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Uintah Science Olympiad Invitational

Students across Utah joined together at Uintah High School on December 9th to participate in the first Science Olympiad. Uintah High School scholars took part in the national competition in which a group of 15 students prepared for 23 different events in each division (middle and high school). These events covered a variety of topics within the STEM fields, including computer programming, engineering, physics, biology, physiology, remote sensing, and chemistry. The events ranged from taking written exams to hands-on labs and projects.

One of the highlights of the competition was an exciting and difficult event called Write-it, Do-it. This popular team event involves one student writing down the details of a preconstructed object, without the use of drawing pictures or parts. The student's teammate is then given the necessary supplies, and is required to build the object from the other student's description. The event is scored based on how closely the finished product resembles the original object given to the first student.

Several GEAR UP scholars received rewards and recognition for their hard work during the Olympiad. Scholars from the Uintah team will move forward to compete in the Region Science Olympiad at Snow College and some competitors will advance to the State Science Olympiad, which will take place on March 24th.

In order to organize the 46 events that took place during the Olympiad, volunteers from several different organizations like Uintah School District, Uintah Basin Applied Technology College, and Utah State University came together to ensure a successful event. If you or your organization is interested in participating in next year's Uintah Invitational, please contact Dean Richens at dean.richens@uintah.net.

GEAR UP scholars work diligently to complete their tasks before time's up.
Paradigm Shift

For a week in November and February, USU STARS! GEAR UP scholars had the opportunity to be a part of Paradigm Shift, a program offering interactive educational experiences for young students throughout the United States. Ryan Eller and Jerrod Murr, who wanted to create fresh and engaging opportunities for students to grow and learn about leadership, created Paradigm Shift in 2008. A collaboration of facilitators from across the nation make up the Paradigm Shift team.

The Paradigm Shift team started out at Logan High School, where they talked to over 800 students about the importance of personal goal setting. The program started out with entertaining games and activities to get the scholars engaged in the event. The Paradigm Shift team shifted towards an educational experience when the team began asking scholars about their future goals. Paradigm Shift encourages and empowers scholars to reach their full potential through dynamic, hands-on learning, workshops, and group development initiatives. The program visited GEAR UP schools all across Utah in November, including North Davis Junior High, Eagle View Elementary, Uintah River High, Gunnison Valley Middle and High, Wendover High, and West Wendover High. They continued their tour in February and March, visiting Logan High, Mount Logan Middle, Dual Immersion Academy, American Preparatory Academy, Cottonwood High, Ephraim Middle, Manti High, and North Sanpete High, where they were able to teach scholars about achieving success through unique lessons and activities.

Kristin Brubaker
Cohort Three Program Director

We are excited to announce the newest member of our USU STARS! GEAR UP team! Kristin Brubaker grew up in Indiana, but has had the opportunity to live in various places. Kristin loves living in mountainous Utah, as her favorite activities include skiing, mountain biking, camping, and hiking. Kristin enjoys cooking and participated in the 31st Annual Chocolate Festival in Logan, Utah.

Growing up in a rural community, Kristin saw that many students never considered higher education as a viable option. “GEAR UP gives us the opportunity to reach these students early to help them start to see themselves as college material,” says Kristin. “Helping students reach higher education – and [teaching them] the skills to succeed there – is so meaningful.” Kristen hopes to contribute to Cohort 3 by taking the lessons learned from the first two cohorts and using them to build fun and educational activities for students, as well as providing an overall positive experience for the new cohort.

When asked why GEAR UP is a useful tool for students, Kristin emphasized how GEAR UP customizes the student experience according to the community, which is crucial to reaching more students and providing a meaningful experience.
Youth Leadership Summit - Where Are They Now?

In 2016, nine GEAR UP scholars attended the NCCEP/GEAR UP Youth Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C. The three-day conference gave scholars training experience that focused on giving scholars the resources, tools, and social skills to act as leaders in their schools and communities. Youth Leadership Summit GEAR UP scholars applied the lessons they learned during the conference to help them with future career and collegiate endeavors.

Jason Shepherd, from Wendover High School, is attending Dixie State University this coming fall. Jason received the Dean’s Admission Scholarship from DSU and is excited to study business administration or accounting. “[Youth Leadership Summit] showed me that with enough hard work,” Jason said, “I can do anything I set my mind to.” Jason expressed his gratitude towards Youth Leadership Summit on teaching him how to communicate with others about various professions and advises future GEAR UP senior scholars “to keep an open mind about your [college] and career choice.”

K’Leigh Halliday, from Gunnison Valley High School, is attending Snow College in Ephraim this coming fall. At Youth Leadership Summit, K’Leigh participated in a film making activity, which inspired her to pursue a degree in the arts in college. She is ambitiously planning on owning her own photography studio, while also practicing freelance photography. Youth Leadership Summit shaped K’Leigh as a student by helping her better understand the importance of a college education. K’Leigh encourages her fellow GEAR UP scholars to take every opportunity to get involved with school activities.

From Wendover High School comes Joel Godoy, a driven GEAR UP scholar who has received many awards for his dedication and hard work towards his education including the Rookie of the Year award, the Mayor Award, the school’s honor roll, and others. Joel plans to begin his education at Snow College or Salt Lake Community College, where he will study business entrepreneurship. “[Youth Leadership Summit] taught me to believe in the hard work I put in towards my goals [and that] not everything is about following society’s ways. It’s okay to be different.”

Piper Christian, a Logan High School scholar, is debating between multiple universities in and out of Utah, including Utah State University, the University of Utah, and Westminster. Piper is in the running for several scholarships for the schools she has applied to. Wherever she attends, Piper is planning to major in political science and is interested in joining the Peace Corps. Youth Leadership Summit helped Piper become more aware of how racism affects students throughout the nation. “[Youth Leadership Summit] made me sure that I want a job where I serve people through policy making, education, social work, or something else.” The USU STARS! GEAR UP program helped Piper with test prep, college visits, and more. She encourages future GEAR UP senior scholars to “take more advantage of GEAR UP resources!”
We are excited to announce that this month’s STARS! Spotlight is American Preparatory Academy (APA). Rob Guido, Site Coordinator of APA, gave us insight on how APA manages to create and manage successful activities and opportunities for GEAR UP scholars of all ages. Rob shared that APA ensures that GEAR UP activities are happening every day. “We offer after school tutoring and mentoring [and] a senior seminar college training class daily,” said Rob “We uphold high expectations and challenge our students’ young minds daily.” APA has seen a collective total of over one million dollars in scholarships for the class of 2018!

APA pays special attention to getting their parents involved in their children’s education. They cater their events to focus on parents’ interests such as preparing for college and financial aid. APA also host events in the morning as well as the evening to be sure parents can attend despite their work schedules. GEAR UP has affected APA by pushing deeper into academic services. Their college visits now feature department specific meetings and with college student panels rather than a general walking tour around the campus.

Rob explains that GEAR UP affects scholars by helping them understand the “unwritten rules of college discourse.” Rob’s favorite part of APA sets up several parent events throughout the year to ensure that children’s parents feel involved and included in their children’s education.

GEAR UP is watching students evolve little by little toward understanding higher education. “Anyone can go to college,” says Rob “and GEAR UP helps our students understand how.”

Wendover Scholar Paints School Mascot

This past winter, our very own GEAR UP scholar, Joel Godoy, of Wendover High School, took on the challenge of painting the Wendover High School mascot on the wall of the Wildcat gym. Joel Godoy, a senior, used his artistic talents to paint a mural of a fierce wildcat on the top half of the gym wall. To reach his unique canvas, Joel had to use his nerve and a tall ladder to complete the painting. Joel plans on attending Snow College in Ephraim to continue his education. Way to go, Joel!

Joel channeled his inner Michelangelo by taking a unique spin on mural painting.

USU STARS! GEAR UP Administrative Team

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Program Director Cohort 2 - Jim Dorward
Program Director Cohort 3 - Kristin Brubaker
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