



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 22, 2014

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Hawai'i Celebrates College Access Program That Serves Over 16,000 Students Each Year

Honolulu, Hawai'i – Hawai'i will be celebrating the success of GEAR UP Hawai'i, a college-access program that serves over 16,000 low-income students statewide, during National GEAR UP Week 2014, starting September 22. Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide students and families the resources they need to succeed in college. Since its inception in 1999, the national GEAR UP program has improved educational outcomes for millions of low-income students across the United States.

The program aims to broaden college awareness, expand academic readiness and increase postsecondary success among Hawai'i's public school students. GEAR UP Hawai'i collaborates with the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE) and the University of Hawai'i (UH) System as well as the government, nonprofit and private sectors to provide information, encouragement, support, resources and services and help eliminate achievement gaps among groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

One of GEAR UP Hawaii's major initiatives this year was to support students with college-level learning opportunities. Research shows participation in college-level coursework during high school can increase students' exposure and aspirations to postsecondary success. This past year, GEAR UP Hawai'i partnered with HIDOE and UH campuses to increase the availability of Running Start courses offered at both high school and college campuses. With GEAR UP support there was a 14% increase in the number of students participating in dual enrollment programs who graduated high school with six or more college credits. In addition, over 530 Running Start scholarships were awarded to low-income students totaling \$140,000, used to pay for tuition, fees and books for a 3- or 4-credit dual enrollment course.

"National GEAR UP Week is a time to highlight all these accomplishments for our program as well as for programs across the country," says Angela Jackson, GEAR UP Program Director and Associate Director of Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education. "To be part of a national effort which inspires hopes and dreams that college is possible and attainable is something worth celebrating."

“GEAR UP Hawai‘i has been a critical program to assist in leading education reform efforts in college access and success. It is essential to reach the state’s goal of 55 percent of working age adults holding a two- or four- year college degree by 2025,” said Karen Lee, Executive Director of Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education, which oversees the statewide GEAR UP program. “The program works hand in hand with the University of Hawai‘i and the Hawaii State Department of Education to prepare Hawai‘i’s students to graduate from high school ready for college or a career, which is absolutely necessary to our state’s future.”

For more information about GEAR UP Hawai‘i, please contact Lesli Yogi, Business and Community Outreach Specialist, lyogi@hawaii.edu or go to <http://gearup.hawaii.edu>. To learn more about the national GEAR UP program, please contact the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships at 202-530-1135 or www.edpartnerships.org.

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GEAR UP Hawai‘i is a program of Hawai‘i P-20 Partnerships for Education, a statewide partnership led by the Executive Office on Early Learning, the Hawaii State Department of Education and the University of Hawai‘i System that works to strengthen the education pipeline from early childhood through higher education so that all students achieve college and career success. Hawai‘i P-20’s partners share a sense of urgency about the need to improve Hawai‘i’s educational outcomes in an increasingly global economy, and have established a goal of 55 percent of Hawai‘i’s working age adults having a two- or four-year college degree by 2025. For more information, visit <http://www.p20hawaii.org>.

GEAR UP Year 3 Highlights

Through its partnership with the Hawaii State Department of Education, University of Hawai'i System as well as the government, non-profit, and private sectors, GEAR UP Hawai'i:

- Provided support to the Class of 2013 graduating **Step Up Scholars** who pledged to complete a more rigorous college and career curriculum during high school. Of these scholars, 23% earned the Board of Education Recognition Diploma (BOERD), 1.5 times the number of graduates who earned the BOERD statewide.
- Supported 2014 **summer bridge programs** to build academic preparation, college and career readiness skills and family engagement at the following middle and high schools: Honoka'a High and Intermediate School, Kaimuki High School, Ka Waihona o Ka Na'auao Charter School, McKinley High, Wai'anae Intermediate School, Wai'anae High School, and Washington Middle School serving over 275 students total.
- Coordinated the **"55 by 25" public awareness campaign** to generate support for a statewide goal of 55% of working age adults having a 2- or 4-year college degree by 2025. The campaign consisted of television, radio, print advertising as well as social media and website communications made possible through partnerships with local corporate sponsors.
- Supported **College Goal 808** events, which provided regional, hands-on FAFSA completion workshops for students and family members. From 2012-13 to 2013-14, participation in the program grew by 156% from eight to 15 schools reaching over 2,000 students and family members.
- Implemented year two of **College Application and Exploration Season (CAES)** to encourage students to start the college application process early with a goal that every senior will complete a college application prior to their high school graduation. Thirteen schools from O'ahu and the Big Island took part in CAES, which more than doubled the number of participating schools from last year's pilot year. A total of 1,199 seniors from nine low-income schools on O'ahu and the Big Island participated including: Castle High School, Farrington High School, Kahuku High School, Kailua High School, Ke Kula 'o 'Ehunuikaimalino, Konawaena High School, McKinley High School, Nanakuli High and Wai'anae High School.
- Worked with ten UH campuses on O'ahu, Big Island, Maui, and Moloka'i to provide 26 middle and high schools with **transition support services**. Key services included 86 informational workshops and events about applying to college, financial aid, and/or college success; 19 campus visits and/or showcases; 17 financial aid advising or application support events; eight mentorship workshops, and four peer mentor programs serving a total of 14,821 students and 489 parents.
- Designed and implemented **Senior Transition Day** as a follow-up to the College Application and Exploration Season (CAES) application events. The event prepared seniors for college enrollment and next steps after high school. All six two-year and four-year UH campuses on O'ahu participated, hosting 569 seniors from five low-income high schools — Castle High School, Kaimuki High School, Nanakuli High and Intermediate School, Roosevelt High School, and Waia'nae High School.
- Supported seven UH campuses to provide student support **services to incoming and first year low-income students**, including, but not limited to: 45 new student orientations (NSO) serving 2,443 students; 38 first-year freshman group activities and/or student groups engaging 2,282 students; 69 student success workshops (e.g. stress management, online learning, financial aid, etc.) provided to 1,774 first year students; two intrusive advising initiatives supporting 70 first year students; and Leeward Community College's first year peer mentor program serving 998 first year students.