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BOLD Compact expands, invites 25,000 more students to return to college

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Ohio Department of Higher Education Chancellor Randy Gardner today applauded the colleges and universities in the BOLD (Be Ohio’s Latest Degree holder) Compact for adding Sinclair College to the compact and reaching out to another 25,000 formerly enrolled students. For students re-enrolling in college, the compact offers up to \$5,000 in non-federal college debt forgiveness.

“Expanding the BOLD Compact opens the door for even more Ohioans to finish their degrees,” said Governor Mike DeWine. “By helping to remove barriers for former students, we can support them as they pursue their dreams and live up to their full potential.”

“The State of Ohio knows that a competitive economy requires maximizing educational opportunity for our citizens,” Chancellor Gardner said. “The BOLD Compact is a great example of teamwork and collaboration to help Ohio students succeed.”

The BOLD Compact is a voluntary debt relief program created by the Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE), a group of colleges and universities in western and southern Ohio. It is considered a “college comeback” program supported by the Ohio Department of Higher Education and offers a relatively simple formula for student success:

- The colleges contact thousands of students who previously enrolled but never earned a degree;
- The colleges offer to forgive up to \$5,000 in debt if the students re-enroll;
- The State of Ohio provides state share of instruction funding for each degree completion; and
- The Ohio Attorney General’s office removes the debt from the collection rolls.

“SOCHE is excited about working across our consortium once again to bring a powerful new program to students,” said Dr. Cassie Barlow, president of SOCHE. “The BOLD Compact has the potential to make a substantive impact on students who have the desire to come back to school to complete their degree. We want all students to know that we are their partners in completing their education.”

Participating Ohio BOLD compact members include:

- Clark State College
- Edison State Community College
- Shawnee State University
- University of Dayton
- Wittenberg University
- Wright State University

- ***(NEW) Sinclair College***

To qualify for up to \$5,000 in BOLD Compact debt relief, students must have:

1. Previously enrolled at one of the seven institutions without earning a degree yet;
2. Stopped out of college for two semesters or more;
3. Owe some amount of outstanding institutional (not federal) debt up to \$5,000; and
4. Have earned at least a 2.0 grade point average on their college transcripts.

A full list of eligibility criteria is available at <https://www.soche.org/college-students/bold-compact/>.

To get started, students should complete the BOLD Compact authorization form at <https://tinyurl.com/BOLDCompact>. A staff member at the Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE) will follow up with additional information and help answer students' questions.

For spring 2023, SOCHE will be emailing approximately 25,000 former students multiple times to let them know about this opportunity.

About the BOLD Compact

The BOLD compact is a voluntary debt relief program created by the Strategic Ohio Council for Higher Education (SOCHE), a group of colleges and universities in western and southern Ohio. In offering up to \$5,000 in debt relief per student, the BOLD compact aims to help students who stopped out at one of seven institutions and ended up with sizeable debt to return to college at any of the seven colleges to earn a degree. The BOLD compact is one of the largest of its kind nationally in the United States. Learn more about the BOLD compact here: <https://www.soche.org/college-students/bold-compact/>

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