



The State of Higher Education in Ohio

2021 Year in Review

January 14, 2022



It has been three years since Mike DeWine was sworn in to serve as Ohio's 70th governor, joined by Jon Husted as lieutenant governor. From the very beginning, Governor DeWine requested that his Cabinet listen carefully to the people of the state and then proceed to act with a sense of urgency to strengthen and improve the great state of Ohio. This document provides a brief summary of what the DeWine-Husted Administration – and the Department of Higher Education – has accomplished in its first three years leading Ohio.

A Message from the Chancellor

Two consecutive years of an ongoing pandemic that continues to challenge higher education, our state, our country, and the world. As we turned the calendar to 2021, we expected an eventual return to “normalcy,” yet COVID has been relentless. But through all of the challenges, we remained resilient in our efforts to offer students the best possible education opportunities for a bright future. And we did so together.

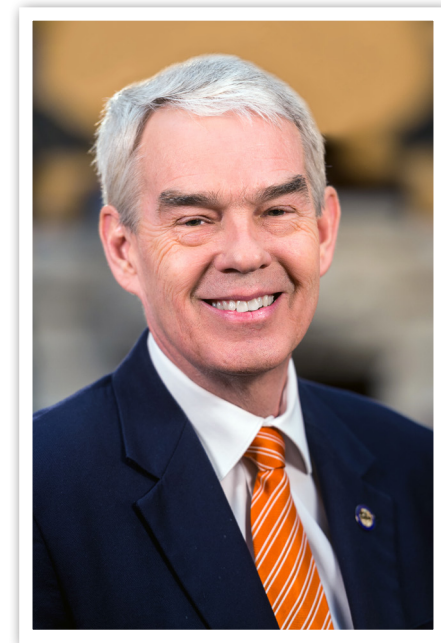
To Ohio’s Higher Education Leadership, you are to be commended for your tireless dedication to facing the pandemic head-on. We will continue to work collaboratively with you and support your efforts to provide Ohioans with the best higher education value possible, in all circumstances.

To Ohio’s College Students, I applaud your ability to adjust to all of the changes and challenges that became part of your higher education experience in 2021. We will work to ensure you learn in a safe and healthy environment, and will strive to continue to make a college degree as affordable and accessible as possible with

restraints on tuition, support for more need-based financial aid, strategic academic scholarships, and enhanced student support services so that every student can reach their God-given potential.

To Families Planning for the Future, we will work to successfully adapt to whatever lies ahead to keep Ohio as a springboard to your student’s future success. We will develop even more ways to help, through savings plans, strengthened College Credit Plus opportunities, and continued support of an “all-of-the-above” approach that includes a diversity of options for college and workforce preparation.

To Ohio’s Employers, you have weathered a difficult time in our history, and we know your success directly corresponds to a healthy economic future for Ohio. We will continue to listen and support investments in workforce preparation strategies that prepare Ohio’s future workers while concurrently supporting education reforms to meet the ever-changing demands of today and tomorrow.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randy Gardner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "R" and "G".

Randy Gardner
Chancellor

2021 – Not Just More of the Same

While some may characterize 2021 as another year of anxiety, uncertainty, and crisis, Ohio pushed forward with higher education and workforce preparation reforms that are enhancing opportunity in our state.

Indeed, with support from the Ohio General Assembly, we increased direct support for need-based financial aid and the Choose Ohio First STEM scholarship program; provided flexible short-term certificates at community colleges and technical centers; and funded the first-ever college campus safety grant program. These and other initiatives will be highlighted in the pages that follow.

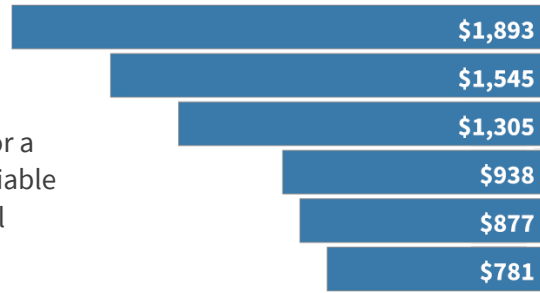


In November, Chancellor Gardner joined the presidents of the University of Findlay, Owens Community College, and Bowling Green State University for the announcement of the creation of the Center for Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics.

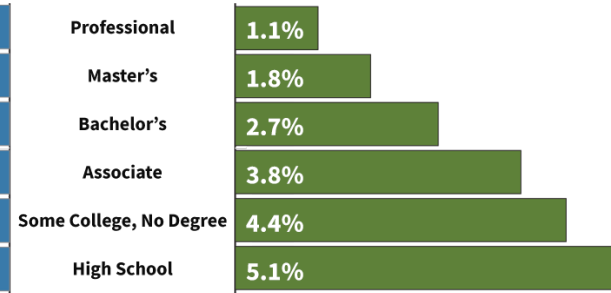
The Unmistakable Value of Higher Education

Achieving postsecondary degrees and credentials is dramatically important today – more important than ever before for our nation, our state, and individuals who strive for a better future. This is evident based on quantifiable quality-of-life statistics as well as fundamental unemployment and wage rates.

Median usual weekly earnings, 2020
(most recently available data)



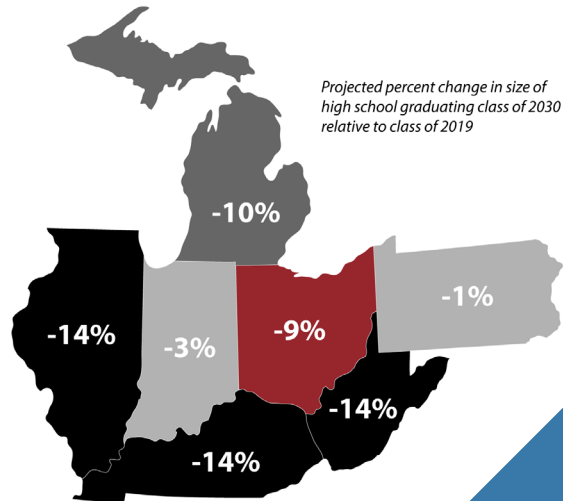
Unemployment rate (Oct 2021)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Number of Midwest HS Graduates Will Decline

Colleges need to look beyond neighboring states to recruit more students



Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. (2020). *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates.*

Every day we see Ohio’s tremendous “Diversity of Opportunity in Higher Education” – 37 public two-year and four-year colleges and universities, 74 independent institutions, 51 technical centers, and dozens of additional training programs that offer real value and more postsecondary options than most other states in the nation. The economic prospects for our state and our state’s families are closely tied to higher education opportunity and attainment. To remind you, we cannot adequately increase postsecondary attainment with new high school graduates. The demographics don’t work for Ohio and most of the Midwest. In addition, there are nearly 1.5 million Ohioans with some college but no degree. We need to continue to meet the needs of adult learners and the underemployed if we are going to realize the potential of our people.

This chart demonstrates the demographic challenge impacting our ability to grow our workforce in Ohio and the Midwest through new HS graduates alone.

Ohio: Now a Destination State for Education

Not long ago, Ohio lost many of its high school graduates to other states and found fewer students coming to Ohio for college. Now, based on the latest annual data from the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES), Ohio attracted **25,366** first-time, full-time, out-of-state freshmen to our colleges and universities and lost just 13,977 to other states. This means Ohio is a net importer by 11,389 students, the 4th highest total in the nation. This statistic speaks to both Ohio’s affordability and quality. As Ohio continues to emphasize these traits, this trend can be continued and expanded.

Many out-of-state students that are attracted to the Buckeye State to attend our outstanding colleges and universities stay here to work after they graduate, bolstering Ohio’s economy. Recently, Ohio became one of the first 10 states in the nation to join the U.S. Census’ postsecondary employment outcomes (PSEO) system. This system provides a mechanism to see how many college and university graduates are employed after graduation and how they are dispersed geographically. Using this data source, we now know that the vast majority of Ohio’s college and university graduates choose to live and work right here in Ohio after graduation. In fact, we know that more than 80% are working in Ohio one year after graduation, 73.8% are still here five years after graduation, and almost 70% are still here working in the Buckeye State 10 years after graduation.

These data demonstrate the positive impact our colleges and universities can have on helping to counter the demographic and workforce challenges we face.

Ohio’s economic future is directly connected to our ability to increase educational attainment. The following chart shows the growth of jobs for the decade prior to the onset of the COVID pandemic. And the pandemic has shown us that education levels have had an even greater impact on job opportunities since March, 2020. Additionally, [a recent study by Ithaca S+R](#) shows that a 5% gain in education attainment – shared equally between associate and bachelor’s degrees – would yield a state budget benefit of \$1 billion. Simply put, increased attainment leads to more state tax revenue and a reduced need for social services spending.

U.S. Employment Levels by Educational Attainment, 2009-2019

EMPLOYMENT LEVEL	2009	2019	change	pct chg
Less than a High School Diploma, 25 yrs. & over	10,367,833	9,438,667	-929,167	-9.0%
High School Graduates, No College, 25 yrs. & over	34,493,667	34,836,500	342,833	1.0%
Some College or Associate Degree, 25 yrs. & over	33,892,500	36,281,833	2,389,333	7.0%
Bachelor’s degree and higher, 25 yrs. & over	43,536,500	57,655,417	14,118,917	32.4%
TOTAL	122,290,500	138,212,417	15,921,917	13.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Table A-4. Annual averages of monthly amounts.

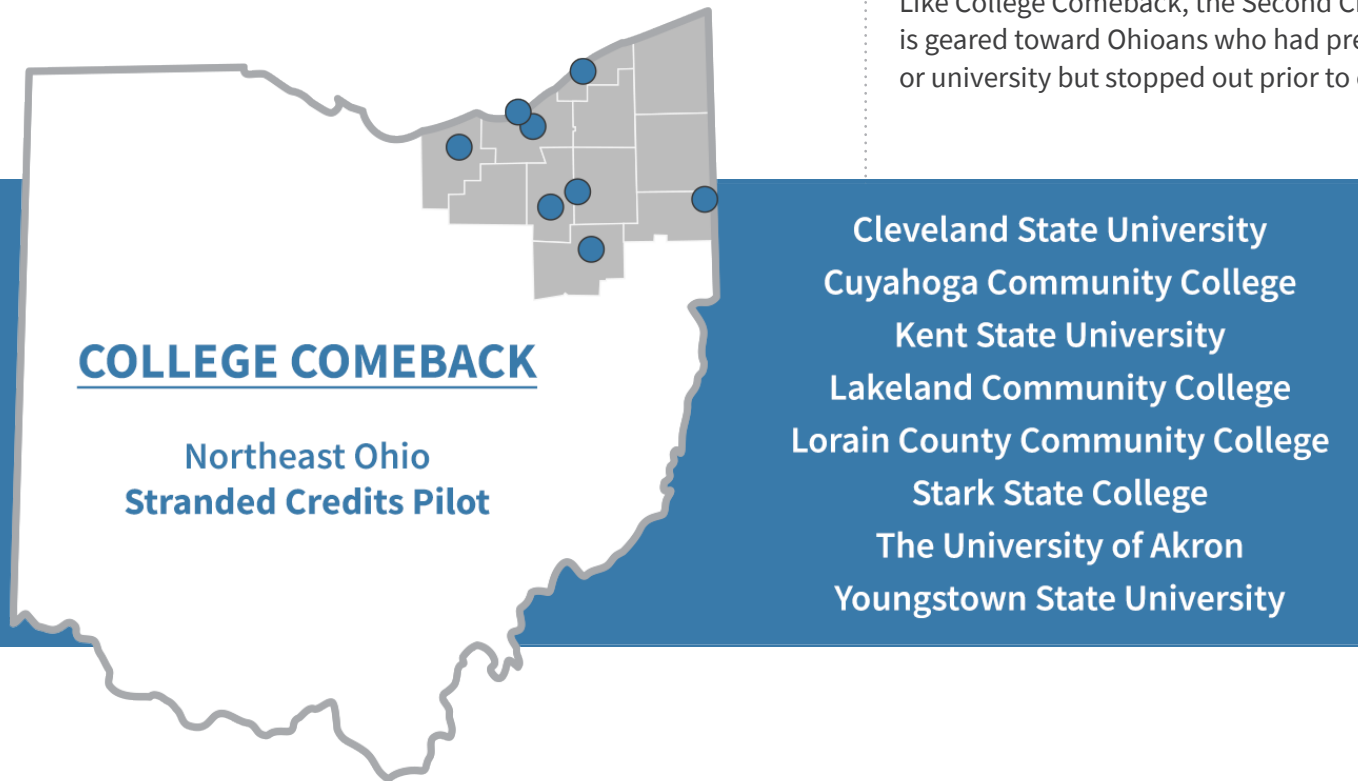
The Ohio College Comeback Story

Ohio's demographic challenges require innovative approaches to increase postsecondary attainment. Approximately 1.5 million Ohioans have some college credit but no degree. In May of 2021, ODHE launched our College Comeback initiative to target recruitment and re-enrollment efforts toward these stopped-out students, many of whom have unpaid balances owed to the institution. In an early victory, the eight northeast Ohio colleges and universities shown in the graphic below all agreed, voluntarily, to

allow students who have credits stranded at their institution to settle their unpaid balances and have their transcripts released as long as they re-enroll at one of the other schools in the consortium. This first-of-its-kind model could help as many as 60,000 students, according to estimates from Ithaka S+R. We have now set a goal that EVERY public college and university participate in a regional College Comeback coalition or develop a strategy unilaterally to build enrollments on our campuses.

Like College Comeback, the Second Chance Grant pilot program is geared toward Ohioans who had previously attended a college or university but stopped out prior to completion. The program,

enacted by the General Assembly in the state budget bill, was launched in October 2021 and provides \$3 million dollars to eligible Ohioans returning to higher education in the form of \$2,000 grants. In the first three months that the grant was in operation, 235 grants totaling \$470,000 were reserved for students returning to 28 different institutions of higher education.



COVID Support

In 2020 and again last year, Ohio's colleges and universities responded to the pandemic in a heroic way, maintaining the safest possible conditions with strategies to de-densify campus, provide online and hybrid instruction, and monitor and support the health of students, faculty, and staff. In fact, the record shows that our campuses experienced some of the lowest COVID infection rates in our state, often lower than the neighboring communities that surround them.

Health experts view COVID testing as a critical component of a safe campus strategy. In that regard, Ohio's state COVID response team provided 84 different colleges and universities with testing supplies to help meet the need. Ohio's Responsible RestartOhio guidelines and protocols for higher education were among the strongest and most thorough in the nation in 2020 and were responsibly maintained where necessary in 2021 even as students returned to in-person campus life.

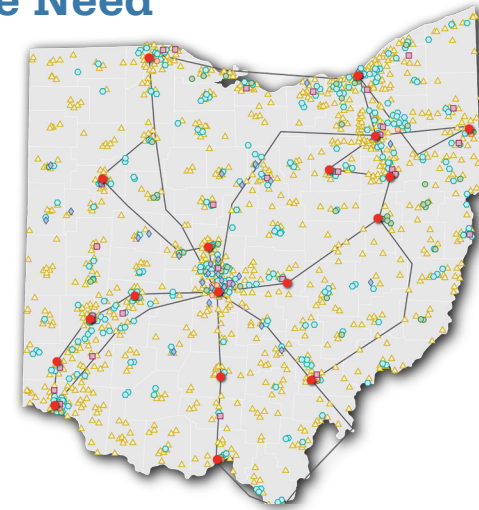


OARnet and OhioLINK – Meeting the Need

Ohio is extremely fortunate to have a nationally recognized technology asset in the form of the Ohio Academic Resources Network (OARnet), a fiber optic backbone stretching more than 5,500 miles across Ohio. COVID-related challenges exacerbated the impact of wide disparities that already existed in access to technology and internet connectivity.

In 2021, thanks to a DeWine-Husted Administration priority, our colleges received \$12.1 million in support through OARnet, known to be among the top five broadband technology support systems in the nation. We increased the broadband capacity for 41 institutions in Ohio, including 19 of the state’s 23 community colleges, ensuring that all colleges and universities are at least at the 10 gigabit level. In addition, we are paying for the doubling of internet capacity at every campus through June of 2022.

We also won support for \$2.5 million for enhancements to OhioLINK, a shared library system that has enhanced curriculum development and resources to support online learning as it becomes more prominent.



OARnet
An OH·TECH Consortium Member

Affordability and Transparency for Students and Families

A DeWine administration goal on day one, tuition guarantees are offered today at all 13 Ohio public undergraduate universities, giving Ohioans perhaps the strongest, most transparent universal price guarantee in the nation.

At Ohio’s public higher education state trustees conference in 2019, Governor DeWine asked all qualifying public universities to provide in-state graduate degree tuition rates for all students who earned their undergraduate degrees in Ohio. Without a mandate or a change in law, all universities in Ohio agreed to the Governor’s request. Having students complete their graduate degrees in Ohio provides a better opportunity to keep these students in Ohio to become part of our emerging economy.



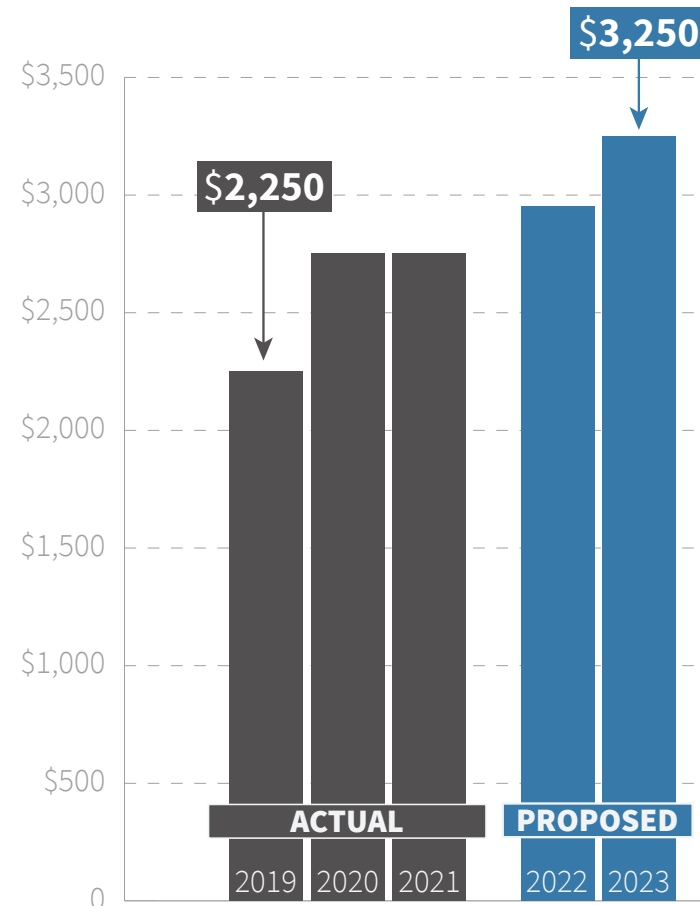
Ohio College Opportunity Grant

The new state budget provides enough funding to increase the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) program by at least \$500 per student over the next two years. Combined with a similar increase in the first DeWine-Husted budget, eligible students will receive \$1,000 more per year by the 2022-23 school year – a 44% average increase in student aid under Governor DeWine’s leadership.

A New Campus Safety Program

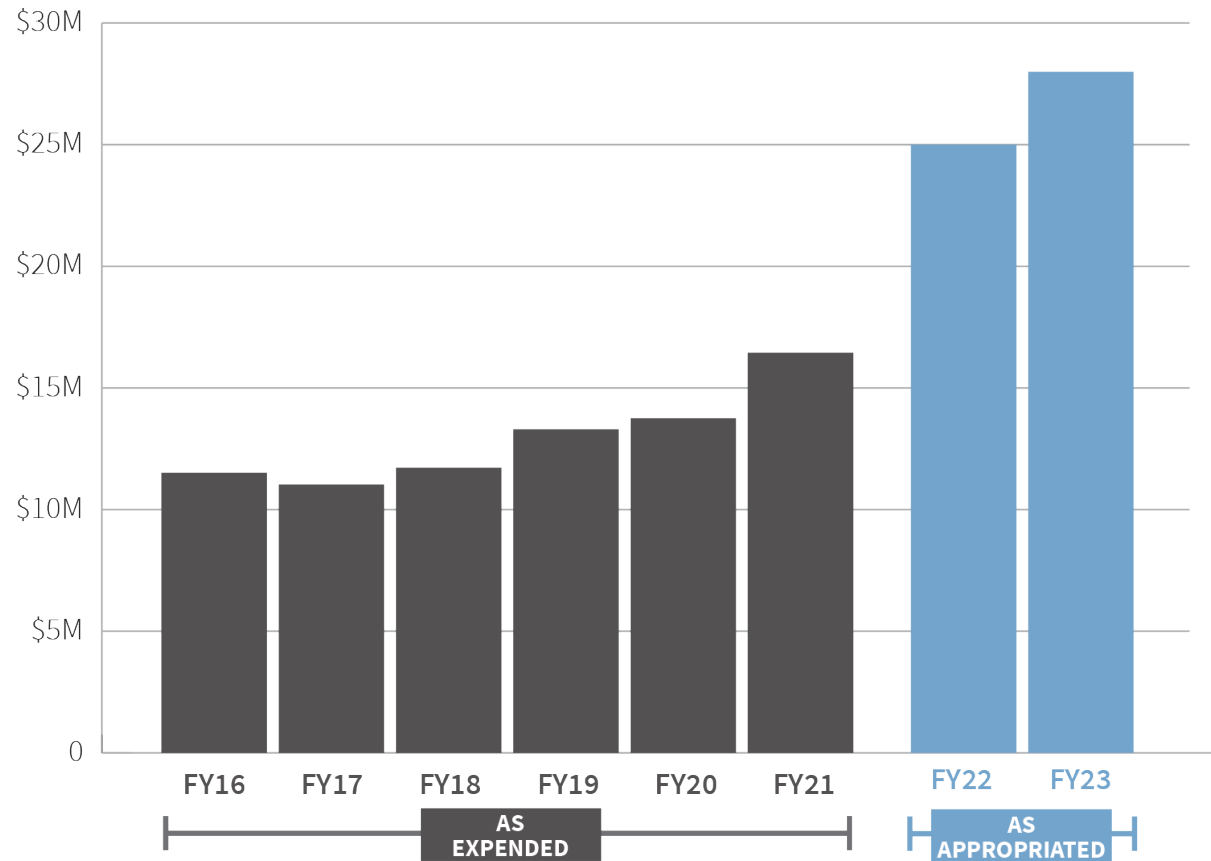
The DeWine-Husted administration’s first State Capital Budget – Senate Bill 310 – contained the first-ever statewide campus safety and security grant fund for universities and community colleges – \$5 million – that was administered in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Public Safety. The program was established to assist in improving the overall physical security and safety of buildings on public campuses throughout Ohio. The Campus Safety Grant Program is one of a kind for Ohio and potentially the United States, and our institutions demonstrated a clear need for this opportunity. In the first round of the program, critical safety and security projects were funded at 27 colleges and universities. As we look to the future, our administration will continue to focus on helping assist local schools, colleges and universities, and law enforcement agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to threats and acts of violence.

Average OCOG Award Amount *(per recipient)*



Choose Ohio First Scholarship

Ohio's efforts to increase students graduating in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) have been bolstered with significant new funding investments for Choose Ohio First scholarships in the first two DeWine budget bills, as shown in the table to the right. It was Lt. Governor Husted's leadership as Speaker of the House of Representatives in 2007 that first established the Choose Ohio First program. Three rounds of Choose Ohio First Scholarship grants have been announced during the DeWine governorship, with funding opportunities of \$43 million, \$42.8 million, and \$20.6 million made available. Last fiscal year, 3,995 students at community colleges as well as four-year public and independent institutions benefited from a Choose Ohio First Scholarship. These scholars were eligible to receive a maximum scholarship of \$8,112, while the average scholarship at a four-year institution was \$4,050 and the average scholarship at a two-year college was \$2,316.



Choose  hio First

Helping Families with the Cost of Education



Helping families save on the cost of college is the primary focus of the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority, the agency under the Department of Higher Education's purview that celebrated the 30th anniversary of its CollegeAdvantage 529 savings plan in 2019. Ohio's CollegeAdvantage Direct 529 Savings Plan is one of the top-rated 529 plans in the country, having earned the number-one rating in investment performance in the one-, five-, and 10-year categories by SavingforCollege.com.

Governor DeWine and the General Assembly also supported Chancellor Gardner's request for \$3.5 million in federal COVID relief dollars to support students especially impacted by the pandemic with most of those funds to support Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion efforts through grant initiatives referred to as FAFSA 21 and FAFSA 22. Efforts were focused and dollars expended primarily in the following categories: direct intervention, professional development, data system upgrades, and communications/awareness. Specific strategies implemented by the grant include: (1) FAFSA champions/coaches/counselors embedded in schools, (2) use of data to support individual interventions and goal-setting strategies, (3) text communications to students and families, (4) social media communications/encouragement, (5) one-on-one FAFSA counseling and completion sessions, (6) FAFSA completion workshops, and (7) FAFSA completion events outside of schools, e.g. events at fairs, libraries, etc.

More than 400 K-12 school counselors registered for training made possible by FAFSA 21. Of the 294 schools served by FAFSA 21 recipients, on average there was a 10 percent increase in FAFSA completion during the time of the grant period. At the conclusion of 2021, Ohio's statewide FAFSA completion rate was 13th in the country, 1.6 percent higher than the same point in 2020 and above the national average (Ohio = 29.1 percent, nation = 26.3 percent). For the "top 20" schools served by FAFSA 21 recipients that showed the greatest improvement during the grant period, 12 were high-minority schools and 15 were Title-I eligible, suggesting that the program had a positive impact on traditionally underserved groups.



Governor DeWine's proclamation declaring October 1st, 2021 as FAFSA Completion Kickoff Day

Another way ODHE works to make higher education more accessible and affordable for students is through collaboration with other state agencies. ODHE continues to collaborate with the Ohio Department of Education on the **College Credit Plus dual enrollment program**, which celebrated its sixth anniversary in 2021. The program, which provides participating students the opportunity to earn high school and college credits at the same time by taking courses from the state’s colleges and universities, has saved students and their families approximately \$883 million on the cost of tuition in the past five years. To date, 5,672 associate degrees and 2,179 certificates have been earned by Ohio high school students through the College Credit Plus program before receiving their high school diploma.



Ohio’s Aspire program works to reduce the estimated number of 800,000 Ohio adults without a high school diploma. The Aspire program provides grants for the development and administration of courses with instruction in basic literacy, workplace literacy, family literacy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and preparation for high school equivalency tests.

Workforce Development through RAPIDS and Short-Term Certificates

The DeWine Administration and General Assembly have to date provided \$15.6 million for the state’s RAPIDS program. RAPIDS, which stands for Regionally Aligned Priorities in Delivering Skills, is a collaboration between higher education institutions and Ohio businesses where funding is awarded to purchase equipment to train students and upskill incumbent workers.

In an additional effort to support fast response times to emerging workforce needs, the state budget included \$7 million over the next two years for short-term certificate grants. This funding supports certificates less than a year in duration that help meet local and regional workforce preparation trends.

In an effort to reinforce the important role that Ohio Technical Centers (OTC) play in educating the state’s workforce, state leaders continue to enhance support for technical centers. The first two DeWine budgets have increased funding for OTCs by 31%. And in a show of support for those serving our country, both DeWine budgets ensured funding to the Ohio National Guard scholarship would cover 100 percent of student tuition and fees.



TechCred: Supporting Ohio Employers in a New Economy

At the beginning of the DeWine Administration, ODHE and the Development Services Agency, led by Director Lydia Mihalik, partnered with Lieutenant Governor Husted to establish TechCred, a program designed to upskill the incumbent workforce and qualify them for new jobs in the technology-infused economy.

The initial budget in 2019 provided \$15 million per year to support grants to employers to help fund new credentials and certificates, and last year the budget increased the line item to \$25 million annually. To date through the program, a total of 1,615 Ohio employers have been approved for funding, supporting the **earning of 32,269 tech-focused credentials by Ohio employees**. Those interested may get more information or apply at TechCred.Ohio.gov.



Ohio's Independent Colleges and Universities

Ohio is home to more than 70 four-year, non-profit institutions, 51 of which are members of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio (AICUO). Independent institutions add to Ohio's diversity of opportunity available to Ohio students and out-of-state students looking to make Ohio their education home. Many of them participate in key statewide programs such as College Credit Plus, the Choose Ohio First Scholarship, and the Ohio College Opportunity Grant. Every year a growing number of public-private partnerships emerge to help provide more student options and enhance affordability, especially between community colleges and independent schools.

Chancellor Gardner visited the University of Findlay campus in August.



Supporting Students with Disabilities

An exciting new collaborative program between higher education and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) was included in the biennial operating budget and led by OOD Director Kevin Miller. The College2Careers program, which provides for a full-time rehabilitation vocation counselor at 17 of Ohio's public colleges and universities, ensures that students with disabilities have the support they need to complete their degree or credential and succeed in the workforce.

In September, Chancellor Gardner and Lt. Governor Jon Husted joined Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Director Kevin Miller and the presidents of Central State University and Wilberforce University to announce the expansion of the Ohio College2Careers program.



Addressing Ohio's K-12 Teacher Shortage

Ohio faces a growing statewide teacher shortage in our K-12 education system. We are in need of qualified teachers in many subjects (particularly in the STEM fields of science, math, and computer science, as well as in special education). We also strive to reduce teacher shortages in urban and rural communities in addition to supporting minority educator programs. The General Assembly appropriated \$5.2 million so that ODHE can partner with the Ohio Department of Education to find effective ways to recruit young people and possibly adults with other occupations and careers into the teaching profession. The RFP process started the first week of January 2022 for colleges and universities to submit applications, with grants awarded in March 2022.

Support for Appalachia

A \$4 million Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) appropriation for ODHE was included in HB169 in December to provide funding to the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio. Funds will be used to support the recruitment and retention of the K-12 educator workforce in the Appalachian region of Ohio in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are in the early stages of developing the program in consultation with the Foundation, but we look forward to opportunities to work with our colleges and universities in the Appalachian region of Ohio to broaden the program's impact.



Governor DeWine after signing Collin's Law

Striving to End Hazing: Collin's Law

Senate Bill 126, known as Collin's Law, was signed by Governor DeWine in July in an assertive effort, perhaps the most comprehensive in the nation, to end hazing on Ohio's college campuses. The new law increases criminal penalties for hazing and requires ODHE to support efforts through education, training, reporting, and awareness initiatives.

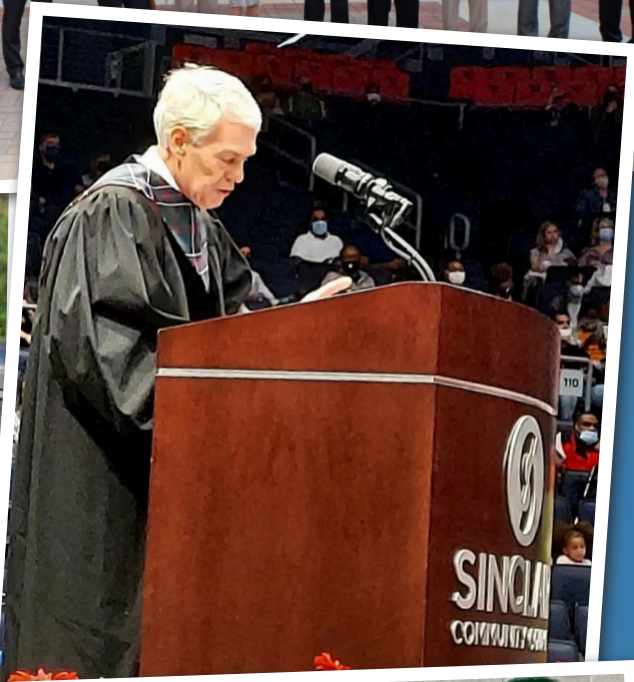
Funding Ohio Priorities through the Third Frontier

ODHE traditionally oversees \$8 million every year in Third Frontier research incentive projects, with increased funding for university algal bloom research, and continued support to reduce opioid addiction and infant mortality, among other things. A newer initiative, spinal cord injury research, was included in both DeWine budgets, with \$6 million available over four years to assist in striving to improve the lives of those with spinal cord injuries.



Return to Campus Visits

One bright spot amidst the continuation of the pandemic in 2021 was the opportunity for Chancellor Gardner to resume campus visits. Safety protocols that allowed students to return to on-campus learning opened the door for Chancellor Gardner to conduct visits on a limited basis. And while he didn't reach the mark of 100-plus visits to 74 campuses that he set in 2019, he did make several trips around the state - joined frequently by Governor DeWine - to talk with students and staff at Central State University, Marion Technical College, Rhodes State College, Sinclair College, Ohio University, University of Toledo, and Ohio State University, just to name a few.



New Presidents

Ohio's campuses are fortunate to have strong leadership, and 2021 brought new presidents to two community colleges, one public university, and six independent institutions.



Trevor M. Bates
President
Wilmington College



Jane Fernandes
President
Antioch College



Connie Gallaher
President
Ohio Dominican University



Colleen Hanycz
President
Xavier University



Todd Hernandez
President
Northwest State
Community College



Eric Kaler
President
Case Western Reserve
University



Alan Miciak
President
John Carroll University

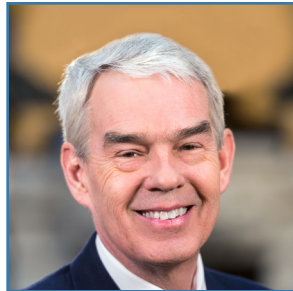


Hugh Sherman
President
Ohio University



Dione Somerville
President
Owens Community College

Higher Education Senior Leadership Team



CHANCELLOR
Randy Gardner



CHIEF OF STAFF
Jim Bennett



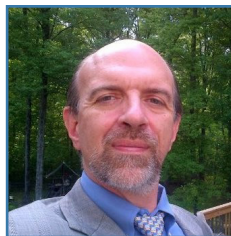
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SR. VICE CHANCELLOR
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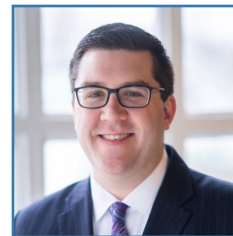
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The “Number of Midwest HS Graduates Will Decline” graphic on page 3 was provided by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio (AICUO).



 **OhioHigherEd.org**

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