



Jasmine Inthabounh, Editor-in-Chief

For 17 or 18 years of lives, it is planned for us to go to school. From Kindergarten to 1st grade and so on and so forth. When senior year hits, is that the time to figure life out? For sophomore, Chaundelle Goodman, it is never too early to look at her options, because of GEAR UP.

“GEAR UP has helped me a lot because it showed me that I don’t just have to go to college in state. I can do so much more and get more opportunities if I apply myself more,” Goodman said.

Goodman moved to Iowa in August from Louisiana and came to North where she met GEAR UP advisor, Amalia Riordan. She quickly became a part of the ambassador program the meets every Wednesday after school. The cohort includes the whole class of 2020 but the ambassadors lead the group.

Q: How has GEAR UP helped you prepare for college?

A: “Now I know how to do a resume, how to get prepared for an interview. It really matured me a lot. I was very childish and I didn’t really want to go to college. I had a goal, to go to college yeah, but it really put me in the mindset, I want to go to college for what I want to do.”

First Hand Experience

A with
 Chaundelle
 Goodman

Q: What is your favorite part about the program?

A: “The college trips, free stuff. But, actually being on campus and seeing the college and I want to be able to do that, I want to be able to go to college and actually have the real feeling. We usually do a tour and we have a student panel. We ask them about their experience and their transition from high school to college and any tips they can give us. They give us insight on what’s real in college.”

Q: Why is GEAR UP important?

A: “GEAR UP is important to me because back home, I didn’t really have much motivation for going to college and actually trying to do something with my life. I just thought I was going to get a regular 9-5 job after high school. I didn’t really have any set plans. It got me very involved in school and I enjoy school now. I like the fact that I have a really good opportunity to follow my dreams. I like the fact that they follow me after high school, they don’t just stop, they actually go through the journey with me through college.”

Design: L. Christensen/ J. Inthabounh

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness For Undergraduate Programs

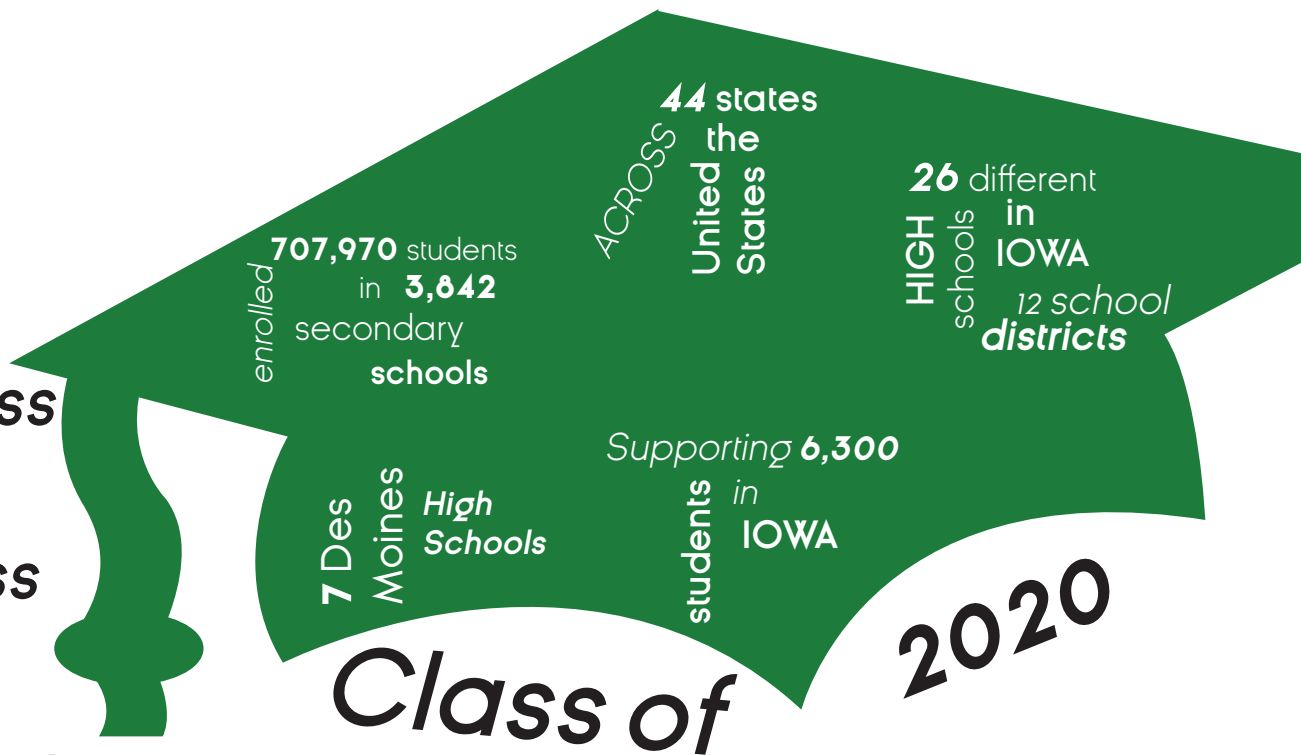
Laura Christensen, Managing Editor

As students in high school, we all hear about colleges and know we have different options we can choose from after high school. But really, what can we do to prepare ourselves for college? The question, "Do you know what you want to do after you graduate?" comes up a lot in students' lives on a daily.

There is a program that is nationwide called GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. GEAR UP is a federal grant program that is intended to follow a cohort of students from 7th grade to 12th grade. The Class of 2020, current sophomores, are the GEAR UP cohort.

GEAR UP is in 12 school districts and 26 high schools across the state of Iowa. Districts were selected based on having a minimum of 50 percent of their students on free and reduced-price lunch. North is 82 percent free and reduced.

"How it's set up right now is, someone at the state level with GEAR UP will follow up



Class of

with the class of 2020 through their post year of post-secondary to see who enrolls and what path students decide to do. Then after that first year of post-secondary with the class of 2020, the program will hopefully start over again in 7th grade. Then there's a process where DMPS will have to apply to get the grant again," Amalia Riordan, the GEAR UP coach at North, said.

If they started at North their freshmen year, once they become seniors, they are eligible for a scholarship of at least \$600 per year, for up to four years towards a college education. This program helps them prepare for college through campus tours, mentoring, tutoring, career shadowing and building leadership skills through workshops.

To ensure students get the college readiness they need, the program uses data-based tools such as a career interest inventory to help narrow down what college they want to go to and build experiences for the students.

This school year, the sophomore class has taken a trip to Simpson College and got to do some engaging activities with STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). "Everyone can be a part of the opportunities, but we're targeting it down and prioritizing people first depending on their interests," Riordan said.

The GEAR UP program isn't just helpful during the school year, they also continue going to colleges during the summer. There is a summer summit where they will attend five different colleges and universities in the summer of 2018, where everyone from across the state can apply and attend.

Overseeing the GEAR UP program nationally is the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP). Each summer, they host a national conference and youth leadership summit. This year, the summit is taking place in Washington D.C. in July.

"The Youth Leadership Summit (YLS), helps GEAR UP high school students identify and maximize their leadership skills, create a national network of peers, and receive the tools and training to make positive change happen in their communities and around the world.

Over 3.5 days, the YLS enhances participants' ability to speak confidently, work effectively in teams, and builds their capacity to lead. In turn, our YLS students then use these skills to serve their schools and communities," according to the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships website.

Students participating in this opportunity will be representing GEAR UP programs from across the nation.