Welcome from the Director

What an exciting time of year. Whether it’s the students in grades 7th through 12th in our eighteen K-12 GEAR UP schools or GEAR UP graduates navigating life in college, everyone is adjusting to being back in school. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the road getting to know more about the services offered by Montana GEAR UP. Meeting Tabetha, a sophomore at MSU and hearing how she is the first in her family to go to college with the help of the Montana GEAR UP $22,200 Pathway Scholarship brought more meaning to the work we do in the Helena office. Watching KiAnna successful design commissioned work for the Fort Belknap Tribe, while on break from Salish Kootenai College, was inspiring. Did I mention that she also a Pathways Scholar? We are in the second year of a seven-year grant and GEAR UP is all about reducing barriers and building potential so that more kids go to college. It’s a big state and there are a lot of good college access and success stories out there. I look forward to visiting more schools and campuses to hear them all. Please keep in touch and call any time.

Best,

Jan Lombardi

Looking Back

73% of 2011 MT GEAR UP High School Graduates Went to College

In looking back, the 2005 GEAR UP grant yielded a resounding success for Montana’s high school seniors. The class of 2011 had 628 GEAR UP high school seniors of which 73 percent enrolled in college the fall semester immediately following graduation. In comparison, Montana’s 2010 college enrollment rate – the most recent data available – was 58 percent.

Enrollment in the Montana University System

42 percent of the 628 GEAR UP Graduates that went on to college attended a unit of the Montana University System while 35 percent attended one of Montana’s seven tribal colleges.
Summer Camps Bridge the Gap

High-quality summer programs keep students engaged in learning, teach them new skills and encourage them to develop previously unseen talents. This past summer, Montana GEAR UP sponsored 20 camps across the state on campuses and at local K-12 schools. In total over 300 students attended camps this past summer, of which 167 7th and 8th grade students found themselves away from home at one of five campuses envisioning life as college students. These camps provide a unique chance for students to bridge the gap to reduce summer learning loss, support higher graduation rates and better prepare students for college. Summer programs have also been shown to positively affect children’s self-esteem, confidence and motivation.

Statewide Summer Camps

**MSU - NORTHERN: GEAR UP + SuperCamp**
- 55 students
- 15 GEAR UP Schools
- Quantum Learning Network approach to learning is creative, interactive, and proven to strengthen leadership, reading, listening, and study skills
- Enhances academic and personal life skills

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA: Digging for the Past...**
- 26 students
- 11 GEAR UP schools
- “Lived like a Griz”
- Archeology, philosophy, and poetry classes and an archeological dig in a town nearby

**DAWSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE: GEARing UP for College**
- 22 students
- 9 GEAR UP schools
- From the admissions process through graduation, campers were exposed to everything students experience at college
- Students attended classes in law enforcement, allied health, ag-science, computer graphics, and culinary arts

**CARROLL COLLEGE: Preserving the Planet**
- 34 students
- 10 GEAR UP schools
- Probability and statistics lab, “Nursing as a Career”, and a water purification engineering activity
- Private Pow-Wow

**MONTANA WESTERN: CSI - Birch Creek**
- 30 students
- 10 GEAR UP schools
- Forensic science investigative camp
- Students used historic documents, crime scene investigative procedures, field observation, DNA testing, and botanical evidence to solve the case

91% of students tell us that their GEAR UP summer camp experience increased their motivation to go to college.

2005-2011 Summer Camp Surveys
College Visit Checklist
A unique experience for students, offered by our GEAR UP schools, is a chance for students to visit a Montana campus beginning in 7th grade. Time and time again, students talk about the first time they set foot on a college campus as the defining moment in their lives when they see themselves as college bound. To make the best use of time when organizing a campus visit, check out the following tips from Cory Chenoweth, former GEAR UP Financial Aid Manager:

- **Start early and be organized:** Determine where to visit, which grades to include, and approximate dates. Get approval from administration, secure chaperones, transportation, substitute teachers, permission slips, etc.

- **Get the most bang for the buck:** Don’t settle for just a campus tour. Students should meet with faculty, financial aid, residence life, a college student panel for a Q & A period, as well as any other campus groups (i.e. Native American Cultural Center or Student Support Services).

- **Eat on campus:** Eating lunch on a college campus can be a really fun and an eye-opening experience for middle and high school students.

- **Include Parents:** Not only do parents make great chaperones, they are a great way to pass college information on to other parents in the community. They will see the campus visit through a different lens and can take this information back home and share with others.

- **Meet with current college students from your town:** College students can provide an honest assessment of what it’s like to be a college student. They have much more credibility than an admissions person or a faculty member, since they are speaking from their heart.

- **Include other activities:** Whether it is visiting a museum, or a factory where backpacks are made, the town you visit offers more opportunities than just a college visit.

- **Pre-visit activities:** Before going on a visit, have students research what programs are offered, the cost of attendance, on-campus living options, athletic teams, etc. This gives students an opportunity to come up with a list of questions to ask while on the campus visit.

- **Post-visit activities:** It’s important to do a reflection assignment. Whether it’s a writing assignment, a follow-up quiz, a compare/contrast with other colleges they’ve visited, or a picture/video montage of the visit, it’s important for students to recall the campus experience.

- **Stay consistent:** Maintain a consistent college visit schedule every year. For example, 7th grade students should visit the same campus every year. Same goes for 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students. This will provide a routine that you can tweak from year to year, but is essentially pretty consistent.

- **Seniors:** Be very thoughtful of when/where you take the seniors, many of whom may have already decided where they plan to attend. Give seniors the option to go to one of their final choices with the other grades and set up his/her own meetings with financial aid/academic faculty, etc.

### Dollars and Sense: Budgeting Tips for College Visits

- Only costs incurred while students and school staff are traveling for the college visit can be counted, such as: meals, lodging, transportation costs, registration costs for workshops, fees for special events, etc.

- Follow State of Montana travel policies to stay within the daily allowances. Current state per diem rates can be found at: [doamt.gov/doatravel/default.mcpx](http://doamt.gov/doatravel/default.mcpx).

- If a bus is used as the mode of transportation, all actual usage costs are permitted.

- Shop around for the lowest room rates, and maximize the number of students per room, if the overnight trip requires lodging.

For more information, go to: [mus.edu/GearUp/TAM.asp](http://mus.edu/GearUp/TAM.asp).

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**Montana College Access Network (MCAN)**
Can you imagine a day when 80 percent of Montana’s citizens have completed some form of postsecondary education? That is the vision of the Montana College Access Network (MCAN), a coordinating network with 200+ members working to help more Montana students pursue their aspirations of postsecondary education.

**Navigating the Future! Conference**
MCAN would like to invite you to learn new and innovative ways to direct Montana students along the path to higher education. Join us October 2-3, 2012, at the University Center on The University of Montana campus in Missoula for the “Navigating the Future” Conference to network, get educational updates, and discuss best practices relative to college access and success throughout the Treasure State. Check out “First Generation,” a 95-minute documentary, a film that tracks four students from their junior year of high school through their first year of college. Listen in and ask questions at three panel discussions that will include Montana educational leaders, first-generation Montana students, and experts discussing affordability issues, barriers, and programs in place to help students pursue postsecondary education.

To become a member of MCAN or to register for the conference, visit: [howto2gomontana.ning.com](http://howto2gomontana.ning.com).
Upcoming Deadlines for GEAR UP Schools

October 2: GEAR UP Liaison Meeting, UM University Center in Missoula, room 333.

October 2-3: Montana College Access Network (MCAN) Conference, Missoula. To register visit: knowhow2gomontana.ning.com/

October 4-17: EXPLORE and PLAN testing window for GEAR UP schools. Contact Jessie Salisbury, Program Coordinator with questions at (406) 444-0056 or jsalisbury@montana.edu.

October 31: Deadline to return EXPLORE and PLAN tests to ACT. Please send tests directly back to ACT in the postage paid envelope you received with your materials.

November 9: Achievement Grant deadline for 2005 GEAR UP grant juniors to submit applications to liaison. Contact the GEAR UP office at 406-444-0056 or MTgearup@montana.edu with questions. Applications will be available October 1.

November 19: Achievement Grant deadline for 2005 GEAR UP grant schools to submit applications to Montana GEAR UP.

GEAR UP Staff Changes

Welcome Zach Hawkins

Please join us in welcoming Zach Hawkins to the GEAR UP team! Zach joins our office as a School Grant Manager overseeing our schools in the eastern part of the state. He brings to GEAR UP a strong experience as a classroom teacher working with K-12 schools in Hays Lodge Pole, Heart Butte and Helena. Most recently, Zach served as the Upward Bound Associate Director/Coordinator with Montana Tech, serving schools in Helena, Butte and Anaconda. Additionally, he worked with students from 13 western Montana high schools in the Upward Bound Summer Academy.

Zach attended a one room school in northwest Montana through 8th grade and graduated from high school in Troy. He attended Montana State University and earned a degree in History and Government teaching.

Zach enjoys sharing a meal, telling stories, and getting to know new people. He enjoys the outdoors and is especially fond of camping, hunting and taking walks with his family. He wants you all to know that he will always have time to hear your thoughts and concerns and is dedicated to ensuring that GEAR UP is working in your school.

You can reach Zach at zhawkings@montana.edu or (406) 444-0598.

A Fond Farewell from Michelle DuMont-Friday

The start of a new school year brings great excitement, new opportunities, and change. Change can be uncomfortable, unpredictable, and challenging. However, what emerges are new ways of thinking, new ideas, new learning, and a tremendous amount of growth. I want to take a moment to express my deepest thanks to all of you as I move towards a new phase in my life. I have truly enjoyed working with Montana GEAR UP over the past two years. As the Eastern School Grant Manager, I had the pleasure and honor of visiting GEAR UP schools, meeting with school staff, GEAR UP students, and families. The work that all of you do to provide services ensuring that all students have access to a postsecondary education across the state is inspiring. As you begin the school year, remember the opportunities that each school year brings to provide students with excitement and inspiration and learn from the challenges and changes in providing students with the education that each one of them deserves.