



# CONNECTED

Connecting Higher Education to Business in Ohio

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CSU

## A CLEVELAND STATE PROGRAM LINKS MINORITY STUDENTS TO CAREERS

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*Photo: Marion Technical College*



## A Message from Chancellor Randy Gardner

As the calendar and thermometer indicate, summer is officially here. But the “lazy days of summer” are anything but in the world of higher education, especially here in Ohio. In this issue of ConnectED, we spotlight some of the innovative ways Ohio colleges, universities, and technical centers are equipping students with the skills they need to succeed while helping Ohio’s business community meet its workforce needs.

Cleveland State University’s LINK program is celebrating 30 years of helping to create a diverse talent pipeline that positively impacts the economic development of the northeast Ohio region. In Columbus, the Department of Higher Education’s Aspire program teamed up with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and the Delaware Area Career Center to assist deaf and hard-of-hearing students in gaining the reading, communication, and independent living skills necessary to succeed in the workforce.

Students and faculty at Northwest State Community College are using an externship program to help a local company address technical challenges and give participants invaluable experience. Miami University’s Hamilton campus is developing a program for regional campus students that will not only give them valuable work experience while in school, but also allow them to graduate debt free. Lastly, at sites in Cincinnati, Columbus, and Dayton, entrepreneurs will have access to education, financial capital, and business support services thanks to an expanded partnership between community colleges and Goldman Sachs.

While summer may slow down for some in higher education, Ohio is staying as busy as ever keeping our students and workforce partners ConnectED.



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# The LINK Program

## Connecting Businesses and Minority Students for 30 Years

Prompted by corporate demand for a more diverse candidate pool for co-ops, internships, and full-time employment, Cleveland State University established an underrepresented scholars' support system in the Career Services

Department in 1988. Thirty years later, the LINK Program continues to adapt to meet the needs of students of color and the business community. The program now draws upon the resources and services available through CSU's Division of University Engagement.

Ramona Lowery, deputy commissioner of the City of Cleveland's Division of Water Pollution Control and a 1988 LINK alum, extolled the program's success and its impact on her career.

"As a first-generation college graduate, I am 100% sure that I would not have graduated or been in the seat that I am in today without LINK," Lowery said. "The tutoring, mentoring, and financial support provided for me through LINK allowed me to successfully finish college. As a result of the support that LINK has provided me, I have recruited at least 10 more students for the LINK Program, hired a student from the LINK Program who is doing well, and have mentored quite a few students enrolled in the program."

Over the course of three decades, the LINK

Program has provided minority students, largely from Cleveland-area high schools, with internship and cooperative education opportunities. The end goal is to promote minority student participation in high-demand occupational fields and serve as a recruitment and retention tool for promising students.

Recent graduate Alex Snyder appreciates the support and opportunities LINK provided.

"As a LINK scholar, I had access to resources, networking opportunities, and advisors that helped me jump start my professional career early on," Snyder said. "Those connections put me in place to land my first internship in 2013, and my advisors and mentors kept pushing me through the next few rounds of internships until I graduated with four years of experience across three different companies in 2017 and eventually into the full-time position I have had since the winter of 2017. I owe my continued success to the LINK program."

LINK has been successful largely because of its strong support from corporate and organizational employers and LINK alumni, as well as a mentoring program for students that has anchored the initiative. A recent redesign recognized these complementary objectives and builds on the program's long-standing

strengths while sharpening its scope to ensure high performance and sustainability.

“The LINK Program provides a great avenue for students to be mentored and connected to Northeast Ohio employers,” said Diana Starks, vice president of human resources and the office of diversity and inclusion at the Federal Reserve

Bank of Cleveland. “I am extremely glad to serve as a LINK mentor, and to see that my 2018 mentee, Isaiah Orr, was offered and accepted a full-time position with the bank!”

LINK alum Keiona Blackmon said she is honored to be connected to a program that has been



Find out more about the LINK Program at: [www.csuohio.edu/engagement/link-program](http://www.csuohio.edu/engagement/link-program)

successful for more than 30 years and continues to make an impact.

“The LINK Program has not only provided me with the skill sets needed in my academic career, but has also given me the skill sets in my professional career,” Blackmon said. “LINK has provided me with networking skills, academic and professional resources, lifelong friendships, and memories that will last a lifetime. It has been an honor to be a part of a program that has been around for over 30 years. I have met several LINK alumni, and many have provided me with advice and resources needed in both my academic and professional career. It is great seeing how this program continues to progress and help students in their professional, personal, and academic life.”



Linking Minority Students to Careers

# LINK Program

Cleveland State University  
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## Program Scope

The LINK Scholars Program serves up to 45 full-time, undergraduate students of color each year. Students are eligible to apply for the program during the spring semester of their first year on campus. Although the program’s developmental structure is suited primarily for rising sophomores, students who transfer into the university with more than 30 credit hours are eligible for consideration. Students from all majors are eligible to apply.

## Program Benefits

LINK Scholars receive a \$2,000 scholarship during their first year of eligibility and renewal of the scholarships, based on the availability of funds, for up to two additional years. Students in the program have access to all services available through Career Services, including online assistance, and assistance from alumni, faculty, and staff. A program coordinator provides one-on-one assistance with mock interviews, co-ops, internships, and permanent employment, and monitors students’ consistent advancement. Each student has an employer champion, specifically recruited for the LINK Scholars Program, to provide mentorship and guidance. Students also receive access to special programming for LINK Scholars through luncheons that include panel presentations and corporate speakers, academic support, and programs offered by the Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement, and connection to civic engagement activities through the Office of Civic Engagement.

## Program Eligibility

For continued eligibility in the program, students are expected to:

- Maintain a 2.5 GPA.
- Obtain and successfully fulfill the requirements of a paid internship or co-op during the summer or academic year after their first full year of participation in the program, and each subsequent summer or academic year until graduation.
- Participate in multicultural student success programs.
- Participate in at least one civic engagement activity offered through the Office of Civic Engagement, the Department of Student Life, a student organization, or an employer.

“The LINK Program has provided our economic development nonprofit with finance and information technology interns who have been integral to the success of multiple audits and financial results and information technology support for nearly 10 years,” said Richard Jankura, senior partner, finance, with JumpStart. “The organization has benefitted from their work and we have watched these young adults blossom in their careers. LINK provides the opportunity and guidance, which helps these talented young people to learn and grow in a supported environment, preparing them for their careers in their chosen field.”

After thirty years, the LINK Program continues to create a diverse talent pipeline that is designed to positively impact the economic development of the northeast Ohio region.

### Current Scholars on LINK:

*"LINK is amazing! I am appreciative of being in the program of successful, aspiring individuals. Professor Jones is the GOAT (greatest of all time). She helped me get an internship that I enjoy! LINK is black excellence!" – Sharonda Smith*

*"The LINK Program has impacted my life, college career and professional career in so many ways. LINK has given me the tools to network, take on challenges, and explore new avenues. This unique experience allowed me to land a co-op by applying the tips I have learned through mock interviews and being paired with a professional mentor who works in my field of study. This program has also given me the opportunity to attend exclusive professional events and galas. I have developed my leadership skills by serving on The Link Student Association (LSA) executive board. Being a LINK Scholar brought more to my college experience. It taught me that college includes academic success as well as social engagement. This allowed me to connect with many students of color across campus and the community." – Alexis Smith*

*"LINK is so amazing. In the year I have been part of the program, I have learned so much and become part of a close-knit community of people who really look out for each other. My experience so far has been nothing short of awesome." – Toni Kolawole*

# GOLDMAN SACHS EXPANDS AN ENTREPRENEUR FOCUSED PROGRAM IN OHIO

A program that partners with community colleges to help entrepreneurs create jobs and economic opportunity by providing them with greater access to education, financial capital, and business support services is expanding in Ohio and bringing with it recovery and workforce training opportunities related to the opioid crisis.

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses (10KSB), which made its Ohio debut at Cuyahoga Community College in 2012, recently announced the expansion of its Ohio program to serve entrepreneurs statewide. This move will expand its partnership-driven model from the current program in Cleveland to regional hubs in Columbus (Columbus State Community College), Cincinnati (Cincinnati State Technical and Community College), and Dayton (Sinclair Community College). The program has reached nearly 700 businesses thus far.

“The support we’ve received from the community in Cleveland has made expanding statewide in Ohio a clear imperative,” said John Waldron, president and chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs. “We’ve seen the dynamic small business ecosystem, supportive local leadership, and motivated business development organizations make real and sustainable change in Cleveland. We are excited to help drive the same success across Ohio as we look to boost the workforce and support economic progress across the state.”

10KSB is provided at no cost with support from the Goldman Sachs Foundation. The program offers participants:

- **Business and management education:** Small business owners have access to a free practical business education through which they develop a business growth plan

to help them increase revenues and hire new employees.

- **Access to capital:** The program helps small businesses understand how to access capital to increase opportunities for growth.
- **Business support services:** Business advising and networking is offered to participating small business owners through partnerships with community-based and national business organizations.

“This program will create a pipeline of well-trained, highly skilled business leaders and entrepreneurs who are vital to increasing the economic impact and growth of our region,” said Sinclair Community College President Steve Johnson.

To date nationally, more than 8,200 small business owners from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico have graduated from 10KSB. The program’s results show 67% of graduates seeing revenue growth six months after completing the program, while 47% report creating new jobs six months after completing the program.

In addition to the 10KSB expansion, Goldman Sachs announced that the program would be collaborating with OneFifteen, a not-for-profit healthcare ecosystem based in Dayton and launched earlier this year by Kettering Health Network, Premier Health, and Verily. The collaboration will support the recovery and redevelopment of the region by connecting people who are in recovery from opioid addiction with workforce training to better secure job opportunities.



**Goldman Sachs**

**10,000  
small  
businesses**

“The goal of Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses to provide economic opportunity to Dayton residents is complementary to the work that OneFifteen is spearheading to get people back on their feet following opioid addiction,” said Andy Conrad, CEO of Verily. “I look forward to seeing the development of the collaboration between Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses and OneFifteen as they identify opportunities for workforce development that will benefit the whole Dayton community.”

**Cuyahoga Community College** is now joined by similar programs at **Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, Columbus State Community College, and Sinclair Community College**



**LEADERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE PRAISED THE PROGRAM AND ITS EXPANSION:**

“Small businesses are the backbone of wealth and job creation in our community. We’re excited that 10,000 Small Businesses will be working with Sinclair Community College to bring new resources and training to entrepreneurs in Dayton.” – *Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley*

“Critical to this effort are community colleges that deliver the program. Cincinnati State, under the leadership of Dr. Monica Posey, jumped in to ensure that Cincinnati would be a regional hub for all of Ohio. We are thrilled to be part of this great program and look forward to working together as a united front to cultivate and support small businesses.” – *Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley*

# Miami University Regionals + Local Businesses = Graduating Debt Free

***Innovative Work+ program to offer Ohio residents work experience through part-time jobs and paid tuition***

Miami University's community-based campuses in Hamilton and Middletown (Miami University Regionals) have partnered with four area businesses to create a new workforce-education program designed to allow students to earn a college degree debt-free. The program, named Work+, will provide participating Ohio residents with work experience, paid tuition, books, and a possible housing stipend.

Local manufacturing companies Bilstein (Hamilton), Deceuninck (Monroe), and The Fischer Group (Fairfield), along with the Butler County Regional Transit Authority (West Chester), are collaborating with Miami Regionals to launch the program this fall. Program participants will be enrolled students at one of the regional campuses as well as part-time employees of one of the Work+ employers.

Students in the collaborative program will typically work between 20 and 25 hours per week while taking classes. Work+ participants will receive a wage and paid tuition and may pursue any major.

Work+ is the brainchild of Ohio Sen. Bill Coley, R-Liberty Township. Coley unveiled the program at a May 30 press conference at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus, alongside fellow Ohio Senators Steve Wilson, R-Maineville, Bob Hackett, R-London, and Joe Uecker, R-Loveland, who are among co-sponsors; Ohio Rep. Sara Carruthers, R-Hamilton; Rob Brundrett of the Ohio Manufacturers Association; and Miami University President Gregory Crawford.

"It's our goal that these students will graduate with degrees and that they are going to be able to graduate with no debt," said Coley. Students will benefit by having increased awareness of job requirements and career opportunities, while local companies will have greater access to more skilled workers.

Crawford said the Work+ program has been in development for about a year.

“This is a great idea, and when Senator Coley brought it to us, we took off with it. It has just been an amazing partnership,” President Crawford said. “We are grateful to be part of this, certainly as a university, but we’re also grateful to be taking the lead. I think it’s going to be a model template that can propagate throughout Ohio and deliver a great workforce that Ohio needs right now. We’re excited!

“We cannot just deliver great employees with these Miami students at our regional campuses, but they will probably stick with the companies for four years. So, the length of time and the retention of these employees will be fantastic,” Crawford added.

Al Fischer, CEO of The Fischer Group, said Miami’s Work+ program is a great fit for his company’s culture of innovation.

“We look at this as an innovative approach to building a highly capable workforce while providing a debt free solution to higher education. We are excited to coach and enable students to consider all possibilities versus leveraging standard solutions when solving technical and business challenges. We believe their experience will provide lessons for our company and the students as they become part of our business and grow into our future workforce leaders,” Fischer said.

Fabian Schmahl, CEO and president of thyssenkrupp Bilstein of America, describes this program as a “win-win” solution.

“For thyssenkrupp Bilstein, we gain a stable long-term employee and the potential that the student continues to grow with us after graduation. For the student, they gain valuable workforce experience and the opportunity to graduate debt free. We are excited about the launch of this program and know it will affect so many people in a positive way,” Schmahl said.

Cathy Bishop-Clark, associate provost and dean of Miami University Regionals, said academic adviser Kelly Brown has agreed to serve as Work+ interim director for Miami Regionals. McKenna Koewler is working part-time during the summer as program coordinator.

“There are multiple advantages to this program. Employers get more consistency in their entry-level workforce. Program participants learn both technical and soft skills, and they can potentially create a pathway to a career if they perform well,” Bishop-Clark said.

She said the goal is to have a total cohort of 40 participants starting the program this fall, distributed throughout the four companies.





## First-of-Its-Kind Ceremony Connects Communication with Employment

It was a beautiful day for a graduation ceremony in Columbus. And while central Ohio is no stranger to this type of thing each May, this particular ceremony was unique. Held at the Ohio School for the Deaf, it celebrated the first cohort of students completing an adult basic literacy program for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

The program, believed to be the first of its kind in the country, is the result of a partnership between Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), a state agency focused on helping individuals with disabilities find employment; the Delaware Area Career Center; and the Ohio Department of Higher Education's ASPIRE program. It is focused on improving overall communication abilities, workplace communication skills, reading levels, and independent living skills. Ohio's Aspire program allows adults to take classes to improve their reading, English, and math skills, thereby increasing their employment and promotion potential. The classes are offered at no cost, but

these services have not always been available or accessible for the deaf or hard of hearing.

The five students in the program's first cohort spent the last six months improving their fluency in both American Sign Language (ASL) and English by participating in eight to 12 hours per week of group classes, online modules, and one-on-one sessions with an instructor.

The May ceremony at the Ohio School for the Deaf featured a presentation from Erika Shadburne of the National Deaf Center on the current state of employment and education for deaf or hard-of-hearing individuals. Shadburne said the deaf are often underemployed or unemployed because of communication and literacy barriers.

Gary Cates, senior vice chancellor at the Ohio Department of Higher Education, and Donna Albanese, state director of the Aspire program, were on hand to thank the students for their

inspiring accomplishment. Cates expressed appreciation to the students for being the first cohort in this unique program, and added that these types of partnerships are built on trust.

“I hope that we have built a good trust with you,” Cates said. “Because there will be others who are going to follow and others who are going to benefit because you blazed a trail.”

The ceremony also included remarks from the program’s partner organizations:

- Dr. Lou Maynus, superintendent, Ohio School for the Deaf;
- Mary Beth Freeman, superintendent, Delaware Area Career Center;
- Greg Dormer, deputy director of the Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired at OOD; and
- Katie Scheetz, program coordinator, OOD.

Laura Smith, the program’s instructor, also presented each student with a certificate of recognition. Smith worked at the Ohio School for the Deaf for 35 years before retiring three years ago. The unique need and potential for this program convinced her to return to teaching.

The students expressed appreciation for the program and the way it boosted their communication skills and their confidence.

“It has given me the confidence to take the next step in my education,” said Allison Clark. “I start college classes on Monday!”

“This program has helped me develop my career,” said Nick Siewertsen, who is currently working in manufacturing.

“This class has helped me feel more confident in my communication skills so that I can seek a better job,” said Anna Piloto.

“Because of this program, I have better self-awareness and more empathy for my community,” said Rae Trambaugh.

The program was featured on WBNS 10TV in Columbus. You can watch the 10TV story [online at this link](#).



**Ohio**  
**Opportunities  
for Ohioans  
with Disabilities**



**DACC**  
DELAWARE AREA  
CAREER CENTER



**Aspire**  
LEARN MORE. EARN MORE.



# EXTERNSHIPS TAKE THE SUMMER SPOTLIGHT AT NORTHWEST STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## Q&A WITH BRAD GEER, PRIOR AND WORKPLACE LEARNING COORDINATOR

Northwest State Community College in Archbold, Ohio has a unique externship program taking place this summer. Brad Geer, prior and workplace learning coordinator at Northwest State, recently answered a few questions about the project and process.



### What exactly is an “externship”?

Externships are typically considered a project-based experiential learning experience, compared to internships, which are typically hourly, and apprenticeships, which are more curriculum driven.

### Are both faculty and students participating this summer?

Yes, we have three science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) faculty doing individual, deliberate externships in our local economy and one student group taking on a project for a local manufacturer. The student group consists of six students and three faculty advisers. Ohio Rotational Molding (ORM) has sponsored the team and offered a creative project for the team to focus on.



## WHAT IS LEAN 5S?

“5S” is a system to reduce waste and improve productivity by maintaining an orderly workplace and using visual cues to achieve more consistent operational results. Implementation of this method “cleans up” and organizes the workplace basically in its existing configuration, and it is typically the first lean method that organizations implement.

The 5 S’s represent Japanese words that describe the steps of the process: Sort (Seiri), Set in Order (Seiton), Shine (Seiso), Standardize (Seiketsu), and Sustain (Shitsuke). These five pillars provide a methodology for organizing, cleaning, developing, and sustaining a productive work environment.

In simple terms, the 5S methodology helps a workplace remove items that are no longer needed (sort), organize the items to optimize efficiency and flow (straighten), clean the area in order to more easily identify problems (shine), implement color coding and labels to stay consistent with other areas (standardize), and develop behaviors that keep the workplace organized over the long term (sustain).

[Source: <http://leansixsigmadefinition.com/glossary/5s/>]

### How did Ohio Rotational Molding become involved?

ORM is a plastics manufacturer in Holgate, Ohio. Bryan Chance, COO and partner of ORM, was introduced to me by Jennifer Arps of the Henry County Community Improvement Corporation. Bryan first talked about his need for computer numerically controlled (CNC) operators and programmers, but after some discussion, we realized that he could be better served by a Lean 5S approach (See sidebar for more on Lean 5S).



### So how did the team approach this challenge in practical terms?

The team came up with a Project Plan to solve the immediate problem, establish a standard operating procedure to move forward, and establish a training program for the company.

The first stage of the project began with system data recovery and restoration from a damaged 1995 hard drive, then software updates to allow for rapid CNC programming.

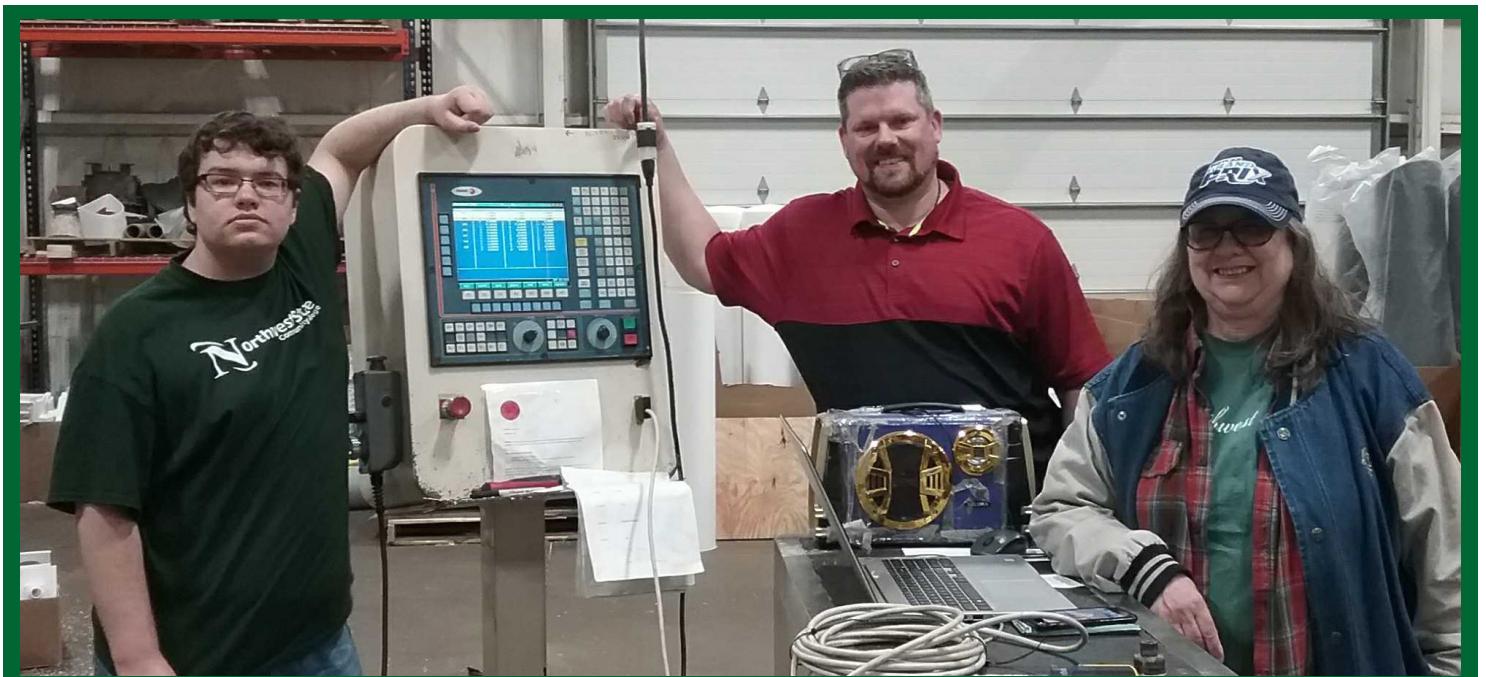
### What type of time frame does a project like this involve?

This first stage took four weeks to complete. The second stage, standard operating procedures, is scheduled for another four weeks, followed by training and close out.

### What are the benefits of a project like this?

I think in the long term, ORM benefits from this project because it will potentially get a worker from this group of students. The company also benefits because it had access to resources it normally would not have had as the group was well rounded.

The biggest winners here were the students, as it exposed them to a real-life scenario where a job needed to be launched from start to finish. They experienced the variety of ways it could have been processed, settled into one way, and even got to experience the pressure of a tight deadline with a real customer. This was an experience I am sure they will remember as they proceed into their careers.







**A special thank you to all of those who contributed stories and articles:**

**The LINK Program – Connecting Businesses and Minority Students for 30 Years**

Charlene A. Jones  
*Cleveland State University*

**Goldman Sachs Expanding Entrepreneur Focused Program in Ohio**

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses  
Website: [10ksbapply.com](http://10ksbapply.com)

**Miami University Regionals + Local Businesses = Graduating Debt Free**

Claire Wagner  
*Miami University*

Perry Richardson  
*Miami University Regionals*

**First-of-Its-Kind Ceremony Connects Communication with Employment**

Lindsay Blusiewicz  
*Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities*

Kim Jump  
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**Externships Take the Summer Spotlight at Northwest State Community College**

Brad Geer  
*Northwest State Community College*

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Thank you for reading ConnectED. We appreciate any suggestions or ideas to improve this newsletter.

We welcome story ideas, links to articles of interest, and news releases.

Please send story ideas to Jeff Robinson at [jrobinson@highered.ohio.gov](mailto:jrobinson@highered.ohio.gov).



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