



State of New Jersey
COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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For Immediate Release

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NJ GEAR UP Celebrates First Annual National GEAR UP Day

September 11, 2009 – The NJ GEAR UP State Project announced today it will celebrate the First Annual National GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Day on September 18, 2009. The day is designed to commemorate ten years of this highly successful and transformative college access initiative. Since its inception in 1999, GEAR UP has improved educational outcomes for millions of low-income students across the United States.

The NJ GEAR UP State Project will mark the day with a presentation to the Commissioners of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education at their regular monthly meeting on September 18 at 10:00 a.m. in Rooms 219 and 220 of the Mary G. Roebling Building, 20 W. State Street, Trenton, New Jersey.

The presentation will showcase students who successfully completed the program and went on to pursue higher education, as well as provide an overview of the program's major outcomes. Among many other accomplishments, 76 percent of NJ GEAR UP students who complete the program enroll in college, as compared to 36.3 percent of low-income students statewide.

NJ GEAR UP, administered by the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education since 1999, collaborates with colleges and universities in Trenton, Camden, Jersey City, Newark, and Paterson to perform direct services. To date, NJ GEAR UP has served over 3,800 students, providing hundreds of hours of intensive college preparation activities. Thousands more students receive tutoring, test prep, and information about college, financial aid, and the value of a rigorous high school curriculum. Students begin the program as early as sixth grade and may continue through high school graduation, when they may become eligible for college scholarships.

“The presentation by program graduates is a great way for the Commissioners to hear directly from participants about the positive impact GEAR UP has had on their lives,” said Marguerite Beardsley, acting executive director of the Commission on Higher Education.

NJ GEAR UP is modeled on and receives required matching funding from the state-funded College Bound Grant Program. College Bound is a precollege initiative that began in 1986 and is also administered by the Commission.

For more information about the NJ GEAR UP State Project, please contact Michelle Johnson, program director, at (609) 292-4310. Local program directors at the host colleges and universities can be contacted directly as follows:

Camden: Rowan University, Winona Wigfall, (856) 756-5420
Jersey City: New Jersey City University, Valerie Boseman, (201) 200-2347
Newark: New Jersey Institute of Technology, Dr. Jesse G. Jackson, (973) 596-5762
Paterson: Passaic County Community College, Clarence Wright, (973) 684-5201
Trenton: Mercer County Community College, Wayne Murray, (609) 570-3156.

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.

Learn more about the NJ GEAR UP State Project at www.nj.gov/highereducation/gearup.

