

## **UCSD receives \$2 million grant to prepare San Diego area middle, high school students for college**

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### **UCSD RECEIVES \$2 MILLION GRANT TO PREPARE SAN DIEGO AREA MIDDLE, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE**

The University of California, San Diego has received a \$2 million GEAR UP Award from the Federal Government to support partnerships with San Diego area high and middle schools aimed at motivating and preparing disadvantaged students for college. The grant was awarded to CREATE, the Center for Research and Educational Equity, Assessment, and Teaching Excellence, in collaboration with the Office of Student Educational Advancement.

GEAR UP Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs builds on educational research and proven practices to develop students' potential to achieve academically and plan for college. GEAR UP includes a comprehensive array of programs to guide students and their families in preparing for college by offering counseling, tutoring, and mentoring to help students achieve and by informing families about scholarships and other financial aid options.

"These programs make all the difference in whether a young person goes to college," said President Clinton, at a recent news conference held to announce the award of \$120 million for GEAR UP grants this year. "These innovative programs start early, reaching out to students no later than seventh grade, staying with them all the way from providing students with mentors who encourage them to have high hopes and high expectations for themselves, to ensuring that schools teach the classes that prepare young people for college entrance exams, to helping families figure out how to pay for college."

The GEAR UP project at UCSD will support and enhance the university's partnerships with Mann Middle School and Crawford High School in the San Diego Unified School District and National City Middle School and Sweetwater High School in the Sweetwater Union High School District. According to CREATE director Bud Mehan, GEAR UP will incorporate the talents of Cal-SOAP, the Student Opportunity and Access Program Consortium, which represents the collaborations among most higher education institutions and large school districts in San Diego County. Through Cal-SOAP, the project will employ graduate students from San Diego State University who will work as counseling interns as part of their field work experience requirement to receive their Master's Degree in counseling.

"Our GEAR UP project shows how K-12 education can benefit when the early academic outreach and professional development components of our campus work together," Mehan said. "When academic counseling and academic tutoring go hand-in-hand, students are better prepared to attend college or make other important life choices."

To encourage the participation of girls in GEAR UP, the Girl Scouts "Girls are Great" program will be featured as an after-school program. "Girls are Great" is designed to boost self esteem, creative problem solving, and communication skills among girls by exposing them to math, science, and technology experiences and career

opportunities. "Girls are Great" is designed to address the lack of support that exists in some cultures for girls to achieve academically and pursue careers goals.

In cooperation with the highly successful AVID program, the project will also include educational enrichment activities designed to motivate and inspire students to participate and achieve academically. These activities include visits to local museums, laboratories, cultural events, and local businesses to expose students to various careers that require college degrees.

Other activities included in the GEAR UP project are: A community-based mentoring program that will identify volunteers from the local business community who will serve as mentors to students; Saturday academies focusing on enrichment activities in math, science, literacy, and computer skills; A broad range of after-school enrichment activities; Tours of local university campuses; Presentations to parents about college costs and requirements; College Fairs; and family involvement training, to help parents gain the knowledge needed to support their children in rigorous curriculum.

CREATE was established by UCSD in 1997 to increase the number of underrepresented students at UCSD and other comparable university campuses by enhanced professional development in K-12 schools, increasing parent involvement, and improving healthcare in the K12 environment. Since its inception, CREATE has established partnerships with 18 San Diego elementary, middle, and high schools. In addition, The Preuss School, the University of California's first charter school operated by UCSD, opened its doors this fall.

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