



The Path

From GEAR UP Wyoming | Fall 2023 | Vol. 3.2



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The Fall semester has come to an end and GEAR UP Wyoming sure has kept busy. Read our updates to stay informed on what has come and gone and what's to come!

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GEAR UP
WYOMING

What is our mission?

GEAR UP Wyoming strives to increase the number of low-income students who graduate high school and enter a post-secondary educational institution to improve their access to career and life opportunities. [Visit our page!](#)

Here are our fall updates:

GEAR UP Student Activities

With the upcoming semester, it is important to have a strong start and a strong support system. GEAR Up's New Year's resolution is to have more open communication and to provide more opportunities for our students. To make this happen, we need your help! GEAR UP is considering hosting various workshops to help build valuable skills. Whether it involves stress management, career skills, study tips, or even skills to live on your own, we want to provide you with the opportunities to grow and succeed in college. If there is a topic that you would like to be addressed, please reach out to your local GEAR UP Freshman Coordinator to place your request!

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Planning for 2024

Whoo-hoo! We made it through the first semester of the academic year! Take a moment to congratulate yourself for making it this far into the year, and then get ready for what's left to come. It's always good to be planning ahead, and there's no better time to plan for the future than the present. With that being said, now is a good time to take a look at what scholarships are available to you for the Fall 2024 term to get a head start on submitting some applications.



Did you know that your chances of winning a scholarship are higher the earlier you submit your application? Early application submission is a signal to your application reviewer that you are organized and dedicated to your education where a late

application might signal the opposite and lower your chances of acceptance. Give yourself the highest chances of success by starting early. Many scholarships require an essay and one or two short form responses that can be a little daunting. Don't worry, there are plenty of resources for assistance with scholarship applications. Speak with your GEAR UP advisor about what scholarships are available to you, get help revising your scholarship essay, or to get help with any other of your college and career planning needs.

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Winter Wellness

As winter sets in and daylight hours dwindle, many individuals find themselves grappling with the dual challenges of cold weather and reduced sunlight. For students and workers alike, this seasonal shift can have a significant impact on both mental well-being and performance. Spending fewer and fewer hours in the sun can take its toll on your health so make sure you're meeting all of your nutrient needs by eating foods rich in vitamin D like fatty fish, egg yolk, oranges, and bananas. You'd be surprised how much a lack of vitamin D can affect your physical and mental wellbeing. People lacking in vitamin D report symptoms such as fatigue, poor sleep, depression, loss of appetite, and frequent illness. This culmination of symptoms due to a lack of vitamin D in the winter is often referred to as SAD or seasonal affective disorder.

SAD often translates into a noticeable decline in motivation and productivity. The reduced exposure to natural light also affects the production of serotonin and melatonin, neurotransmitters that play a crucial role in regulating mood and sleep patterns. SAD may affect your performance in school or at work as well as your relationships with your friends and family. For many people, SAD often coincides with the holiday break so take extra care to reach out to your loved ones and check in with your friends. It's essential for friends and family to offer support, understanding, and a compassionate ear during this time of the year. (cont'd)

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Winter Wellness (cont'd)

If you're experiencing the effects of SAD this season, consider engaging in regular exercise to boost your serotonin production, eat foods high in vitamin D, and reach out to friends and family for support. In facing the trials of Seasonal Affective Disorder, it's imperative for students to adopt a holistic approach that encompasses both physical and mental well-being. By acknowledging the impact of SAD on various aspects of life and employing proactive strategies, individuals can foster resilience and maintain a positive outlook even in the darkest days of winter. Remember that by taking care of yourself now you are setting yourself up for success in the future.

The Better FAFSA

As the 2023 year comes to an end, many students are looking forward to the holidays and some well-earned time away from school. There is one more task that students should have on their radar before they spend too much time celebrating: completing the FAFSA for the 2024-2025 school year. Branded as the "Better FAFSA," this application offers many changes. These changes include new terminology, grants for more students, and more. There are several main changes that college students should be aware of as we approach the deadline, June 30th, 2024. (cont'd)

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The Better FAFSA (cont'd)

The first big change requires the student's consent and their contributors' consent to transfer their federal tax information directly to the FAFSA form from the IRS.



This change is meant to make the process easier and more efficient to complete the form. Without this consent, the student will not be eligible for financial aid. Two more changes will only affect a small number of students but will require extra steps to complete the FAFSA application. The first involves a student's parents. If a student's parents are married, but file taxes separately, then both parents will need to have an FSA ID—in the past, only one parent needed an FSA ID. This is because both parents will have to link their tax records to the FAFSA application. The second change also affects a student's parents. If a parent does not have a social security number, there will be an option to create an FSA ID without a Social Security number—make sure to reach out to the financial aid office for additional help with this process! Although these changes may cause stress, it is important to tackle this task one step at a time. If you have any questions, make sure to reach out to your college mentor or the financial aid office!

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