

Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2008-2017

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Board of
Regents

Ohio

University
System of Ohio

Ted Strickland, Governor
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Executive Summary

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If the State of Ohio is to grow and prosper, it must raise the education level of its population. The goal of this 10-year strategic plan is to raise the educational attainment of our state each year, and to close the gap between Ohio and competitor states and nations. To accomplish this goal we must do three things:

1. **Graduate more** students.
2. **Keep more** of our graduates in Ohio.
3. **Attract more** degree holders from out of state.

Meeting the goal of this plan will require mobilizing Ohio's extensive network of public universities and community colleges – the University System of Ohio – and a diverse collection of independent colleges and universities.

The University System of Ohio consists of the state's 13 public university campuses, one medical college, 24 regional branch campuses, and 23 community colleges, as well as adult literacy and adult workforce centers. Through a combination of strategies, the University System of Ohio will become a high-quality, flexible system of higher education that offers a wide range of educational options, while driving down the average amount that students pay to among the lowest in the nation.

Lowering the cost to the student is a top priority, but it cannot be done through cost-cutting alone or through setting a one-size-fits-all price at the state level. Instead, the state will offer **many educational options** to students who can then choose the best programs at the best price to meet their needs. This is the quickest path to an affordable, high-quality education for every Ohioan.

The University System of Ohio will **end the counter-productive competition** among institutions for scarce resources. The historic strengths and traditions of our individual universities will be drawn upon to create **distinctive missions** for each, leading to the establishment of nationally and internationally-recognized **Centers of Excellence** that will be drivers of both the regional and state economies and that will complement the comprehensive, quality education available at each institution. Each institution will delineate these Centers of Excellence, together with specific goals and measurements by which the goals can be evaluated.

Institutions will be given **flexibility** to set tuition at the main campuses, but this authority is contingent upon the institution's ability to offer financial aid based on need to all qualified students in accordance with guidelines to be established by the Chancellor. Information about the benefits and impact of this policy on students at all income levels will be provided to the General Assembly prior to the adoption of a biennial budget.

High-quality associate and bachelor's programs in core fields will be made available at a University System of Ohio campus **within 30 miles** of every Ohioan, utilizing the existing infrastructure of community colleges and regional campuses. These associate and bachelor's degrees will be among the lowest cost available anywhere in the country.

The **Seniors to Sophomores** program will allow qualified high school students to spend their

senior years on a college campus, then after graduation enroll as sophomores in the system. Other early college opportunities, such as increased use of advanced placement exams and offering college-level courses in high schools, will also raise students' aspirations for college and lower their costs.

A **comprehensive community college education** will be available to all Ohioans. Community colleges will be linked through policies and a database that will enable each school to offer programs developed at other schools, and enable students to see what courses are offered at other schools.

High school graduates will have the option of being **"dual admitted"** to a community college and a public university, if they meet the admission standards of each, and will be able to move seamlessly from the college to the university after meeting established benchmarks.

Programs at **adult workforce centers** that are equivalent to technical programs offered at community colleges will be accepted for college credit, creating clear pathways between these types of institutions. Ohio's network of Adult Basic and Literacy Education centers will offer convenient and affordable "college prep" courses to prepare adult workers academically for the rigors of higher education.

Students who do not complete high school by the end of the school year following their 18th birthdays will be identified by the Board of Regents and the Ohio Department of Education and recruited to attend a program combining high school completion with **college readiness**. Students up to the age of 21 who obtain a high school diploma through this initiative will be counted in the graduation rate statistics gathered by the Ohio Department of Education and individual schools.

The **technology infrastructure** of Ohio's higher education system will be upgraded and integrated. This will benefit students by providing access to online information about University

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System of Ohio schools, allowing online application for admission, and permitting registration at multiple University System of Ohio campuses. Similarly, technology will be integrated across the spectrum of primary, secondary and higher education.

The Board of Regents will implement the **Ohio Skills Bank** to link industry demand to workforce supply in the state's 12 economic development regions. Demand for employment in each region will be measured against the supply of students and programs available, and the programs offered will be adjusted accordingly.

In recognition of the clear need of business and industry for a **diverse workforce**, a center will be established to study factors leading to success for African-American males and to implement best practices across the state. To promote Ohio colleges and universities internationally and draw talent here, the University System of Ohio will work with the state's private schools to promote higher education in Ohio to a global audience and share the costs of recruiting international students. Opportunities for military veterans and adults over 55 will be expanded as well.

The cost of higher education cannot be reduced without rigorously monitoring expenditures and efficiencies. A **continuous improvement system** will be created to identify spending efficiencies and productivity improvements and implement them statewide. The Chancellor will recommend to the Governor and General Assembly efficiency targets for each fiscal year. As the University System of Ohio becomes increasingly efficient, state support per full-time student should be increased to the national average.

The state will work closely with Ohio's excellent and diverse **private colleges and universities** to help accomplish the goals of this plan. Private schools will be encouraged to participate in the state's credit transfer system. Reforms will be made to the program approval system and student financial aid.



A list of 20 **"measurements for success"** will allow the state to determine how well the University System of Ohio is implementing this plan over the next 10 years. All universities will join the national Voluntary System of Accountability, making data available regarding price, financial aid, degree programs, retention and graduation rates, campus safety, student satisfaction and student learning outcomes. The results will be compiled into an Ohio College Portrait that will provide easily accessible, understandable information for prospective students, and give the state an objective measure of performance. Community colleges will join a comparable accountability system.

Implementation of this plan has already begun. When fully enacted, it will, over the next decade, accomplish the goal of the Governor and General Assembly to make higher education a principal driver of Ohio's economic growth and prosperity in the 21st century.

