



# The Path

**From GEAR UP Wyoming | Spring 2026 | Vol. 5.4**



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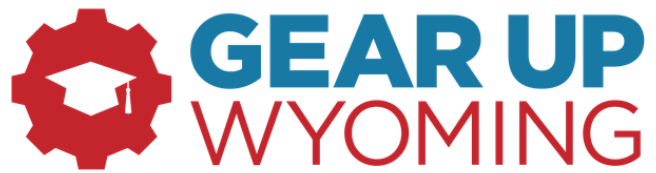
GEAR UP Wyoming has plenty to share this spring. Read our newsletter to meet our featured student, pick up some finals tips, and learn how we're strengthening support for Wyoming students. Stay through the end for a letter from our program director.

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## 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 winter updates:

### Student Spotlight: Adyson

This quarter, GUWY is proud to celebrate the extraordinary achievement of Western Wyoming Community College GEAR UP Alumna, Adyson. Graduating with her Associate's in Health Sciences, Adyson is not your average student. She is compassionate beyond measure and dedicated to increasing access to health resources. During high school, Adyson demonstrated initiative by launching the JAE Foundation's "High School Senior Boot Program" at her high school, a mental health initiative with the intention of increasing mental health awareness, reducing suicide risk, and providing "boots on the ground" support to seniors facing challenges.

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Adyson worked to uphold a “Boot-Check” culture that demystifies mental health by encouraging students to self-reflect and check in on themselves and their peers.

While fostering a positive mental health culture, Adyson balanced many other responsibilities. Her uplifting spirit led to her serving as the cheer captain for three years, while simultaneously holding a position on the board of her school’s National Honor Society, along with active involvement in the Health Occupations and Career Academy, all while maintaining a part-time job at a local gym. Adyson is a textbook definition of an ambitious, driven individual.



Photo of Adyson

This Spring Adyson will be graduating from Western Wyoming Community College’s Health Sciences program, boasting a 4.2 GPA which will support her continued education as she pursues a degree in nursing and further demonstrates her dedication to health initiatives. Adyson is motivated by her mother’s strength, love and determination. Through meaningful conversations and her own experiences, she has come to understand the power of connection and the importance of knowing you are not alone. The support from her family and from her GEAR UP advisor has taught her “to push through obstacles and stay focused on [her] goals.” Adyson doesn’t need luck in her goals, as the determination and persistence demonstrated in all facets of her life serve as evidence that Adyson will be successful in all that she is called to do.

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## That's a Wrap - By London Vetos

You're almost there! Only a few short weeks left until those early morning alarms can be a thing of the past! Well, at least for a few months. The end of a school year, while exciting, brings its own challenges. While the obvious challenge is finals, we must also recognize that burnout from the semester happens and is no joke. GEAR UP Wyoming has gathered a few tips to help with both of these areas, so that instead of worrying about big exams, you can start making summer plans!

You've made it through so much of the semester, and that's an accomplishment in itself, though it's during this time that many students start to face burnout. Burnout compounds over the semester and finals can make it even worse. [An article from The University of Georgia](#) defines academic burnout "as a negative emotional, physical and mental reaction to prolonged study that results in exhaustion, frustration, lack of motivation and reduced ability in school." No matter the stage you are at in your educational journey, burnout can take many forms and it affects everyone differently. From exhaustion, no matter how much sleep you get, an increased likelihood of getting sick, and even depression and anxiety, burnout is something that needs to be addressed so you aren't a victim of it too. One of the hardest things about dealing with burnout is recognizing that you are going through it in the first place.

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## That's A Wrap (cont'd)



UW students throw pinecones into “Rexy’s” mouth, a finals tradition believed to bring good luck and passing grades.

Take a look at your life and see if what you think is just standard stress could be burnout from all the work you do. If you decide that it is, please seek whatever help you need! Whether that’s taking some time to actually relax for once, or going to office hours with your professors, know that there is a way to get back into your groove!

While burnout is a product of time, the stress of finals certainly doesn’t help. Students often forget to take a step back and review how far they have come and how they can make it through challenges. Remember that even though they seem scary, finals are still just one more assignment that you will get through in the grand scheme of things. With all this in mind, GEAR UP Wyoming has found a few tips that we want to make sure that you keep in mind during this finals season. An [article by the University of Notre Dame](#) shares a few key things to keep in mind:

1. “Sometimes the extra hour in the books is necessary, but if you’re exhausted, hungry, or falling asleep during your exam, you might make mistakes you could have avoided otherwise.” Remember that you are human and that we need to rest and revitalize ourselves, or we aren’t giving ourselves the best shot at these exams.

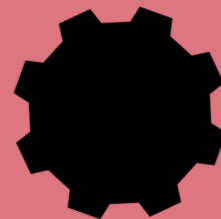
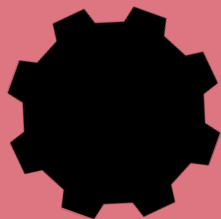
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## That's a Wrap (cont'd)

2. "Taking Breaks Is Critical." While it seems like nonstop study would be the right answer for giving yourself the best chances, you can only do so much before you exhaust yourself. Taking breaks is an essential part of studying. Whether that's taking an hour to catch up on your favorite show, or as strange as it sounds, packing up your dorm so you can spend the last few days of finals week hanging out with friends, breaks are a crucial step in the process of studying that you cannot forget!
3. "Give Yourself Leeway." We can plan all we want for things to go as smoothly as possible, but plans can go awry, and that is a possibility that we need to plan for. Recognize that sometimes something won't stick at the exact moment that you're studying and that's okay!

That's a wrap! Finally, finals are over, and you have a chance to relax for a few months before you're going to be back in the classroom again. And yet, some of you aren't going back into the classroom next fall. Take a look back at how far you've come. You have made it through so much, and finally, it's all paying off. To those who are finishing school, we want to congratulate you, as we know it wasn't always the easiest journey, and we can't wait to see what you will do with your lives!



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## Building Relationships and College Readiness

When families think about college readiness, the conversation often centers on grades, test scores, and course selection. While these factors are important, research shows that one of the strongest foundations for college readiness is consistent, supportive communication between parents and their children about school, goals, and future plans.



Harvard Graduate School of Education's [Making Caring Common](#) project highlights that asking questions, showing curiosity, and listening attentively are key ways parents build trust and strengthen relationships with their children. At the same time, research available through the [National Library of Medicine](#) consistently shows that parental involvement in education is linked to improved academic outcomes. Students tend to perform better when parents take an interest in their learning and engage them in conversations about school and goals. Together, these findings suggest that talking with your child about academics can both strengthen family relationships and support academic success.

These conversations can feel more challenging during late teen years, yet this is when they are more important than ever. Though it can be frustrating or even hurtful, decreased communication is a normal part of adolescent development. As students grow older, they begin to seek greater independence, develop their own identities, and rely less on parents for direction.

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Communication that once came easily becomes less frequent or less detailed. This shift does not mean parents are no longer influential; it means your role as a parent changes from directing to supporting. Staying engaged, without pressuring or controlling, helps maintain connection during this important transition.

Meaningful academic conversations go beyond checking grades or reminding students about assignments. Talking about what is going well, what feels challenging, and what goals lie ahead helps students to reflect on their progress and build confidence. These discussions also help students practice skills that are essential for college and career success, such as setting goals, problem solving, and thinking about long term plans.

Strong communication takes time and practice. Asking open-ended questions invites students to share more than one-word responses. Listening carefully, without immediately offering solutions, shows respect for their perspective. Additionally, simple actions like maintaining eye contact, acknowledging feelings, and following up on past conversations signal that their experiences matter and that you respect their own self-understanding.

Over time, these conversations help students learn how to persist through challenges and solve their own problems. Discussing setbacks, reflecting on effort, and focusing on growth reinforces the idea that success is built through consistency and perseverance. By staying curious, listening attentively, and keeping conversations about education ongoing, parents help strengthen relationships and support the skills students need to be ready for college and whatever comes next.

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## **Letter from the Project Director:**

### **Grit: Driving Student Success Across GEAR UP Wyoming**

Grit is the steady force behind meaningful and lasting impact. Within GEAR UP Wyoming (GUWY), it reflects a commitment to ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has access to the support, opportunities, and guidance needed to succeed in education and beyond. This work is not always easy, but it is essential to advancing college access, persistence, and completion for the students and families we serve.

Across GUWY partner sites, grit is demonstrated through a shared responsibility for student success. Educators and staff work collaboratively to meet students where they are, continuously adapting programming, instruction, and support systems to better align with individual needs. Rather than placing barriers on students, the focus remains on removing obstacles, strengthening engagement, and ensuring that all students are prepared for postsecondary opportunities.

As pathways to postsecondary success continue to evolve, GUWY remains committed to expanding awareness and access to a wide range of opportunities, including college, technical training, certifications, and career exploration. This requires intentional programming, strong partnerships, and a unified approach that connects students to meaningful experiences both in and beyond the classroom.

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A key component of this work is personalization. When students encounter challenges, GUWY staff and partners respond with targeted support. Through advising, tutoring, financial aid guidance, and family engagement, GUWY works to meet the needs of its participants. This approach reinforces high expectations while providing the resources necessary for students to meet those expectations and persist toward their goals.

Grit is also reflected in the collective effort of the entire GUWY network. From site staff and educators to support personnel and community partners, each plays a vital role in creating environments where students feel supported, connected, and capable of success. Through strong relationships and a shared mission, GUWY continues to build a culture focused on opportunity, belonging, and achievement.

Ultimately, grit within GUWY is about persistence with purpose. GUWY continues to remain committed to continuous improvement, collaboration, and the belief that every student can succeed. As Angela Duckworth, a psychologist and author of the bestselling book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, emphasizes, grit is the combination of sustained passion and perseverance over time. This mindset reflects the ongoing work across GUWY, where dedication, consistency, and belief in students continue to drive meaningful outcomes across the state.

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GEAR UP Wyoming | Dept. 3808, 1000 E University Ave, Laramie, WY 82071