Youngstown State University and IBM Launch New IT Skills and Apprenticeship Accelerator

Program will prepare students and the local workforce for high tech jobs of the future

Youngstown, OH, Nov. 13, 2019 – Youngstown State University (YSU) and IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced the launch of the YSU IT Workforce Accelerator designed to provide students and the local workforce with skills needed for high-tech jobs in the growing digital economy.

The IBM-designed initiative *will* provide pre-apprenticeship training and apprenticeship program enablement so that local companies can train area workers in fields ranging from software engineering and data science to analytics, cybersecurity and mainframe systems administration. The program is intended to make more area candidates apprenticeship-ready and accelerate their progress to promising careers.

The use of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, data science and security is rapidly growing. AI alone is expected to create more than 130 million new jobs by 2022.* A large portion of these are and will be in-demand "new collar" jobs that require in-demand skills, but not necessarily a bachelor's degree in technology related fields or a previous career in technology. To keep pace with innovation, close to 12 million workers in the U.S. may need to be retrained or reskilled because of AI and intelligent automation in the next three years.**

"As the region's leader in post-secondary education, YSU is thrilled to partner with IBM to provide greater access to skills and training in the tech industry," said Brien Smith, YSU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. "Expanding pathways to technology-oriented careers will build a lasting channel to grow the IT workforce over the long-term."

The new IT Workforce Accelerator will bring together local employers, workforce intermediaries and other partners interested in implementing and supporting apprenticeship programs and job opportunities. YSU will serve as a registered apprenticeship program sponsor and help local companies access apprenticeship training and incentives. The university also will provide administrative support to employers looking to hire apprentices.

Apprenticeship opportunities will be available for students in degree and non-degree education tracks. IBM will provide education and enablement support to the Accelerator and member businesses, drawing on its own experience launching a rapidly expanding new collar apprenticeship program. Established in 2017 and registered with the U.S. Department of Labor, IBM's apprenticeship program grew twice as expected in its first year and today serves as the foundation of a national coalition that will create thousands of apprenticeship opportunities in communities coast to coast.

"Skills are the new currency, and we need to fully equip our current and future workforce with the right skills to participate in the digital economy," said Jennifer Oddo, New Collar Apprenticeship Program Manager. "Together with Youngstown State University and a nationwide network of business and academic partners, IBM is committed to helping American students and workers build in-demand skills both in and beyond traditional degree programs."

For more information on the Youngstown State University IT Workforce Accelerator, visit https://ysu.edu/workforce-accelerator.

About Youngstown State University

Youngstown State University is a comprehensive urban research university that offers nearly 13,000 students more than 135 undergraduate and graduate programs backed by a strong tradition of teaching, scholarship and public service. As a major educational and economic development resource in the region, YSU is known for its focus on academic research and creative programs that transform its students into successful professionals, scholars and leaders. Located in the heart of the Tech Belt between Cleveland and Pittsburgh, YSU provides opportunities for students to actively participate with accomplished faculty, often in one-on-one settings, on advanced research and creative collaborations. The beautiful 145-acre campus includes high-tech classrooms, state-of-the-art labs and performance facilities, a variety of on-campus housing options and recreational facilities among the best in the nation. For more information, visit www.ysu.edu.

About IBM

For more information see: www.ibm.com

**World Economic Forum, "The Future of Jobs Report 2018," September 2018

****IBM Institute of Business Value, "The Enterprise Guide to Closing the Skills Gap," September 2019.

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