



**T**he College Access, Retention and Success (CARS) Conference was held in the Wichita State Rhatigan Student Center on February 21, 2017. Approximately 65 people attended the morning event that was held in conjunction with National TRIO Day.

McNair Scholars Program Director, LaWanda Holt-Fields, presided over the event and introduced Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of Special Programs, Deltha Q. Colvin, who welcomed the audience and talked about the importance of TRIO and GEAR UP.

Dr. Holt-Fields presented a session on grit as it relates to adults and successful strategies that enhance college preparedness for individuals who have been out of school for a long time. Holt-Fields and Kennedy Musamali, EdD spoke about the impact of students who will change the college landscape. According to the presenters, in 20 years over 50 percent of students from minority groups and most of those students are first-generation college students. Dr. Holt-Fields, Souriya-Mnirajd, and Corinne Nilsen discussed characteristics of high achieving students, in particular, foster care students and students with disabilities. These students typically are not traditionally thought of as high achieving but they are. The needs of these populations are being met through programs that operate in tandem. Several WSU faculty members and Wichita Public Schools (USD 259) personnel were in attendance. After learning about all the diverse programs offered by the Office of Special Programs, Regehr, Special Education, Student Support Services, and the TRIO and GEAR UP. Norman Bent, WSU College of Education shared her intention to refer more students to the TRIO and GEAR UP.

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The overwhelming response to the CARS conference was positive. Several attendees indicated how informative the sessions were, while many felt that they learned how programs operate in tandem. Several WSU faculty members and Wichita Public Schools (USD 259) personnel were in attendance. After learning about all the diverse programs offered by the Office of Special Programs, Regehr, Special Education, Student Support Services, and the TRIO and GEAR UP. Norman Bent, WSU College of Education shared her intention to refer more students to the TRIO and GEAR UP.



for future collaboration.” Not only were WSU faculty and staff impacted, but the OSP staff, many of whom were new professionals, also felt the event was a great eye-opener for