FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEAR UP Hawai‘i Celebrates National GEAR UP Week
Starting September 10, 2012

9/7/12 – GEAR UP Hawai‘i, along with the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, celebrates National GEAR UP Week 2012 starting September 10. This week commemorates the continuing success of Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), a college access program funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide students and families the resources they need for college success. Since its inception in 1999, GEAR UP has improved educational outcomes for millions of low-income students across the United States, including 10,000 students served statewide each year by GEAR UP Hawai‘i.

GEAR UP Hawai‘i’s celebration includes various activities focused on preparing students for higher education throughout the school year. In September, 30 Hawai‘i public schools throughout the state will receive training and begin to implement MyFutureHawaii.org, a college and career access web portal designed to help students plan for college and career while in high school. During the months of October through December, GEAR UP Hawai‘i will launch the pilot project “College Application and Exploration Season” to assist high school students to explore and apply for college. Volunteers, college faculty and staff will work with five high schools to encourage their seniors to complete a college application and apply for financial aid. GEAR UP Hawai‘i will also sponsor over 50 financial aid workshops and events statewide to help families and students apply for financial aid. To see a complete listing of upcoming events go to: http://gearup.hawaii.edu.

Over the past year, GEAR UP Hawai‘i has served over 10,000 low-income students statewide in grades seven through twelve and through their first year in college at University of Hawai‘i campuses. Through a partnership with the Hawai‘i State Department of Education and the University of Hawai‘i System as well as the government, nonprofit, and private sectors, GEAR UP Hawai‘i provides information, encouragement, support, resources, and services to help eliminate achievement gaps among groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education.
“GEAR UP Hawai‘i has been a critical program to assist in leading education reform efforts to help meet the state’s goal of 55% 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 GEAR UP Hawai‘i. “The program works hand in hand with UH and the Hawaii DOE to prepare Hawai‘i’s students to graduate from high school ready for college or a career, which is absolutely essential to our state’s future.”

One of GEAR UP Hawai‘i’s major initiatives this year was to support students in their first year in college. This summer, GEAR UP sponsored multiple freshman orientation events and activities at the University of Hawai‘i’s campuses to help ensure students were prepared for college life. “We are extremely thankful for the work that GEAR UP Hawai‘i supported this summer with our first time freshmen entering the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa,” says Clement Bautista, Director of Office of Multicultural Student Services. “It’s not only about preparing students for higher education, but giving them the necessary tools and knowledge to succeed once they get there.”

“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 imperative is something worth celebrating.”

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 Early Learning Council, the Hawai‘i State Department of Education and the University of Hawai‘i System 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 1 Highlights
Through its partnership with the Hawai‘i State Department of Education, University of Hawai‘i System as well as the government, non-profit, and private sectors, GEAR UP Hawai‘i:

- Supported over 14,200 students and parents to “Step Up” to rigorous academic coursework.

- Partnered with After School All Stars to support two six-week summer school programs at Dole Middle School and Washington Middle School that provided academic and enrichment activities to 125 students.

- Provided scholarships to 189 high school juniors and seniors for Running Start classes at UH campuses throughout the state.

- Supported advanced placement and pre-advanced placement professional development opportunities for teachers in conjunction with the Hawai‘i State Department of Education.

- Coordinated a multi-media public awareness campaign focused on increasing educational expectations of Hawai‘i’s families and encouraging students to “Take Charge of Your Future”.

- Launched MyFutureHawaii.org, a college and career access web portal for Hawai‘i’s students, to 15 Hawai‘i DOE pilot schools.

- Partnered with the Pacific Financial Aid Association and other organizations to provide more than 38,400 families with financial aid information and application assistance.

- Partnered with Bank of Hawai‘i to coordinate financial literacy workshops on savings and credit management to over 2,200 K-12 students statewide.

- Created a visit “Downtown Honolulu” initiative and hosted 40 McKinley High School students on a tour of local businesses in downtown Honolulu.

- Supported a freshman summer bridge program and three-credit course for 68 incoming “GEAR UP” students at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

- Provided funding for a school-wide event at Molokai High School aimed at serving over 350 students and introducing them to various college and career options.

- Supported University of Hawai‘i Community College’s “Passport to College Success” event which served 244 new students and assisted them with registering for Fall classes.