



# WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES THAT *really* WORK

NEW YORK GEAR UP WORKS.  
*Great ideas from  
NEW YORK GEAR UP Sites.*

- Making Connections/  
Dispelling Myths
- Essay Writing Workshop
- Education Unites Us/  
Family Celebration
- College Awareness  
Groups
- Nassau Community  
College GEAR UP Program
- The Seven Habits of  
Highly Effec...Sean Covey

*The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cicu) would like to thank all our GEAR UP friends who submitted their successful activities for this publication. We applaud your hard work and dedication. These activities will be invaluable tools and resources for schools and community-based organizations that provide college awareness programming.*

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# COLLEGE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

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## Audience

Academically and economically disadvantaged middle and high school students.

## Goal

To provide academically and economically disadvantaged students with the educational support, skills, inspiration, and preparation needed to pursue and succeed in postsecondary education. Student needs are addressed through the coordination of services and programs that build a sense of community among students, schools, their families, and postsecondary institutions.

## Objectives

Students learn about themselves and research different aspects of college life through several self-discovery exercises.

## Setting and Materials

- Name tags
- Writing and portfolio materials
- Access to computers and the Internet
- Information about public, private, and community institutions of higher education

## Presenter/Facilitator

A person who is familiar with the participating students and knowledgeable about higher education in the state/area.

## Estimated Timeline

Year-round weekly meetings

## Procedures/Plan

### I. Self Discovery Questions

- Who am I?
- Where am I going?
- Where do I want to go?
- What steps do I need to take to get there?

### II. Internet Research Topics

- The difference between attending a two-year and a four-year college
- The difference between private and public colleges
- Tuition cost
- Extracurricular activities
- Campus life
- Student population
- College locations

### III. Portfolios and Presentations

Students build portfolios based on their own interests and make presentations to their peers and in their communities, discussing and disseminating information about how to research and find the college or university that matches an individual's needs and aspirations.

## Evaluation Tools

- Program Evaluation
- Instructor Evaluations
- Parent Surveys
- Student Surveys
- Attendance Records

Parents were also surveyed about the impact certain activities have had on their children. Of the 174 parents surveyed, more than 80% responded with positive feedback. In particular, parents noticed an increased interest in school; increased use of technology for research on careers and college; an increased ability to set goals; as well as increased cooperation, self-confidence, improved communication, and writing skills. Many parents also noticed that their children began to understand the consequences of poor choices and the long-term impact of not completing high school.

## Other Comments/Feedback

*As part of the GEAR UP mission, students are encouraged to take an active role in their education and in the development of themselves as whole persons. Students are offered the opportunity to explore their talents and interests as well as to seek opportunities to enjoy new cultural experiences; GEAR UP activities serve to enhance the academic skills of students and to motivate them to*





## COLLEGE AWARENESS WORKSHOP SERIES

### A Three-Part Interactive Workshop for 11th Grade Students and Evening Events for Parents

#### Workshops for Students:

- Workshop 1: Introduction to college consideration and search process
- Workshop 2: College fair and interview scenarios presented by facilitators, with feedback from students
- Workshop 3: Students role play successful encounters with college representatives to gain confidence and effective strategies for college fairs, interviews, and open houses

#### Evening Events for Parents (descriptions not provided):

- Event 1: Overview of College Application and Financial Aid Process
- Event 2: Financial Aid Nights

#### Authors

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#### Audience

This workshop series is timely for 11th grade students and parents/families embarking on a college search and application process, but the series could be offered as early as the 9th grade.

#### Goal

To show students how to actually start the college search process. To give parents and families guidance on how to help their children in the college search process. Through small group opportunities and interactive approaches, students are fully involved in the workshop. The series offers opportunities for students to discuss career goals and degree aspirations, as well as allowing them an opportunity to deal with any confusion and questions about college.

#### Objectives

To actively engage students in small group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and role-playing over several workshops in order to solidify their understanding of the college search and application process.

To help parents/families gain a more complete understanding of the college application and financial aid process *before* their children are on a deadline for application submission.

#### Setting and Materials

For Student Workshops 1 and 2 (see pages 7-11 for workshop outlines):

- 1 Lead Facilitator and 5 Co-Facilitators
- Flip chart and easel
- Large inflated ball
- Post-its and pens
- College admissions packets (in this case CUNY and SUNY)
- Private college search materials (in this case *Your College Search* and *Affording College*)
- College Research Form chart with key components of college consideration - see sample on page 15 (completed by students during Workshop 1)
- Folders with tips on how to search for college information and scholarships online
- College fair and college interview tips
- Experience Checklist to prepare for interviews - see sample on page 14. For Workshop 2, facilitators should bring partially-completed search charts in case students have forgotten their originals
- A room large enough for up to 70 students, who will be broken up into 5 small groups.

For Student Workshop 3 (see pages 12-13 for workshop outline):

- 1 Lead Facilitator and 3 Support Facilitators
- Chalkboard (not necessary, but helpful)
- Completed Experience Checklist from each student before start of workshop - see sample on page 14
- Regular classroom space

For Parent Evening Events 1 and 2:

- A school auditorium or cafeteria
- Food

Continued on page 6



## WORKSHOP I

### Introduction to College Consideration and Search Process (90 minutes)

This workshop is designed to take place during the school day. See **Other Comments/Feedback** on page 6 for more information.

- I. **Pre-Workshop Set Up – 5 minutes**
  - a. Bring students into room and ask them to sit in a large group.
- II. **Introduction – 5 minutes**
- III. **Large Group Exercise (distribute post-its and pens to students) – 15 minutes**
  - a. Have students imagine where they will be in the future.
  - b. Have students write thoughts about their future onto a label.
  - c. Use a large ball for students to pass around and affix their label.
  - d. Once completed, have students pass ball to Lead Facilitator who will read some ideas aloud as Co-Facilitators record ideas on a large sheet of paper.
- IV. **Small Group Work – 30 minutes**
  - a. Students break out into small groups to discuss future goals and how to attain these goals.
- V. **Large Group – 5 minutes**

*Question:* What factors have an impact on, influence, affect, and are important to the college search process?

  - a. Students respond to question.
  - b. A Co-Facilitator records answers on flip-chart and categorizes into the following areas:
    - Admissions Requirements
    - Location
    - Cost
    - Academic Programs
    - Student Life
  - c. Co-Facilitators begin the individual group sessions in which each group will be assigned one of the above areas to discuss in depth. (Co-Facilitators identify themselves as “Team Leaders” by their topic and an assigned color and area of the room where they will facilitate a breakout group. Students have color-coded pieces of paper to match to a topic.)

- VI. **Breakout Groups – 25 minutes**
  - a. Team Leaders and students move to their breakout areas and select individual group recorders and spokespersons for their team before beginning the actual discussion.
  - b. Groups discuss their topic with the goal of generating a set of important considerations that will be shared with the larger group. A large piece of paper torn from the display board will be given to each team in order to record their points.
  - c. Team Leaders facilitate the group discussion to help students consider how they would tackle their assigned topic as part of an overall plan for a college search.

*Guiding questions:*

    - How do you research that?
    - How would you find this out?
    - Who would be able to help you with that question at your high school or at a college?
    - How would you contact them?
    - How important is this to you?
    - When do you think you need to get this information?
- VII. **Sharing – 15 minutes**
  - a. Lead Facilitator will bring the groups together by asking each team to share the questions they have developed about their individual topics.
  - b. Provide each student with a College Research Form (Co-Facilitators hand out Research Forms - see sample on page 15). First, review a completed sample College Research Form with the group. Then, instruct students to complete these sheets before meeting again in about one month. Have each student research one 2-year, one 4-year, and one additional college of choice using the 5 areas discussed.

Students can use college advisement office catalogs and Web sites to help with this process. Provide each student a packet with materials on public and private colleges in the state (in this case CUNY, SUNY, and New York’s 100+ independent colleges and universities) to get started. Encourage students to participate in any college trips taking place through their high school or outreach program. Instruct students to bring the completed College Research Form with them to discuss at the next meeting.
  - c. Thank students for their attention and participation today. Distribute admissions packets to students as they leave the room.

Continued on page 8

## WORKSHOP 2

### College Fairs and Interviews (90 minutes)

This workshop is designed to take place during the school day. See **Other Comments/Feedback** on page 6 for more information.

- I. **Pre-Workshop Set Up** – 5 minutes  
Bring students into the room and ask them to sit in large group.
- II. **Introduction** – 5 minutes  
Ask students to pull out College Research Forms. Have blank forms available.
- III. **What We've Learned** – 10 minutes
  - a. Ask students to share things they have learned about the colleges they have researched. The Co-Facilitator records answers on flip-chart.
  - b. Ask students if they still have questions about the colleges. Suggest ways to find out more about colleges and briefly discuss college fairs and college interviews – what they are; where they are held; when they may occur.
- IV. **Scenarios** – 70 minutes  
Examine both college fairs and college interviews through scenarios enacted by presenters (see College Fair Scenario Scripts at right and on page 9).
  - a. The College Fair
    1. Ask students to describe a typical college fair.  
*Ask these guiding questions:*
      - Who do you think is behind the table representing the college?
      - What are the most useful questions to ask the representatives?
      - Should you see as many colleges as possible, or select the ones you want to talk to?
      - Should you travel through the fair on your own or with your friends, and why?
      - What should you bring with you to the college fair?
    2. The College Fair Scenarios  
Students watch a presentation of Scenario 1, followed by Scenario 2.
    3. College Fair Discussion  
Ask students what they noticed about Sam's and Sara's approaches. Incorporate the points below in the discussion.  
*Guiding Questions:*
      - Which actions or behaviors were appropriate or inappropriate in Sam's and Sara's scenarios?
      - What advice would you give to Sam, if he were your friend, on how he could do better?
      - What do you think is most important when you meet someone from a college for the first time?

### College Fair Scenario 1: Sam

*(Scenario should be read verbatim.)*

*Narrator:* Meet Sam Anybody and Sara Somebody, played by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. They are at College Fair 200x. They will be meeting a representative from Anyplace University and this is their first college fair. Today, we have a representative from Anyplace University providing information to our students.

*Sam enters, wearing a hat on backwards, earphones on, and his shirt untucked. He plops his backpack on the nearest college table.*

*College Rep (CR):* Hello.

*Sam:* What's up? My dad made me come here, so what's this about?

*CR:* Well, Anyplace is *(starts to answer but is interrupted by the ringing of Sam's phone)*.

*Sam (answering phone):* Hey, whassup... this is nothing, I'll be ten minutes, this is dumb, so I won't be long. *(Hangs up and turns toward CR.)* So I hear you guys are really into animation.

*CR:* Well, actually, that is not one of the many programs we offer, but we do have over 200 programs offered that you might be interested in, including a number of liberal arts programs.

*Sam (interrupting CR):* You know what, I'm also really into music and now you're talking about liberal arts stuff.

*CR:* Music is a part of...

*Sam (cutting off the CR):* Let me just take one of those catalogs. Okay. I gotta go and meet up with my friends, they're ready to go.

*Lead Facilitator:* FREEZE! That is one way to handle a college fair, but remember what college fairs are meant to do. Now let's see how Sara does.

## College Fair Scenario 2: Sara

*(Scenario should be read verbatim.)*

*Sara walks in confidently and approaches the College Rep (CR) with a smile and a handshake.*

*Sara:* Hello, my name is Sara Somebody.

*CR:* Nice to meet you, Sara. How can I help you today?

*Sara:* I have done some initial research (*deliberately pulls out College Research Form*), and I want to know more about your business programs.

*CR:* First, tell me what kind of business you're interested in.

*Sara:* Well, I'd like to own my own business one day.

*CR:* We have a wonderful entrepreneurship program.

*Sara:* Yes, that was what attracted me to your school. How can I get more details on that?

*CR:* If you complete this card, we'll send you more information about the college and the program, but you really should try to make it to our open house this Saturday, so you could meet some of the students and faculty members in the business department.

*Sara:* Oh, great — thank you so much.

*CF:* I hope to see you on Saturday.

*(Sara walks toward Sam, who has just entered Stage Left.)*

*Sara:* Hey, Sam, how's it going?

*Sam:* I don't know what's going on.

*Sara:* Didn't you go to that GEAR UP meeting? They gave us the sheet with all of the questions we should be asking. I brought mine and it really helped.

*Sam:* Nah, I don't know where mine is.

*Sara:* Well, I guess you could use mine for a while, but promise to give it back.

*Sam:* Cool!

*Lead Facilitator:* FREEZE! Okay, let's discuss what we saw and how it might help you when you visit a college fair.

### b. The College Interview — 15 minutes

#### 1. Discuss the following types of interviews with your students:

- A required interview means you must go to the college or a designated location and sit down with either an admissions or academic department representative to discuss your application for admission. Small colleges and selective departments at larger colleges and universities may require interviews. Larger public and private universities usually do not. If a department has an artistic or athletic focus, you also may be asked to audition or submit a videotape. If this is necessary, it will be listed in the admissions materials that you receive by mail or from their Web site. The purpose of the interview is to determine if you will be a good fit for the college. Depending on the college, the interview may be a factor in the admissions decision.
- An optional interview is something that you, as a potential student, may request from a college or university that you are interested in attending. It is not required, but can be a useful part of your college search process. The purpose is for you to learn more about the school and to give them a better sense of who you are. You should call the admissions office, and possibly the specific academic department you are interested in, to determine who may be able to meet with you. If a college is competitive, or if you have your heart set on a particular college, regardless of its competitiveness, it's a good idea to consider an optional interview so that they know that you are very interested in their institution.
- Both types of interviews are opportunities for you and are not meant to put you on the spot. The person meeting with you wants to be impressed by you and to think that you'd be great at their school. Maybe he or she has some questions for you, based on your application. Your grades were low in math in your sophomore year? Here is a chance to explain why. You can also promote some of your own strengths, ones you think would make you an ideal student at their school. Use the interview as an opportunity to talk about those strengths.

#### 2. The College Interview Scenarios

Students watch a presentation of Scenario 1, followed by Scenario 2.

#### 3. Discussion of Sam's college interview

Following presentation of Sam's interview (script on page 10), discuss briefly with student's and follow discussion with presentation of Sara's interview (script on page 11).

Continued on page 10

## College Interview Scenario 1: Sam

*(Scenario should be read verbatim)*

**Narrator:** Sam has applied to Anyplace College as a music major. He is attending a required interview with the head of the music department. His audition on keyboards went very well, but his overall GPA wasn't very high in his junior year.

**Sam enters in a pair of khakis with his shirt tucked in. His appearance is neat, and he extends his hand to the Anyplace Music Department Representative (AR).**

**Anyplace Representative (rising from desk to shake hands):** Hi, Sam. Welcome to Anyplace College.

**Sam (shaking hands and making eye contact):** Thanks very much. It's good to be here.

**AR (sitting):** Have a seat. How was your tour of campus?

**Sam (sitting down):** The campus is great. I really enjoyed seeing the recording studios and hearing the students practicing. They all sound terrific!

**AR:** We have a lot of talent here. Sam, we called you in today to discuss your application. Why do you think you'd be a good fit here at Anyplace?

**Sam:** Like your students, I am totally committed to music. I have so many ideas in my head, but know I need more training to make them happen. I want to study with other students who feel the same way. I also want a great liberal arts education so I can put it all into my music. I really want a conservatory program and a bachelor's degree, and I can get both here at Anyplace.

**AR:** Your audition was quite impressive. You obviously have a lot of musical talent. How long have you been playing?

**Sam:** Thanks very much. I've been playing since I was 7. I studied with my dad at first, then started piano lessons at the local music school when I was 9.

**AR:** What styles do you like best?

**Sam:** Everything! I play the classics every day to keep up my technique, but I love jazz and salsa. I joined my middle school jazz band and then formed my own salsa band with a group of friends when I was 15. We play at church and school functions. I am also in my high school jazz ensemble. I play as often as I can.

**AR:** You have exactly the kind of spirit we look for in our students. We do have some questions about your academic record. We want to admit students who are very talented but also able to keep up with our rigorous academics. I see your grades slipped a bit in your junior year. What happened?

**Sam:** I was playing a lot of paying gigs with my band and it was getting in the way of my studies. My guidance counselor and parents sat down with me at the end of the year and explained that I needed to cut back on the playing and put more attention into my schoolwork. I agreed. I didn't have my priorities straight. Now I only play out once a month and on school vacations. I went to summer school and repeated two classes. I got my GPA back up and I expect to be back to a 3.0 when my fall report card comes out. My counselor will be sending you a copy next month.

**AR:** Are you prepared to get help if you are struggling in a particular subject?

**Sam:** Definitely. I don't wait when I need help. I ask for tutoring help or I study with others. In fact, I really like studying with a few friends. It helps me understand the class better and it's more fun.

**AR:** You think you can handle the demands of your music practice, rehearsals, and 3 liberal arts classes each semester?

**Sam:** I do. I've learned to balance my music with my studies. They are both equally important. I know I'll be a better musician if I have a great education. I know I'll get that here.

**AR (rising and extending hand):** Okay. Thanks very much for coming in to see us, Sam. You'll be hearing from us soon.

**Sam (shaking hands with a smile):** Thanks very much for meeting with me.

**Lead Facilitator:** FREEZE! Okay, let's discuss what you just saw. What kind of impression did Sam make?

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## WORKSHOP 3

### Students Role Play Successful Encounters with College Representatives (43 minutes, or 1 class period)

This workshop is designed to take place during the school day. See **Other Comments/Feedback** on page 6 for more information.

#### I. Pre-Workshop Set Up Group – 3 minutes

Bring students into the room and ask them to sit in large group.

#### II. Introductions by Lead Facilitator – 7 minutes (maximum)

- Brief introduction of each Co-Facilitator by name and affiliation.
- Ask if anyone has attended a college fair or open house, or has gone on a college interview; if so, ask a few students (2 or 3 maximum) to share their experiences with the class (Co-Facilitator writes responses on board or post-it poster paper, if available).
- Ask other students who have not attended a college fair or gone on an interview what they hope to learn or gain from them when they do go (Ask for responses from 2 or 3 students. Co-Facilitator records responses on board, if available).
- Lead Facilitator gives a brief statement about how college fairs, open houses, and interviews (required or optional) are each excellent ways to learn more about colleges and can help students make more informed choices.
- Transition direction to the group: Explain that the purpose of today's workshop will be to work in small groups to practice presentation and questioning skills through role playing.

#### III. Small Group Work – 25 minutes

##### a. Overview:

Students will work in small groups, each with a Co-Facilitator, to run through a series of improvised scenes. There is no script; the Co-Facilitator will play an imaginary college representative at a college fair, an admissions professional in an interview setting, or a faculty member at a college open house. Each student will role play a meeting with this person, then receive feedback from the group about what went well and what could be improved. Each student will have two opportunities to role play.

- Ask students to pull out the Experience Checklist (see sample on page 14) they completed before today's workshop.

- Divide the class into four even groups. Use the four corners of the room to disperse the groups with their assigned Facilitator.
  - Remind the class of the 25-minute timeframe and that they will regroup for sharing at the end of the period. The Lead Facilitator should give the groups a 10-minute and 5-minute warning.
  - Each group's Co-Facilitator plays the college representative.
  - Students play themselves in each scenario.
  - Use 2 or 3 students per scenario. Not all students will do every scenario, but each student should do at least 2.
  - Instruct observers to watch closely and be prepared to give constructive feedback to their classmates. Give the group concrete examples of what constitutes constructive criticism. Criticism should be limited to what specific things their classmate could do better next time. Give students examples such as: "I think you should have shared more about how you help out at your family's restaurant." "Make eye contact when you talk about the volunteering you did last summer."
  - Each role play should last no more than 1.5 minutes.
- #### b. Breakout Small Group Work Components
- Warm-up (2-3 minutes): Keep students on their feet for a moment and ask each to make eye contact, to shake your hand, introduce himself or herself, and tell you about one item the student is particularly proud of from their Experience Checklist.
  - Scenarios:
    - Scenario 1 – College Fair: You have a minute and a half with a college admissions representative to introduce yourself, ask 2 or 3 important questions about the college, and find out when you can visit the campus.
    - Scenario 2 – College Open House: You are meeting a professor from the academic department that you hope to be part of next year. What will you say about yourself to let him or her know of your interest in the department's area of study and college?
    - Scenario 3 – College Interview: You are meeting an admissions officer and will have to explain why you didn't do as well as you hoped to do in a particular subject at some point in your high school career.



# EXPERIENCE CHECKLIST

DIRECTIONS: Place a check mark next to any experience in which you have participated, and write a brief summary about that experience.

## THE ARTS

- Art
  - Dance
  - Music
  - Theater
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## AUTOMOBILE

- Detail
  - Maintenance
  - Painting
  - Repair
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## CLUBS

- 4-H
  - Boys & Girls Club
  - Scouts
  - YMCA/YWCA
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## CRAFTS

- Jewelry
  - Sewing
  - Woodworking
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## FUNDRAISERS

- Club
  - Community
  - Religious
  - Sports
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Babysitting
  - Cleaning
  - Cooking
  - Pet Care
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## MUSIC

- Drums
  - Guitar
  - Piano
  - Voice
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Camping
  - In-Line Skating
  - Rock Climbing
  - Skate Boarding
  - Skiing
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## RELIGIOUS

- Choir
  - Religious School
  - Youth Group
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## SPECIAL CLASSES

- Computer
  - Electronics
  - Language
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## SPECIAL SKILLS

- Childcare
  - Culinary
  - Mechanical
  - Technical
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## SPORTS

- Baseball
  - Basketball
  - Biking
  - Boxing
  - Fishing
  - Gymnastics
  - Hiking
  - Hockey
  - Soccer
  - Swimming
  - Track
  - Volleyball
  - Wrestling
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

## VOLUNTEER WORK

- Child/Adult Care
  - Community
  - Hospital
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

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## College Research Form

Questions	College #1	College #2	College #3
Admission Requirements			
Location			
Cost and Financial Aid			
Programs			
Student Life			



## ESSAY WRITING WORKSHOP

### Authors

Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU)

### Audience

Students who are writing college application essays or who would benefit from exposure to writing college application essays. This workshop would be appropriate for all students applying to college and writing admissions essays.

### Goal

To improve awareness and to stress the importance of application essays and improve students' ability to write college admission essays.

### Objectives

Help students applying to college or contemplating applying to focus on the admission essay writing task, to give them tools to tackle the writing process, and help them begin to draft their essay. Demonstrate how admissions essays differ from other types of writing.

### Setting and Materials

- Classroom with smartboard/whiteboard/chalkboard and desks and chairs
- Writing materials: paper, pencils, erasers, etc.
- Examples of good and bad admission essays
- Essay writing tips sheet
- Sample admission application essay topics [Find examples of college application essays from online college applications and from The Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org))]
- Information about how admissions officers evaluate student essays

### Presenter/Facilitator

The presenter/workshop facilitator should be an individual familiar with both the admissions process and essay writing (e.g., a seasoned admission representative, or an experienced higher education professional).

### Estimated Timeline

Three hours (minimum)

### Procedures/Plan

- I. **Introduction and overview of the workshop** – 10 minutes
- II. **Icebreaker exercise** – 10 minutes  
For example, "Packing your suitcase" exercise: Have students write four things on an index card that they would pack in their suitcase to bring to college – two material and two non-material items (e.g., honesty, integrity). Facilitator collects the cards and discusses the importance of the submissions with the group as a whole.
- III. **Discuss the role of the essay in admissions decisions** – 30 minutes  
*Questions to pose might include:*
  - What are admissions counselors looking for when they review college applications?
  - How important is the essay in admission decisions?
  - Rank the importance of the different pieces of the admission application.
- IV. **Evaluate samples of good and bad admissions essays** (3 to 4 sample essays) – 20 minutes  
Divide the group into small discussion groups (size of groups will depend on class size; it is strongly recommended that each small group be no larger than 4 or 5 students). Ask each group to make notes of their discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of each of the sample essays and to assign one group member to be the reporter back to the class at a specified time. When the facilitator calls for reports from each of the small groups, each group will report their group's discussion.
- V. **Essay topic discussions** – 30 minutes  
Students again meet in their small groups to brainstorm possible topics for their own essays. Facilitator should circulate among the groups to provide feedback to student discussion in the small groups.
- VI. **Essay drafts** – 70 minutes
  - a. Review possible essay structures and good writing tips.
  - b. Ask students to pick an essay topic and to outline their essay. Facilitator will circulate and respond to questions, brainstorm and challenge students to think about what defining life experiences they have encountered. At the 40 minute point, the facilitator will ask students to share their outlines with the students sitting next to them and request general feedback on organization, coherence, and interest.
  - c. For the final 40 minutes, ask students to begin to write their essay.
- VII. **Wrap-up, questions** – 10 minutes  
Ask the group if anyone would like to share what they have written with the entire class.

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# LEADERSHIP CAMP

## Authors

Jill Fazio, GEAR UP Social Worker  
Khiet Long, GEAR UP Social Worker  
David Johnson, Assistant Director of GEAR UP at CUNY LaGuardia  
Community College

## Audience

High school seniors, but may be used with students of almost any age, and also with adults.

## Goal

To motivate students to remain involved in the educational process during the summer months and to help them develop leadership skills and the ability to work with others.

## Objectives

To provide students with 2 days of interactive activities focusing on recognizing and building leadership skills: more specifically, self-exploration, self-esteem, decision-making, goal setting, conflict resolution, and teamwork. Activities were designed and chosen to aid students in high school and in preparing for college life.

## Setting and Materials (for a group of 30 students)

- Wide open space (a state park or nature preserve)
- 30 small blank puzzles with 10 pieces each (one puzzle for each participant)
- 30 ziplock bags (one for each participant)
- 15 rubber chickens (for Toss the Bird Tag activity)
- Blindfolds (for See No Evil, Speak No Evil activity)
- 9 large hula hoops (for Hoop Relay, and Shipwreck activities)
- Pictures of different animals (for Animal Game activity)
- Matchboxes (for Matchboxes and Paperclips activity)
- Paperclips (for Matchboxes and Paperclips activity)
- Rubber bands (for Matchboxes and Paperclips activity)
- Box or partition (for Matchboxes and Paperclips activity)
- 3 signs, each with one of these inscriptions – I AGREE, I DISAGREE, and I AM NOT SURE (for Values Election activity)

## Presenter/Facilitator

Facilitators who are energetic and involved, not just presenters, but also participants, are a necessity. They should be well-versed in the activities, able to see them through, and guide students.

## Estimated Timeline

2 days

## Procedures

*NOTE: The list below reflects selected activities from the Leadership Camp. We encourage you, when planning your own workshop, to include these and other trust, team building and energizing activities that you have found to be successful.*

Activities are divided into categories: *Energizer* activities (to get the participants moving and energized); *Trust* activities, to help the participants build trust with one another; and *Teamwork* activities, to help build teamwork among the students from different schools.

- I. At the beginning of Day 1, distribute a small, blank puzzle (about 10 pieces), to each of the participants. Have each student write his or her name across the front of the puzzle and decorate it, so that each puzzle is representative of that student. Students then disassemble their puzzles and put all of the pieces into ziplock bags. At the end of each activity throughout the camp, each student should exchange puzzle pieces with someone new, and have that person write something positive about that particular student on the back of the puzzle (something the person did well to help make the last activity successful for the team). Students reassemble their puzzles at the end of the camp.
- II. *Energizer* Activity #1: Toss the Bird Tag (Day 1)
  - a. Assign 4 to 5 people to be IT. To be immune from a tag, a player must be grasping a bird.
  - b. With only 15 birds to 30 students, the birds are tossed often. Each participant can only hold one bird at a time. The bird cannot be thrown to the same person twice in succession. Use restricted boundaries. *Helpful Hints:* If you see players hogging the birds, you may have to put a time limit on how long a bird can be held. Also, if birds are being thrown in a dangerous manner, you may have to limit throws to underhanded tosses.
- III. Introduction to *Teamwork*: The Human Knot (Day 1)
  - a. Randomly divide students into three smaller groups. Have each person in the group face one another in a tight circle, holding hands with the person to each side. Ask each group for one volunteer, then remove that volunteer from the circle. Tighten the circles again and have participants release their hands. Each person then holds out a right hand and grasps the right hand of someone else, as if shaking hands. Then each person extends his or her left hand and clasps the hand of someone else, so that each person is holding two different hands (and not the hands of the people directly next to them on either side).
  - b. With students holding hands tightly, with arms intertwined and bodies juxtaposed, the facilitators explain the problem. The volunteer is the only person allowed to speak. All those within the knot may only listen as the volunteer tells them how to “unknot” themselves. The goal is for the participants to “unknot” themselves and end up in the same circle in which they began – without releasing hands.

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- c. If the group is still struggling after 5 to 8 minutes, allow the volunteer to reenter the circle, and have the group reform the knot and start over, while allowing all in the group to speak. Again, the goal is to “unknot” themselves and end up in the same circle they began with, but without releasing hands.
- IV. *Trust* Activity: Backward Fall and Catch (Day 1)
- Have participants find a partner they trust.
  - The whole group will form an inner circle and an outer circle, so that the partners stand at about 1 meter distance, as if one person were behind the other.
  - Both circles should be facing inwards. The person in the inner circle allows him or herself to fall back and be caught by his or her partner. Distance can be varied within a safe limit.
- V. *Energizer* Activity: Hoop Relay (Day 1)
- Using the small teams, have the students line up, facing forward. The people in each line should be holding hands front-to-back; in other words, reaching backward through their legs to grasp the hand of the person behind them.
  - This relay requires two starters, each standing in front of a line, designating the start, and each holding 3 to 4 hoops. At a signal, each starter begins by placing a hoop over the head of the first person in line. As soon as that hoop has been moved to the third person in line, the second hoop is started, and so on with the rest of the hoops.
  - If the starters want to become part of the action, they simply start the last hoop, and then become the first person in line. When the first hoop reaches the last person in line, that individual runs to the front of the line with the hoop, grabs the hand of the person there (who now becomes the second person in the line), and starts the hoop moving toward the end of the line. Continue until the original person who was at the front of the line returns to that position.
- VI. *Teamwork* Activity: Shipwreck (Day 1)
- The object of Shipwreck is to gain the most points during the activity through group cooperation and fast action.
  - Using the same teams, each team is given a “ship” (hula hoop). Instruct all members to hold onto its sides as they run the length of the field. Groups are to run with their “ship” until a staff member yells “Shark!” Then all team members “jump on board” the ship. The first group with all feet off the “ground” and with at least one on the ship (in the hoop), gains a point.
  - Repeat this procedure several times. The first group to reach the finish line gains 3 points. Add up all the points scored by each team to decide the winner.
- VII. *Teamwork* Activity: Everybody Up (Day 2)
- Ask two people of approximately the same size to sit on the ground facing each other so that the bottoms of their feet are opposed, knees are bent, and hands are tightly grasped.
  - From this sitting position, ask the pair to try to pull themselves into an upright standing position. If the two are successful (most pairs are), ask them both to find another partner and try standing up with three people, then four, and so on, until the entire group eventually makes an attempt to stand up together.
  - Criteria for a successful attempt are: hands grasped, foot contact, all must stand at the same time.
  - A growing group will soon find that the seemingly logical circular configuration of bodies cannot be continued beyond 8 or so. A change of thinking must be employed to come up with a solution that will allow a larger number of people to complete the problem.
- VIII. *Energizer* Activity: Animal Game
- Distribute the animal pictures randomly to all participants. Participants are not allowed to speak or show their pictures to the other participants. They need to mimic the sound of the animal and migrate toward others making the same animal sounds.
- IX. *Teamwork* Activity: Matchboxes and Paperclips
- Participants are divided into teams of 5 or 6. Ask for 1 volunteer from each team. Pull the volunteers aside and explain the rules only to these volunteers.
  - It is then the responsibility of each volunteer to explain the rules to his or her team.
  - In the meantime, staff will have constructed something out of the matchboxes, paperclips, and rubber bands and have placed it in a location that cannot be seen by the groups from their stations.
  - Rules: Only 1 person from each team may view the construction at a time. When a team believes that they have reconstructed it correctly with their own matchboxes, paper clips, and rubber bands, they must all be seated with their hands raised.
  - Judges will then stop the activity to check the constructions. If they are not correct, all teams resume the competition.
  - Following the activity, discuss these questions with the group: What was your plan of attack? Did anyone take charge of the group? Who was it? How did they do it? How did the volunteer do with the explanation of the rules? Did everyone in the group participate and contribute? What worked well for your group? What were some of the obstacles you faced? What would you do differently?







## QUICK TAKES ~ MORE WORKSHOPS FOR STUDENTS

### Selected Workshops and Activities Organized by GEAR UP Sites in New York State 1999-2005.

Compiled from editions of *In Gear*, the NYGEAR UP grant-funded newsletter produced bi-annually by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu) for the GEAR UP sites in the state. The workshop authors below were all GEAR UP grantees in New York.

#### Arts in the Hospital

Authors: CUNY Consortium

Description: Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School students created arts and crafts for long-term care patients in area hospitals.

#### Challenge of the Mind and Body

Authors: SUNY Cobleskill

Description: A series of games and problem-solving activities with a real-life focus.

#### Camp College

Authors: Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities

Description: The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities along with the host college campuses, and in partnership with the New York State Association of College Admission Counselors, organized a general 3-day weekend college experience for 60 students who stayed on a college campus for 2 nights. Assigned to small groups led by adult mentors, students attended simulated college classes taught by college professors in the fields of arts, sciences, and engineering; participated in workshops on the college search (admissions and financial aid), and attended a college fair; and learned interviewing and essay-writing techniques. Programming also included time for a dance, teambuilding, and a field trip. Camp College host campuses have included Niagara University, Union College and Manhattan College.

#### Chef Educator Program

Authors: The New Rochelle Partnership

Description: A program offered by Cornell University in conjunction with the New Rochelle High School Science Department where 15 GEAR UP students learned about cooking, nutrition, and careers in the culinary field.

#### Choices and Responsibilities

Authors: SUNY Cobleskill

Description: A workshop by motivational speaker Duke Fisher was presented to students at 6 high schools. Parents joined students for dinner and discussion after the workshops.

#### The College Essay

Authors: The Association of Proprietary Colleges

Description: A workshop for students preparing their college applications presented by representatives from a local proprietary college.

#### College Essay Writing Workshop

Authors: Copiague Public Schools

Description: A workshop to help students in writing college essays conducted by writing consultant Eddie Bell.

#### College Tour

Authors: The New Rochelle Partnership

Description: Students wrote an essay describing why they wanted to go on the college tour, what they hoped to see, and what information they might gather on the trip.

#### Conflict Resolution

Authors: CUNY Consortium

Description: A required class at Brandeis High School in Manhattan. Students learned how to mediate by learning to listen, and specifically how to: be an active listener; reflect on what they heard and understood with others; and remember that "you" statements may be seen as confrontational, while "I" statements can describe how one feels in positive terms. In addition to mastering conflict resolution skills, and identifying behaviors and actions that can lead to conflict, students produced a video that could help to train others in such skills. English teacher Anita Salvate and video artist Matthew Williams team taught this class.

#### The Economics to Stay in School

Authors: Yonkers Public Schools

Description: A program presented once a week for 8 weeks in 8th grade social studies classes that focused on why students should stay in school.

#### Essential Skills Math Class

Authors: The New Rochelle Partnership

Description: Designed for students who wanted to learn outside a formal classroom environment. Offered once a week after school for 1 hour, students learned math while applying it to everyday situations, and gained an understanding of technology by using math skills to solve practical problems.

#### Essential Skills Reading Program

Authors: The New Rochelle Partnership

Description: Designed for students who wanted to learn outside a formal classroom environment, 10 students met for 1 hour, 2 days a week, to work on reading, writing, and comprehension. Students applied what they learned while working on a special project from concept to completion. Students created a how-to orientation booklet for the following year's 9th grade class, and wrote, edited, proofread, printed, and assembled the booklet.

#### Future Options

Authors: CUNY Consortium

Description: A 2-hour discussion session held every Wednesday for 12th graders at Vanguard High School in Manhattan. The goal of the sessions was to prepare students for college, but participants explored many other concerns, such as job readiness, self-esteem, self-confidence, family dynamics, dorm life, preparing for the SATs, and communications skills.

#### Health Fair

Authors: CUNY Consortium

Description: CUNY Hunter College collaborated with community health agencies to organize a health fair at Vanguard High School that included outreach and educational activities.

#### High School Bound Program

Authors: CUNY Bronx Community College

Description: A series of workshops in math and reading were offered along with orientation visits to local high schools to help prepare students for the transition to 9th grade.

### High School Career Fair

Authors: New York University

Description: An event for 10th to 12th graders to show the success education can bring. 7 speakers provided students with information on their careers and backgrounds. Career fields included law and government, media and entertainment, allied health, business, finance and banking, and entrepreneurship.

### Japanese Anime Workshop

Authors: CUNY Consortium

Description: A 10-week course for students, offered at CUNY New York City College of Technology. Students worked with an anime artist and with English and anthropology faculty.

### Latinos Look to the Future - College for a Day

Authors: St. John's University

Description: 15 students were each paired with a Latino college student who was enrolled in a program of interest to the younger student. Students attended college classes and got first-hand information about college.

### Leadership Retreat

Authors: St. John's University

Description: Held at the St. John's University Manhattan Campus for 48 students, students worked on problem-solving and teamwork skills, concentrating in their workshops on leadership and what it takes to be a good leader.

### Leadership Retreat: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*

Authors: St. John's University

Description: A highly interactive all-day workshop to train students in habits that will make them better leaders and more able to fulfill their potential. The workshop also trained teachers so that they could lead future workshops.

### Learning Studio

Authors: CUNY Consortium

Description: Created at Bushwick High School in Brooklyn, the Learning Studio was a welcoming space where students could do homework, meet with tutors, use computers, play interesting board games, or relax. The rules: each student first had to do 20 to 25 minutes of schoolwork before engaging in other activities. Tutors were available, and students could also receive supplemental course work and additional tutoring for required senior year courses needed to graduate. Mentoring was provided to students who needed help with personal problems. The Learning Studio was open during school hours and after school until 6:00pm.

### Millionaire Carnival

Authors: CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC)

Description: An activity exploring financial responsibility. Student players won prizes based on their ability to master and use a financial vocabulary, and also had drills in basic math and money problems. Each player opened an interest-bearing savings account at Carver Federal Savings Bank in Harlem, where the bank matched student passbook savings dollar for dollar.

### Multicultural Youth Summit

Authors: St. John's University

Description: 3 sessions were held on the following topics: Self-Esteem, with workshops on anger management and conflict resolution; Celebrating Differences, led by Carolivia Herron, author of *Nappy Hair*; and Violence in the Schools.

### MyRoad Workshop

Authors: College Board

Description: Offered at Charlotte Valley Central School and South Kortright Central School of the SUNY Cobleskill NYGEAR UP Partnership. Students learned how to use College Board's MyRoad, a personalized online software program to explore academic majors, colleges, and careers.

### Princeton Review SAT Information Night

Authors: Copiague Public Schools

Description: A workshop where students and parents received information to help prepare students for the SATs.

### Rap, Rhythm, and Rhyme Workshop

Authors: Copiague Public Schools

Description: An interactive and dynamic writing workshop conducted by Erik Cork of International Write Now, Inc.

### Résumé Writing Workshop

Authors: Yonkers Public Schools

Description: A workshop for 11th graders to show them how to create a personal profile of their activities, accomplishments, and goals. Students learned how to compile useful data about themselves, how to organize that information, and how to write and customize a résumé.

### Road Trip: Destination College

Authors: CUNY Consortium and the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities

Description: A busload of New York City GEAR UP students (49 students and 5 chaperones) took a week-long visit to 9 upstate New York private colleges and universities, including Cornell University, Ithaca College, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Syracuse University, Le Moyne, Cazenovia, Skidmore and Union Colleges, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The group toured the campuses, met with admissions representatives, and saw several presentations. Michael Collazo, a program coordinator, accompanied the students.

### Saturday Culture, Theater, and Dance Program

Authors: CUNY LaGuardia Community College

Description: A program at LaGuardia Community College that offered 3 different classes for students: Culture and Theater allowed students to study playwriting, create theatrical sets and costumes, and give theater performances; Culture and Dance paired exploration of various cultures, social expression, and ethnic diversity through choreographed original dances; and Film, Literature, and the Internet let students explore these forms while writing on a variety of subjects.

### Saturday Media Journalism Program

Authors: CUNY Bronx Community College

Description: A program to improve language arts skills for 8th, 9th, and 10th graders, students met at the CUNY Bronx Community College campus to create video projects. Faculty from Fordham University offered instruction in integrated learning, language for social interaction, language for critical analysis and evaluation, language for literacy responses and expression, speaking and writing, and language for information and understanding. Using these 6 areas as a foundation, students showed their completed video projects on public service announcements to the community at large.

### Saturday Academy

**Authors:** Bronx Institute at CUNY Lehman College

**Description:** Saturday programming at CUNY Lehman College allowed students to participate in activities outside their high schools. Activities included photography, journalism, Web design, leadership development, visits to cultural institutions, Princeton Review courses, and preparation for tests, including the SAT and New York State Regents exams.

### Saturday Program

**Authors:** CUNY Medgar Evers College Central Brooklyn GEAR UP Partnership

**Description:** A program to provide tutoring in math, reading, and science with several corporate partners.

### Saving Our Sons

**Authors:** Bronx Institute at CUNY Lehman College

**Description:** A mentoring program for holdover students that provided 4 hours a month of mentoring with adult mentors.

### Science Enrichment

**Authors:** The New Rochelle Partnership

**Description:** Designed for students who wanted to learn outside a formal classroom environment. The program was offered 1 afternoon a week for 1 hour, for 8 to 10 weeks. Hands-on experiments and activities were offered, including fingerprint analysis (forensic science), activities involving the nervous system (biology), ice cream making and paint making (chemistry), lightbulb examination (physics), and learning how to research a topic, prepare a presentation, and share findings with others.

### Students Taking Academic Responsibility (STAR)

**Authors:** The New Rochelle Partnership

**Description:** A 10-week program to help students with poor grades improve their academic performance. Staff and counselors worked with small groups of students to motivate them, and help build their study skills.

### Summer Academy

**Authors:** CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC)

**Description:** During this program, students built a computer, installed programs, and developed a Web site. They also formed 3 teams to create 3 videos. Teams shot their own footage and edited the final piece under the supervision of the BMCC Corporate and Cable Communication Department.

### Summer Bridge Program

**Authors:** CUNY Bronx Community College

**Description:** A program that gave support to 7th graders and to graduating 8th graders who have academic challenges and need more attention during the transition to high school. Project-based and collaborative instruction was provided in such areas as journal writing, reading comprehension, math, science, and personal development. Students researched and developed a community service learning project. In the afternoon, students attended the National Sports Program.

### Summer College

**Authors:** Syracuse University

**Description:** An intensive program offered to 23 10th graders who enrolled in over 10 courses on the Syracuse University campus.

### Summer College Experience

**Authors:** Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

**Description:** A summer program for 8th grade students offered jointly by Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection and RIT to enhance academic skills, leadership qualities, math and reading skills, and computer literacy. The program also introduced students to different career paths, college requirements, college subjects, and provided information about college admissions and financial aid. Parents of students were also invited to the sessions, held at RIT from 9:00am until 2:30pm, and also to field-trip Fridays, when students visited college campuses, local workplaces, community service organizations, and parks.

### Summer College Experience

**Authors:** Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

**Description:** A 2-week summer camp hosted by RIT offered workshops in writing college essays, career exploration, college choices, computer Web page design, leadership training, financial aid, and other academic skill building topics. Students also traveled to the Capital Region and visited colleges in that region.

### Summer Enrichment Program

**Authors:** Bronx Institute at CUNY Lehman College

**Description:** Over 200 8th graders attended this 5-week long transition to high school program at Fordham University. Activities included SAT prep in ELA and math, college and career counseling, sports, videography, and art.

### Summer Enrichment Program

**Authors:** Long Island University/Brooklyn Campus

**Description:** Held at Long Island University for 42 NYGEAR UP students. In the journalism class, students learned the basics of writing, and created, wrote, edited, and designed a newsletter. In the math class, students studied symbols, reviewed essentials, and learned about math's practical applications. The poetry class offered instruction in poetic forms and terms, while also showing students how to listen and to express themselves. At the end of the month-long sessions, students performed in a poetry slam. Students found out how to design Web pages in the computer class, while the global studies class explored the early history of African-Americans in the U.S. Instruction in English concentrated on important concepts in grammar, punctuation, and spelling; students also learned how to paraphrase or summarize. Pairs of students worked together to research a famous scientist or inventor, prepare a report on their findings, and present their report to others using PowerPoint.

### Summer Institute

**Authors:** St. John's University

**Description:** A summer program consisting of 4 days of workshops in communications, study skills, time management, leadership skills, library research, math, drug prevention, self-esteem, and computers. A carnival was featured on the fifth day. Some activities included a visit to the Liberty Science Center, and group projects such as a newsletter, a PowerPoint presentation, a video production about college awareness, step dance routines, and a mural painting.

### Summer Opportunity Fair

**Authors:** Bronx Institute at CUNY Lehman College

**Description:** A program to link students with opportunities in the New York City area to keep up their learning during the summer.

### Summer Residential Camp

**Authors:** CUNY Bronx Community College

**Description:** A 10-day residential camp at Camp Deer Run in Sullivan County with activities that included museum trips, interviews with representatives of the medical profession, and intensive work groups in decision making.

### Summer Residential Programs

**Authors:** Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) RAISE Partnership

**Description:** During a 2-week long program on the RPI campus, students learned about lighting design, robotics, PSAT prep, and how to marketing themselves for college.

### Summer Success Project

**Authors:** The New Rochelle Partnership

**Description:** A 5-week long program for 9th graders focused on the academic, social, and emotional transition to high school.

### Summer Technology Camp

**Authors:** Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)

**Description:** A week-long camp on the RIT campus for 65 9th, 10th, and 11th graders. The camp offered exploration in 6 areas: imaging science, robotics, print media, flight technology, computer programming, and biotechnology.

### Summer Video Project

**Authors:** SUNY Westchester Community College

**Description:** Developed by Life Support USA Productions, this program explored careers in communications, while increasing students' self-confidence, helping them develop marketable skills in video production, and dealing with subjects of interest to teens. Students from Peekskill High School wrote, produced, directed, and edited a short film, *Choices*.

### Summer USENY/ESNY Experience

**Authors:** St. John's University

**Description:** A week-long residential camp of academic and recreational activities for GEAR UP students from around the state. Workshop topics included getting into college, peer pressure/conflict resolution, creating a Web page, and the college search. Students went on college tours to Adelphi, Columbia, Hofstra, Fordham, and Juilliard. Classes included ESL, history, science, math, and computers. Activities also included a trip to see *Beauty and the Beast* and a career fair.

### Teens on the Job Shadow Day

**Authors:** Copiague Public Schools

**Description:** Students were matched to an employee in a career that interested them, and spent a day observing and sharing that person's daily responsibilities.

### Urban Rowing and Environmental Science Experience

**Authors:** CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC)

**Description:** In collaboration with Floating the Apple and East River C.R.E.W., BMCC created this 6-week summer program. 25 students used the Hudson River to learn about science, literature, and rowing. Students also spent time on language arts and science lab activities.

### Video Production Workshop

**Authors:** CUNY Consortium

**Description:** A video production workshop for students was offered at Queens Gateway Secondary School and CUNY Queens College.

### We're In This Together

**Authors:** Copiague Public Schools

**Description:** A workshop for students and parents on improving family communication presented at YES Community Counseling Center.

### Winter Recess Program

**Authors:** SUNY Westchester Community College

**Description:** A 3-day program held at Peekskill High School and Port Chester High School for students during winter recess. At Peekskill, students caught up on assignments so that they could be on top of their classwork when school resumed. English as a Second Language classes were a strong component of the program at Port Chester, attracting 35 students wanting to improve their language skills.

### What Every Family of a 9th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)

**Description:** A workshop for parents and students on how to prepare for college. Topics included: college is possible, college graduates earn more, college graduates do interesting work, there are hundreds of college choices, how to pay for college, the admissions decision-making process, and a 9th grader's path to college.

### What Every Family of a 10th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)

**Description:** A workshop for parents and students about preparing for college. Topics included: planning a strategy, building academic assets, getting involved, discovering career paths, exploring colleges, taking the PST/SAT, investigating financial aid, and a 10th grader's path to college.

### What Every Family of an 11th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)

**Description:** A workshop for parents and students about preparing for college. Topics included: learning more about your college choices, the college application, the college essay, preparing for and taking the achievement tests, an overview of financial aid options, New York State and Federal aid programs, becoming familiar with the financial aid options, and an 11th grader's path to college.

### What Every Family of a 12th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)

**Description:** A workshop for parents and students about preparing for college. Topics included: a month-by-month guide to the senior year: student and family deadlines, writing the essay, college cost, comparing award packages, college transition, and a 12th grader's path to college.

### Young Ladies Empowerment Conference

**Authors:** Long Island University/Brooklyn Campus

**Description:** About 140 8th grade girls attended workshops on such topics as What It's Like to Be a Woman Executive; High School and Beyond; Government; Becoming an Entrepreneur; Nutrition and Your Body; and Player Hater (disliking someone for no reason). The event was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Queens.

### Zoology/Environmental Science Course Curriculum

**Authors:** Syracuse University

**Description:** A 5-week summer program for 20 GEAR UP students who had each completed one 9th grade laboratory science course. Students spent 4 weeks at the Rosamund Gifford Zoo and a fifth week at Syracuse University. The curriculum was designed by an educator from the zoo and a teacher from the Syracuse City School District. Among the topics covered were basic biology, habitats, animal behavior, biodiversity, and sustaining the environment. Students also learned about careers in the sciences and about the interdependence of people, animals, and the natural world. Students completing the program earned one unit of credit in zoology/environmental science.

## 2-DAY CONFERENCE

### Authors

Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)

### Audience/Participants

Those invited to attend the conference will depend on the goal of the conference. Participants may include, for example, key stakeholders; representatives from partner organizations in a grant-funded program; staff from different departments in an institution, individuals from member institutions. cIcu's grant-funded conferences have sought to engage discussion and problem-solve, bringing together college and university directors of admissions, financial aid, and opportunity programs with school-based staff and administrators.

### Objectives

The objectives for the conference should be explicitly stated and the agenda and conference activities and workshops should follow the stated objectives. For example, the objectives for 2-day Summer Institute cIcu hosted were: explore Independent Sector grants or scholarships for our state's GEAR UP students; discuss how to effectively disseminate specific information about financial aid availability to these students; discuss how our member campuses can continue to best serve the GEAR UP students; discuss future GEAR UP/independent higher education partnerships.

### Setting and Materials

The location for the conference should comfortably accommodate a gathering of the full conference group with space for small group sessions (e.g., gatherings for the entire group and space for breakout meetings, if scheduled). cIcu has held conferences at hotels, and at a conference institute.

Resource materials in a folder or binder should include the essentials relating to the conference schedule and activities, along with speaker biographies, if speakers are invited, and supplemental materials relating to the conference's objectives and discussion questions.

- Attendee list with contact information
- Name tags for participants, hosts, organizers; table tents for invited guests/speakers
- Writing materials: paper, pens
- Bios of any speakers or invited guests
- Overviews, outlines, background information, updates
- Brochures, pamphlets, research

### Presenter(s)/Facilitator(s)

The most successful conferences will be ones where attendees are engaged, active participants who gain new insight and learning through questioning, discussion, and sharing of experiences. Individuals with a particular expertise can help direct discussion of specific topics by setting the stage with background information about the problem, followed by a question and answer period.

Assign one individual as the program leader who will keep the group on task and on time. It is also important to assign one individual to the task of coordinating before and during the conference with the conference facilities' and food service staff.

### Estimated Timeline

2 days

### Procedures/Plan (Sample)

#### Day One - 4:00p.m - 8:00p.m.

- I. Check in (30 minutes)
- II. Reception (90 minutes)
- III. Dinner (2 hours)  
Informal program that may include, for instance, a preview of the conference agenda, speakers and an icebreaker (e.g., ask attendees to introduce themselves, and explain why they came to the conference)

#### Day Two - 8:00a.m - 4:00p.m.

- I. Morning introductions (30 minutes)  
Introduce new arrivals, speakers and review schedule, purpose and the day's activities.
- II. Topic One: Overview (15 minutes)
- III. Breakout Session Activity (45 minutes)  
Divide the larger group into evenly-sized smaller groups. The conference leader provides each small group with the problem sheet (prepared in advance) which lists a number of questions to discuss and develop into a presentation for the larger group. The small discussion groups are instructed to find an area within the conference facilities to meet and discuss problems. Provide each group with post-it poster paper, markers, pens, paper, and other office supplies. Sample questions posed to small groups at a cIcu conference:
  - a. Based on what you've learned so far about who GEAR UP students are and where they come from, discuss concrete ideas on how to facilitate their application for college admissions.
  - b. How does your campus designate grant aid for specific populations?
  - c. Thinking about the students who transfer to your college or university, what specific efforts/programs/initiatives do you target toward students at 2-year campuses? At 4-year campuses?



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

## Authors

Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)

## Audience

Professional Development Workshops (PDW) can be specifically tailored for any audience. cIcu organized a series of PDWs for school teaching and guidance professionals, tutors, mentors and individuals who work with students.

## Goal

To provide essential information on timely topics of interest to educators, school and community-based organization staff.

## Objectives

Bring targeted, useful information to workshop attendees. Survey key individuals in the target population to determine general information needs, then structure the PDW topics from that feedback. On the PDW registration form, include a questionnaire asking for registrant's questions on each workshop topic. Before the workshops, provide these questions to each topic's expert facilitator for use in preparing their remarks, materials, and activities for the workshop. Sample workshop topics cIcu offered:

- *Building Formidable Bridges to the Future: Tools, Tips, and Tasks for Students and Schools*
  - **Objectives:** To increase awareness of the financial aid process, to improve understanding of what students will experience as they transition into college, and to share summaries of successful grant-funded supplemental workshops and activities for students and schools.
- *Preparing for College: Focus on Senior Year*
  - **Objectives:** To prepare staff, teachers, and parents to help students in the college search, application, and financial aid process. To review some of the challenges students may face before and after entering college.
- *GEARing UP for College*
  - **Objectives:** To outline admissions and financial aid timelines. To evaluate issues, resources, and special programs pertaining to the transition to college life.
- *Making Connections/Dispelling Myths*
  - **Objectives:** To discuss the admissions process and college visits, the financial aid process, issues of concern to special populations (disabilities, international, undocumented), and programs for disadvantaged students.

## Setting and Materials

- Invitations and pre-workshop survey - send by e-mail and mail
- Agenda
- Meeting room(s) within convenient travel distance for participants (e.g., cIcu asks one of its member colleges to act as host for the workshop; the host campus may offer participants a brief tour or a welcome by their admissions staff. cIcu also asks the host campus if they would suggest one of their administrators to be one of the workshop's expert discussion facilitators)
- Physical space for this type of workshop should include a large room where all attendees meet for the welcome and later for lunch and concluding remarks. Depending on its size and acoustics, this room may be used for all three breakout sessions with three large rounds set up at the far corners of the room. Alternatively, one or two of the discussion breakouts may be located in nearby smaller rooms
- Appoint and introduce one of the event organizers as "official timekeeper" who will keep the sessions on track by breaking sessions at designated times and guiding rotations
- Name tags for participants, hosts, organizers; table tents
- Attendance sign-in sheet (essential for grant-funded projects)
- Expert topic facilitators' audiovisual, electronic, or print materials prepared for distribution as requested
- Morning beverage service with light snack (bagel, muffin, or fruit); buffet lunch; afternoon beverage with snack
- Binders for participants containing PowerPoint presentations, relevant background information on the PDW's topics (e.g., newspaper and journal articles, research, reports, government publications)
- Other resources related to PDW topics (e.g., sample publications, handouts, brochures, materials)

*Materials included in each PDW binder for participants depends on the workshop's theme. Some examples of materials cIcu included in the workshop's resource binders:*

- Information on the 260+ colleges and universities in New York State and more specifically, because the PDWs were organized by cIcu, the association representing New York's private, independent colleges and universities, the various resources and materials focused on cIcu member colleges
- Resources on college visits, interviews, college fairs, the admissions application, and college essay
- Information on completing the FAFSA and comparing financial aid award packages
- Higher Education Opportunity Programs in New York State
- Research on retention, persistence, and success in college
- Information on the transition to college
- Academic year and summer outreach and enrichment programs
- Scholarship information
- Lists and enrollment data for New York's 100+ private colleges and universities







## QUICK TAKES ~ MORE WORKSHOPS FOR SCHOOL/COLLEGE PROFESSIONALS

### Selected Workshops and Activities Organized by GEAR UP Sites in New York State 1999-2005.

Compiled from editions of *In Gear*, the NYGEAR UP grant-funded newsletter produced bi-annually by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) for the GEAR UP sites in the state. The workshop authors below were all GEAR UP grantees in New York.

#### Annual Summer Institute on College Admissions for Secondary School Counselors

Authors: College Board

Description: Offered to GEAR UP counselors with less than 3 years of experience. Counselors from New Rochelle, CUNY, RIT, and Westchester sites attended.

#### AP Summer Institute

Authors: College Board

Description: One 1-week workshop for GEAR UP teachers beginning to teach Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Teachers interacted with experienced AP instructors and AP subject matter. Teachers from SUNY Cobleskill, Syracuse, and Yonkers NYGEAR UP sites attended.

#### Breaking the Cycle of Violence: A Conflict Management Approach

Authors: Yonkers Public Schools

Description: Staff development workshop, presented by Liz Friedman of SUNY Purchase.

#### Building Success

Authors: College Board

Description: A 2-day workshop for English and history teachers in grades 7 to 12. The workshop provided instructional strategies in reading, writing, and communications to prepare students for advanced coursework.

#### Engaging Parents: A Vital Key to Academic Success

Authors: College Board

Description: A workshop with resource manuals highlighting some of the best research about parental involvement.

- GEARing Up for College Professional Development Workshop
- Preparing for College: Focus on Senior Year Professional Development Workshop

Authors: Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities

Description: Day-long professional development workshops for GEAR UP staff, teachers, tutors, mentors, and parents. St. John's University hosted the GEARing Up for College workshop and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) hosted Preparing for College: Focus on Senior Year.

#### Instructional Strategies Seminars

Authors: CUNY Bronx Community College

Description: Professional development workshops for middle school and high school teachers. Workshops included Math in the Mirror, Using Improvisation and Theatre Games in the Classroom, and Active Learning in Social Studies.

#### Leadership Retreat: *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*

Authors: St. John's University

Description: A highly interactive all-day workshop to train students in habits that will make them better leaders and more able to fulfill their potential. The workshop also trained teachers so that they could lead future workshops.

#### LEGO Robolab Training Workshop

Authors: SUNY Cobleskill

Description: At SUNY Cobleskill, 11 NYGEAR UP technology, math, and physics teachers from 7 school districts took part in 2 training workshops. Using LEGO Robolab kits, they learned how to construct increasingly complex robots and the accompanying math and physics used to drive them. Teachers each took several thousands of dollars worth of LEGO Robolab kits, cameras, and computers back to their classrooms.

#### Making Connections, Dispelling Myths

Authors: Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities

Description: A workshop for GEAR UP directors, staff, tutors, and parents. The workshops were hosted by and held at New School University, Adelphi University, and Syracuse University. At each workshop, four experts led small roundtable discussions on financial aid, admissions, special populations, and disadvantaged students.

#### Nurturing Leadership Potential in All Students

Authors: Yonkers Public Schools

Description: Staff development workshop, presented by Dr. Robert Zuber, consultant for the Peace Education Project at Teacher's College, Columbia University.

#### PSAT Summary of Answers

Authors: College Board

Description: A workshop for administrators, counselors, and teachers that provided PSAT score information and suggestions on improving curriculum.

#### Study Skills Workshop

Authors: SUNY Cobleskill

Description: Presented by SUNY staff at 6 SUNY Cobleskill NYGEAR UP high schools. School supplies and organizational binders were given to all students.

#### Tools for Test Prep Conference

Authors: College Board

Description: Held at the Mohonk Mountain House, this conference covered tools for test preparation.



## QUICK TAKES ~ MORE WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

### Selected Workshops and Activities Organized by GEAR UP Sites in New York State 1999-2005.

Compiled from editions of *In Gear*, the NYGEAR UP grant-funded newsletter produced bi-annually by the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu) for the GEAR UP sites in the state. The workshop authors below were all GEAR UP grantees in New York.

#### Annual RAISE Parents' Conference

**Authors:** Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) RAISE Partnership  
**Description:** A conference held at the RPI Heffner Alumni House, attended by 138 parents, teachers, school administrators, students, and partnership members. The parents' committee honored 14 students, nominated by their teachers, with the RAISE Fortitude Award for academic improvement.

#### Choices and Responsibilities

**Authors:** SUNY Cobleskill  
**Description:** Workshop by motivational speaker Duke Fisher, presented to students at 6 high schools. Parents joined students for dinner and discussion after the workshops.

#### Computer 101 Workshop

**Authors:** CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC)  
**Description:** A computer workshop for parents, held during four Saturdays. Parents learned word processing and the basics of Internet research. College admissions and financial aid information was also offered.

#### Computer Class for Parents

**Authors:** Yonkers Public Schools  
**Description:** A 9-week Saturday morning computer class just for parents of GEAR UP students taught by an Iona College student.

#### Computer Workshop

**Authors:** St. John's University  
**Description:** A 4-week computer workshop, held on Saturdays, for 85 families. The workshop included a college search through NYMentor, basic Microsoft Word and Excel skills, and a financial aid session. Each family received a Dell computer and an Epson color printer after completing the workshop.

#### Summer College Experience

**Authors:** Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT)  
**Description:** Program for 8th grade students to enhance academic skills, leadership qualities, math and reading skills, and computer literacy. The program also introduced students to different career paths, college requirements, college subjects, and provided information about college admissions and financial aid. Parents of students were invited to the sessions, held at RIT from 9:00am until 2:30pm, and also to field-trip Fridays, when students visited college campuses, local workplaces, community service organizations, and parks.

#### Planning for Success

**Authors:** Copiague Public Schools  
**Description:** A workshop for parents about the PSAT, the SAT, and what students can be doing to prepare themselves for college, offered through College Board.

#### Saturday Parent College Awareness Event

**Authors:** CUNY Consortium  
**Description:** Bilingual presenters reviewed the college admissions and financial aid process with 80 GEAR UP parents.

#### We're In This Together

**Authors:** Copiague Public Schools  
**Description:** A workshop for students and parents on improving family communication presented at the YES Community Counseling Center.

#### What Every Family of a 9th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)  
**Description:** A workshop for parents and students on how to prepare for college. Topics included: college is possible, college graduates earn more, college graduates do interesting work, there are hundreds of college choices, how to pay for college, the admissions decision-making process, and a 9th grader's path to college.

#### What Every Family of a 10th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)  
**Description:** A workshop for parents and students about preparing for college. Topics included: planning a strategy, building academic assets, getting involved, discovering career paths, exploring colleges, taking the PSAT/SAT, investigating financial aid, and a 10th grader's path to college.

#### What Every Family of an 11th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)  
**Description:** A workshop for parents and students about preparing for college. Topics included: learning more about your college choices, the college application, the college essay, preparing for and taking the achievement tests, an overview of financial aid options, New York State and Federal aid programs, becoming familiar with the financial aid options, and an 11th grader's path to college.

#### What Every Family of a 12th Grader Needs to Know About College

**Authors:** Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cIcu)  
**Description:** A workshop for parents and students about preparing for college. Topics included: a month-by-month guide to the senior year: student and family deadlines, writing the essay, college cost, comparing award packages, college transition, and a 12th grader's path to college.

#### What Every Parent Should Know About College Preparation and Requirements

**Authors:** Copiague Public Schools  
**Description:** A workshop for parents led by Judy Cestaro (assistant director of admissions at SUNY Farmingdale). The workshop highlighted the need for early college planning by working for good grades and cultivating a serious attitude toward college. Parents received "College for Me" folders and pencils plus copies of *Affording College* and *Your College Search*.

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WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES THAT *really* WORK