




Newsletter, Volume 4  
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## College Access Information Hotline designed to remedy college confusion

Good information is a remedy for the notion that college is out-of-reach for too many Ohioans. Unveiled by the Ohio Board of Regents in May, the College Access Information Hotline (1-877-1-ATTAIN or 1-877-428-8246), offers callers information on preparation for college, admission, articulation and transfer and general facts about enrollment at colleges and universities throughout Ohio. In addition, the hotline service is paired with the existing State Grants and Scholarship Hotline to deliver information about college student financial aid, directing callers to available local, state and federal sources.



Available from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, the hotline serves to supplement the college-advisement work of overburdened high school guidance counselors.

The hotline proved invaluable for another reason in September after Hurricane Katrina displaced many Ohio native college students attending school in the Gulf Coast region. 

## Multi-million dollar GEAR UP grant to prepare Ohio students for college

A \$20 million federal grant will help students in eight Ohio communities prepare to enter and succeed in college.

The U.S. Department of Education supports early college awareness activities at both the local and state level through its competitive Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant program. Under the leadership of the Ohio Board of Regents and with the collaboration of the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) and Ohio Department of Education, Ohio's six-year, \$3.3 million annual grant will focus on advancing educational opportunities and increasing college participation rates in selected schools in the communities of Columbus, Conneaut, Elyria, Lima, Springfield, Toledo, West Union, and Zanesville.

"The value of an education beyond high school is well proven," said Roderick G. W. Chu, chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. "Through this grant we will work with local leaders in these eight communities to create enthusiasm about the importance of going to college and the transformational impact that educating more of their students can have on their communities and the state."

Middle schools and high schools in these eight high-poverty rural and

urban communities were identified because of low college participation and high remediation rates. Students will be exposed to a menu of proven college access "best practices," such as tutoring, enrichment programs, early awareness activities and college/financial aid advising, practices refined through Ohio's successful 1999 GEAR UP state project as well as OCAN's programs.

"The eight 'lighthouse' sites will deliver comprehensive services to nearly 14,000 economically disadvantaged students each year," said Jennifer Blatz, executive director of OCAN. "About 50 percent of the 8,000 urban students to be served are from minority groups that are under-represented in higher education. Students in the other sites are from rural or Appalachian schools, where students have not pursued college as strongly as in other schools."

Since the September announcement of the grant award, meetings have been held with community partners at each GEAR UP site.

Ohio's previous six-year GEAR UP grant demonstrated that a comprehensive college access approach could significantly improve student aspiration and academic achievement. GEAR UP students in Cleveland and Ironton achieved significantly better proficiency test results, high school

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*(GEAR UP from page 1)*

course selections, attendance and grade point averages.


Beyond the statewide GEAR UP grant, two other locally initiated GEAR UP sites in Ohio were funded.

Bowling Green State University will continue its work with sixth and seventh graders at schools in east Toledo over the next six years with more than \$4 million in federal funds. The northwest Ohio GEAR UP program is part of a larger grant to the Midwest Educational Reform Consortium, which, in addition to BGSU, includes Western Michigan University.

The Lorain City Schools also received a six-year GEAR UP grant of more than \$3 million. The money will be used for a variety of initiatives related to Project GRAD for current seventh-grade students at General Johnnie Wilson Middle School, Whittier Middle School and Longfellow Middle School and follow the students until graduation. The funds will be used for tutoring, summer programming, social services, college-based activities, mentoring and professional development activities for their teachers.

Supervised by former Lorain Southview

Principal Jay Ferguson, the GEAR UP program is a community partnership that uses the services and support of many community organizations.

Partners include Project GRAD Lorain, Lorain County Community College, Lorain County Job and Family Services, Oberlin College, El Centro de Servicios Sociales, the Lorain County Urban League, Boys and Girls Clubs of Lorain, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Lorain County Inc., First Federal Savings and Loan, Lorain Police Department and Brenna Chiropractic. 

## New leaders take helm at OACHE, OCAN

The boards of the Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE) and the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) named new leaders for their organizations over the summer.

Dawson Bryant High School Principal Brenda Haas, Ed.D. began her work as executive director of OACHE on Aug. 15. Jennifer C. Blatz officially took the reins at OCAN as Executive Director on July 1.

Haas holds a doctorate in education, master's in education and a bachelor of science degree all from Ohio University.



**Brenda Haas**


Before serving as principal at Dawson Bryant High School for six years, Haas served as principal at Dawson-Bryant Elementary School for eight years. She was also principal and teacher in the Rock Hill School System for nearly 20 years.

Dr. Haas said a major goal is to keep everyone at the state and national levels



**Jennifer C. Blatz**

informed about OACHE. In the long term, Haas would like to see an increase in students going to and finishing college.

Before her becoming OCAN's Executive Director, Blatz served the previous six months as the Interim Executive Director as an "executive on loan" from KnowledgeWorks Foundation. Blatz brings experience in both college access and policy as she has spent the past four years as program officer in the Foundation's College & Career Access Program Area where she has managed the Foundation's work with OCAN and worked with local OCAN member programs through direction of Foundation's OhioCAN grants program. Ms. Blatz also served as a member of Project Team for the Governor's Commission for Higher Education and the Economy, and a member of the Executive Committee of the National Pathways to College Network. 


## Universities in Ohio announce scholarship programs

Helping more needy students attend two of the state's four-year universities is the focus of two new scholarship programs.

In January, Ohio State University announced its Land Grant Opportunity Scholarships - worth up to \$17,000 a year - to help the top low-income student in each of the state's 88 counties attend Ohio State.

In October, Ohio University announced its Appalachian Scholars Program, a need-based scholarship initiative that seeks high school students from the 29 counties in Appalachian Ohio and provides them with scholarship support to attend Ohio University.

Blended with federal and state grants, the OSU awards will cover a student's annual tuition, room and board, books and other expenses. The program is open to families earning less than \$40,000 a year.

Ohio University will work with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio to identify potential scholars, form partnerships with regional high schools and identify prospective supporters for the program. All six OU campuses will participate in the program. 

# Ohio College Access & Success Conference

The 2005 Ohio College Access & Success Conference was a smashing success! More than 300 participants attended the three-day conference in October with the theme *Ohio Can! Go to College.*

The conference brought together key educational practitioners including college access personnel from the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN), Ohio College Tech Prep, the Federal

GEAR UP and TRiO programs; middle and high school guidance counselors, principals and superintendents; and

two- and four-year college officials including staff from financial aid, admissions, student affairs, enrollment management and the president's offices to network and engage in professional development.

The first day of the conference included a panel discussion on college access initiatives and a keynote speech by Dr. Calvin Mackie, a professor, speaker, author and inventor.

The second day's activities included a breakfast at the Statehouse with remarks by Senator Joy Padgett, Chair of the Education

Committee; Representative Shawn Webster, Chair of the Higher Education Subcommittee; and Susan Bodary, Executive Assistant for Education in the Office of the Governor.



Nationally recognized researcher on student retention and success, Dr. Vincent Tinto, led the discussion during the Retention Summit on the conference's final day. 📖

## Northeast Ohio embraces College 360° program

Northeast Ohio business and civic leaders accepted the challenge in September to transform the region into a premier destination for college bound students and college graduates by making an unprecedented commitment to enrolling, engaging and employing more college students in the region.

The College 360° brain gain initiative targeted at 18 to 24 year olds was unveiled at a Community Kickoff at the Federal Reserve Bank in downtown Cleveland.

The region's leaders answered that call by vowing to:

\* Create 3,600 more internships in northeast Ohio over the next three years. FirstEnergy Corp. of Akron, Hyland Software of Westlake and Nestlé of Solon are among the region's largest employers committed to making the College 360° initiative a success in this regard.

\* Make "Do Downtown Akron" discount cards available to all area college students via the College 360° web site, [www.College360.org](http://www.College360.org).

\* Offer college students access to many Playhouse Square events for discounted rates via [www.College360.org](http://www.College360.org).

\* Provide affordable hotel lodging opportunities and restaurant values through a partnership between College 360° and the Greater Cleveland Convention and Visitors Bureau.

College 360° has published the region's first "Campus Visit," a magazine that promotes and informs potential college students and their parents of the cultural and other assets of Northeast Ohio. A new web site, [www.College360.org](http://www.College360.org), introduces students to the same assets and serves as a catalyst for engaging them off the campuses in the communities and activities of Northeast Ohio. 📖

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Jonathan Tafel, Vice Chancellor for Educational Linkages and Access, oversees OBR's access initiatives and collaborative efforts with statewide partners to increase Ohio's college-going rate.

*Student Access and Success is a quarterly newsletter produced by the Educational Linkages and Access Division of the Ohio Board of Regents for Ohio's access and success community. Look for the next edition to be published electronically.*

[www.ohioaccess.org](http://www.ohioaccess.org)

## College Prep 101 tackles college-readiness issue

In late October, a partnership between the Columbus Public Schools and several central Ohio colleges and universities unveiled a plan to prepare Columbus students for college, to develop high-quality teachers to inspire them and to help with financial aid and other tools for their success.

Called College Prep 101, the initiative also involves I Know I Can, which provides financial help and other support for students to go to college; Columbus State Community College; Capital, DeVry, Ohio Dominican and Ohio State universities; Otterbein College; and Columbus College of Art & Design. Administrators from six colleges have met up to three times a

month for the past year to develop the plan.


College officials pledged to conduct research on urban education, develop student-aid programs and coordinate their results with one another.

The goals of the program under the curriculum category include: making classes more rigorous, increasing the number of students taking college-entrance exams, eliminating grade inflation and improving the ability of teachers to describe what colleges expect of incoming students.

Under academic and student services, goals including lowering the student-to-counselor ratio, having more mentors

available and boosting college credits that high school students can earn.

The plan also calls for teacher-development programs and expanding the use of computers and other technology to enable children to learn at different paces and from remote locations.

Ohio State University President Karen Holbrook, Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Roderick Chu, Columbus Public Schools Superintendent Gene Harris and I Know I Can President Teckie Shackelford participated in the kickoff ceremony. 

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Please submit articles to Bret Crow, assistant director of communications, at the Ohio Board of Regents, at [bcrow@regents.state.oh.us](mailto:bcrow@regents.state.oh.us) .

<http://www.ohioaccess.org>