



## GEAR UP Program Information St. Olaf College



### Purpose of GEAR UP:

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federally funded 6-year program, enacted as part of the 1998 Higher Education Act, and sponsored by St. Olaf College. GEAR UP works in collaboration with teachers, community members, students, and families to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enroll and succeed in a postsecondary program. Since 1999, St. Olaf College GEAR UP served over 300 students (classes of 2005 and 2006) at Humboldt Secondary Complex. Beginning in the fall of 2005, GEAR UP will work with 850 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at Battle Creek Middle School, Hazel Park Middle School, and Humboldt Junior High. GEAR UP will follow these students through high school graduation in 2011 at Harding and Humboldt High Schools.

### St. Olaf College GEAR UP Partners:

St. Olaf College GEAR UP collaborates with The St. Paul Public Schools, Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth (MITY), Minnesota Higher Education Services Office (MHESO), and the Boys and Girls Club.

### St. Olaf College GEAR UP Outcomes (1999 grant-class of 2005):

- 300 students served at Humboldt Secondary Complex (classes of 2005 and 2006).
- 36% of GEAR UP students persisted in the GEAR UP project since 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
- 96% of GEAR UP 2005 graduates applied to, and were accepted to, at least 1 college, *which is an increase of 38% compared to the previous class (2004)*.
- GEAR UP's four-year high school graduation rate of the class of 2005 was 84%, *which is an increase of 52% from the previous class (2004)*. Students that began in the GEAR UP program in 7<sup>th</sup> grade had a four-year high school graduation rate of 88%.
- Increased the number of students that enrolled in advanced courses by 16%.
- Increased financial aid and college planning knowledge by 45% for families and 68% for students.
- GEAR UP students that have persisted in the program since 7<sup>th</sup> grade are passing the Minnesota Basic Standards test at a 29% higher rate than students that enrolled after 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

### St. Olaf College GEAR UP 2005 grant:

- 850 students served at Battle Creek Middle School, Hazel Park Middle School, and Humboldt Junior High School (class of 2011).
- GEAR UP will follow students through high school graduation if attending Harding High School and Humboldt High School. GEAR UP students that attend other high schools will be referred to TRiO and GEAR UP Programs at their high school.
- The St. Olaf GEAR UP Program was rated in the top 1% (3/333) of grantee applications across the country.

### Services Provided:

The following GEAR UP services are offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays:

- Daily GEAR UP workshops that supplement classroom teachers' curriculum. Topics include: career exploration, financial aid information, study skills, college planning, and course selection advising.
- Individual meetings to discuss middle school, high school, and college planning
- After-school, in-classroom tutoring, and evening tutoring
- College visits and cultural field trips
- Attendance and behavior interventions
- Parent/guardian activities and individual meetings
- Professional development for teachers and staff
- FAFSA completion parent/guardian workshops
- Application assistance for summer enrichment programs, post-secondary institutions, and financial aid

- Test preparation
- Other college preparatory programming

The St. Olaf College and GEAR UP Connection:

The community service and outreach activities offered by GEAR UP are connected with the mission of St. Olaf College which encourages students to pursue activities which are “ultimately worthwhile.” The following are cooperative services sponsored by GEAR UP that enhance education opportunities for St. Olaf students:

- Annually, fifteen St. Olaf student workers are hired to provide tutoring and field trip supervision for participants in inner city schools
- Annually, five St. Olaf student workers are hired to provide office support
- Annually, two hundred St. Olaf students volunteer as mentors to Educational Talent Search and GEAR UP students
- GEAR UP supports the goals of Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, Students Support Services, and St. Olaf Multicultural Affairs and Community Outreach and Community Life and Diversity
- St. Olaf Admissions provides College Club sessions for students to inform students about the college application process and assist with financial aid and scholarship applications
- St. Olaf Career Development Center provides workshops for students to inform students about career options and assists with career exploration
- St. Olaf professors provide professional development for teachers during GEAR UP’s Hawk Talk, a monthly professional development series

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