

Eastern Oklahoma State College  
Hank Mooney, Office of Public Information  
<http://www.eosc.edu>

## **EOSC GEAR UP Delegation Attends NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference in Washington, DC**

(Press Release 07-30-10)

Members of the Eastern Oklahoma State College GEAR UP for a Brighter Tomorrow team and superintendents and principals from several partner schools recently attended the 2010 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference—GEARing UP for Excellence: Linking Programs, Policy & Practice—in Washington, DC.

The event provided participants with an opportunity to look to the future by assessing the program's performance, refining strategies, and infusing new practices to improve services. This is the eleventh year in which NCCEP has convened the GEAR UP community for the purpose of sharing best practices, exemplary models, and effective strategies designed to expand college access and success for low-income students.

Participants attended concurrent sessions. Plenary speakers included Héctor Garza, founding president of NCCEP; U.S. Representative Chaka Fattah, the author of GEAR UP; Dr. Martha Kanter, Under Secretary of Education; Juan Williams, senior correspondent for NPR, a political analyst for Fox television, and a regular panelist for FoxNews for the Washington Post; Dr. Ruby Payne, author of *A Framework for Understanding Poverty and Bridges Out of Poverty*; and Chad Foster, entrepreneur, best-selling author, and nationally-acclaimed speaker.

Eastern's GEAR UP staff participated in the GEAR UP Program and Gallery Walk on Monday evening. The Gallery Walk features GEAR UP programs and is designed to provide all conference participants the opportunity to share their programs, college access models, and education strategies they have found most effective in closing the academic achievement gap between low-income and more affluent students. This showcase of exemplary college access practices provides conferees with ample opportunities to network, exchange information, and share lessons learned.

Eastern's GEAR UP team members attended over 66 breakout sessions throughout the conference. One of the highlights of the conference was the presentation by the NCCEP Youth Leadership Summit participants. Students performed skits and talked about how GEAR UP had affected their lives. Afterwards, each Summit graduate was presented an academic stole by NCCEP International President Héctor Garza. Several from Eastern's delegation toured the U.S. Capitol after the closing session.

"I thought the conference was very informative, and we had some outstanding lecturers," said McAlester Public Schools Superintendent Tom Condict. "But the most impressive part of the whole conference was when the GEAR UP students performed skits as they shared how GEAR UP has made a difference in their futures."

Eastern Oklahoma State College received a \$6.7 million federal GEAR UP grant and is beginning its fifth year of implementation. Eastern is partnered with 23 area schools to provide students with additional educational opportunities.

“It was a great conference,” added GEAR UP Project Director Linda Morgan. “It was wonderful to have some of our partners attend the conference and see the potential of GEAR UP. We look forward to working with students, parents, and partner school personnel this year.”

Caption information: Members of the Eastern Oklahoma State College Delegation to the 2010 NCCEP/GEAR UP Annual Conference—GEARing UP for Excellence: Linking Programs, Policy & Practice in Washington, DC were:

Front Row, Left to Right: George Larson, GEAR UP Web Computer Specialist; Avalon White, Evaluator; Michelle Cox, GEAR UP Education Coordinator; Helen Scott, GEAR UP Project Assistant; Linda Morgan, GEAR UP Project Director; Cheryl Roberts, GEAR UP Data Analyst; and LaDonna Baldwin, GEAR UP Education Coordinator.

2nd Row: Bryan McNutt, Antlers High School Principal; Peery Lee, GEAR UP Education Coordinator; Dara Ward, GEAR UP Education Coordinator; and Jimmy Harwood, Pittsburg Public Schools Superintendent.

3rd Row: Cary Ammons, Buffalo Valley Public Schools Superintendent; Rita Echelle, Keota Public Schools Superintendent; Katie Blagg, Whitesboro Public Schools Superintendent; Kelli Hopper, GEAR UP Professional Development Coordinator; and Dart Drummonds, McCurtain Public Schools Superintendent.

4th Row: Vic Woods, Eastern Oklahoma State College Vice President of Student Affairs; Nina Fereday, GEAR UP Education Coordinator; Donna Dudley, Moyers Public Schools Superintendent; Tom Condict, McAlester Public Schools Superintendent; Jim Dominick, Clayton Public Schools.

Back Row: Dennis Shoup, Bokoshe Public Schools Superintendent and Rodney Karch, Canadian Public Schools, Superintendent.

