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Survey Says...

The Final Countdown to Becoming a College Student

BY CORY CHENOWETH, FINANCIAL AID MANAGER

Wow...it’s hard to believe we’ve already made it to April! Though we are on the home stretch, and many graduating seniors may have contracted an extreme case of senioritis, there are still a few things that students will need to take care of before they enter college in the fall.

By this time, all students should have applied and been accepted for admission to at least one college. Additionally, all students hopefully have completed their FAFSA and know if they will receive a Pell Grant award and its amount. If students have not completed these two steps, it is not too late. Many colleges accept applications for admission up until the first week of classes, and it’s never too late to complete the FAFSA. However, the earlier the student applies, the more aid they may be eligible to receive.

April is generally the time when many students receive their financial aid award letter. This gives students time to carefully examine the financial aid packages schools are offering, allowing them to compare the actual out-of-pocket costs to attend each school (see March newsletter article re: financial aid award letter).

The next step that some students need to take is to check on the status of their Montana American Indian Tuition Waiver. If the student has not yet completed the application, and is at least one-quarter American Indian, demonstrates financial need, and plans to attend school at a Montana University System campus, they will need to complete this application as soon as possible. This tuition waiver is awarded on a first come first serve basis and it does run out.

April is also a great time for students and their families to make one or two final campus visits. This is an opportunity to set up meetings with campus resources such as financial aid or Student Support Services, as well as to take one last look at the campus to make sure the student feels comfortable spending the next few years there. April is an incredibly busy time for campus admission offices, so make sure to call early to schedule appointments.

If a student plans to live on campus, they will need to fill out a housing application. Colleges make a great effort to place students in a living situation where they can be successful. The more information the student provides on the housing application and the earlier it is submitted, the more likely the student will receive their first or second housing choice. If a student doesn’t fully complete the application, or turns it in late, it is highly unlikely they will be placed in one of their top residence hall choices. In addition to completing a housing application, students will also be asked to submit a housing deposit. The deposit is typically about $200 and is non-refundable. If a student does not have the $200 deposit, they can contact the school to let them know the situation. Generally the schools are willing to work with the students to have the $200 deposit fee roll over to the fall bill which can be paid using their grants, scholarships, and/or loans.

The final step that seniors need to take is to sign up for summer orientation. This is where students register for their first semester classes and become acquainted with all of the campus resources available as well as have an opportunity to meet their fellow classmates. Some schools may charge an orientation fee of $50–$100; however, if the student attends the orientation program in the fall right before classes start they will not be charged an orientation fee. For students able to pay the orientation fee, it is strongly recommended that they attend one of the earlier orientation sessions. The summer sessions provide the best opportunity to acclimate to college life as students, where the fall session is fast and furious with numerous distractions.

These final steps might seem like a lot, however, they are essential and really quite easy. Campuses are more than happy to help out with any questions the students may have or contact Cory Chenoweth, GEAR UP Financial Aid Manager at 406-444-0350 or cchenoweth@montana.edu.

Survey Says...

Increased Motivation to Attend College because of GEAR UP Summer Camp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 303</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</table>

Source: 2010 Montana GEAR UP Summer Camp Survey
GEAR UP Spotlight: Heart Butte Students Investigate Science

BY ALICE RYAN, HEART BUTTE HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER

SpectrUM Discovery Area, located on The University of Montana campus, is an interactive science museum, which takes its exhibits, activities and demonstrations to Montana communities and classrooms.

SpectrUM, in coordination with the Western Montana Area Health Education Center, developed the “Hands on Health” program. This program is designed to teach students about five different types of health professions as a way of encouraging students to start thinking about careers in the medical field. This intense hands-on science exhibit called Circus of Science was brought to Heart Butte in January.

GEAR UP Spotlight: Dutton/Brady Gets Weighted Down

BY TEDI BISHOP, GEAR UP LIAISON

Dutton/Brady sophomores were challenged to build a Popsicle Bridge for their semester test grade in Geometry. The allowable materials were popsicle sticks and white glue. The bridge had to span fifteen inches and there needed to be a scale drawing of the bridge included with the project.

Grading was determined by the efficiency of the weight carried divided by the bridge weight, plus the scale drawing of the bridge and of course, effort on the project.

Tension was high as weights were added to the different bridges. Based on efficiency, Trent Duty’s bridge held at least 250 pounds, but the bucket was not big enough to hold any more weights. Savannah Timmerman’s bridge came in second place and held 140 pounds before it broke. Her bridge was not built as heavy, so it had a greater efficiency rating. This is a favorite project of the Geometry class and the bridges get better every year! Students are able to incorporate all the learning styles into this one project and hands-on activities are always popular!

GEAR UP Spotlight: Postsecondary Partnerships for Box Elder Seniors

BY SHARI RUFF, GEAR UP LIAISON & SHANE SANGREY, DEMONSTRATION GRANT

The Demonstration Grant provides funding for a transition program geared to high school students. The program provides outreach services to high school scholars to help them make a smooth transition to college by creating services to increase educational aspirations, providing information regarding requirements for postsecondary educational achievement, and providing diagnostic resources necessary to help students become successful.

The program has been in place for four years and the students who started with us as high school freshmen are now planning to graduate in May. All Box Elder High School seniors are involved in the program. The grant program, based at Stone Child College works in conjunction with the high school staff and faculty to help retain the students.

As seniors, this cohort has participated in numerous workshops to help them apply for Federal Aid and to learn the vernacular of the Federal Aid program. They’ve worked on setting attainable goals, education planning, leadership and self-advocacy. The students have also learned to seek out support systems, write scholarship essays and research scholarship opportunities. They have learned life skills, including budgeting and communication. The students were also given the opportunity to take college level classes during the 2010 summer session at the Demo Summer Encampment. They successfully passed their classes with stellar grades.

The students went on many campus tours to get a grasp on much larger populations, to attain wholesome educational experiences, and had the opportunity to explore programs of study in math and the sciences. The grant provided a summer encampment every summer that involved math, science classes, and field experiences. The students traveled to Yellowstone National Park, Glacier National Park, Dinosaur Museums throughout Montana, and Kerr Dam as well as participated in activities such as Bear Paws and Botany and Mitigation.

Stone Child College, the Demonstration Grant, and Box Elder High School make this a successful partnership that will produce future leaders of the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation.
Interactive Student Notebooks

By Jim Vaile, Browning High School Science Teacher

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) has extensive experience in supporting student achievement and has proven to be one of the most effective ways to increase the likelihood that a young person who comes from an underrepresented, low-income family will graduate from high school and go on to enroll in postsecondary education with no need for remediation. The AVID pilot program at Browning Public Schools is the first in Montana, and it is funded by Montana GEAR UP. The Interactive Notebook is an AVID strategy that Browning high school students are using in the classroom.

Note-taking is an engaging and interactive activity when done thoughtfully. Students can become involved with the material by making charts, illustrating concepts, creating graphic organizers, making connections between concepts and the real world, and applying knowledge to new situations. Interactive Notebooks, which are being used by students in physical science classes at Browning High School, encourage students to use critical thinking skills to organize and contemplate new ideas.

The purpose of the Interactive Notebook is to enable students to be creative, independent thinkers and writers. Interactive Notebooks are used for class notes as well as for other activities where the student will be asked to express his/her own ideas and process the information presented in class.

Advantages

Teachers using Interactive Notebooks in the classroom site the following advantages:
1) It is a method for mastering information, not just recording facts.
2) It is a strategy that encourages independent thinking.
3) It is efficient.

4) Each step prepares the way for the next part of the learning process.

Getting Started

Students need a spiral notebook with a minimum of 80 pages or a binder to keep loose-leaf paper in addition to colored pencils, highlighters, glue and scissors. The students construct a title page as creative and colorful as they wish and include a table of contents page to easily find each section when reviewing notes. The notebook is divided into two sides (see below). One side of the notebook contains the notes taken in class or from the text. The other side demonstrates the student’s understanding of what they have learned. This is where the students creativity comes into play. This page can contain graphs, colorful pictures, articles taken from newspapers, or whatever else helps the student process the information they receive.

So far I have seen a big improvement on test scores and overall improvement in each student in the classroom. I use the Cornell notes in science so that students can be creative. This is a great way for students to learn the Scientific Method, which we use every day.

The most important lesson that students learn is that the Interactive Notebook prepares them for all tests and homework which makes it easier for the students to learn the material in science as well as be prepared for college.

A junior at Browning High School, who has been struggling in school for 4 years, said that the Interactive Notebook has given him a second chance at learning all the material in all of his classes. Once a D average student he is now a B average student since learning how to use the Interactive Notebook and all the students in the classroom are steadily improving their grades.

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Left Side - Output

Student Directed:
- Interpretations & reactions
- Illustrations
- Cartoons, songs, or poems
- Graphic organizers
- Application of knowledge to new situation
- Colorful & varied representation of concepts
- Flow charts
- Math graffiti
- Charts
- Sequence chains
- Advertisements
- Personal responses
- News articles
- Brainstorming
- T-charts
- Matrices

Student must actively do something with the information before they can internalize it.

This is where students show that they have processed the information and used critical-thinking skills.

---

Right Side - Input

Name:_______
Date:_________
Page:_________

Topic:

Study Questions:

- Any input students get in the classroom
- Information given in class
- Notes from teacher lectures
- Notes from text books
- Vocabulary words and their definitions
- Notes for labs, lab instructions, procedures, and materials
- Teacher questions and sample problems

Adapted from the Cornell note system by: James O. Donbach (2003)
Montana GEAR UP Reminders & Upcoming Events

April 9: ACT test date.
April 7-10: Montana Indian Education Association (MIEA) Conference, Great Falls.
April 15: Annual Performance Report (APR) due to U.S. Department of Education.
May 1: Final date to submit Budget Amendments for 2010-11. No exceptions!
May 2: Spring Liaison’s Meeting, Wingate Hotel at 2007 North Oakes Street in Helena. Please call 406-449-3000 to reserve your room in the GEAR UP block at the state rate of $81.00/night + tax.
May 6: ACT test registration deadline for June 11th test date.
June 10: 2010-11 Final Program Reports due to School Grant Managers.
June 11: ACT test date.
June 15: Remaining student performance & activity data due in GEARS.
June 20-24: Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI), Bozeman.

Montana GEAR UP Summer Camps

Montana GEAR UP will offer four (4) statewide middle school camps and one (1) high school camp this summer. The table below lists the campus host, dates, camp theme, possible regional pick-up sites, and the maximum number of students each camp can accommodate. If you have questions regarding statewide summer camp programs please contact the Montana GEAR UP Summer Camp Coordinator Kris Stockton at 406-444-0383 or kstockton@montana.edu.

### Middle School Camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>College &amp; Location</th>
<th>Camp Name</th>
<th>Camp Focus/Theme</th>
<th>Possible Regional Pick-up Sites</th>
<th>Max. # Students</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 5-8</td>
<td>MSU-Northern, Havre</td>
<td>GEAR UP + SuperCamp MS</td>
<td>Quantum Learning Network Program</td>
<td>• Ravalli/Kalispell</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Lincoln/G. Falls</td>
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<td>• Hardin/Billings</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 19-25</td>
<td>Dawson CC, Glendive</td>
<td>DCC + ME = Discovery</td>
<td>A college semester in a week featuring Makoshika State Park</td>
<td>• Missoula/Billings</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Shelby/Hi-line</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 17-23</td>
<td>UM-Western, Dillon</td>
<td>CSI: Birch Creek</td>
<td>Crime scene investigation including forensic science, research, testing, writing, history, and drama</td>
<td>• Kalispell</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>• Havre/G. Falls</td>
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<td>• Hardin/Billings</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 17-23</td>
<td>Carroll College, Helena</td>
<td>Preserving the Planet</td>
<td>Environmental studies with writing, arts, and humanities</td>
<td>• Kalispell</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Havre/G. Falls</td>
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<td>• Hardin/Billings</td>
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### High School Camp

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<th>Dates</th>
<th>College &amp; Location</th>
<th>Camp Name</th>
<th>Camp Focus/Theme</th>
<th>Possible Regional Pick-up Sites</th>
<th>Max. # Students</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 9-12</td>
<td>MSU-Northern, Havre</td>
<td>GEAR UP + SuperCamp HS</td>
<td>Quantum Learning Network Program</td>
<td>• Ravalli/Kalispell</td>
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<td>• Hardin/Billings</td>
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Our mission: Montana GEAR UP believes that postsecondary education is possible for all Montana students, regardless of economic background, and strives to empower them to realize that ambition. Montana GEAR UP brings this message to middle and high schools, students, their parents, and the community through early college and career awareness activities, scholarships, financial aid information, and improved academic support to raise the expectations and achievement of all.