

# GEAR UP WYOMING

MAY 2016

## Matters


GAINING EARLY AWARENESS AND READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

### Wyoming's First LEDA Scholar

John Lenzi, a Northern Wyoming Community College District GEAR UP student, is the first-ever Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America (LEDA) Scholar from Wyoming.



John is currently a junior at Sheridan High School. This summer, he will attend the Aspects of Leadership Summer Institute at Princeton University. LEDA fully funds 100 students from across the nation to attend the summer institute during the summer before their senior year. The summer institute is an intensive, seven-week program which focuses on preparing under-represented students for admission to our nation's most selective colleges and universities.

LEDA is a national, non-profit organization that identifies and develops the academic leadership potential of "exceptional public high school students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds." The LEDA Scholars program is free for all students admitted and provides on-going resources and guidance for scholars attending college. For more information about LEDA, visit [www.ledascholars.org](http://www.ledascholars.org). 

### Wyoming has Three GUALAs

Three Wyoming students have been selected as GEAR UP Alumni Leadership Academy (GUALA) representatives. Only 24 students are chosen from a nationwide pool of applicants.

Claudia Vanessa Hernandez Marquez, KaylaRae Lawrence, and William Brooks Van Buren will travel to Washington, D.C. in June to receive training on grassroots advocacy, social media advocacy, and leadership skills during a week-long retreat. The training they receive will help them educate others about the importance of GEAR UP, as well as help them work toward creating positive change in education policy for younger GEAR UP students.

Vanessa received her associate's degree from Western Wyoming Community College before transferring to the University of Wyoming (UW). She is currently serving as a GEAR UP peer mentor at UW.




Brooks graduated in 2015 from Campbell County High School in Gillette. He was named the 2015 GEAR UP Youth of the Year and is currently attending Purdue with a full scholarship.



KaylaRae grew up in Riverton and is attending Eastern Wyoming College (EWC). She was a team leader at the 2015 Camp GEAR UP at the University of Wyoming and is currently a GEAR UP peer mentor at EWC.



GUALA is offered by the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships, GEAR UP's national training and technical assistance provider, with funding from the Kresge Foundation. 

**In 2015-16, GEAR UP WYOMING**

served 2229 students in 113 schools  
and reached 929 teachers through  
professional development.

## Kimberly Sanchez: From GEAR UP Student to Outstanding Graduating Woman

Kimberly Sanchez, a GEAR UP student who graduated in 2011 from East High School in Cheyenne, was recently named University of Wyoming's Outstanding Graduating Woman. Kimberly graduated with a dual major in anthropology and Russian. While attending the University of Wyoming (UW), she was a GEAR UP peer mentor and an AmeriCorps representative with GEAR UP WYOMING. She was also a TRIO McNair Scholar and visited Mongolia as a part of her research project. Kimberly will begin working on her doctorate at the University of Michigan in the fall.

GEAR UP WYOMING Matters recently spoke with Kimberly about her experiences as a GEAR UP student and as a UW student.

### What was the role of GEAR UP in your path to college?

I was a part of TRIO Educational Talent Search in elementary school. Then in junior high and high school, I participated in GEAR UP.

During college, I was in GEAR UP during the first year as well as TRIO Student Success Services, and that's how I learned about the McNair Scholars Program. I was a part of the whole pipeline within the TRIO organization.



*Kimberly Sanchez with her students in Mongolia.*

### What was your experience as a GEAR UP student on scholarship?

It gave me so much opportunity. It was a huge blessing for me not having to worry about the meal plan or the dorm expenses. It gave me more time to focus on my studies.

The GEAR UP scholarship helped me especially for study abroad. It helped me go to Mongolia and to Russia for language studies. GEAR UP made a huge difference.

### What did your time as an AmeriCorps representative provide for you?

Being an AmeriCorps worker and working for GEAR UP WYOMING was really helpful, because it gave me a broader view of GEAR UP students. We're low-income, a lot of us are first generation, and a lot of us also have other things that affect our lives. It's such a diverse array of students, and interacting with them as more of an administrator than a peer helped me become a better mentor. It also gave me huge respect for the GEAR UP professionals. As GEAR UP students, we see the other end of it, like the cool events, but there's a lot that goes into it.

### How did you become involved with the TRIO McNair Scholars Program?

In high school, I didn't do well at all academically, but when I was accepted into college, I felt I was able to have a fresh start. I did well and loved college. My advisor encouraged me to talk with McNair and apply to graduate school. I met with Susan Stoddard and Zackie Salmon from McNair, and that's how I became involved.

### Tell us about your McNair research project and international study abroad.

In my sophomore year, I began volunteering in the lab of my archeology professor, Todd Surovell. He was doing a new project in Mongolia. I was analyzing all these



*Kimberly Sanchez with faculty member Todd Surovell in UW's archeology lab.*

time-lapsed images, and I became really interested in the people I was looking at. I decided that I wanted to do something with these images for my McNair project.

While I was doing the research for my projects, I asked my professor if he ever needed someone to help with field work. He said that he did, but that there was no funding to pay for people to go.

The more I thought about doing field work, the more I thought maybe I could try and find some way to make it work. And so my McNair advisor, Zackie Salmon, found a volunteer organization run by a tour guide company in Mongolia where if you could teach english for a few months in the fall, they would give you room and board in exchange for your labor. She said that maybe I could teach and do my research on the side.

It took six months of planning and checking with UW to make sure that I could count it as an independent study and keep my scholarship. There were times that I didn't think it would work out, but it finally did.

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*“Both of my parents didn't get their bachelor's, but here I am going for my Ph.D. If you had told me that in junior high, I would have said you were crazy.”*

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My research there was how the Russian language is used in Mongolia, because I was in a northern village, and it was only 20 km south of the Russian border. I wasn't able to do the second project in the way that I had planned, because I had anticipated the students knowing more English than they actually did. That project ended up being an overall “What is it like to be a woman in the village?” And it ended up being my honors thesis at UW.

Mongolia was a wonderful place to research, and the people are wonderful. The landscape and climate are just like Wyoming — especially with all the herds of animals.

#### What would you say to other young GEAR UP students?

I would say that no matter where you come from or what talents you have or you don't think you have, there's always a way to do what you want to do. It just might take a little bit more effort, like my Mongolia trip. Try to be as creative as possible and never give up on your dreams. Both of my parents didn't get their bachelor's, but here I am going for my Ph.D. If you had told me that in junior high, I would have said you were crazy. 🇺🇸

## New GEAR UP Office Spaces

The GEAR UP programs at Casper College (CC) and Western Wyoming Community College (WWCC) have moved into new offices.

CC has seen tremendous growth with GEAR UP students utilizing the new GEAR UP youth room for tutoring, drop-ins, mentoring, and support. According to Ray Pacheco, CC GEAR UP director, “The new youth room has been a crucial and core part of our one on one case management approach that is building deep and lasting relationships.”

The WWCC GEAR UP offices are now centrally located on campus, right next to the new Mustang Central. There is space for students to study, meet, and socialize. Amanda DeBernardi, WWCC GEAR UP coordinator, says, “This location allows us to optimize our freshmen services program and ensure that GEAR UP students have the support and guidance that they need to be successful at WWCC.” 🇺🇸

Casper College's  
GEAR UP  
youth room.



The GEAR UP  
offices at WWCC  
are now in a  
prime location  
for students.

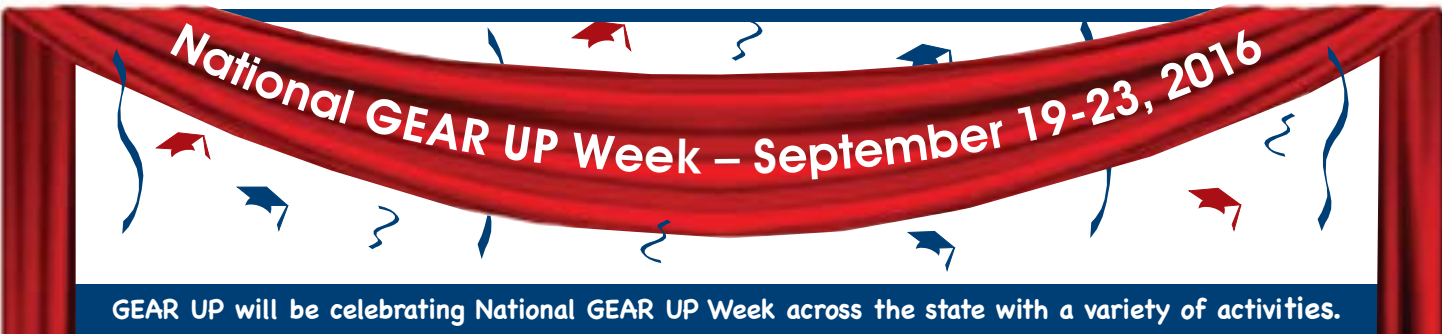
Follow GEAR UP WYOMING on:



# UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

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GEAR UP will be celebrating National GEAR UP Week across the state with a variety of activities.

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GEAR UP WYOMING is administered by the office of Student Educational Opportunity (SEO) in the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Wyoming.

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**GEAR UP Wyoming Partners:**  
Casper College, Central Wyoming College, Eastern Wyoming College, Laramie County Community College, Northern Wyoming Community College District, Northwest College, Western Wyoming Community College, University of Wyoming, Wyoming Department of Education

## ACT® College Entrance Exam Test Dates

Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 10, 2016	August 5, 2016	August 6-19, 2016
October 22, 2016	September 16, 2016	September 17-30, 2016
December 10, 2016	November 4, 2016	November 5-18, 2016
February 11, 2017	January 13, 2017	January 14-20, 2017
April 8, 2017	March 3, 2017	March 4-17, 2017
June 10 2017	May 5, 2017	May 6-19 2017

The ACT® is an important college entrance exam. Scores can affect college entrance and scholarships.

All Wyoming eleventh-grade students will take the ACT® in April at their schools. Students who want to take the test again can visit the following ACT® website to register for the test and to locate testing centers: [www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html](http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html)

GEAR UP WYOMING students may contact their GEAR UP coordinator to obtain an ACT® test fee waiver. (GEAR UP WYOMING cannot pay for or waive late fees.) Also, GEAR UP WYOMING students have free access to ACT® preparation programs.

GEAR UP WYOMING Matters is a publication for GEAR UP students and their families offering news and tips to help prepare students for college.

GEAR UP WYOMING is a statewide program that serves 2,000 7th-12th grade, income-eligible students each year. Wyoming's seven community colleges provide services to these students and encourage them not only to complete high school, but to enter and succeed at a postsecondary institution. GEAR UP WYOMING also supports students through their first year of college.

GEAR UP WYOMING is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education totaling \$3,548,876 annually with an additional \$3,548,876 annually provided by in-kind and scholarship contributions.