Raising Aspirations: New England Goes to College

Monday, October 29 -
Tuesday, October 30
Samoset Resort
Rockport, Maine

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Maine

New Hampshire

Vermont

Massachusetts

Rhode Island

Connecticut

New England GEAR UP Conference 2007

Welcome to the 2007 New England Gear Up Conference!

Welcome to the annual New England GEAR UP Conference in Rockport, Maine! We are excited you have joined us as we reconnect with previous participants and welcome the new. Together, we will collaborate, share ideas and strategies, and rejuvenate each other as we learn approaches to raise aspirations and ensure all students are prepared to successfully engage in post-secondary education. We have created an environment to stimulate your thinking as we journey through New England.

This year's New England Conference is being hosted by the Maine Team, with the collaboration and support of the GEAR UP Vermont and Massachusetts Teams. This interactive conference will provide opportunities to learn about effective strategies to engage middle and high school students, educators, and families. We promise wonderful and rich sessions led by GEAR UP staff and other professionals from throughout New England interested in promoting post-secondary education.

On Monday, we look forward to sharing with you one of the most dynamic and entertaining presenters of all time, Russ Quaglia, PhD. Dr. Quaglia will share his wit and wisdom as he describes the conditions related to raising aspirations for all students.

On Tuesday, we have the honor of presenting Douglas Luffborough III, M.Ed. Mr. Luffborough will inspire us with his journey from "Homeless to Harvard." He will bring to life the strength of the human spirit and the power of dreams for a better future.

We urge you to take advantage of all the opportunities to connect with friends old and new, to join in the discussions, and to continue those discussions throughout the conference. The scheduled learning opportunities, along with the rich diversity of programs represented here, will provide a wide range of learning and networking opportunities.

We know you will leave energized after this fun-filled, learning-rich, and network-oriented experience.

In addition to the learning opportunities:

- Visit the book sale area and purchase materials to help enhance your learning.
- Participate in the Job Alike discussions.
- Enjoy a New England dinner extravaganza.
- Enjoy the inspirational presenters.
- Network.
- Share your expertise.

Be sure to check our information board at the registration area daily to get any updated information.

Please, remember to dress in layers as it is difficult to control temperature, and let the Support Network staff know if you have any concerns or needs during the Conference. Most importantly, enjoy your time here, take care of you, and have fun!

If you are interested in receiving the list of Conference attendees and/or a certificate with contact hours, please email office@mainesupportnetwork.org.

How has the GEAR UP program impacted you on your personal "Road Trip" toward raising college aspirations?

The changes over the past 5 years are pretty dramatic. Never before have we had a focus on college-going for all students- it was only for a few. And GEAR-UP has contributed to this. -Guidance Counselor

It's so sweet to see these kids who were not even thinking about college talking about possibilities after making college visits. Kids I never would have expected to aspire to college are now talking about going. -GEAR-UP Advisor

It is a joy to see kids coming in with an award letter. They are all smiles because they never thought they would be able to go. -GU Advisor

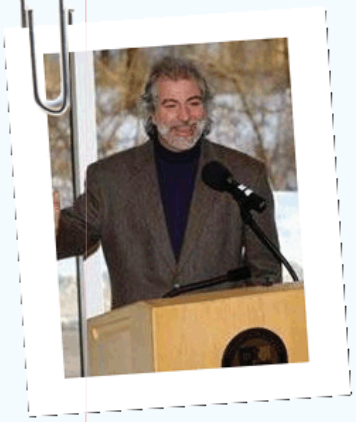
The 6th grade college visits are opening doors never even thought about before. -Parent

Through the student-led conferences more and more students are taking responsibility for their learning, being reflective. -High School Teacher

Our portfolio program is growing in stature and has morphed from just lists and pretty covers to real evidence of learning. -Principal

The data- with 17 of 32 students persistently behind their peers- have challenged us to look at different interventions. We had gotten cocky. We did some research on credit recovery, where failure is not an option- incompletes, no Fs- and are piloting it now. -High School Principal

AGENDA



Sunday, October 28, 2007

3:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Early Registration
6:00 p.m.	Dinner on Your Own

Monday, October 29, 2007

7:30 – 5:00 p.m.	Book Sales through USM Bookstore - Schooner Room
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Registration - Schooner Room
	Continental Breakfast Available - outside the Knox County Ballroom
8:30 – 9:15 a.m.	GEARing UP for Learning - Knox County Ballroom
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Breakout Session 1
11:15 – 12:15 p.m.	Welcome - Susan Gendron, Maine's Commissioner of Education
	Russell J. Quaglia, Ph. D., President/Founder
	Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations
	Raising Student Aspirations - Knox County Ballroom
12:15 -1:15 p.m.	Networking Lunch - Vinalhaven Room
1:30 - 3:00 p.m.	Break Out Session 2
3:15 - 4:00 p.m.	Job Alike Breakout Sessions
6:15 p.m.	GEAR UP and Mingle Social - Knox County Ballroom
7:00 p.m.	New England Dinner

Monday Highlights

Welcome

Maine's Commissioner of Education, Susan Gendron

Susan Gendron has worked tirelessly to improve educational opportunities for all youth in Maine. It is with great pleasure that we introduce her to GEAR UP New England. Her energy and passion for youth is contagious.

Russell J. Quaglia, Ph.D.

Raising Student Aspirations

Dr. Russell Quaglia has inspired educators, community leaders, and families with his straight-to-the-point style, delightful sense of humor, and passion for youth. Russ is the founder and director of the Quaglia Institute for Student Aspirations. He was described as the foremost authority on student aspirations by NBC's Today Show.

Dr. Quaglia's work, both nationally and internationally, is founded on research-based information describing the conditions associated with raising aspirations for youth. Dr. Quaglia has been published in some of the most well established research journals, as well as popular magazines such as *Reader's Digest*, *Parents and Families*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*.

Dr. Quaglia's presentation style is delightful. He pulls no punches when he challenges us to do what is right instead of what is easy or routine. He has challenged the system and reminds us that doing what is right for students often means not doing business as usual, rather being creative, personal, and caring.

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

7:30 - 1:00 p.m.	Book Sales through USM Bookstore - Schooner Room
7:30 - 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30 - 9:30 a.m.	Principal Call-In Session – 100 College Going Strategies: New England Principals Lead the Way - Owl's Head Room or Question and Answer Period, for those new to New England GEAR UP Penobscot Bay Room
9:45 - 11:15 a.m.	Break Out Session 3
11:30 - 12:30 p.m.	Douglas E. Luffborough III, M. Ed. Co-Founder and Executive Director, Turning the Hearts Center - Knox County Ballroom
12:30 p.m.	Raffle Giveaways and Box Lunch

Safe Travels!

Pool open until 11:00 p.m. Sunday & Monday

Tuesday Highlights

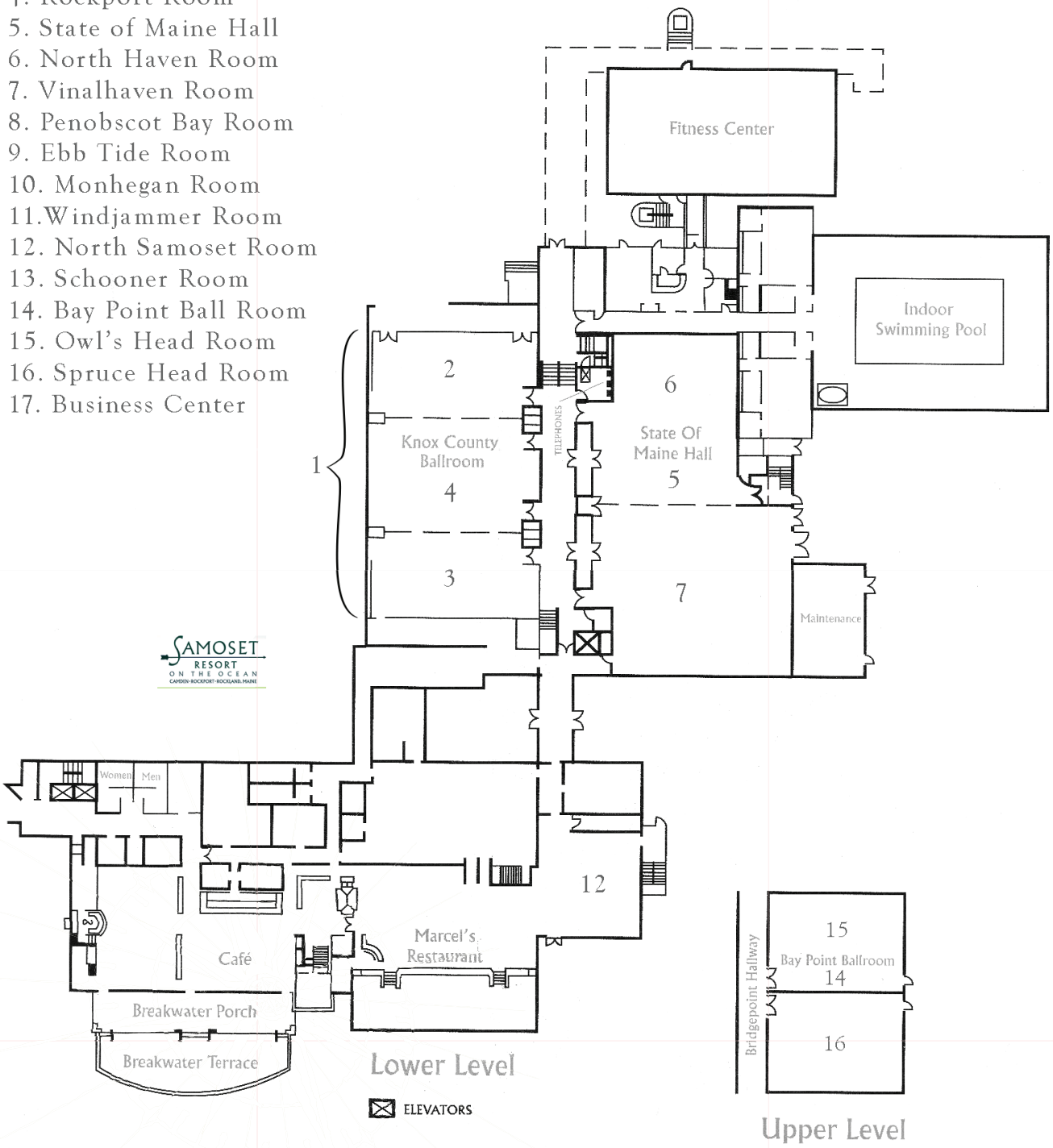
Douglas E. Luffborough III, M. Ed.
From Homeless to Harvard

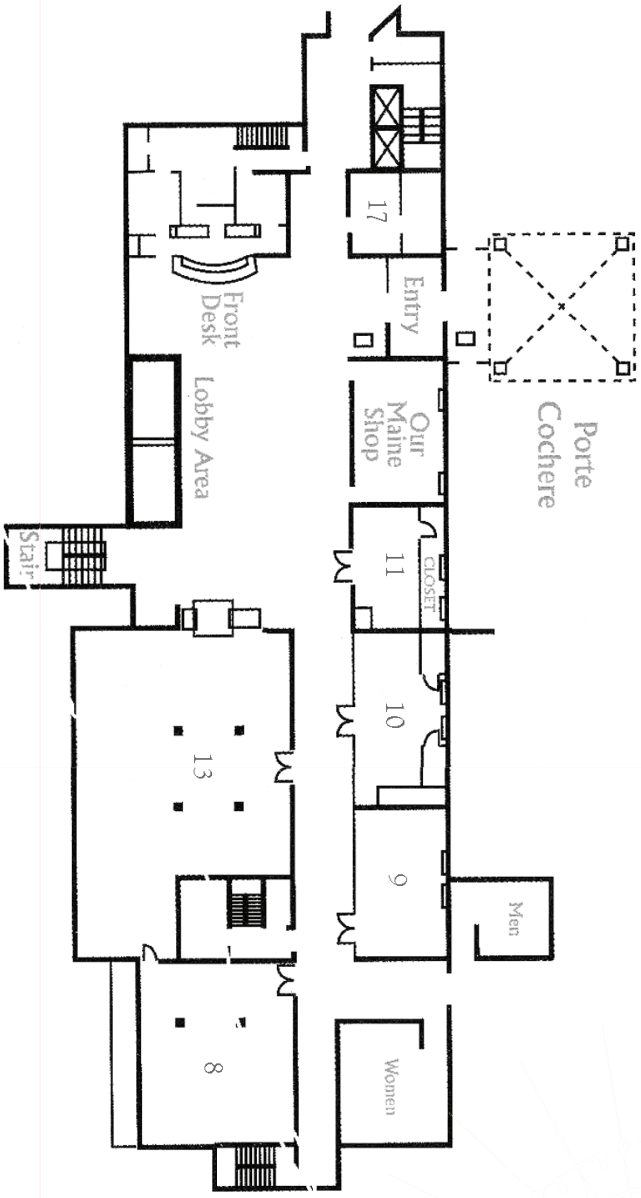
Mr. Douglas Luffborough is an inspiration. His greatest dream was to be the first member of his family to graduate from college. This dream became ever more important and difficult to envision when he and his family found themselves homeless during his senior year in high school.

Mr. Luffborough persevered against all odds, including dismissive high school guidance counselors. Doug worked hard to hold on to and achieve his dream, which was realized when he was accepted into Northeastern University. Mr. Luffborough graduated with such esteem and honors that he was asked to deliver the Student Commencement Address at his graduation. His story of perseverance and hope inspired the Invited Commencement Speaker, President Bill Clinton. President Clinton was so impressed with Doug that he invited both Doug and his mother to the White House.

Mr. Luffborough's inspiring style, and story of perseverance, will remind us of the strength of the human spirit. Doug's presentation is a must see!! He will leave you with a renewed sense of mission and passion.

1. Knox County Ballroom
2. Camden Room
3. Rockland Room
4. Rockport Room
5. State of Maine Hall
6. North Haven Room
7. Vinalhaven Room
8. Penobscot Bay Room
9. Ebb Tide Room
10. Monhegan Room
11. Windjammer Room
12. North Samoset Room
13. Schooner Room
14. Bay Point Ball Room
15. Owl's Head Room
16. Spruce Head Room
17. Business Center





Main Level

SAMOSET RESORT ON THE OCEAN
GARDEN-ROCKPORT-ROCKLAND, MAINE

Monday, October 29
Breakout Session 1

9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Using Advisors to Engage Students
The College Crusade of Rhode Island
Rockland Room

This workshop will highlight some unique ways the RI GEAR UP program uses advisors to engage students. The advisors are not only counselors but are also direct service providers through adventure education programs, mentoring programs, and study skills workshops. A brief overview of the advisory system, and testimony from both middle and high school advisors, will be included.

Presenters: **Robert Oberg**, Director of Development, **Reuben Tillman**, GEAR UP Advisor, **Kalomo Vanterpool**, GEAR UP Advisor, **Kristen Gardner**, Middle School Program Manager, **Lauren Schetchman**, Middle School Program Manager, **John Cruz,** High School Program Manager, **Maria Carvalho**, High School Program Manager

The Campus Visit: GEAR UP Fitchburg Goes to College
Mount Wachusetts Community College GEAR UP Directors
Camden Room

Finding opportunities to bring students, especially those from middle school grades, onto college campuses can be challenging. With a little brainstorming and a lot of creativity, this can be one of the most successful parts of the GEAR UP project. In this workshop, Rebeccah Sonn will share their successful strategies.

Presenters: **Rebeccah Sonn** is the Community Partnerships Director at Mount Wachusett Community College, and the Director of GEAR UP 2011/ 2012 in Fitchburg, MA. **Victor Rojas** is the Assistant Director of GEAR UP 2011/2012. **Melissa Bourque** is the GEAR UP Academic Liaison at Fitchburg High School. **Andrew Goodwin** is the GEAR UP Resource Specialist at Memorial Middle School in Fitchburg. **Natalie Mercier** is the GEAR UP Resource Specialist at Academy Community Pilot School and Fitchburg Arts Academy. **Anthony Semidey** is the GEAR UP Resource Specialist at B.F. Brown Middle School in Fitchburg. **Martin Silva** is the GEAR UP Academic Liaison at Fitchburg High School and Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School (Monty Tech).

From High School to College: Removing Barriers for Maine Students
The Mitchell Institute
Penobscot Bay Room

Working with findings from a yearlong study of the growing gap between high school graduates' college intentions and actual enrollment, participants will learn about promising practices in Maine schools and communities, interpret data, and generate new ideas to help more students realize their college aspirations.

Presenters: **Colleen Quint**, Executive Director, has directed the Mitchell Institute since its inception in 1999. **Lisa Plimpton**, Director of Research, has been conducting research on college access in Maine since 2000, when she joined the Mitchell Institute staff. The Institute awards college scholarships annually to 130 graduating seniors in Maine.

Strength in Numbers: Developing a Multi-School Tutoring Collaboration Project
Vermont State GEAR UP VSAC
Rockport Room

With an eye towards best practice, this presentation will examine the successes and challenges that the facilitator and participants have encountered in the development of school tutoring programs. A tutoring manual and a sample program from Vermont's annual Tutor Academy will help get the conversation started. Please bring your materials if you already have a program going!

Presenter: **Matthew Myers, M.S.**, Academic Support Coordinator, has created several student-centered programs in the Educational and Human Service Fields in Vermont since 1988.

How To: Implementing Proven Best Practices in College Access
MELMAC
Spruce Head Room

Over the past 4 years, MELMAC Education Foundation has granted money to 52 Maine high schools. These grants target all students with activities designed to help them aspire to, and achieve their college aspirations. College enrollment rates at grantee schools have increased by 7%, while college enrollment rates statewide have remained flat. The structure and lessons learned from this initiative will be discussed.

Presenters: **Wendy Ault**, Executive Director, has been with the Maine Educational Loan Marketing Corporation (MELMAC) since its creation in January 2001. **Tarren Bragdon** has consulted with the MELMAC Education Foundation for five years.

Technology Tools in Literacy Increase Student Access
ALLTech at Spurwink Institute
Owls Head Room

A wide variety of software tools exist that allow students with learning differences full participation in the regular education curriculum. These tools can provide the student with a learning environment where reading and writing are supported. Programs that provided text-to-speech, speech-to-text, and many other supports will be discussed and compared. Options for both Windows and Macintosh based computer platforms will be discussed.

Presenter: **Dale Blanchard** is the director of the ALLTech Division of Spurwink Institute. He is a lifelong educator who, for more than 15 years, has focused on assistive technology and universal design. Dale has Assistive Technology Practitioner credentials and provides assistive technology consultations and assessments throughout New England.

Monday, October 29
Breakout Session 2

1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Experience Connect! The Only Comprehensive College, Career, and Financial Aid Planning System Designed for Students, Parents, and Guidance Counselors
ConnectEdu, Inc.
Penobscot Bay Room

Connect! is an innovative web-based education platform designed to reduce administrative tasks in the college search and placement process, while facilitating communication within its networked community (high school students, transfer students, parents, guidance counselors and admissions officers). This session will provide an opportunity to experience this college planning solution firsthand and understand the value of a system designed with students in mind.

Presenters: **Jeff Alderson**, Director, Strategic Partnerships for ConnectEdu. With 10 years experience in large scale government and educational IT systems, Jeff brings together technology and societal impact while working to address key market needs . Prior to his tenure as the chief executive officer of the Textron Chamber of Commerce charter high school he spent twenty-four years as an investment banker in New York City and two years teaching at Brown University. **Rick Landau** is the Director of Foundations Partnerships at ConnectEdu and the former chief executive officer of the Textron Chamber of Commerce Academy, a Providence charter high school.

Happy Kids, Happy Parents
Vermont State GEAR UP VSAC
Camden Room

Parents want their kids to be happy, so let's get to it. It all starts with relationship and understanding. This hands-on, interactive workshop will offer some ideas on getting parents to the table, what to do with them once they're there, and lessons learned.

Presenter: **Cathy Printon**, is in her second year as Parent Program Coordinator. Prior to working with GEAR UP she was the Executive Director of the Milton Family Center in Milton, VT.

Hearing from the Practitioners: Hands-on Strategies Proven to Help Students Aspire To, and Actually Enroll In, College

MELMAC
Spruce Head Room

The MELMAC Education Foundation has granted money to 52 Maine high schools to support programs that help more students go to college. Hear from grant administrators and Foundation coaches about logistics of administering college visits, cultural change support activities, high school senior college transition programs, parent programs, and both summer interviewing and fall college enrollment surveys of recent graduates.

Presenters: **Wendy Ault**, Executive Director, has been with the Maine Educational Loan Marketing Corporation (MELMAC) since its creation in January 2001. **Tarren Bragdon** has consulted with the MELMAC Education Foundation for five years.

School? On My Summer Vacation?? Absolutely!!!

College of Worcester Consortium, Inc.
Rockport Room

Convincing students to participate in summer programming can be a tough sell, as anyone who has put together a summer program can tell you. This presentation will focus on the recruitment efforts for the GEAR UP Summer Camp at Worcester East Middle School. We will include curriculum and camp activities that were successful. There will also be an open discussion on best practices and successes with summer recruitment and retention.

Presenters: **Taryn Tomkin** is the GEAR UP Director at North High School and Worcester East Middle School. This is Taryn's 6th year with the GEAR UP Program. **Delma Kusy**, GEAR UP Educational Advisor, is an Educational Advisor for GEAR UP at North High School in Worcester. Delma has been working with underserved high school students in the Worcester area for over 5 years.

Leadership Compass – Do you know your natural leadership style and the leadership style of others?

Turning the Hearts Center
Rockland Room

What does leadership mean to you? In this workshop learn a simple yet profound way to determine your leadership style, and the leadership styles of others, that lead to personal and professional success in life. Key strategies based on the directionals on a compass - North, South, East, and West.

Presenter: **Douglas Luffborough III, M.Ed.**, Chief Managing Consultant, is a nationally acclaimed dynamic speaker and trainer with 15 years of experience as a true turner of hearts.

Monday, October 29
Job Alike Breakout Session

3:15 - 4:00 p.m.

State Directors, Schooner Room
Partnership & Local GEAR UP Directors, Windjammer Room
GEAR UP Middle School Staff, Monhegan Room
GEAR UP High School Staff, Penobscot Bay Room
Parents & Others, Ebb Tide Room

Tuesday, October 30
Breakout Session 3

9:45 - 11:15 a.m.

Adventures in Technology at UMass, Lowell
GEAR UP University of Massachusetts, Lowell
Camden Room
What do you do to engage your students in the summer? How do you keep them on pace in their college planning? Join us for a roundtable discussion on summer programs for GEAR UP students. GEAR UP Lowell's Adventures in Technology at UML was a comprehensive five week program during the summer of 2007.

Presenters: **Bowa Tucker**, Program Manager, **Leticia Porter**, Associate Manager - Tutoring, **Leonor Daley**, Associate Manager - Parent Outreach, **Shawn Barry**, Associate Manager - College Awareness

Thinking Outside the Box: Right Brain Outreach
Maine Parent Federation
Rockland Room
When traditional efforts to engage parents in the education process don't work, it's time to try something else. This is a workshop for exploring rather than instructing. We hope the planned exercises will stimulate creative thinking about reaching the parents who don't, or can't, respond to traditional parent involvement opportunities. We'll share some of our strategies for reaching families.

Presenters: **Janice LaChance**, Executive Director, and **Ray Cook**, GEAR UP Parent Involvement Activities Coordinator, Maine Parent Federation. This statewide non-profit agency provides information, referral and training (at no cost) for parents, families and professionals.

Expand Your Toolkit: Career Awareness Activities That Engage Students
Vermont State GEAR UP
Spruce Head Room
This workshop is a hands-on training session with curriculum that is effective, developmentally appropriate for middle and high school students, enjoyable, active, and easy to use with groups of all sizes. All of the curricula demonstrated in this workshop are available for use by workshop participants.

Presenter: **Heidi McLaughlin,** Outreach Coordinator, has been working with students in grades 7-12 for the past 7 years for Vermont Student Assistance Corporation as an Outreach Counselor with GEAR UP. Prior to working for VSAC, Heidi worked as a community service coordinator at Johnson State College.

Middle School is Not Too Early to Go to College
Partnerships for Success/UMF
Penobscot Bay Room
Seventh graders going to college! It started with a creative idea and then a little negotiation, but eventually all were on board. The University of Maine provided the use of its facilities, the principal and teachers let students miss five days of classroom time, and GEAR UP was responsible for the week's activities.

Presenter: **Dixie Bonnevie**, GEAR UP Site Coordinator, has worked with GEAR UP for almost two years in the position of Site Coordinator for two school districts in Maine. Through our partnerships with the schools and the University of Maine, GEAR UP has provided many opportunities for our students to experience college first hand.

No Money? No Worries!
Narraguagus High School
Owls Head Room
Despite limited financial resources, educators at Narraguagus High School in Harrington, Maine, promote a college-going atmosphere by using a visual focus, and a celebratory atmosphere. Now they're adding the power of moodle technology to further strengthen their connection with Gear Up students and families in this interactive community.

Presenters: **Brittany Ray,** Guidance Director, was named Maine's Teacher of the Year in 2006. She taught English Language Arts at Narraguagus High School for more than ten years before becoming its Guidance Director. **Corey Fleming**, GEAR UP Liasion, works closely with students and families, as well as school guidance and teachers, to promote college awareness and readiness.

New England GEAR UP State Programs

Vermont State GEAR UP

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation

2007-08 Vermont State GEAR UP Quick Facts:
# of students: 1,700 | **# of schools:** 53
We serve **both urban and rural** students.

Vermont State GEAR UP (VSGU) is housed at Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC), a public, non-profit agency created to administer state financial aid programs. VSAC also hosts the state's only Talent Search and EOC (TRIO) projects, and is Vermont's single point of delivery for career, post-secondary and financial aid information. Vermont struggles with access to information due to its isolating geography and post-secondary affordability, and this arrangement promotes the ability to address several critical education planning needs facing families.

Vermont students living in poverty face challenges that lead to lower academic achievement when compared to their classmates not living in poverty. They face a growing achievement gap between elementary and middle school, are twice as likely to drop out of high school, less likely to take rigorous math and science curricula, less likely to have teachers with a masters degree in the field they are teaching, less likely to be enrolled in college by age 19, and more likely to face higher loan debt if they do make it to college. Vermont's state GEAR UP Project has been in existence since 1999. Vermont was one of only nine states to host the National Early Intervention Scholarship Program, a national model that the GEAR UP state grants were built upon. As this proposal will demonstrate, VSGU targets the most needy schools and regions in the state, and provides comprehensive services that directly address GEAR UP goals and objectives. VSGU will identify and select 1,700 low-income students and provide the necessary information, academic support and financial resources through the VSGU Scholarship to assure that each student has the opportunity to enroll and succeed in higher education. VSGU will provide resources to schools in partnership with the Vermont Department of Education to all schools failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to the No Child Left Behind Act. VSGU will also coordinate, support, supplement and provide resources for state partnerships created to advance school reform efforts with emphasis on teacher preparation and professional development.

Project Director: Linda A. Shiller
Telephone: (802) 655-9602
Email Address: shiller@vsac.org

Rhode Island State GEAR UP

The College Crusade of Rhode Island, under the auspices of the Rhode Island Department of Higher Education

2007-08 Rhode Island State GEAR UP Quick Facts:
# of students: 4,300 | **# of schools:** 43
We serve **urban** students.

The mission of RI GEAR UP is to increase educational and career success for youth in Rhode Island's low-income communities. We help participants get ready to succeed in college by providing caring Advisors and sustained academic and social support from grades 6 to 12, combined with scholarship incentives. We advocate for expanded opportunities for pre-K-16 success while helping participants to develop as responsible, productive members of the community.

The typical RI GEAR UP participant is economically disadvantaged, is Hispanic, lives in a non-English speaking, single-parent home, and attempts to learn in a substandard environment that does not nurture learning, growth, or development. RI GEAR UP participants attend schools of which seventy-five percent are labeled by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as In Need of Improvement and/or Making Insufficient Progress toward improving. Participants attend schools where parents, teachers, and students generally do not have high expectations for student achievement. RI GEAR UP's services have helped students and parents to develop higher expectations for success in school.

Each year, RI GEAR UP positively impacts approximately 4,300 of RI's most economically disadvantaged students. We provide advisory services, post-secondary preparation, academic enrichment, social-personal development, career awareness and exploration, parent outreach programs and services, and scholarships. RI GEAR UP programs are asset-based, research-driven, age-appropriate, and sustained in order to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

RI GEAR UP participants attend forty-three schools in four urban-core cities of Rhode Island. RI GEAR UP has established close working relationships with each of these schools. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the responsibilities and expectations of RI GEAR UP and the school.

Project Director: William Formicola
Telephone Number: (401) 854-5506, ext. 117
Email Address: wformicola@thecollegecrusade.org

Connecticut State GEAR UP

Connecticut Department of Higher Education

2007-08 Connecticut State GEAR UP Quick Facts:
# of students: 4,500 | **# of schools:** 6
We serve **urban** students.

The Connecticut State GEAR UP program serves 4, 500 students from 3 high schools in Bridgeport, CT and 3 high schools in New Haven, CT.

In its initial funding cycle, the applicant's GEAR UP Project focused on mathematics, based on research showing that students who take upper level math courses in high school are better prepared and more likely to graduate from college. The Project's principle goal was to increase the number of eighth-graders taking and successfully completing Algebra I, expecting that these students would subsequently take advanced math courses. Project outcomes included substantial curriculum change, including elimination of low-level math courses in both middle and high schools, and establishment of new graduation requirements. The proposed Project will continue emphasizing math but the focus will be placed, as a logical progression, on academic rigor to improve student academic achievement. Research has identified the rigor of high school curriculum as the strongest factor associated with students enrolling in, and graduating from, college.

The need for the Project is documented by low student performance levels on state assessment tests at its target schools. This documentation of students' need to improve their level of academic performance aligns the Project with the needs of target school districts and target schools. All have been designated as "in need of improvement."

An experienced and competent Project staff will implement an ambitious array of 30 student or parent activities and systemic change activities, integral elements of target school improvement plans. Implementation will be guided by the Project's management and evaluation plans, constructed in an action plan structure of an integrated, strategic management approach, which in turn will guide achievement of the Project's mission, goals and objectives. Project programs and services, in collaboration with district and school improvement plans, will undoubtedly further development of a college-going culture of achievement that will have a positive, enduring influence upon student academic performance and parental involvement.

Project Director: Arthur Poole
Telephone Number: (860) 947-1834
Email Address: apoole@ctdhe.org

GEAR UP Massachusetts

Massachusetts Board of Higher Education

2007-08 Massachusetts State GEAR UP Quick Facts:
# of students: 6,504 | **# of schools:** 16
We serve **high poverty urban** districts.

GEAR UP Massachusetts focuses program services within seven middle schools and nine high schools in high-poverty urban districts.

GEAR UP Massachusetts' middle schools have increased the number of students passing the high stakes Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam. However, schools are still struggling, particularly in mathematics, and have not yet met their Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as required through No Child Left Behind. GEAR UP will provide more targeted academic support programs so that the middle schools move closer to their AYP goals. Through improved assessment tools and analysis of data, GEAR UP will become a research model that provides schools and districts with evidence of success of targeted interventions. GEAR UP will provide professional development that supports the certification requirements of NCLB and each school's improvement plans. Mathematics is clearly a gatekeeper, not only for MCAS, but also for students getting into, and succeeding in, college. GEAR UP resources will target mathematics achievement through tutoring, after-school and summer programs, and particularly math camps.

Schools will have on-site GEAR UP Coordinators to coordinate academic support programs, college admissions and financial aid guidance, and outreach to parents and community resources. Local GEAR UP Directors will work closely with principals and school districts and the statewide GEAR UP Director will provide overall direction and link GEAR UP to state and regional initiatives that share our goals.

Administrative Assistant: Keisha Dixon
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Maine State GEAR UP Program

Maine Department of Education

2007-08 Maine State GEAR UP Quick Facts:
# of students: 2,300 | **# of schools:** 46

We serve **both urban and rural** students with the vast majority of schools being located in **rural** areas.

The Maine Department of Education's State GEAR UP Program, in collaboration with the Maine Support Network, the Maine Parent Federation, Maine CITE, the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System, the Mitchell Institute, school administrative units, and the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), serves students from low-income households in school districts statewide.

Maine GEAR UP Project Goals and Objectives:
The Project is leveraging Maine's advanced technological infrastructure to create a sustainable program supporting students who are economically disadvantaged in preparing for, accessing, and succeeding in post-secondary education.

Maine's State GEAR UP program is working to increase academic performance, educational expectations, high school graduation and post-secondary participation rates of participating students, as well as student and family knowledge of post-secondary options, preparation, and financing. Connecting the use of Maine's Learning Technology Initiative and distance learning networks into GEAR UP program strategies and activities is furthering this goal. GEAR UP supports schools to promote high aspirations for all students by facilitating student engagement and achievement in supportive learning environments.

Maine State GEAR UP unique strengths:

Schools are implementing the GEAR UP goals and objectives in meaningful district-specific plans. Our schools have the support of six regional coordinators who bring knowledge and resources unique to their region.

Maine State GEAR UP schools are working to ensure that:

- All high school students take college courses.
- All students have individual learning plans.
- All seniors complete their FAFSA before March 1.
- All parents are actively involved in their child's education.
- All seniors complete at least one application to attend a post-secondary school.
- All schools increase the number of rigorous courses, including AP and college.

Project Director(s): David Stockford, Department Liaison, Kathryn Markovchick, Director
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New England GEAR UP Partnership Programs

Local Partnership Programs:

University of Massachusetts, Lowell, MA
Mount Wachusett Community College, Fitchburg, MA
University of Maine, Farmington, ME

Mount Wachusett Community College
Fitchburg GEAR UP

Mount Wachusett Community College will administer the Fitchburg GEAR UP Project in partnership with the Fitchburg (Massachusetts) Public School District, the University of Massachusetts, the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg, the Cleghorn Neighborhood Action Center, the Twin Cities Latino Coalition, the Worcester County Juvenile Probation Office, the Spanish-American Center, and the Massachusetts Educational Financing Agency. The project will serve 884 students in grades eight and nine in six target schools: Fitchburg High School, Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School, Academy Pilot School, B.F. Brown Middle School, Fitchburg Arts Academy and Memorial Middle School. The city has one of the highest crime rates in Massachusetts, and the District is overwhelmingly low income and first generation, with a large percentage of students from primarily Latino backgrounds who are second language learners. Standardized test scores at each school are well below the state and national averages, and this is magnified among the Latino student population. The goals of the project are:

Goal 1: To increase the academic performance of GEAR UP students.
Goal 2: To increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in post-secondary education for GEAR UP students.
Goal 3: To increase students' and their families' knowledge of post-secondary education and financial aid options.
Goal 4: To implement sustainable teaching and learning improvements through annual professional development and curriculum reform activities for teachers.

The project will provide all cohort students with intensive, bilingual academic support services including targeted initiatives in math and for second language learners; college admissions and financing information and application assistance; after-school and vacation programs, including a special initiative focusing on math, science, and engineering; and family based interventions designed to increase student academic success. The Fitchburg Public School District will embark upon instructional and curricular reforms that will make improvements in teaching diverse learners, and reforming the middle school and high school math curricula. Anticipated project outcomes are increased post-secondary matriculation of students, a math curriculum aligned to national standards, and developing all teachers to become certified by 2011. The Partnership will maintain the capacity to continue providing services to all students beyond the period of federal support.

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University of Massachusetts Lowell
GEAR UP Opportunity Lowell!

A cohort of 724 students currently in grade 9 at Lowell High School will be followed through to high school graduation. The GEAR UP (GU) Partnership will offer an array of services to students and their families, ensuring equitable access to resources. Emphasis will be on partnership programs that foster parent education and involvement; prepare students for post-secondary education with the assistance of tutoring, mentoring, enrichment, and college and career awareness programs; enhance pedagogy to address the needs of diverse students; provide professional development; conduct capacity-building evaluations; and build sustainability in GEAR UP programs and activities.

The program will strengthen links among the schools, businesses, community organizations, and university departments to ensure that initiatives can be sustained when funding ends, using volunteer support and the assumption of some program costs by partnering institutions.

One of the Partnership's key strategies for increasing students' expectations is to remove the element of self-selection from activities that guide students toward preparing for college. Workshops introduce students to the idea of college as both valuable and accessible, and guide them through information about SATs, financial aid, course selection, and the application process.

GEAR UP proposes a set of programs to improve math performance. Students will have opportunities to learn from both peers and partners to strengthen their math literacy. GU will 1) stimulate students' interest in mathematics, expanding their understanding of their own problem-solving process and increasing their ability to reason about math; 2) implement programs responsive to the students' immigrant experiences; and 3) assist in alignment of mathematics courses across middle school, high school and college to strengthen performance in mathematics.

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University of Maine at Farmington
UMF GEAR UP

The University of Maine at Farmington (UMF) GEAR UP Project, building on the success of our partnership with School Administrative District 21 between 1999 and 2005, will expand its partnership to include SAD 21, SAD 43 and Jay School District. These districts share many similar traits. Situated in an economically challenged part of rural Maine, they include schools with very limited resources. Students lack aspirations, motivation and role models. Parental participation in the education process is very limited and few financial and college counseling opportunities are offered. Post-secondary education is perceived by many to be unattainable. Isolation and budget reductions also deprive the schools of opportunities for sufficient professional development.

To alleviate these problems, the UMF GEAR UP Project proposes to deliver services to students, parents and teachers through collaborative efforts with partners from businesses and community-based organizations. The program will employ methods that have already proven to be effective and successful. Students will be offered tutoring and mentoring; a week-long series of lectures, classes and activities on UMF's campus; after-school and summer programs; field trips and college visits; career planning and job-shadowing; and 21st Century Scholar Certificate ceremonies. Parents will be provided with college and financial aid counseling, field trips and college visits. For teachers, the program will deliver college/school bridging courses, professor-teacher workshops, as well as courses, seminars and training programs to help them improve student academic performance through more vigorous and challenging courses. It is hoped that the success of the first GEAR UP project will be replicated, and benefit more people in Maine.

By the time they graduate, 85 percent of the students will be academically prepared for college. All families will have received financial counseling, will be cognizant of the steps needed to plan for college, and will have started saving for post-secondary education. Schools will also gain through collaboration with the university in capacity building and curriculum development.

Exciting news! UMF Partnerships for Success (GEAR UP) is receiving FAME's "Education That Works" award for 2007.

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