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20by20 CHALLENGE Update

SOCHE Fifth Year Report on Progress of Creating 20,000 Internships by 2020

DAYTON, Ohio (May 12, 2017) – Five years ago, SOCHE launched the **20 by 20 CHALLENGE**, an initiative to increase the number of internships in the region to 20,000 by the year 2020; and, five years later, the number of internships has increased from 11,066 to 15,014, representing a total gain of 36 percent since the start, and an annual growth rate of over 10 percent. See the progress at: <http://www.20by20challenge.com/progress.html>

SOCHE's member colleges and universities, representing nearly 200,000 students, provided the data to SOCHE for their research. "We're proud of the gains made locally that continue to outpace national trends, and we hope local employers and colleges and universities are equally proud of their progress," explained Sean Creighton, president of SOCHE. "As we go into our sixth year of the 20 by 20 CHALLENGE, we will need to continue to strengthen and evolve the partnership between the private sector and higher education to reach the goal of creating another 5,000 internships by 2020," Creighton said.

SOCHE's own internship program employed hundreds of students in research positions to support Wright Patterson Air Force Base, the City of Dayton and Montgomery County, as well as numerous small and mid-sized companies. While most internships focused on the STEM fields, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, SOCHE and its members are expanding internship opportunities for students from business, social sciences, and the humanities.

Sheryl Kent, outgoing chair of SOCHE's Career Services Committee and Director of the Brandeberry Career Development Center at Wright State University noted, "Internships are a winning investment for both the employer and the student. Not only do employers gain the benefit of having new talent with fresh ideas to complete desired tasks, but they can also 'test drive' the student for transition into a permanent position."

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), 2016 saw a nearly five percent decrease in the number of internships compared to 2015, and NACE forecasts this trend will continue for 2017. However, the overall conversion rate from intern to employee rose to 62 percent, which is a 13-year high.

Maggie Varga Byrne, chief operating officer who oversees SOCHE's internship programs added, "We're excited to see the number of internship in the Dayton region continue to grow despite the national trends. The progress we're seeing really speaks to the commitment of the local business community and colleges and universities to retain talented and engaged students in the region."

This summer SOCHE will partner with UpDayton, a young professionals group, on quality of life programming that focuses on talent retention. UpDayton's *Discover Dayton* program will provide curated experiences for interns participating in summer programs at Synchrony Financial, CareSource, and SOCHE. Programs and events will be open to all students, interns, and early career professionals in the Dayton region.

According to AJ Ferguson, director of UpDayton, "While students who have internships are drastically more likely to stay in the region versus students who do not, we know that amenities and activities that generate networking, fun, and add to quality of life also help retain talent."

Launched in 2012, the 20 by 20 CHALLENGE is an initiative of the member colleges and universities that comprise SOCHE, along with several strategic partners, including the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce, Dayton Development Coalition, and UpDayton.

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Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2017, SOCHE is the collaborative infrastructure for higher education, helping colleges transform their communities and economies through the education, employment, and engagement of nearly 200,000 students in southwest Ohio. For more information about SOCHE, visit <http://www.soche.org/>.