

# Press Release

For Immediate Release

## Contact Information

Oregon GEAR UP – Oregon Goes To College

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## July 2025

### **Oregon Rural Middle and High School Students Build Leadership Skills at Oregon GEAR UP Camp**

*Oregon GEAR UP program hosts an annual summer leadership camp to help students prepare for college and career success*

**Portland, Oregon** — More than fifty middle and high school students from rural communities across Oregon gathered at the University of Portland during the week of June 22 for Oregon GEAR UP’s annual Leadership Camp. The multi-day program offered students hands-on leadership training, team-building activities, college campus exploration, and opportunities to build connections with peers from across the state.

Oregon GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally funded initiative dedicated to helping low-income, first-generation, and rural students prepare for college and career success. The leadership camp is one of many supports offered through Oregon GEAR UP to strengthen college-going culture among rural schools and communities.

During the camp, students took part in workshops designed to develop communication, goal-setting, and leadership skills. Activities ranged from campus tours and scavenger hunt challenges to outdoor team-building activities. The program is divided into middle school and high school groups, each with tailored activities to match their developmental and academic needs.

“Leadership Camp is about helping students see themselves as capable leaders who belong on a college campus,” said Grace Whitley, a Graduate Intern and Team Lead at camp with Oregon GEAR UP. “We want to give them the skills, confidence, and real experiences that make higher education feel accessible and achievable.”

The University of Portland’s setting provided campers with the chance to experience college life firsthand, including meals in the dining hall, staying in the residence halls, and exploring academic buildings and resources.

Photos of students engaged in camp activities are available for media outlets interested in covering the program. Oregon GEAR UP also welcomes follow-up inquiries or interviews if requested.

For more information or photos, please contact:

Grace Whitley

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### **About Oregon Goes To College**

*Oregon Goes To College* is the go-to source for information on preparing for education after high school. It is a statewide initiative of Oregon GEAR UP.

### **About Oregon GEAR UP**

*Oregon GEAR UP* (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally funded program through the U.S. Department of Education that helps middle and high school students prepare for and succeed in after high school.