Talking Points

When talking to media and others, consider weaving your local story, experience, and numbers into one or more of the following talking points. This helps connect USU STARS! to the national GEAR UP effort.

**GEAR UP is a competitive grant program of the U.S. Department of Education**
GEAR UP increases the number of low-income, minority, and first-generation students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

**GEAR UP Is Community-Based**
GEAR UP provides services at high-poverty middle and high schools. The program unites the entire community in a responsive, creative and research-based effort to get entire classrooms of low-income, minority and disadvantaged children and their families, ready for higher education.

**GEAR UP Leverages Local Resources**
Because GEAR UP is built around public-private partnerships, it enlists resources of government, industry, business, labor, community groups and places of worship alike, in the cause of helping low-income students prepare, enter and succeed in college.

**GEAR UP Is Cohort-Based**
GEAR UP works with entire grade levels, and whole schools, supporting low-income students and their families, starting no later than the 7th grade, through 12th grade, and into first-year college.

**GEAR UP Is Research-Based**
GEAR UP helps local school systems improve student achievement by providing them with resources, training and expertise to use the most effective and evidence-based interventions.

**GEAR UP Provides Critical Early College Awareness and Support Activities**
The program includes interventions such as tutoring, mentoring, rigorous academic preparation, financial education and college scholarships to improve access to higher education for low income, minority and disadvantaged first-generation students and their families.

**GEAR UP Works**
The program now serves more than 580,000 low-income, minority and disadvantaged students nationwide in 42 states, the District of Columbia, and three U.S. Territories.

**USU STARS! GEAR UP**
Utah State University Science Technology Arithmetic Reading Students (USU STARS!) received its first GEAR UP seven-year grant in 2012, and has since been awarded three additional seven-year grants in 2015, 2017, and 2018. The program partners with schools in which at least 50 percent of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch. The program is cohort-based which means that it works with entire grade levels, and whole schools, starting in 7th grade through the first year of post-secondary education.

The USU STARS! GEAR UP program is part of the School of Teacher Education and Leadership in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services at USU. Funding for USU STARS! GEAR UP totals around $64 million across all grants, providing direct services to nearly 13,000 students starting in 7th grade. With the program’s dollar-for-dollar cost share requirement, the total program investment into Utah’s schools will be $128 million. The program works to leverage local communities’ assets to enhance students’ academic achievement and college readiness in preparation for realizing their education and career goals.