

PRESS RELEASE**For Immediate Release
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Governor Strickland Declares February 2009 “Financial Aid Awareness Month” in Support of College Goal Sunday

COLUMBUS---Governor Ted Strickland has declared February 2009 as “Financial Aid Awareness” month in combination with the Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut’s endorsement of the annual College Goal Sunday event in Ohio. This is the Governor’s second annual proclamation in an effort to increase the awareness of financial aid options for students seeking a post-secondary education.

“By once again recognizing February as Financial Aid Awareness Month, my hope is that we educate more and more students on the financial aid process and help them navigate the best programs for them,” Strickland said. “College Goal Sunday is a unique opportunity that gives students and their families a tool to complete the FAFSA document and help tackle the financial barriers that are often associated when applying for college.”

College Goal Sunday offers Ohio families free assistance with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is the basic form that must be filled out for all students who would like to participate in Federal student aid programs, including Pell Grants, which do not need to be repaid, and Perkins or Stafford loans, as well as for some forms of State aid programs, such as the Ohio College Opportunity Grant.

This year, college financial aid administrators and high school guidance counselors will volunteer their assistance at 40 locations in 35 counties around Ohio on February 8, 2009, at 2 p.m. The effort is coordinated by the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA), in collaboration with the Ohio Board of Regents, Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corporation and the Ohio College Access Network’s KnowHow2Go campaign,

“Any prospective student – high school or adult – who wants to lower his or her college costs should complete the FAFSA form on College Goal Sunday” said Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric D. Fingerhut, who also noted that lowering the cost of higher education to all Ohioans is an essential strategy of the state’s 10-year *Strategic Plan for Higher Education*. “We need to ensure that all of our students know their options when it

comes to applying for and receiving financial aid since these packages directly lower the amount students pay to receive a college education. It makes sense to take advantage of the free services provided by college financial aid administrators and high school counselors spreading out across Ohio on February 8.”

“OASFAA is pleased to have the support of Governor Strickland and Chancellor Fingerhut regarding such an important issue for our state,” said Betsy Johnson, President of OASFAA . “Applying for financial aid can be seen as a barrier for some students, thus it is pertinent we offer opportunities to assist students with this process. Although College Goal Sunday is geared towards low income and first generation students, in this economy, it is a day to help everyone in our state apply for financial aid.”

For more information about College Goal Sunday in Ohio, visit <http://www.ohiocollegegoalsunday.org/> or call the Ohio College Access Information Hotline at 1-877-I-ATTAIN (428-8246).

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