JetBlue Takes Fresh Approach to Employer-Sponsored Education with Launch of JetBlue Scholars

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New Program Designed to Help Crewmembers Complete Their College Degrees Utilizes Alternative Credit Options and Partnerships With JetBlue Covering Most Costs

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- JetBlue (NASDAQ:JBLU) today announced JetBlue Scholars, an innovative new program that offers crewmembers an opportunity to earn a fully accredited college degree with JetBlue covering most of the cost. The program takes an unconventional approach to employer-sponsored education by providing alternative college credit options and going well beyond standard tuition reimbursement. JetBlue Scholars addresses the needs of those working full-time with college advisement and resources.

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here: http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20160418006299/en/



JetBlue Scholars is Inspiring Education. JetBlue Scholars is an unconventional approach to employer-sponsored education by providing alternative college credit options, going well beyond standard tuition reimbursement.

Traditional paths to higher education can be overwhelming. Consistent with its mission of inspiring humanity, JetBlue is bringing humanity into the process by easing complexity for crewmembers. Through a pioneering partnership model, JetBlue has unbundled the higher education system, step-by-step, to make it easier for crewmembers who have some previous college credit but do not know how to move forward to complete their degree. JetBlue Scholars provides a clearer path and converts aviation and military training and other professional certificates into college credit, helping to reduce the time to complete a bachelor's degree for crewmembers.

More than 36 million Americans have some college credits but no degree (a), often due to cost, busy work schedules and family commitments. According to a government data analysis by financial aid experts at Edvisors, the average student graduates $33,000 in debt. Under the JetBlue Scholars program, crewmembers will only be responsible for $3,500 in tuition and even that may be covered by JetBlue scholarships or Pell grants which means a degree may be completely free for those with financial need.

"Crewmembers asked for help earning degrees and we knew we could take a big step beyond tuition reimbursement," said Bonny Simi, founder of JetBlue Scholars. "We rethought the employer's role in investing in education. Utilizing the alternative credit model to unbundle the higher education process, we're eliminating some of the complexity. We hope to inspire other employers to adopt this model which will help dramatically increase the percentage of Americans who have access to post-secondary degrees."

As part of the initial launch, more than 400 JetBlue crewmembers are currently advancing toward their bachelor's degrees. The first class is scheduled to complete curriculum requirements in May 2016. The first graduation ceremony will take place in September with more than 50 crewmembers slated to receive their degrees.

Rethinking and Innovating in Higher Ed

The JetBlue Scholars model focuses on just learning and has removed some of the complexity and cost. Eliminating the costs of classrooms, dorms, sports teams and hardcover books, JetBlue Scholars focuses on a cohesive curriculum of self-contained and self-directed online courses and e-books that lead to a degree.

The program opens periodically for enrollment. Crewmembers are assigned a Success Coach and share their education background, including transcripts from previous coursework, copies of licenses or certifications held, records from past military, police or fire training and any other experiences or documentation that demonstrates past college level learning. Many crewmembers already hold special licenses or professional certifications from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Much of this is worth college credit. Students receive credit for what they already know:

- The main requirement is at least 15 prior college credits earned from an accredited two- or four-year college and two years of service at JetBlue.
- JetBlue pilot and dispatch training is reviewed and may be approved for college credit. College credit is granted for pilot, dispatch and maintenance certificates.
- Training and licenses in the fields of medicine, first response (emergency medical technician, paramedic, police and fire), human resources, information technology and military training are also eligible for college credits.

The assigned Success Coach then helps crewmembers map a pathway to a bachelor's degree in aviation, liberal studies, information technology or business from Thomas Edison State University.

Coursework is completed through three innovative learning platforms – Sophia.org, StraighterLine.com and Study.com. These American Council on Education (ACE-credit) (b) courses offer a variety of online videos, lectures and other content that allows for flexible schedules and self-motivated learning. JetBlue is also developing new courses internally which prepares crewmembers for college level exams provided by the College Board and Thomas Edison State University. These courses utilize open source material from providers such as Saylor.org and OpenStaxCollege.org. Courses typically take one to three months to complete and all costs are covered by JetBlue. After each course is completed and the final exam is passed, JetBlue facilitates the transfer of college credit(s) to Thomas Edison State University.

Once crewmembers have earned 114-117 credits, they begin completing final online courses with JetBlue's launch partner Thomas Edison State University. Once 120 credits are reached, the bachelor's degree from Thomas Edison State University is conferred.

"We are honored to partner with JetBlue to help its crewmembers complete their degrees and achieve their personal and professional goals," said Dr. George A. Pruitt, president of Thomas Edison State University. "JetBlue Scholars is an innovative program that leverages the core competencies of our University – delivering flexible, high-quality collegiate programs to self-directed adults and assessing college-level knowledge that has been acquired outside the traditional classroom. We are very excited about our role in the launch of this unique and important partnership."

Crewmembers Speak Up About Degree Opportunities

> "When it comes to mapping my college degree path, my journey has been one of discovery, excitement and pleasure – thanks to the guidance I've received from the JetBlue Scholars team. I love being able to see where I've been and what I need to reach my end goal," Bonnie Merritt, Reservations Supervisor, JetBlue and current JetBlue Scholar.
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> "I am on track to finish my next course in two months and it takes a lot of focus and dedication. While these courses are very flexible, and I can do them on my own time, it is still a lot of work. After all, it is college," Elsy Viala, General Manager, Port-Au-Prince, Haiti, JetBlue and current JetBlue Scholar.
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> "It actually dawned on me when I started getting my transcripts, that I had a lot of credits. I had never seen my military transcript either. I was surprised to see how close I was to getting my bachelor's degree. I want to finish what I started and I'm doing it through JetBlue Scholars," Roxanne Hawkins, Dispatcher, JetBlue and current JetBlue Scholar.

JetBlue Scholars was designed based on crewmembers' feedback to meet their needs, interests and career progression goals. Not only is this an innovative retention vehicle, it helps with internal advancement and has already positively impacted crewmember engagement. Upon revealing plans for JetBlue Scholars, in less than one week, 2,500 crewmembers (approximately 14% of JetBlue's workforce) responded to indicate their interest.

For more information, visit www.jetbluescholars.com.

About JetBlue

JetBlue is New York's Hometown Airline™ and a leading carrier in Boston, Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood, Los Angeles (Long Beach), Orlando and San Juan. JetBlue carries more than 32 million customers a year to 96 cities in the U.S., Caribbean, and Latin America with an average of 900 daily flights. For more information, please visit JetBlue.com.

(a) According to the Adult College Completion Network, a key Lumina Foundation commitment to increasing adult college completion and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

(b) The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) was established in 1974 to connect workplace learning with colleges and universities by helping students gain access to academic credit for formal training taken outside traditional degree programs. More information can be found at: http://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Adult-Learners-Using-Your-ACE-Credit-Recommendations.aspx

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