



IowaCollegeAid.gov

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Seven GEAR UP Iowa cohort students prepare for early graduation

Kimberly Center High School graduates prepare for postsecondary education with help from GEAR UP Iowa

Des Moines, IA., December 16, 2013 – The Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) announced today that seven cohort students from Kimberly Center High School in Davenport are graduating high school early on December 17th. Payton Engels, Marilyn Linhart, Gabe Nunn, Jaisset Raya, Dejah Smith, Augustina Vieyra and Lisa Young all plan to pursue postsecondary education with the aid of the GEAR UP Iowa scholarship, worth up to \$2,600 a year at eligible postsecondary institutions.

The graduation is set to take place at the St. Ambrose University Galvin Fine Arts Center at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 17. The GEAR UP Iowa students are graduating high school a semester early and many have already decided to attend Scott Community College.

Iowa College Aid administers GEAR UP Iowa, a program with the mission to create a “college-going culture” throughout the state of Iowa by strengthening academic achievement, increasing academic aspirations and raising college awareness.. The program began serving a cohort of seventh grade students during the 2008-2009 academic year. Now entering its 6th year, the program serves nearly 7,000 students, many of whom are from economically disadvantaged and/or at-risk backgrounds. This fall the students entered their senior year in more than 150 high schools across the state.

“The GEAR UP team would like to commend the Kimberly Center students who have worked hard to earn their high school diplomas early,” said John Gilman, GEAR UP Iowa Coordinator. “Most of all we are extremely excited that all six of them view their early education from high school not as their final educational endeavor, but as just one big step on the path to success in postsecondary education. I can’t wait to congratulate them personally at their graduation ceremony for their efforts not just in meeting high school graduation requirements, but for taking the necessary steps to enroll in college after the first of the year.”

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“We are incredibly proud of all the hard work and effort on part of these students to graduate early,” said Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid, the state agency charged with administering the statewide GEAR UP Iowa grant. “I’d also like to thank our GEAR UP Iowa staff and Kimberly Center High School staff that helped these students achieve their goals, and will continue to support them as they continue their education. Our agency is here to assist these students, along with all Iowans, as they embark on the college planning process,” said Misjak.

For more information about GEAR UP Iowa, go to www.gearupiowa.gov or contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456. In addition, more information to help Iowa families plan, prepare and pay for college is available on Iowa College Aid’s website at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa’s students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$68.0 million annually, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education’s College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR-UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being utilized to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa’s students and families. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

About GEAR UP Iowa

Funded by a \$16.8 million Federal grant, GEAR UP Iowa (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is charged with significantly increasing the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP Iowa works to create a college-going culture through statewide and school-based services to a cohort of approximately 6,000 high school students and their families in 18 communities across Iowa. The [Iowa College Student Aid Commission](http://www.IowaCollegeAid.gov) administers GEAR UP Iowa in partnership with the Iowa Department of Education and other state agencies; local school districts; postsecondary educational institutions; and community organizations, businesses, and industries.