSION

#### Cultivating Learning Mindsets in a Time of Crisis

**Speakers:**

**Chrissy Tillery**, Ed.D. Vice President of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships



**David Yeager**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, The University of Texas at Austin

Helping our students persevere through challenging life and academic situations is an essential ingredient for GEAR UP’s success. Every day, our students are exposed to experiences that help or hamper their beliefs about their what they are capable of. Fortunately, research has revealed that both our students and educators can practice tactics and create habits to foster learning mindsets that encourage learning.

In this Burst session, join Dr. David Yeager as he explores how even in a time of crisis, we can cultivate and foster learning mindsets and how the research can inform how we become better learners and grow together.

1:45 pm – 2:00 pm ET

### EXHIBIT HALL BREAK

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET

### WORKSHOPS (Part 1)

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm ET

### EXHIBIT HALL BREAK

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm ET

### WORKSHOPS (Part 2)



### EXCEL WORKSHOP: Revolutionizing Your College-Going Culture, The Time is Now!

**Speakers:** **April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Elizabeth Manuel**, Senior Director of Student Services, West Virginia GEAR UP

**Overview:** While the standard components of college and career readiness remain the same, transforming a school’s college-going culture requires a holistic approach that embraces the entire school community. No two GEAR UP programs are the same, and there’s no cookie-cutter approach for rethinking a college-going culture. However, our collective GEAR UP goals serve as a guidepost for our grant-specific program planning, project management, and student and family service delivery. Amid our pandemic recovery, whether you and your students are in a virtual, blended, or in-person educational setting, it is now time to harness our students’, families’, and partners’ excitement, energy, and enthusiasm. We can and will turn our time of educational recovery into the time of transformation, improving the college-going culture within our school communities.

Let’s share what works, update what needs a refresh, and rebuild what areas need improvements within our college access and success programming. Join this workshop as an individual or a team to participate in interactive virtual working groups based on your interest and expertise. Participants will review, discuss, and evaluate the student-centered non-negotiables deemed crucial for the revolution of our middle and high school college-going culture.

**Objectives:**

- Review the elements of college and career readiness programming.
- Evaluate their current educational environment through a college-going culture lens.
- Jumpstart an action plan using research-based promising practices designed to meet GEAR UP program goals while simultaneously exceeding the expectations of our students and families.



**EXCEL WORKSHOP: Strengthening College Transitions for Underrepresented Students**

**Speakers:** **Stella Flores**, Ed.D., Associate Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy, The University of Texas at Austin  
**Katie Hill**, Ph.D., Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** This workshop will address how college access practitioners, researchers, and communities can more effectively work through key transition points from middle school to high school to college to workforce through the lens of data, policy, and equity. Participants will explore the key challenges and opportunities across the cross-sector pipeline in their districts, states, and nationally by working to diagnose their own environments. The purpose is to brainstorm ways to develop innovative program and policy solutions that can contribute to increased college success.

Come ready to discuss the key factors in the college access pipeline for underserved students by local context, and the role of partnerships, corporations, community groups, chambers of commerce, and research entities. Through discussion and activities, by the end of the workshop participants will be ready to diagnose key issues in their college access communities, potential solutions, and create an action plan to involve stakeholders that can ultimately benefit from a cross-sector (K to 16 to workforce) strategy.

**Objectives:**

- Explore key challenges and opportunities to education transitions.
- Discover key factors in the college access pipeline.
- Produce a set of principles to diagnose key issues and potential solutions to use in a local setting.



## **EXCEL WORKSHOP: Zen and the Art of Family Engagement: Using Social and Emotional Learning to Engage Families**

**Speaker:** **Alex Casillas**, Principal Research Psychologist, ACT, Inc.  
**Betty Paugh Ortiz**, Vice President of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Caregivers and families play a critical role in student development and growth. During these challenging times, we know that caregivers can benefit from understanding the value of social and emotional learning (SEL), developing their own social and emotional (SE) skills, and supporting their children's SE development and growth. Part 1 will present a brief introduction to SEL and results from national surveys showing how caregivers and families perceive SEL, including how to address common misconceptions. Part 2 will present tools and activities that you can use to engage families, support their SEL needs, and help their students succeed and thrive.

### **Objectives:**

- Understand how to measure and act upon caregivers' familiarity with SEL.
- Gain exposure to activities that stakeholders can use to practice mindfulness, stay positive, and cultivate a growth mindset.
- Learn how to support families in establishing positive conditions for learning so their students can maximize their academic success.



## **PROVE WORKSHOP: Data and Evaluation 101**

**Speakers:** **Chrissy Tillery**, Ed.D., Vice President of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Thomas Cech**, Senior Data Scientist, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Jackie Mania**, Ed.D., Director of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Understanding the core foundational aspects of GEAR UP research and evaluation are essential for effectively running a GEAR UP grant. Join us for this beginner-level workshop that will cover an introductory overview of GEAR UP data management and evaluation practices which will include hands-on materials that you can use as a toolkit for your program.

This workshop will focus on three core areas of data and evaluation: (1) the core tenets of GEAR UP data and evaluation so you are equipped with knowledge; (2) an understanding of how your data connects to the services you provide through data-informed decisions; and (3) an overview of the ways to enhance your data and evaluation efforts once you are equipped with the foundation.

### **Objectives:**

- Understand the foundational aspects of GEAR UP research and evaluation.
- Review the ways in which evaluation can influence decision-making.
- Obtain tools and resources that can be used locally.



## **MOBILIZE WORKSHOP: Developing and Delivering a Dynamic GEAR UP Message**

**Speakers:** **Juliette Funes**, Public Information Officer, GEAR UP 4 LA  
**Meghan Cave**, Director of College Pathways and Communications, Colorado GEAR UP  
**Emily Jeffries**, Director of Government Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Do you communicate with education leaders, families, students, or community members? Attend this hands-on workshop to learn how to update, create, and communicate your GEAR UP messaging. Identify your target audiences, choose delivery methods, and align your messages to your strategy. Workshop participants will learn and discuss how to implement valuable messaging strategies. This workshop is for any educator interested in identifying and creating a strategic messaging plan for their teams.

**Objectives:**

- Define your GEAR UP audience(s) and corresponding messages.
- Determine how to overcome messaging barriers.
- Decide how to communicate your message to your audience(s).



## **EXPLORATION LAB: Here to Stay – Innovations from the Pandemic**

**Facilitators:** **Dana Beck**, Director of Practice, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Adrienne Enríquez**, Program Manager, Oregon GEAR UP

**Overview:** Unprecedented. Life altering. Really, really hard. The pandemic has tested all of us personally and professionally, oftentimes changing what GEAR UP does and how we do our work. So, what did we do? What did we learn? What will we keep?

Join your peers to reflect on challenges, successful innovations, and how you will approach your work moving forward.

*What is an Exploration Lab?*

Exploration Labs are one of NCCEP’s strategies to encourage peer networking, sharing, learning, and problem-solving. Facilitator(s) will guide you through exercises and/or conversations on a specific topic or challenge. The collective input of the group will be compiled in a brief “Lab Report” after the conference.

*Who should attend?*

Anyone who wants to share their experiences and learn from others.

*What should I expect?*

Come ready to participate! We encourage you to have your camera on to foster connection and conversation.



## **EXPLORATION LAB: Strengthening GEAR UP Compliance and Operations**

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

**Jamie Lewis**, Business Officer, GEAR UP Alabama

**Alex Chough**, President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Let's be frank: administering a GEAR UP grant is remarkably challenging. Not only does it require a top-notch programmatic team, but it also requires a strong budget, finance, and compliance infrastructure too. Yet, learning how to navigate the federal compliance issues and standing up financial and operational controls, policies, and processes that are responsive to the unique implementation model of GEAR UP can take years to develop.

This Exploration Lab is designed to bring together programs of all experience levels to collaborate on how to take the back-office operations of GEAR UP to the next level. The session will be lightly facilitated to create a peer-to-peer space for attendees to share, learn, and problem-solve with each other.

#### *What is an Exploration Lab?*

Exploration Labs are one of NCCEP's strategies to encourage peer networking, sharing, learning, and problem-solving. Facilitator(s) will guide you through exercises and/or conversations on a specific topic or challenge. The collective input of the group will be compiled in a brief "Lab Report" after the conference.

#### *Who should attend?*

Anyone who is responsible for grant administration, finance and budget planning, operations, compliance, and other related functions.

#### *What should I expect?*

Come ready to participate! We encourage you to have your camera on to foster connection and conversation.

#### *Technology Requirements*

To participate, make sure you have the most recent version of Zoom downloaded. You will be required to self-select into breakout rooms, which requires a recent version of Zoom.

4:30 pm – 4:45 pm ET

**EXHIBIT HALL BREAK**

4:45 pm – 5:45 pm ET

**SKILL-BUILDING SEMINARS**



**SEMINAR: GEAR UP Alumni Panel: Cultivating Connection in Our Communities**

**Speakers:** **Casey Weld**, Executive Director, GEAR UP Alumni Association  
**Emily Jeffries**, Director of Government Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Ashley Aragón**, GEAR UP Alum 2011, Project Higher Learning  
**Terran Artis**, GEAR UP Alum 2017, GEAR UP 4 LA  
**Leslie Serpas**, GEAR UP Alum 2011, Project Higher Learning  
**Victor Sanchez**, GEAR UP Alum 2020, GEAR UP 4 LA

**Overview:** Come join a panel of GEAR UP alumni (*including the 2019 NCCEP/GEAR UP Student of the Year!*) discussing the ways in which GEAR UP staff can understand and support the



whole child. While college access and academic support services are what drive GEAR UP programs, many of our students' needs are outside of the classroom.

By hearing the stories and perspectives of GEAR UP alumni and the challenges they experienced as students, attendees will gain a greater understanding of the real-life topics that play a large role in their students' ability to persist to a college degree. This seminar is for GEAR UP coordinators, directors, and school counselors.



**SEMINAR: Keep in Touch: Communicating with College Students**

**Speakers:** **Jessica Smith**, GEAR UP GUIDE Program Coordinator, Vermont State GEAR UP (VSAC)  
**Adriana Eldred**, Communication and Outreach Specialist, Vermont State GEAR UP (VSAC)  
**Jackie Mania**, Ed.D., Director of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Continuing services and communication for students in their first year of postsecondary education can be a challenge for GEAR UP professionals. These students are no longer enrolled in participating schools but are attending colleges and universities across the state and nation. Further, the needs of these students shift from college preparation to college persistence. Communication methods used while students were in high school are not always adequate or appropriate for these new challenges.

This seminar will provide strategies on effectively communicating with and engaging first year college students in GEAR UP programming. Through the sharing of best practices and reflection on how they will work in your context, you can identify helpful ways to ensure your first-year college students receive the support they need.



**SEMINAR: Level Up Your Facilitation Skills: Elevate your Icebreakers, Energizers, and Activities**

**Speakers:** **Carlos Ojeda, Jr.**, CEO and Creative Force, CoolSpeak  
**Ernesto Mejía**, Vice President, CoolSpeak  
**Dana Beck**, Director of Practice, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** After we learn a new icebreaker or activity, we try it out with our students, our parents and even our staff. However, the part we rarely prepare for is the facilitation and debrief. During this workshop you will improve your facilitation skills and learn basic techniques that will allow you to upgrade anything you do. Enhance all your sessions by learning to read body language and using the Socratic questioning method. Even the virtual world requires a trained facilitator to better engage your audiences. Come learn how to do this and much more.



**SEMINAR: Life Happens! Strategies for Ensuring the Financial Aid Office is Aware of Current Circumstances that Impact Aid Offers**

**Speakers:** **Dana Kelly**, Vice President of Professional Development and Institutional Compliance, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

**April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Most conversations revolve around FAFSA completion, scholarship applications, and award letters when discussing financial aid. Our senior year workshops and advising sessions with students and families cover the financial aid award letter review and analysis, serving as the foundation for selecting a college based on financial fit. We must take the financial aid application process several steps further, far enough to ensure that our students and families secure the money (free money) needed for annual tuition, fees, room, board, books, and other educational expenses.

*It's called the Special Circumstances and Professional Judgment!*

Join this seminar to gain insight into the common language used when engaging with a college financial aid office. We will dissect a traditional and nontraditional financial aid award letter and outline the components for presenting the pertinent information and evidence required for the special circumstance review process.



**SEMINAR: Preparing New GEAR UP Leaders for Success, Part 2: Foundational Issues in GEAR UP Implementation**

**Speakers:** **Adriana Badillo**, Director, Center for Educational Partnerships California State University, Fullerton  
**Alana Simmons**, Ph.D., Program Director, GEAR UP Dougherty  
**Angela Jackson**, GEAR UP Hawaii Project Director, Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education, University of Hawai'i  
**Troy Grant**, Senior Director of College Access / Principal Investigator, Tennessee Higher Education Commission / GEAR UP Tennessee  
**Alex Chough**, President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Winning a GEAR UP grant is the first step in a long and challenging journey. Your ability to improve student outcomes will depend in part on your ability to overcome challenges that nearly every GEAR UP leader faces when implementing a high-quality program. This seminar will explore foundational issues that every GEAR UP leader should prepare for, including: getting off to a strong first year; change management; nurturing your partnership; and creating a culture of evidence.

Come join experienced GEAR UP leaders in an interactive seminar to learn, explore, and discuss important lessons learned over many years of GEAR UP. This seminar is ideally suited for new GEAR UP directors, senior coordinators, and other central staff administrators who play important roles in leading GEAR UP programs.



**SEMINAR: SEL in Action: A Deeper Dive into Tools to Manage Stress and Address Trauma**

**Speakers:** **Jennifer Murphy**, Ph.D., Director, School Partnership Grants, Arizona State University  
GEAR UP  
**Danielle Walker**, Associate Director of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** In this seminar, participants will learn about common approaches to social and emotional learning (SEL), and the importance of supporting students and adult audiences to adopt effective self-care habits. Arizona State University GEAR UP will guide participants through a variety of interactive activities to explore the concept of social and emotional learning and engage with methods that can be easily applied to student engagement and personal well-being. Participants will walk away with tools to manage stress and address triggers of trauma intended for their self-care.



**SEMINAR: The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center: What Can We Learn?**

**Speakers:** **Afet Dunder**, Director, Equity in Research and Analytics, National Student Clearinghouse  
**Chrissy Tillery**, Ed.D., Vice President of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Most of us use the National Student Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse) to determine if our students enrolled, persisted, and graduated from college. However, did you know that the Clearinghouse also conducts research on postsecondary data? The Clearinghouse has a library of research briefs, reports, and papers on the status of postsecondary education.

Join a Clearinghouse expert researcher to learn about navigating their resources, using their resources as data sources, and better understanding the landscape of postsecondary attainment through their work. If you like to peruse scholarly work on postsecondary outcomes, join this seminar to learn more.



**SEMINAR: What I Wish I Knew: Tips for New GEAR UP Coordinators**

**Speakers:** **Benjamin Breault**, GEAR UP Program Coordinator, Manchester Community College, GEAR UP Connecticut  
**Tanya Smith**, Nevada GEAR UP First Year College Advisor, Nevada State College, Nevada GEAR UP  
**Katie Hill**, Ph.D., Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Are you new to GEAR UP? Do you find yourself facing unexpected challenges? Questioning how to resolve programming issues? This seminar is for you.

We will explore common challenges new GEAR UP professionals face when serving students and share tips to overcome those challenges. You'll interact with other GEAR UP practitioners, reflect on how to apply practices to your local setting, and discuss your burning questions.

5:45 pm – 5:50 pm ET      **BREAK**

5:50 pm – 6:30 pm ET      **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT**



**Social Engagement: B-I-N-G-O, and Bingo Was His Name-O**

**Facilitator:** **Janeé Williams**, Associate Director of Operations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Dana Beck**, Director of Practice, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Who doesn't love the classic game, Bingo? Come test your luck and see if you can be the first to get five across, five down, or even five diagonal. And don't forget the free space!



**Social Engagement: It's a Page Turner**

**Facilitator:** **Betty Paugh Ortiz**, Vice President of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Danielle Walker**, Associate Director of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Ever wonder what to read next? Tired of looking up "best books of the year"? Then let's crowdsource recommended books. Come ready to share your favorite book and why, or simply listen to all the recommendations your peers have to offer. You'll be leaving with a list of books that will surely keep you reading all throughout 2022.



**Social Engagement: Just Dance!**

**Facilitator:** **Linda Hayden**, Founder, Break Out and Dance

**Kelly Pappas**, Director of Career & College Clubs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Come join us and just dance! With easy-to-follow choreography, rhythms, and steps from many styles of dance and music that will make you want to move, Just Dance! feels more like fun and less like exercise. Want to focus on fitness? Check. Move your soul? Check. Just for funzies? Check, check, and check.

## Wednesday | February 16

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1:00 pm – 1:45 pm ET

**BURST SESSION**

**Storytelling as a Tool for Change**

**Speakers:**

**Betty Paugh Ortiz**, Vice President of Programs, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships



**Nic Stone, Author**

While our experiences shape us, our stories connect us. Stories inherently play a critical role in driving social change by provoking inspiration, fostering understanding, and deepening our shared humanity. As we seek to mobilize our students and our nation towards a brighter future, harnessing the power of our stories is central to our work.

Join Nic Stone, the award-winning author of *Dear Martin* and *Dear Justyce*, as she explores the ways in which each of us can harness the power of story to engage, educate, and empower those around us.

1:45 pm – 2:00 pm ET

**EXHIBIT HALL BREAK**

2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET

**WORKSHOPS (Part 1) & DIRECTORS' MEETINGS**

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm ET

**EXHIBIT HALL BREAK**

3:30 pm – 4:30 pm ET

**WORKSHOPS (Part 2) & DIRECTORS' MEETINGS (Continued)**



**EXCEL WORKSHOP:**

**Healing Where We Are Hurting: The Journey Towards Building Trauma-Informed Communities**

**Speakers:**

**Jaye Holly**, Faculty Member, Sanctuary Institute

**April Bell**, Director of Constituent Relations, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** It is said, *“It is very hard for someone, anyone, to heal in the same place where they are hurting.”* Through a trauma-informed caregiving lens, our virtual and in-person school communities, for many, serve as a backdrop within a *novel* concerning traumatic experiences. We don’t have the luxury of changing our educational settings, which means we must institute a plan that empowers ourselves, students, and families to look beyond what we can see to what it can be.

We all deal with trauma in different and unique ways, *page by page*. As educators, we often try to wear a brave face, masking evidence of current or past trauma, all to provide students and families with the trauma-informed care that they need, require, and sometimes seek. In many cases, the school communities we work in are the same areas or environments we came from or resided. Believe it or not, we or someone close, in proximity, or at a distance, has a *story* to tell that includes a traumatic *chapter*. GEAR UP Family, healing is a process. As we continually learn and grow as trauma-informed care professionals, nothing is impossible when healing becomes something we strive towards, *one word, one action at a time*.

**Objectives:**

- Define trauma and the impact of sorrow, hopelessness, and the stages of grief.
- Establish safety and self-compassion techniques for ourselves and our families.
- Secure student- and family-centered information, resources, tools, and techniques that promote resilience within our trauma-informed care services and support within our school communities.



## **EXCEL WORKSHOP: The Struggle Against Cultural Hegemony: Creating Culturally Relevant Experiences in GEAR UP Programming**

**Speaker:** **Aaliyah Baker**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Cardinal Stritch University  
**Katie Hill**, Ph.D., Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** In the 1990s, the term culturally relevant teaching was coined (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Now, this concept goes beyond classroom teaching to encompass all of what we do in education, including GEAR UP programming. There are endless opportunities to bridge theory to practice which can have a profound impact on high quality experiences and student achievement. To increase cultural relevance in education, issues stemming from socially constructed isms must be acknowledged, exposed, and directly challenged. When naming, framing, and addressing issues of student success, it is important to explicitly address inequality within the context of a stratified society.

During this session, participants will analyze and apply strategic connections for culturally relevant experiences across curricula, instruction, stakeholders, and sociocultural issues. The intended outcome is to explore research and strategies that seek to unpack layers of cultural identity that foster a commitment to justice and student success.

### **Objectives:**

- Explore the key elements of culturally relevant experiences.
- Discuss strategies to implement culturally relevant experiences in your GEAR UP programming.
- Develop action steps for your GEAR UP services.



## **PROVE WORKSHOP: Using Data to Inform, Educate, and Advocate**

**Speakers:** **Scott Wilson**, Associate Director of Innovative Learning, K20 Center  
**Leslie Williams**, Director, K20 Center  
**Emmett Mathews**, Associate Director, Art, Media, and Communications, K20 Center  
**Aaron Coffey**, Data Systems Engineer, K20 Center  
**Jackie Mania**, Ed.D., Director of Research and Evaluation, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** NCCEP has set a goal of benefiting one million students with GEAR UP programming. To reach that goal, NCCEP has placed strong emphasis on communicating the importance of GEAR UP and building relationships with policy makers. As GEAR UP projects, we can strengthen our work in these areas by providing relevant data in a user-friendly format. This workshop is designed to support GEAR UP leaders in collecting, interpreting, and presenting data in a way that appropriately tells our stories and empowers our policy makers to make informed decisions.

This workshop will facilitate discussion about data collection processes, provide basic information on interpreting and reporting data, and guide participants in an exploration of web applications and video-based tools that enhance data visualization. Presenters will also demonstrate how one way data can be shared in a real-time, interactive format. By the end of this session, participants will have the information and resources necessary to leverage data to inform, educate, and advocate for GEAR UP policies based on research and best practice in GEAR UP programming.

**Objectives:**

- Describe the ways data can be used to tell the story of a GEAR UP program.
- Compare data visualization methods.
- Formulate a data collection/visualization strategy for a GEAR UP program.



**MOBILIZE WORKSHOP: Cut the Jargon: Approaches for Communicating with Clarity**

**Speakers:** **Eric Johnson**, Director of Editorial Strategy, The College Board  
**Brandon Flores**, Director, State GEAR UP, Weber State University  
**Beth Kelly**, Assistant Director, College Access and Support, Washington Student Achievement Council  
**Alex Chough**, President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Overview:** Our success depends in no small part in our ability to effectively communicate with students, families, and others. Given the nature of our college readiness work, it's simply hard to effectively communicate our GEAR UP purpose, how college admissions works, or how to make sense of the financial aid process. Yet ensuring that our messages are well understood by real people can be achieved by adopting an audience-centric mindset and using simple techniques that cut through the jargon, dense, or complex language that typifies our work. This workshop is suited for any individual who communicates to students, families, or non-educators about the college going and financial aid process.

**Objectives:**

- Learn guiding principles that help you communicate with simplicity and clarity.
- Explore specific challenges in communicating about GEAR UP with your audiences.
- Apply what you've learned through hands-on exercises.



**EXPLORATION LAB: Building Trust with Families**

**Facilitators:** **Dana Beck**, Director of Practice, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships  
**Cristal Sanchez**, Educational Services Coordinator, CSU Fullerton GEAR UP

**Overview:** Building trust with families is an essential and often overlooked element of successful family engagement. Taking the time to develop trust creates an environment in which families can be confident that the information you are sharing with them is accurate and you have their best interest in mind. But how do you build trust with families? What are the potential barriers to overcome? Join your peers to share challenges, promising practices, and potential solutions to build trust with families in this collaborative session.

*What is an Exploration Lab?*

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*Who should attend?*

Anyone who works with families and wants to share their experiences and learn from others.

*What should I expect?*

Come ready to participate! We encourage you to have your camera on to foster connection and conversation.

 **SPECIAL MEETING: State Directors' Meeting**

**Overview:** 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 State GEAR UP Directors and/or Principal Investigators who have been designated as such by the U.S. Department of Education. *This is an invitational meeting and pre-registration with NCCEP is required to access the meeting.*

 **SPECIAL MEETING: Partnership Directors' Meeting**

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

4:45 pm – 5:00 pm ET

**CLOSING SESSION**

**Connection – Illuminating a Path for Our Students**

**Speakers:**

**Alex Chough**, President, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships

**Maria Ibarra Rodriguez**, Deputy Director for Data and Technology, United We Dream

**Greg Evans**, Founder & Executive Director, Seeds Training



GEAR UP was enacted in 1999, and since then, has served millions of students. Many of these students are now successful professionals in their fields, some researching breakthrough solutions to many of the world's challenges, and some even giving back to their communities by now working for GEAR UP.

This success can be attributed to many things, but for most, they'd say the connections they had to their GEAR UP supporters was what lit the way for them. Be sure to join us as we share stories of connection and light from GEAR UP alumni from across the country.





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and Education Partnerships**

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# **NCCEP/GEAR UP Capacity-Building Workshop**

February 14-16, 2022