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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 7, 2005**

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**MULTIMILLION DOLLAR FEDERAL GRANT  
TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE**

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – 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 the counties of Adams, Allen, Ashtabula, Clark, Franklin, Lorain, Lucas and Muskingum.

"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/junior high school and senior 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 access 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."

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 course selections, attendance and grade point averages.

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FEDERAL GRANT/2

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Members of the media with questions about the purpose or the details of the grant or the involvement of the Ohio Board of Regents, OCAN or the Department of Education can contact:

Dr. Jon Tafel Vice Chancellor Ohio Board of Regents Office: 614.466.3561 Email: <a href="mailto:jtafel@regents.state.oh.us">jtafel@regents.state.oh.us</a>	Ms. Jennifer Blatz Executive Director <a href="http://Ohio College Access Network">Ohio College Access Network</a> Office: 513.830.1210 Email: <a href="mailto:blatzj@ohiocan.org">blatzj@ohiocan.org</a>	Ms. Sarah Luchs Policy Analyst Ohio Department of Education Office: 877.644.6338 Email: <a href="mailto:Sarah.Luchs@ode.state.oh.us">Sarah.Luchs@ode.state.oh.us</a>
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Members of the media with questions about college participation, attainment or other challenges/opportunities in the eight lighthouse communities can contact the Ohio College Access Network program directors:

<p><b><u>Lima County</u></b>  <b>Lima/Allen College Access Program</b>                  Ms. Angela R. Meyer, College Access Director                  Phone: 419-222-6045                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:ameyer@limachamber.com">ameyer@limachamber.com</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> Lima South Middle School and Lima Senior High School</p>	<p><b><u>Ashtabula County</u></b>  <b>ACCESS Ashtabula</b>                  Ms. Kimberly A. Landis, Executive Director                  Phone: 440-992-2332                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:kimlandis@earthlink.net">kimlandis@earthlink.net</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> Rowe Middle School and Conneaut High School</p>
<p><b><u>Clark County</u></b>  <b>Springfield Higher Education Partnership</b>                  Ms. Mary Patton, Director Career Services                  Clark State Community College                  Phone: 937-328-6073                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:pattonm@clarkstate.edu">pattonm@clarkstate.edu</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> Schaefer Middle School and South Springfield High School</p>	<p><b><u>Franklin County</u></b>  <b>I KNOW I CAN</b>                  Mr. Eddie Harrell Jr., Executive Director                  Phone: 614-251.4103                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:eharrell@iknowican.org">eharrell@iknowican.org</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> Beery Middle School Marion-Franklin High School</p>
<p><b><u>Adams County</u></b>  <b>Southern Ohio Center of Excellence</b>                  Dr. Lawrence Dukes, Executive Director                  Southern State Community College                  Phone: 937-393-3431                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:ldukes@sscc.edu">ldukes@sscc.edu</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> West Union Junior High School and West Union High School</p>	<p><b><u>Lorain County</u></b>  <b>Cleveland Scholarship Programs</b>                  Ms. Maria I. Boss, President &amp; CEO                  Phone: 216-241-5587                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:mboss@cspohio.org">mboss@cspohio.org</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> Westwood Junior High School and Elyria High School</p>
<p><b><u>Lucas County</u></b>  <b>Northwest Ohio College Access Program</b>                  Ms. Libbey McKnight, Executive Director                  Phone: 419-340-5821                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:lmcknight_1@netzero.net">lmcknight_1@netzero.net</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> Leverette Middle School and Calvin M. Woodward High School</p>	<p><b><u>Muskingum County</u></b>  <b>Scholarship Central</b>                  Ms. Heather M. Sands, Program Coordinator                  Muskingum County Community Foundation                  Phone: 740-453-5192                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:hsands@mccf.org">hsands@mccf.org</a>  <b>GEAR UP Schools:</b> Grover Cleveland Middle School and Zanesville High School</p>

Members of the media with questions about the successes and challenges of Ohio's previous six-year GEAR UP grant site programs can contact:

<p><b><u>Cuyahoga County</u></b>  <b>Cleveland Scholarship Program</b>                  Ms. Maria I. Boss, President &amp; CEO                  Phone: 216-241-5587                  Fax: 216-241-3187 (Fax)                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:mboss@cspohio.org">mboss@cspohio.org</a></p>	<p><b><u>Lawrence County</u></b>  <b>It Might As Well Be You</b>                  Mr. Jeff L. Handley, Project Director                  Phone: 740-533-4556                  Fax: 740-533-4567 (Fax)                  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:handleyj@ohio.edu">handleyj@ohio.edu</a></p>
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