USU STARS! GEAR UP NEWSLETTER

Fall 2014 Issue No 4

- USU students make carnival games
- USU STARS! now on Facebook!
- GEAR UP Team plans for Year 3
- Math teachers share strategies
- Students get excited about college
- Seattle conference inspires

College Carnival games

GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. One activity schools have done to increase students’ college knowledge is the College Carnival. Students explore different aspects of college through playing carnival games such as financial aid shuffle to learn about different types of financial aid, or Scholar Shots to learn about different types of scholarships that students can work towards. This year each site was given College Carnival games constructed by USU Professor Ed Reeve, School of Applied Sciences, Technology and Education, and the students in his Woods Based Manufacturing Systems class. Thank you Professor Reeve and students. The games will be used at events to encourage our GEAR UP scholars to continue pursuing their high education goals.
Preparing Ourselves to Prepare Students: Technical

In September, our GEAR UP Team held the 2014 Technical Guidance Seminar to prepare for the new school year. Site Coordinators, Counselors, and School Administrators joined us for break-out sessions to learn more about the many resources we have at our disposal. We discussed data from the previous year, where our program stands now, and strategies to improve the program for our young scholars. USU Teacher Education and Leadership (TEAL) Professor and Former State Superintendent, Dr. Steven Laing (left), led a special session with the Superintendents and Administrators about incorporating GEAR UP into their district plan.

One of the objectives of the Technical Guidance Seminar is to provide hands on activities for teachers and Site Coordinators to take back to their schools and use with students. This year at the seminar we built marshmallow launchers, moved toxic waste, and created capsules to protect potato chips. Duane Merrell, BYU Professor, and one of our partners from the Utah Space Grant Consortium led the potato chip activity. The goal of the activity pictured was to create a protective case for a potato chip, using only one sheet of paper and a meter of masking tape. The case would be dropped from a certain height, hopefully protecting the potato chip. Greg Muller, South Sanpete Site Coordinator, was the first to test his design with success. This is only one of several activities Duane has shared. These activities are great because he actually uses them with his students, and provides tips and cautions to implement them successfully.
During the Technical Guidance Seminar, Site Coordinators had the opportunity to hear from Judy Petersen, Granite School District Director of College and Career Readiness. The Granite School District has a model college and career readiness program throughout their district. Judy and her team shared ideas that their district used for creating a college going culture. She and her team provided several resources for our Site Coordinators to share with their School Counselors to help our schools create a college going culture.

Gayle Bowen from the Space Dynamics Laboratory demonstrated the thermal imaging technology compatible with the iPhone. The sensor revealed the residual heat left from Nathan Smith's hand, where he held the manila folder just moments before. Several schools are purchasing these infrared teaching cameras to use with their students. This will be a great STEM opportunity for our students.

Other presenters included John Vanderford from the Utah Space Grant Consortium, Nathan Smith, USU College of Education and Human Services Director of Technology, and Nicole Vouvalis, USU Student Services Diversity Specialist. We appreciate all of our partners who help us provide enriching opportunities for our GEAR UP scholars.
This session focused on hands-on learning activities that teachers could incorporate into their classrooms the very next day. The session was divided into three rotations. GEAR UP provided teachers with sets of dice and an activity to explore exponential functions. Teachers were also provided AngLegs manipulatives and a lesson to aid in the teaching of triangle congruence. The third rotation used TI-84 graphing calculators to solve systems and equations. All of these math topics are a component of the math curriculum our GEAR UP students are taking this year. We received very positive feedback from many attendees. We would like to thank all those who made this a successful event.

Gayle Bowen and Don Buse instruct teachers on the use of AngLegs.

Above: Pat Oberg and Ben Elmer use dice to simulate exponential functions.
Students STEP UP for College

All students in our GEAR UP cohort have been given the STEP UP college guide produced by the Utah System of Higher Education. This publication is designed to make students aware of college and the opportunities available to them, and provide a one-stop source for places to start their investigation. We expect these books to become the student’s guidebook on many aspects of college. Below Left: Mount Logan Middle School Students demonstrate use of their STEP UP books. Below right: Vernal Junior High students use the STEP UP book in an activity directed by Nicole Vouvalis, USU Student Services Diversity Specialist. For more information about preparing students for college, visit StepUpUtah.com.

Area Conference Inspires

The annual gathering for western GEAR UP programs, GEAR UP West was held October 26-28 in Seattle, Washington. USU STARS! GEAR UP sent 13 representatives to the conference, including our Program Coordinator, Melia Balls, and many of our Site Coordinators.

At the conference, Site Coordinators had the opportunity to network with professionals from GEAR UP programs across the West. The opportunity to share ideas with other programs, and learn from them, was very exciting. Next year the conference will be hosted in Boise, Idaho.

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