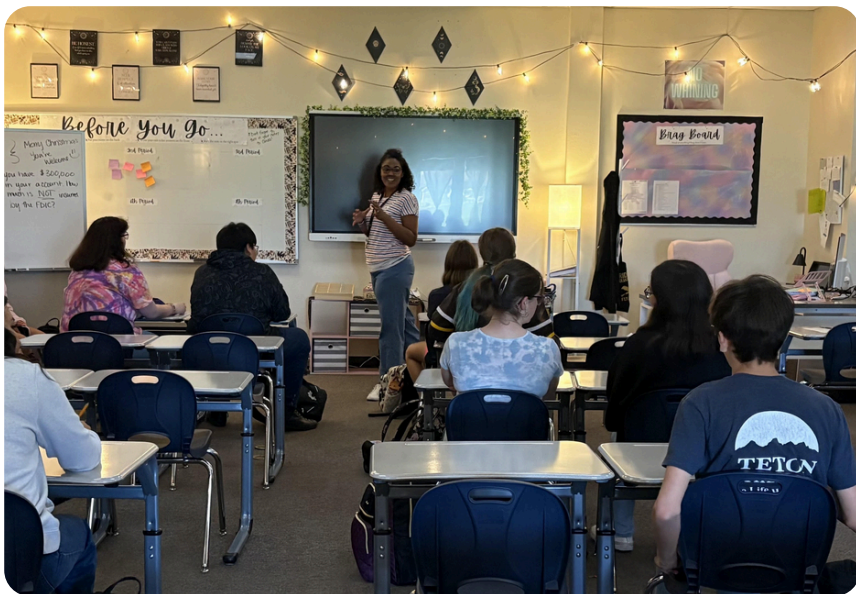


# GEAR UP WYOMING RUSTLER BULLETIN



Gear Up students attending their first meeting of the 2026-2027 school year!

## LIGHTING THE WAY!

Empowering Wyoming's Youth: CWC Celebrates National GEAR UP Week

This past September, Central Wyoming College (CWC) joined a nationwide movement to celebrate National GEAR UP Week, honoring over two decades of student success and college readiness. Since 1999, the federally funded GEAR UP program has provided essential resources—including one-on-one mentorship, campus visits, and financial aid guidance—to help local students navigate the path to higher education.

The weeklong celebration highlighted the collaborative effort required to build a strong college-going culture. Beyond recognizing student achievements, CWC GEAR UP WY emphasized the crucial support provided by local families, educators, state officials, and community partners. By working together, these networks help students build early momentum, submit college applications, and gain the confidence needed to succeed on campus.

While National GEAR UP Week has concluded, CWC's commitment to student achievement continues year-round. Community members are encouraged to stay involved by advocating for local youth, engaging in mentorship programs, and sharing success stories using #GEARUPworks as CWC GEAR UP WY helps the next generation reach its full potential.

## CONTENTS

[Cover Story](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[Parent Corner](#)

[Financial Aid & Deadlines](#)

[Career Spotlight](#)

[Triva and Tips](#)

[Campus Showcase](#)

[CWC Gear Up Staff](#)



New study space for Gear Up students at CWC

## Did you know?

**Gear Up Wyoming Serves  
2000 Students per year!**

**Making Headlines**

Click Below

[CWC GEAR UP WY News County10.com](https://www.cwc.edu/gearup/)



Celebrating National Gear Up Week Sept 21-25, 2026

**New Website Launch!**

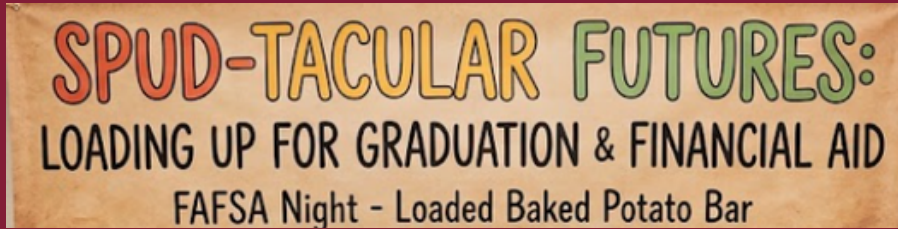


<https://www.cwc.edu/gearup/>



# Upcoming Events

Spud-Tacular Event for GEAR UP WY High School Seniors and CWC Gear Up College Freshman



## What you will need:

- Email address—
  - Parents must have your own email, not a school or work email
- 2025 Tax Information
- Social Security Number
- Date of birth
- Address and phone numbers



Enjoy a loaded baked potato bar and assistance filling out the FAFSA .

**Who?**

For - CWC Gear Up WY  
Seniors & CWC College Freshman  
& their Parents/Guardians

**Where?**

CWC-Riverton Campus  
Main Hall Room 181

**When?**

Tuesday, October 20th  
5:30-7:30  
Dinner Provided!



FAFSA stands for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It is an official form that students in the United States complete to apply for financial aid to help pay for college or trade school.

RSVP by October 8th  
Scan here



## CWC Gear Up WY Student meetings have begun at your school.

Keep an eye out for  
messaging alerts & emails  
with meeting information  
and future events.

Respond to email RSVP's in a timely manner to ensure we provide enough activities and goodies for everyone.

## Navigating the school years: A Parent's Guide to the High School Pitch

### 9th Grade: Building the Foundation

- **Establish Daily Routines:** Create a quiet space for homework and set consistent evening expectations to protect sleep.
- **Monitor Progress:** Check the school's online grade portal regularly to spot and fix early assignment slips before term grades lock in.
- **Encourage Exploration:** Prompt your student to try 2–3 clubs, sports, or career exploration activities.



### 10th Grade: Finding Depth & Direction

- **Track Accomplishments:** Start a simple digital or paper list logging activities, awards, and community service hours.
- **Narrow the Focus:** Help your student focus on 2–3 core passions where they can develop deeper involvement or leadership.
- **Use Low-Stakes Practice:** Treat fall practice exams (like PreACT) as zero-stress diagnostic tools to highlight academic strengths.
- **Explore Careers:** Participate in local campus visits offered through your school and GEAR UP. Attend Career Fairs hosted by your school or community.



**Junior year** is widely recognized as the most demanding stretch of high school. Between peak course rigor, standardized testing, and early college planning, it is a period defined by both pressure and opportunity.

As parents, the goal isn't to take the wheel—it's to serve as a steady guide and anchor. Here is how you can support your student through this crucial year.

#### Key Focus Areas for Success

- **Maintain Academic Momentum:** Junior-year grades are the last full-year marks that college admissions teams see. Protect your student's sleep schedule and encourage them to advocate for themselves directly with teachers if grades drop.
- **Streamline Standardized Testing:** Map out a testing timeline that targets an ACT in late winter or early spring, leveraging free resources such as Magoosh offered by GEAR UP WY.
- **Align Expectations Early:** Discuss college finances honestly before building a school list. Plan spring visits to explore different campus environments.
- **Keep Perspective & Boundaries:** Track major deadlines on a shared family calendar, but establish explicit "no-college-talk" zones at home to keep burnout at bay.

#### The Bottom Line

Your student doesn't need you to manage their checklist—they need you to hold the steady line. By fostering their independence and keeping the big picture in mind, you can help them navigate junior year with confidence.



#### References & Resources

GEAR UP Program (U.S. Dept. of Education): Federal guidelines on college readiness, parent engagement, and student support ([ed.gov/gearup](https://ed.gov/gearup)).

NCCEP: National family toolkits and GEAR UP community resources ([edpartnerships.org](https://edpartnerships.org)).

College Board & ACT: High school planning, testing timelines, and free practice tools ([bigfuture.collegeboard.org](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) | [act.org](https://act.org)).

Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): Official federal aid details, grant information, and net price calculators ([studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)).

# PARENT CORNER CONTINUED

## FALL PARENT GUIDE: NAVIGATING SENIOR YEAR

Fall of senior year is intense. Your main job isn't to drive the process, but to act as a supportive navigator. Here is your streamlined fall action plan to help your teen stay organized, grounded, and prepared.

### Application & Deadline Logistics

- **Build a Master Tracker:** Help your teen set up a spreadsheet or calendar for deadlines, fees, and essay requirements.
- **Let Them Own the Work:** Assist with tracking, but let your teen complete and submit their own applications.
- **Set a Weekly Check-In:** Pick one 30-minute window per week to discuss plans so application talk doesn't ruin every family dinner.

### Autonomy & Life Skills

- **Encourage Self-Advocacy:** Have your teen email or call teachers, counselors, and admissions officers directly when issues arise.
- **Teach Practical Basics:** Use the fall months to practice cooking simple meals, budgeting, doing laundry, and managing medical appointments.
- **Shift to "Coach":** When problems come up, ask "How do you think you should handle this?" before jumping in to fix it.

### Financial Planning & Aid

- **Complete Parent Forms:** Parents you will need to create your own FSA ID at StudentAid.gov. Students will also have their own FSA ID.
- **Talk Budget Early:** Be clear about what the family can afford, expected contributions, and limits on student loans before choices are locked in.
- **Target Local Scholarships:** Encourage them to apply for local community awards—they have far fewer applicants and higher win rates than national contests.

### Mental Health & Well-Being

- **Watch for Burnout:** Guard their rest and encourage downtime away from schoolwork and application talk.
- **Reframe Setbacks:** Remind them that deferrals or rejections reflect institutional enrollment needs, not their intrinsic worth.

References & Resources:  
Federal Student Aid (U.S. Dept. of Education): <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/fafsa-deadlines>  
College Board BigFuture (Senior Checklist): <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/college-prep-timeline/senior-year>  
The Common Application: <https://www.commonapp.org/apply/first-time-students>  
CollegiateParent: <https://collegiateparent.com/family-life/parent-to-parent-advice-for-the-college-transition/>

Central Wyoming College CWC GEAR UP Wyoming staff is here to support you and your student every step of the way.

Here is how Gear Up helps:

- **Hands-On FAFSA & Financial Aid Guidance:** Helps parents complete federal financial aid forms step-by-step and helps compare college award letters to understand what the cost of attendance may be.
- **Deadline & Application Tracking: Provides** structured timelines, helps navigate application portals, and provides access to college application fee waivers.
- **Scholarship Navigation:** Assists families in finding and applying for local, state (including the Hathaway Scholarship), and program-specific scholarships early in the fall.
- **One-on-One Family & Student Assistance:** Offers 1:1 check-ins with a GEAR UP Coach to review a student's graduation progress, GPA, and post-secondary goals.
- **Testing Fee Waivers:** Provides up to two free ACT fee waivers if the student did not use them during their junior year of high school.



# Financial Aid

2027-2028

FAFSA Opening Date: OCT 1

What is the FAFSA?

FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

How do I fill out the FAFSA?

First visit [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) or follow this QR code.



Financial Contributors and Students will need to create their own FSA ID.



## High School Seniors - Mark your calendars!

October 1, 2026: [FAFSA](#) 2027-2028 Application Opens & [GEAR UP Wyoming Federal Opportunity Scholarship](#) Opens

October 15, 2026: [Daniels Fund Scholarship](#) Application Deadline

November 1, 2026: [University of Wyoming](#) (2027–28 Application Priority Deadline

December 1, 2026: [University of Wyoming Trustee's Scholarship](#) Deadline

March 1, 2027: [CWC General Scholarship](#) Priority Deadline for 2027-2028



All 7 Wyoming colleges and the University of Wyoming maintains its own institutional scholarship deadlines and local GEAR UP requirements.

Always visit their financial aid page you plan on applying to so you don't miss any local deadlines!

Seeking more scholarship information and deadlines?

Click Link Below

[Visit the New CWC Gear Up WY](#)

[Scholarship website](#) and learn more about other scholarships and other Gear Up Institutional Scholarships

## College Terminology

What is a college course that you must pass prior to being able to take a more advanced class?

Answer: A prerequisite





# CAREER SPOTLIGHT

## Education

### What are the types careers in Education?

#### Elementary/Primary Education

A specific major with several subcategories (e.g., music, art, etc.). Degree Type: Bachelor of Arts

#### Secondary Education

This is a specific major declared for middle and high school! Degree Type: Bachelor of Arts

#### Special Education

This is a specific major declared to specialize in work to provide students with disabilities with accommodations Degree Type: Bachelor of Arts

#### College Education

This requires a Masters or PhD in a specific field (e.g. English, Psychology, Philosophy, Biology...) Degree Type: Graduate

## For More information about Educational Careers

Scan QR Code



# Trivia!

Which University's mascot is a tree?

- A: Stanford University
- B: Oregon State University
- C: University of Washington
- D: University of Maine

Answer: A



72% of GUY High School Seniors completed the FAFSA

GUY students attend postsecondary institutions in 36 states across the U.S.



66% of GUY college freshmen persisted from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> year



## Study Tip! ● ●

Set aside time for a specific class, then set a timer for 30 minutes. When it goes off, take a 10-minute break!

Tip: Go for a walk (without your phone) to help keep your mind motivated and grounded!



## THIS MONTHS TIPS

Don't be afraid to email a college about questions you might have!

Look at the webpages for colleges/programs you are interested in!



Staying ahead of college and scholarship deadlines ensures you maximize your financial aid opportunities.

# CAMPUS SHOWCASE ● ●



To Learn More About the  
University Of Wyoming  
Scan QR Code



## University of Wyoming: Laramie, Wyoming

The University of Wyoming is the only four-year university in the state of Wyoming! They offer over 200 areas of study, ranging from Arts and Sciences to Agriculture to Engineering, and many more!

The University of Wyoming honors the Wyoming Hathaway Scholarship (a scholarship offered only to graduates of a Wyoming high school who will be attending an in-state college). They also offer a scholarship called the Cowboy Commitment, a scholarship offered to students both in-state and out-of-state based on GPA and ACT score.

## Meet your CWC Gear Up Wy Team



Guiding you on your path to possible!

The Central Wyoming College (CWC) GEAR UP Wyoming team consists of six staff members dedicated to supporting middle school, high school, and postsecondary students:

- **Jamie A. Iiams** (Program Director | [Jiams@cw.edu](mailto:Jiams@cw.edu)): Lander native and first-generation college graduate who studied Human Resources at CWC and earned a B.S. in Family, Consumer, and Human Development from Utah State University. She draws on her personal academic path and family ranching background to guide local students toward college success.
- **Tanya Lopez** (Grant Support Specialist | [tlopez@cw.edu](mailto:tlopez@cw.edu)): Brings over 20+ years of experience working for GEAR UP WY, holding an Associate's degree from CWC and a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of Wyoming.
- **Beth Sandlian** (Curriculum Coordinator | [bsandlia@cw.edu](mailto:bsandlia@cw.edu)): Holds a B.A. in Elementary Education and a Master's in Early Childhood, with dual endorsements in General and Special Education (Birth–Grade 12) alongside 19 years of teaching experience.
- **Sondra Brown** (Academic Coach & Freshman Advisor | [Sbrown@cw.edu](mailto:Sbrown@cw.edu)): Holds a degree in Elementary Education from Fort Hays State University and utilizes her middle school teaching experience to guide 7th–12th graders and college freshmen.
- **Donna Apland** (Academic Coach, Thermopolis | [Dapland@cw.edu](mailto:Dapland@cw.edu)): Serves Hot Springs County High School students, bringing deep community roots and a 29-year background as a high school secretary.
- **Pam Hull** (Academic Coach | [Phull@cw.edu](mailto:Phull@cw.edu)): Holds an educational background in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Northern Colorado, applying her background in student advocacy to help youth reach their academic goals.

Together, the team leverages deep local roots, advanced degrees, and educational expertise to guide students toward higher education and career success.

To learn more about your CWC Gear Up Team, click [here](#) or visit <https://www.cwc.edu/academics/prep/gear-up/staff/>