GEAR UP
Gazette
GEAR UP UTAH

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 5-7
2026 NCAN Conference
Las Vegas, NV

OCTOBER 18-20
2026 GEAR UP West Conference
Los Angeles, CA

JANUARY 29-30
Utah Tech Blazer Blast (UVU Regions)

FEBRUARY 27
ACT Jump Start

DIRECTOR’S MESSAGE

Building Momentum and Embracing Change

We are several months into another year of GEAR UP Utah programming, and I want to recognize the momentum building across our regions and schools. There is a tremendous amount of work happening across GEAR UP Utah, and I appreciate your commitment and the commitment of everyone who makes this work possible.

As we continue through the year, I want to keep asking an important question: **What do our activities and events mean for students?**

It is easy to measure our work by the number of activities we hold, students we serve, or events we complete. Those things are important, but they are only part of the story. What matters most is what happens because of those experiences. Did a student learn something new? Did an experience help them see college or a career as something within their reach? Did a conversation with a counselor help a student make a different decision?

Utah College Application Week (UCAW) is a great example. Completing a college application may seem like a small task, but for a student it can represent an important step from thinking about college to taking action toward a post-secondary goal.

Another important part of our work is our ability to **change and adapt from year to year**. As we do our work, we may find that something needs to change. Sometimes that means refining a process, trying a different approach, or letting go of something that is no longer producing the impact we want.

Change does not mean that what we have done in the past was wrong. It means we are willing to learn, adapt, and continue moving forward.

As we move through the rest of the year, let's continue building on the strong foundation we have established while remaining open to new ideas, new approaches, and meaningful change.

Ultimately, what we do should serve the same purpose: **creating meaningful opportunities and better outcomes for students.**

Thank you for your continued commitment to our students and to the work we do together.

Ruben Rocha

GEAR UP Utah Program Director

THIS MONTH AT A GLANCE

USU-E-Ernesto Balderas

Campus visit to Colorado Mesa University–Oct 8

Campus visit to SLCC (Taylorsville)–Oct 22

STATEWIDE

Statewide Training–Oct 14

Mandatory meeting for all GEAR UP staff. Reach out to Zylia.L@uvu.edu for an invite.

ALPINE-Candy Castillo

School Workshops

EAST-Cecilia Templeton

Campus visit to U of U in collaboration with AVID and Scholarship Advisor

UVU REGIONS

Staff Meeting–Sept 2

UVU Soccer Game–Oct 10

Mentor Gathering–Oct 15

WEBER-Shironda Culpepper

College Field Trips to Weber State University

WASATCH-Vanessa Neal

UVU First Generation Conference–Oct 20

Got Something to Share?

Help us keep GEAR UP in the loop! Use the submission form to share **upcoming events, staff updates, student success stories, photos, helpful resources, or ideas** you’d like featured in the newsletter. Submissions are due by the **20th of each month** to be considered for the following month’s newsletter.

Submission Form

REMINDERS

- **UVU Compliance Training and site-specific training:** Title IX, FERPA, Workplace Conduct, Freedom of Speech, and Cybersecurity trainings; Vehicle Rental/Driving Safety Certification, Active Shooter training and Stop the Bleed. *Due Nov 1*
- **Continue gathering Cost Share documentation**
  Oct 15th - All Year 2 Year-Ending Forms Due
  Oct 30th - All Year 3 Year-Beginning Forms Due
- **Track and submit student and parent contact data**
- **FAFSA Application is open**
- **No Senior applications accepted after October 1**
- **Remind Students of ACT Registration**

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Region 2 - West

GEAR UP Utah
Gaining Early Awareness
GEAR UP is nothing without YOU!

GEAR UP Week: West High celebrated GEAR UP Week with four engaging activities:

- **Monday:** *Light the Way* and share your goals
- **Tuesday:** Students shared how GEAR UP has empowered them and created a “Dream Wall” with no obstacles
- **Wednesday:** Kahoot featuring questions about *Advocate, Activate and Celebrate*
- **Thursday:** *Bring a Friend + Donuts*

40+ students participated in each event!

College Connections: Connected a sophomore with SLCC’s PACE Program, a full-ride scholarship covering eight semesters toward an associate degree.

PECPs: Meeting one-on-one with students to complete their PECPs and support their individual goals.

FAFSA & College Enrollment: Helping students navigate FAFSA, college enrollment and their next steps after high school.

Architecture Connections: Connected two seniors interested in architecture with Salt Lake City architecture firms for job-shadowing opportunities and potential apprenticeships, while helping them develop academic plans aligned with their career goals.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

GEAR UP Utah

Megan Pachner
Admin

Alpine Region

Madison McCauley
Outreach Mentor

Wasatch Region

Kendra Garcia Barrientos
Outreach Mentor

Weber Region

Paige Walkins
Outreach Mentor

Marianna Norseth
Outreach Mentor

Talia Atkinson
Outreach Mentor

East Region

Welcoming to their team from Provo

Jackson Campbell
Outreach Mentor

Josie Merrill
Outreach Mentor

DATA DOWNLOAD

Did you know that nationwide, the GEAR UP program serves:

588,068	3,137	44
Students	Schools	States

That means that students all over the country are being seen, heard, and mentored in ways that wouldn’t be possible without the GEAR UP grant. You are part of that!

Every check-in, family event and tutoring session helps a student one step closer to the bright future they deserve to experience. Thank you for your impact!

MONEY MATTERS

GEAR UP UTAH SCHOLARSHIP

Reminder!
Now that the FAFSA application is open, it’s the perfect time to help students fill out the FAFSA and then fill out the GEAR UP scholarship!
Please remind students that they **do not need to know which college or university they will attend in order to apply for the scholarship.** They can apply now and make their college decision later.

NATIONAL GEAR UP WEEK

SEPTEMBER 21-25

USU-E College Campus Tour of UVU

Alpine - Show your GEAR UP pride. Get a flashlight

Alpine - Orem Jr High Workshop

Alpine - Mt View Workshop

Nebo - Springville Jr High Workshop

National
GEAR UP
Week
CELEBRATE

Nebo - Payson Jr High Workshop

Provo - Independence High Breakfast

Provo - Independence High Breakfast

Wasatch - Parent Dinner

Future Dream Achiever
Future Dream Achiever

Wasatch - Student Workshop

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FYS - Open House

Barry McLarren, a member of Senator Curtis' team

Rachel Ellington, a member of Congresswoman Maloy's team

Visit with Olivia Price, a member of Senator Lee's team

POST-IT OF POSITIVITY

What are you proud of this month?

Are there any personal success stories that you'd like to share with us? Did you complete an epic hike or read a fabulous book? Email us and let us know! (dawna.webb@uvu.edu)

MINDFULNESS MINUTE

Do you ever wonder if you're making a difference in the workplace? Or feeling like it's been a long week of constant noise and chaos trying to stay on top of everything you need to do?
Take time for you and break away from the screen, even if it's only for a five-minute walk outside.

A walk in nature lowers activity in the brain's stress and anxiety centers while restoring your ability to focus. With autumn breezes and cooler temperatures around the corner, who wouldn't want to enjoy a moment outside, right?

RESOURCE ROUNDUP

AI Gateway

UVU has created a centralized dashboard featuring approved AI tools, including ChatGPT, Copilot, and more. Please use this dashboard as your primary AI resource for GEAR UP–related work.

FAFSA Walkthrough Videos

Be set up for success when completing the FAFSA

The Daniels Scholarship

Up to $25,000 scholarship. Application is open September 1 through October 15.

Keys to Success

Connects students with scholarships, internships, careers, CTE pathways, and other opportunities.

Utahmajors.org

Helps students explore Utah college majors and connect interests to future careers.

USHE

Provides support to help students with college admissions, financial aid and scholarship opportunities, FAFSA, and concurrent enrollment resources.

ACT Student Fee Waiver

Helps eligible students cover ACT costs and access free test prep and score reports.

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