



# PRESS RELEASE

From the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Local Resident, Darius D. Spurlock, Will Participate in the GEAR UP Alumni Leadership Academy**

**Spurlock is one of 29 selected from a nationwide pool of applicants**

BATON ROUGE – Local resident, Darius D. Spurlock, has been chosen for the highly competitive GEAR UP Alumni Leadership Academy (GUALA), Class of 2016. The GUALA program identifies students with exceptional leadership potential and provides additional training and tools to help them more effectively engage their peers, schools, and community in creating a college-going culture.

GEAR UP, or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a federally funded college readiness and success program that provides services to approximately 551,000 students in low-income schools across 43 states and 1 territory. This region is served by Louisiana GEAR UP, which is based within the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), and serves over 3,000 students in 30 schools and 12 parishes across the state.

In order to better support the GEAR UP mission nationwide, the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) created the GUALA program, with the support of the Kresge Foundation. GUALA works to advance college and career readiness in communities by providing 12 months of training for Alumni Leaders on topics related to peer-to-peer outreach and mentoring, social media engagement, public speaking, and education policy.

Spurlock will participate in the year-long GUALA training program in order to better serve his GEAR UP community. As part of the program, Spurlock will travel to Washington, DC for a week-long intensive leadership training, where he will interact with national policymakers and leaders.

“Mr. Spurlock’s countless contributions to the community make him a great fit for this position,” said LA GEAR UP Assistant Director, Dr. Tireka Cobb. “He is an advocate for higher education, and he promotes post-secondary education not only to his peers but to everyone he meets,” she continued.

Darius is an active member of the True Vine Baptist Church of Baton Rouge, LA where he has been involved in numerous church-related activities throughout the community. His most recent honor, the prestigious Scotlandville Magnet High School Principal’s Award, was presented to him for his dedication to excellence and peer leadership.

“While his accomplishments are many, Darius is most proud of being selected to share his GEAR UP story with over 2,000 GEAR UP directors, coordinators, and students at the 2014 National GEAR UP Conference held last summer in Washington, DC,” Cobb added.

“Darius Deonbre Spurlock embodies what Louisiana GEAR UP is all about and he is committed to helping the program achieve continued success in the future,” Cobb concluded.

For more information about Louisiana GEAR UP, please contact Dr. Tireka Cobb at LOSFA at 225-219-0920]. To learn more about GUALA, please contact Alex Chough at NCCEP at 202-530-1135 or [www.edpartnerships.org](http://www.edpartnerships.org).

### **About Louisiana GEAR UP**

In partnership with 12 Louisiana parishes, LA GEAR UP aims to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education. Please visit our website at [www.lagearup.com](http://www.lagearup.com).

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