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## Chamber links students, area's opportunities

### Program surveys N.Ky. commerce

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The Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce has chosen 15 college students as "Northern Kentucky's Most Likely to Succeed." The students will participate in a six-month program highlighting what the region has to offer.

"The goal is to expose the class members to opportunities in our region and give them a better understanding of what Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati has to offer, while also providing professional development," said Amanda Dixon, the chamber's manager of education solutions.

The program consists of monthly sessions where students visit an area employer that represents a different aspect of the region's economy. The students already visited Ty's Toy box in Erlanger to learn about entrepreneurship. The students will also tour a bank, a manufacturer, a health care provider, a nonprofit company and a firm focusing on distribution. Each will also have a professional mentor.

"Within each there will be a connection to skill development and some type of interactive exercise to encourage critical thinking and team building," said Dixon.

Michael Loban, 21, an Xavier marketing major, moved to Cincinnati six years ago from his native Ukraine.

"Cincinnati has a lot to offer, but a lot of its residents choose to sit at home and complain about not living in New York, instead of going out and explore," he said.

Loban, an aspiring entrepreneur, serves as a chair for cincy update.com, which he said seeks to "stem the 'brain drain' experienced by most mid-tier cities by helping make our city a better place to live, work and play.

"I hope that through this program I will be able to work with a mentor who could guide me through the development process of a start-up," he said.

Northern Kentucky University's Elizabeth Osborne, 21, of Villa Hills hopes the program helps her utilize her major.

"As a Spanish major, I believe that I have very marketable skills that many local businesses could use, and with this program and the Chamber of Commerce's help, I hope that at the end of this I will have a better idea of which companies I can apply to with the most success," she said.

Dixon said the program will be a success if each completes the program and develops a lasting relationship with their mentors.

"We hope the students will have a better sense of what is needed to succeed in the workplace and the industries that are leading our region in the area of projected job growth," she said.

The chamber promoted the program through 11 area schools. Each student had to submit an application detailing their background and what they hoped to learn during the program. Two letters of recommendation and a 3.0 GPA were required.

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