



... College is possible for all Montana students

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

AVID Summer Institute	2
EXPLORE & PLAN Test Administration	2
Planning for Life After High School	3
GEAR UP Trivia	3
2009 Summer Camps	4
GEAR UP Achievement Grant	5
Poster Contest	5
Fall Conference Highlights	6
Survey Says...	7
Montana College Access Network	7
Rural Montana Saves	7
GEAR UP Directory	8
Fall Reminders	8

Welcome from the Director

BY SANDY MERDINGER, MONTANA GEAR UP DIRECTOR

It is already late September and year five of our second GEAR UP grant is well underway. The fall conference is now behind us, and I hope you took away some good information and energy to start the year. Just as Superintendent Juneau spoke with optimism for the new year, I echo that. So much is going well as evidenced by the presentations and conversations at the fall conference, the timeliness and quality of implementation plans, and the implementation of new promising practices such as the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program in Browning. We want to hold on to that momentum so we can continue to improve our students' academic performance in order for them to be better prepared for postsecondary education and life.

The theme of the conference, *Shifting into High Gear: Preparing for College, Career and Beyond*, was present in

many of our sessions. With our oldest cohort class now juniors, there is still much to do before they graduate and go on to college. Although we've done well teaching students *how* to go on to college, they aren't as academically prepared as they need to be. Now we must place more emphasis on academic rigor and on increasing educator expectations of ALL students. I don't believe we are doing our students any favors when we show them the steps to go to college but don't provide the academics that they need to be successful. As was mentioned at the conference, I encourage you to follow the three R's for GEAR UP schools: Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships. Without rigor, students aren't academically prepared. Without relevance, it is difficult to engage students, and without relationships, students don't have the support they need to succeed in school. All three are needed for a student to prepare

for postsecondary endeavors.

At the conference I was especially pleased to recognize our long term partners in GEAR UP: the Office of Public Instruction, the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program, and the Student Assistance Foundation (SAF). All three partners have been with us since the very beginning in 1999 and have been major contributors of expertise, services, match and/or cash. We look forward to our continued relationship as we move closer to graduating the first class from this grant. There is much to be done and the small staff at Montana GEAR UP can only take on a piece of the work.

Aside from the AVID pilot at Browning, we are taking on some other new initiatives this year. First, in the financial aid realm, Cory Chenoweth will continue to present to middle school students, and he will also be

(Continued on page 2)

Welcome Jessie Salisbury

BY ANDI RANKIN, PROGRAM MANAGER

As the school year begins, we are very happy to introduce our new Program Coordinator, Jessie Salisbury. Ms. Salisbury is a native of Traverse City, Michigan, and attended Michigan Technological University in Houghton. In 2004, Jessie migrated westward to Bozeman and started working for Schnee's Boots & Shoes. She quickly

worked her way up through the ranks at the company - starting out in retail on the floor and ending up as Catalog Marketing Manager.

After five years with Schnee's, Jessie tried on some new shoes and accepted the position of Program Coordinator for Montana GEAR UP. She moved to Helena with her husband, Collin, who is

teaching at Helena High School, and two children, Rowen (3) and Marin (1), along with their cat Jo-Jo, and dog Techa.

There were over 60 applicants for the Program Coordinator position! We are thrilled to have Jessie join our team. Thank you for giving her such a warm welcome at the fall conference.



AVID Summer Institute

BY SARA BERG, SCHOOL GRANT MANAGER

Montana received a warm welcome as the newest state to implement AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) at the AVID Summer Institute in Sacramento, CA July 13-18. Sixteen educators from Browning Middle and High Schools and Sara Berg, Montana GEAR UP School Grant Manager and AVID District Director, joined 2,100 educators from across the nation for the week-long training institute. AVID Center hosted eight summer institutes around the nation

and trained over 18,000 educators. Browning administrators, counselors, and teachers participated in content-specific training where they learned AVID strategies and methodologies, spent time collaborating with their site team, and attended special interest sessions and a luncheon highlighted by AVID student and teacher speakers.

AVID is a school-wide system that prepares students in the academic middle for postsecondary education. In 2008, seventy-eight percent of AVID

graduates were accepted to a four-year college. Browning Schools will kick off the 2009-2010 school year with its first group of AVID students entering the 8th and 9th grades. AVID students will be enrolled in the school's toughest classes, as well as the AVID elective class where they will receive academic instruction, tutorial support, and motivational activities. To learn more about AVID, please contact Sara Berg at 444-0848 or visit www.avidonline.org.

EXPLORE & PLAN Test Administration

BY JESSIE SALISBURY, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Levia Nahary, Director of Educational Services at ACT West Region Office, was on hand during our annual Fall Conference with some valuable information on test administration for EXPLORE and PLAN testing this school year. Here is a recap of some of the biggest topics to ensure a smooth testing season. The school testing window opens September 28th and closes October 9th. The deadline for returning test answer sheets to ACT is October 31st. This is a different procedure than past years, and the EXPLORE and PLAN boxes that test

administrators picked up at the Fall Conference should contain the return envelopes and labels for your test answer sheets. If any additional materials are needed for your students, test administrators or counselors, please contact Jessie Salisbury at (406) 444-0056 or jsalisbury@montana.edu.

John Lowe, ACT Principal Consultant, will be traveling back to Montana in December to facilitate the Regional EXPLORE and PLAN Training around the state. By attending this training you will be gathering vital information on

how to use the test results for student interest, skill identification, course planning and curriculum development. It is highly recommended that those who review test results with students and parents as well as teachers responsible for the curriculum attend.

Montana GEAR UP will sponsor ten staff from each GEAR UP middle school and ten staff from each GEAR UP high school to attend this training. More information as to the locations and days of the training will follow in the next newsletter.

Welcome from the Director

continued from page 1)

available to present to parents of either middle or high school students. Additionally, he will consult with the high school counselors when he visits to see what needs there are in the financial aid world. If he can't provide the answers, he will either find out and get back with the information or connect the counselor with the appropriate person. There are some great financial aid resource people available to help school personnel with financial aid issues.

Second, we want to pilot initiatives to

improve academic rigor, especially in math and writing. If your school is interested, please contact your School Grant Manager or me or watch for further information to be sent out this fall.

Third, Montana GEAR UP recently received a small grant from the Lumina Foundation via the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) in connection with a Lumina grant received by SAF. We look forward to this partnership to pilot a new college access event called KnowHow2Go 2 College Week.

Next, since our cohort of students now extends to juniors, we are emphasizing transition to college this year and next. Finally, we are compiling promising practices found in your schools and otherwise that we want to share with all of you. We hope to begin this project in the spring.

In closing, we are delighted to have Jessie Salisbury join our state GEAR UP team! I'm sure many of you will get to know her friendly voice and emails as she contacts you regarding the EXPLORE and PLAN tests, travel reimbursements, poster contest and more. Welcome, Jessie!

Planning for Life After High School

BY ANNETTE WALSTAD, PROGRAM MANAGER

“So, what do you want to be when you grow up?” Most of us have either asked or been asked this question at some point in time. We hope that at GEAR UP schools a variation of this question is asked of our students... “So, where are you planning to go to college?”

In many respects this is a positive question, even if it stumps or embarrasses the student. It is positive because it puts forth the expectation that the student WILL go to college, and this is often the first step required to make college attendance a reality. The language we use regarding college or ‘life after high school’ has a big impact on students.

Julie Hayes, Browning Middle School Principal, recalls the subtle way the expectation to attend college began creeping into classroom conversations. “As a classroom teacher, I began to rephrase questions and comments about college. Rather than saying ‘if’ you go to college’... it became ‘when’ you go to college. The students really picked up on the message and most will tell you that they ‘are’ going to college.”

Beyond communicating the expectation that students WILL go to college, what can we do to help students plan for life after high school, and in particular, college success? Here are a few suggestions:

- Know Thy Self – Help students learn about themselves. What do they like and what do they dislike? What

intrigues them and holds their interests...what bores them to tears? How do they spend their time and money? Often students have a difficult time expressing what they want to do but they can easily say what they don’t want to do. If a student has a clear idea of personal preferences, interests, and goals, it becomes possible to use this information to eliminate colleges, majors, occupations, regions of the country, etc.

- Decisions DO Follow You – Students must understand that what they do in high school...grades, attendance, test scores, activities, etc., becomeS part of a permanent academic record THAT follows them to college or the workplace. The “C” they receive in math in the freshman year because the ‘teacher was lame’ is figured into their grade point average, which is used for college admission and scholarships. It is unfortunate that many students don’t realize the importance of grades, attendance, etc., until they start looking at colleges in the junior and senior years. The flip side is that GOOD things that happen follow students too...volunteering, service learning, clubs, sports, good grades, excellent attendance, etc., also follow and make a positive impression down the road.
- Take the Hard Road – Students must be encouraged to take challenging

courses in high school and then offered the support necessary for success. It goes without saying that the harder the student works in high school the more prepared they will be for college. A good resource for information on building a 4-year plan and what courses to take to get ready for college can be found at <http://knowhow2gomontana.org/freshmen/college-preparation/coursework.jsp>

- Get Started NOW – Do a little bit each year of high school rather than saving all the research, work, decisions, etc., for the senior year. Many websites offer “check lists” to students and parents which outline all the decision points from Freshman year through high school graduation. A few to check out are located at: <http://www.actstudent.org/college/checklist.html> or http://www.collegeprep101.com/college_planning_checklist.htm

There are so many variables and issues that affect transition to college, and we plan to discuss them regularly as our students get closer and closer to high school graduation. If you have suggestions for transition topics, please email Annette Walstad, GEAR UP program manager at awalstad@montana.edu.

GEAR UP Trivia

At the fall conference we celebrated ten years of Montana GEAR UP and GEAR UP programs nationwide. Here are a few fun facts about GEAR UP:

- To date Congress has appropriated \$3,022,351,584 for GEAR UP programs. For the current year \$313,212,000 is appropriated.
- GEAR UP programs can be found in 46 states and 4 territories.

- In FY 2008 738,968 students were served.
- We are doing something right! At the national level, in FY 2003 30% of GEAR UP students passed Algebra I by the end of 9th grade. In 2008 it increased to 42.8%. There’s room to improve but we’re going the right direction!

- The racial/ethnic composition of GEAR UP students:

	National	Montana
African American	30%	0.31%
Asian	3%	0.34%
Hispanic	36%	1.42%
Native American	5%	66.33%
White	26%	31.60%

2009 Summer Camps

BY ANNETTE WALSTAD, PROGRAM MANAGER

What do DNA, tie-dyed t-shirts, water quality, and dinosaurs have in common? Each was part of a 2009 GEAR UP summer camp. Montana GEAR UP offered five statewide summer camps and although each camp offered students something different, each was challenging and fun...at least according to the students!

The adults involved in the camps were very impressed by the students. Anneliese Ripley, Dean of Outreach and Research at UM Western and the UMW-GEAR UP summer camp director stated, "The program staff and instructors loved this group of kids. They were well behaved, attentive, enthusiastic, respectful, easy to direct, timely, and hard working."

This sentiment was echoed from all of the camp directors...in short, an exceptional group of 250 students from 23 GEAR UP schools attended one of five camps offered on college campuses this summer.



The first camps of the summer were hosted by MSU-Northern in Havre. These 3 ½ -day **GEAR UP + SuperCamps** were attended by 82 middle school students from 19 GEAR UP schools (June 7-10) and 60 high school students from 17 GEAR UP schools (June 11-14). Facilitated by a talented team of four from Quantum Learning Network in San Diego, these camps focused on enhancing academic and personal life skills. The approach to learning is creative, interactive, and proven to strengthen leadership, reading, listening, and study skills. During check-in, each student tie-dyed a camp t-shirt specific to their group. For many students it was the first time they had tried tie-dyeing, and

they were proud of the unique results.

Montana GEAR UP again selected students who attended previous GEAR UP + SuperCamps to serve as student team leaders/mentors for the younger students. Each student team leader received a \$300 stipend for their service.



Dawson Community College hosted 53 students from 15 GEAR UP schools at the week-long **DCC + ME = Discovery** camp, which was held in Glendive from June 14-20. Students participated in the full college experience compressed into a week. From the admissions process through finals, campers were exposed to everything students experience at college. Some of the classes they took included Music Technology, Google Earth, History Fun, Livestock Anatomy, Sign Language and Drama. Students also went on field trips to Makoshika State Park, Fort Buford and Fort Union.

Twenty-five students from 11 schools attended the **Carroll College GEAR UP Environmental Science Camp** in Helena from July 26-August 1. This year's camp focused on preservation of our world and its cultures. Highlights of the week included water studies, mine operation and techniques, floating the Missouri, nature writing, tile making, and stargazing using the Carroll College observatory. Students participated in a



visit to the Montana Historical Society's *Neither Empty or Unknown* exhibit, a presentation on tribes of West Africa, and an evening powwow with the Helena Indian Alliance.

UM Western in Dillon hosted a camp for GEAR UP for the first time, and it was a very popular choice for our students. CSI: Birch Creek had a forensic science theme, and 30 students from 15 schools spent the week conducting a forensic investigation of a fictitious cold-case file involving a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) enlistee. The crime scene investigation occurred at the Birch Creek Outdoor Education Center, a university operated facility that was built in the 1930s as a CCC camp in the Pioneer



Mountains of southwest Montana. To solve the case, students were introduced to historic camp documents, CCC history, crime scene investigative procedures, field observation, DNA testing, and collecting/identifying botanical evidence. Students also wrote an investigative report, produced a dramatic reenactment of the crime and presented their research findings in a symposium.

Montana GEAR UP plans to offer up to five middle school camps and two high school camps in the summer of 2010. More information will be available to GEAR UP schools in early March.

Financial Aid: GEAR UP Achievement Grant

BY CORY CHENOWETH, FINANCIAL AID MANAGER

Welcome back from what we hope was a relaxing and rejuvenating summer. We here at GEAR UP are particularly excited that our oldest cohort of students has advanced into 11th grade, which means we now have the opportunity to award Achievement Grants of \$1,500 to every qualifying student.

Achievement Grant recipients may use the \$1,500 award toward a degree at any postsecondary institution in the country including 4-year public and private colleges and universities, 2-year institutions, tribal colleges, as well as certificate programs. Although in some cases \$1,500 will pay for little more than a year's worth of books, the Achievement Grant is also the first step a student must take in order to apply for the \$21,400 GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship during winter of their senior year.

In order to qualify for the Achievement Grant award, a student must meet the following parameters:

- Must be currently enrolled in a GEAR UP school

- Have a 2.0 GPA at the time of application
- Maintain a 2.0 GPA through graduation from a GEAR UP school
- Submit a completed application with a current high school transcript and list of junior and senior year classes to the GEAR UP Liaison by November 6th.
- Be on track to complete the *college prep curriculum**

*English - Four years

*Mathematics - Three years
(Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry)

*Lab Science - Two years (Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics)

*Social Studies - Three years
(World History, World Cultures, US History, Government, Psychology, Sociology)

*Electives—Two years
(Language, Computer Science, Visual/ Performing

Arts, Vocational Ed)

This year there are roughly 800 GEAR UP students entering 11th grade, which is significantly larger than any of the classes from the previous award years. Thus we think it is realistic to set a goal of awarding achievement grants to 350 students from this year's junior class. Reaching this goal will certainly take a strong partnership with students, parents, teachers, counselors, and GEAR UP staff. Considering, however, that this is our fifth award year and we have a record number of students in the program, we are confident in our ability to aid GEAR UP students in taking the first step in achieving their postsecondary goals.

All liaisons have been provided with informational brochures, grant applications, as well as a sample informational letter you may send to parents and/or students. If you have any questions about the achievement grant please feel free to contact Cory Chenoweth, Financial Aid Manager at 406-444-0350 or cchenoweth@montana.edu.



2008-2009 poster contest entries

2009-2010 Poster Contest

BY JESSIE SALISBURY, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Right now, college probably seems a million miles away to most of our 7th and 8th grade GEAR UP students. But really, middle school is the best time to start making plans for what happens after high school. This year we are asking students the following questions:

- What are you doing now to prepare yourself for college?
- What steps will you take in 7th and 8th grade to plan for a successful college career?

Montana GEAR UP wants to know! We

are inviting all GEAR UP students in 7th and 8th grades to submit a poster for the 5th annual Montana GEAR UP poster contest based on the *KnowHow2Go 4 Steps to College*:

- **Be a Pain!**
- **Push Yourself!**
- **Find the Right Fit!**
- **Put Your Hands on Some Cash!**

Students can be as creative as possible along the lines of "GEAR UP 2 Go" and the *KnowHow2Go 4 Steps to College*.

Why is it important to start planning now for college? Deadline for submissions to GEAR UP liaisons from students is December 11th and entries are due to GEAR UP from liaisons by December 18th.

Visit <http://www.knowhow2go.org> for some guidance and activities for middle school students.

Contact Jessie Salisbury with questions at 406-444-0056 or jsalisbury@montana.edu.

Shifting into High Gear:

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE, CAREER & BEYOND

The 2009 Montana GEAR UP Fall Conference kicked off on Monday morning, September 14th, with special recognition of our partners for the past 10 years. Sheila Stearns, the Commissioner of Higher Education, was on hand to help thank the Montana Guaranteed Student Loan Program, the Student Assistance Foundation and the Office of Public Instruction. These partners have been an integral part of the GEAR UP grant, and we thank them for their support promoting student success.

Denise Juneau, the Superintendent of Public Instruction spoke to the crowd of 130 GEAR UP liaisons, teachers, counselors, school administrators, and others regarding the upcoming year, what challenges lay ahead, and how optimistic she is about the future — an inspiring message and uplifting start to the 2009 conference.

Monday at lunch, Jonna Grant, a junior at St. Ignatius High School and 2009 National Youth Leadership Summit Participant, spoke about her experience as a participant in the summit. Following Jonna was Ms. Joy Langley. Ms. Langley traveled all the way from Washington, DC

where she works as the Director of Government Relations at the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP). Her key responsibility with NCCEP is to build a coalition supportive of GEAR UP and comprised of U.S. Government Agencies, Members of Congress, and Political Appointees. Ms. Langley spends much of her energy advising U.S. Senators and Representatives regarding GEAR UP policy decisions, advocating for increased funding of the program, and creating the federal, legislative, and advocacy programs for NCCEP. Ms. Langley was very impressed with the level of support GEAR UP has received from the Montana delegation. Ms. Langley also indicated that GEAR UP is widely known on Capitol Hill as being a successful program, and continues to receive strong bipartisan support from members of congress.

Monday evening the Helena Tour Train took conference attendees to the Montana Historical Society for an evening of food, cake and culture. Bill Mercer, the Museum Manager, gave a tour of the *Plateau Indian Beaded Bag* exhibit and fun was had by all.

Within the first moments of Greg Evan's plenary Tuesday morning, participants had changed seats three times, met at least two new people, and had shared something with a table of people that they rarely share with anyone. His highly energizing and engaging style helped us to remember that within a classroom setting teachers deal with at least, but not limited to, three different types of learners (kinesthetic, auditory and visual) and gave ideas on what can be done in order to reach each of those types of students. This fast-paced journey touched on the different ways to connect with students in each of the learning categories, piqued our interest in social-emotional learning and how important it is for some students to be connected socially, and left us wanting more. Attendees of the plenary left feeling reinvigorated and ready to take on the day and find new ways to connect with their classroom.

There were many wonderful speakers and breakouts throughout the conference, and we are grateful to all that participated and presented.



Sheila Stearns presents Jim Stipcich with a recognition plaque thanking SAF for their support over the past 10 years.



MGSLP Director Bruce Marks accepting a recognition plaque thanking his team for their support over the past 10 years.



Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau speaking Monday morning.



All aboard! Monday evening's transportation to the Montana Historical Society was provided by the Helena Tour Train.

Rural Montana Saves Helps Students

Participate in Rural Montana Saves and we can help make your education more affordable and increase your financial knowhow. The Rural Montana Saves program is a special matched savings program that is helping families with limited incomes save for college or job training.

Participants who fulfill the program requirements will receive \$3 in matching funds for each dollar they save. Save up to \$400 to be eligible for the maximum match of \$1,200! Plus, participants will have the opportunity to access \$1,200 in “quick start” payments.

Rural Montana Saves is a project of Rural Employment Opportunities (REO), Montana’s Credit Unions, Student Assistance Foundation and Montana State Extension Service. Funding is provided through a grant from the Department of Public Health and Human

Service’s Family Economic Security Project.

In order to qualify for Rural Montana Saves, individuals must meet certain income, location, and age requirements.

- **Income:** Your annual income must be less than \$20,036 for a household of one. For each additional household member, add \$6,919.
- **Location:** You must currently live in one of the 49 participating rural counties in Montana:

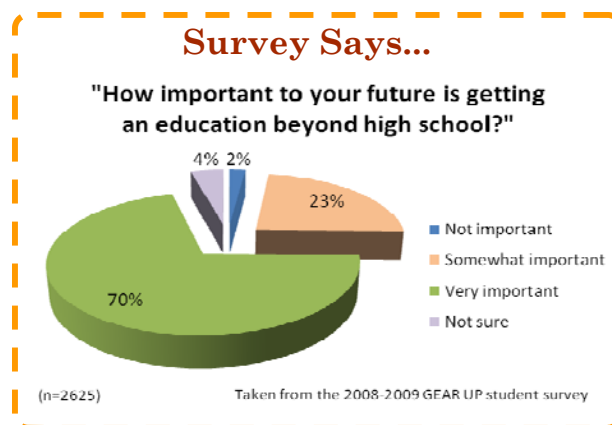
Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Mineral, Musselshell, Park,

Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, and Wibaux.

- **Age:** If you are over the age of 18, you must have at least one minor child living with you and you cannot be receiving TANF cash assistance.

If you meet the income and location requirements, are between the ages of 16 and 19, and still in high school, you may also be eligible to participate.

For more information, contact REO at (800) 546-1140 or rmsinfo@reomontana.org. Applications and information are also available at www.montanacreditunions.coop - click on Matched Savings Accounts/IDAs.



Montana College Access Network (MCAN)

BY CORY CHENOWETH, FINANCIAL AID MANAGER

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 nearly 200 members all working to help more Montana students pursue their postsecondary education aspirations. MCAN is not a new program—it is a new way for partners to work and learn together.

You and all school staff are invited to sign up to be a part of MCAN online at knowhow2gomontana.ning.com. Once there, click “sign up” in the upper right-hand corner and follow the prompts. After signing up, you can click

on the “groups” tab at the top of the page and join the GEAR UP group. It is an easy process and should only take a maximum of about five minutes. However, if you are a creative person, there are lots of opportunities to customize your profile. This social networking site is growing into a great place to network with colleagues and find the latest news about college access.

MCAN offers monthly education calls/webinars open to anyone who would like to participate. The calls take place 3:30-4:30 on the fourth Tuesday of every month, the MCAN site will provide you with all of the login information.

The schedule to the right lists the education call topics through the end of the calendar year:

October 27: Join us for an abbreviated version of the National Training for Counselors and Mentors (NT4CM) and learn what is new in financial aid for students planning ahead for the 2010-11 school year.

November 24: Join Barbara Duffield, Director of the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth in a discussion of the McKinney Vento Act and ways to help students without a permanent residence.

December: No Call.

Montana GEAR UP Reminders for Fall

September 28 through October 9 – EXPLORE and PLAN testing window

October 1 – Deadline for entering all new students and creating new 2009-2010 student performance records for continuing students in GEARS. Contact Andi Rankin at arankin@montana.edu or 406-444-0674 or Jessie Salisbury at jsalisbury@montana.edu or 406-444-0056 for more information

October 4-6 – GEAR UP Northwest Conference, Spokane, Washington

October 9 – EXPLORE and PLAN testing window closes: Mail tests directly to ACT to arrive no later than October 31st. Test packets should include the Pack/Return slip with the mailing label. Fill this out, keep a copy for your records and include the original in the package. The return address is Test Scoring Service, 2727 Scott Blvd, Iowa City, IA 52243

October 15-16 – MEA-MFT Conference, Billings

October 19 – Spotlight articles for November due

November 6 – Achievement Grant application deadline for students to submit to liaison. Contact Cory Chenoweth, Financial Aid Manager at 406-444-0350 or cchenoweth@montana.edu with questions

November 13 – Achievement Grant application deadline for liaisons to submit to Montana GEAR UP

Montana GEAR UP Staff Directory

Sandy Merdinger - Director
406-444-0317
smerdinger@montana.edu

Andi Rankin - Program Manager
406-444-0674
arankin@montana.edu

Cory Chenoweth - Financial Aid Manager
406-444-0350
cchenoweth@montana.edu

Sara Berg - School Grant Manager
Western Schools
406-444-0848
saraberg@montana.edu

Annette Walstad - Program Manager
406-444-0598
awalstad@montana.edu

Kelly Hert - Federal Accountant
406-444-0321
khert@montana.edu

Justine Jam - School Grant Manager
Eastern Schools
406-444-7490
jjam@mt.gov

Jessie Salisbury - Program Coordinator
406-444-0056
jsalisbury@montana.edu

Janice Kirkpatrick
MGSLP Scholarship Coordinator
406-444-0638
jkirkpatrick@mgsllp.state.mt.us

Montana GEAR UP
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
2500 Broadway
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201
Phone: (406) 444-0056
Fax: (406) 444-0425
Visit us on the web at www.gearup.mus.edu

Our mission: Montana GEAR UP believes that postsecondary education is possible for all Montana students, regardless of economic background, and strives to empower them to realize that ambition. Montana GEAR UP brings this message to middle and high schools, students, their parents, and the community through early college and career awareness activities, scholarships, financial aid information, and improved academic support to raise the expectations and achievement of all.