



TRANSFORMING OHIO FOR JOBS + GROWTH

2014 MID-BIENNIUM REVIEW

HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM

Making Ohio's State-supported Colleges and Universities More Accessible, More Affordable and More Effective

From Day One, Gov. John Kasich has made higher education reform a key priority for his Administration. His commitment has already put Ohio in a national leadership role by successfully implementing performance-based funding for Ohio's publicly supported colleges and universities. To further advance his goal of improving higher education in Ohio, Gov. Kasich has moved forward in his 2014 Mid-Biennium Budget Review (MBR) to further strengthen pathways to college and enhance college learning opportunities. These initiatives have been aimed at improving college readiness, lowering the out-of-pocket costs required to obtain a college degree, and improving graduation rates at our state-supported campuses.

A Jump-Start on College—Fixing the High School-Age College Enrollment Program: An improved system to help high schools encourage more students to earn college credit while completing their high school courses is giving students a jump on their college careers and helping reduce college costs for them and their families. In 2013, 30,000 public high school students participated in the dual-credit program, but due to the program's complexity, that's a small fraction of the more than 500,000 who are eligible. Because participation in the past had been held back by the unfocused structure and lack of transparency in the way dual credit was funded, the governor's MBR reforms now provide more students with access to this proven, effective and efficient accelerated pathway toward degree completion. Among their benefits, these MBR reforms are:

- Creating a transparent and equitable funding mechanism that works for both high schools and higher education institutions
- Increasing participation across all student demographics, improving educational achievement, and ensuring course and programming quality
- Providing consistent communication with students and parents
- Establishing a system-wide College Credit Plus data collection and reporting system

Incentivizing Colleges to Graduate Students, Not Just Enroll Them: To help increase the number of Ohioans with degrees, the state budget for FY 2014-15 introduced a new funding formula that ties state higher education funds to successful student outcomes. For undergraduate students at four-year schools, state funding is now tied entirely to student graduation and course completion. Ohio community college presidents finalized their recommendations for the coming fiscal year that will also base all of their state funding on successful course, degree, and certificate completions, rather than course enrollments. The MBR provided the final piece of this policy for two-year schools, completing the transition for all public colleges and universities. As a result, in a period of just two years (FY13 to FY15), Ohio's community colleges have gone from being funded almost entirely based on earmarks and student enrollment to being funded 100 percent based on successful student outcomes. Furthermore, although the new community college formula rewards student success, it also protects access to higher education by providing schools with greater payments for older, low income, and minority students that are successful.

Aligning Funding for Ohio's Technical Centers: Just as Ohio's two-year and four-year colleges had done, a new funding formula now shifts the focus of Ohio's Technical Centers from simply enrolling more students to being successful with those students and working to ensure that students are finding jobs after they complete their program of study. Beginning in FY2015, 50 percent of state funding for Ohio Technical Centers will be based upon the percentage of their students that actually find a job after they complete their program of study. The remaining 50 percent of state funding will be based upon a combination of successful student retention, the number of students who successfully complete a workforce training program, and the number of students who successfully receive an industry recognized credential.

Taking Advantage of Technology and Distance Learning: Rapid changes in technology have created a wealth of learning opportunities for adult learners and teachers, including various modes of "distance learning" that take place outside the traditional classroom. To take full advantage of this emerging technology, Gov. Kasich's MBR reforms provide a number of programs to better prepare Ohio's workforce, including:

- **Course- and Program-Sharing Network:** The Ohio Board of Regents now administers a course- and program-sharing network, encouraging institutions and adult career centers to share existing courses and programs across the state.
- **Expanding access to Ohioans who want to learn and enhance their skills:** The Board of Regents is now authorized to partner with the Midwestern Higher Education Compact and allow Ohio colleges to deliver distance education to students in other states. When finalized, this partnership will allow Ohio colleges and universities to expand their distance education offerings and create more opportunities for Ohio residents to take college courses to expand their knowledge and skill sets.

Keeping Ohio's International Students in Ohio after Graduation: The number of international students attending Ohio's colleges and universities is at an all-time high, and the state's future workforce needs – especially related to engineering and sciences – will rely on their contribution to a well-trained workforce. To ensure that Ohio job creators can meet their workforce needs, an MBR initiative authorizes the Chancellor of the Board of Regents, through a globalization liaison, to increase recruitment and enrollment of international students and to encourage them to remain in the state after graduation. The liaison will also concentrate on retaining those international students in areas such as engineering, while simultaneously encouraging more Ohioans to earn degrees in this and other high-demand fields. The Chancellor is now working with institutions of higher education and the business community to make recommendations to accomplish these goals.

Providing Tuition Certainty to Students and Their Families: In an effort to keep Ohio's colleges more affordable, Ohio's community colleges now have the option of giving their students a guaranteed tuition rate that would apply to their time on campus. This same type of guarantee was provided to all of Ohio's four-year public universities as part of the last state budget.

Giving Veterans College Credit for Their Military Training and Experience: Veterans who work toward a college degree deserve credit for the military training, experience and coursework they've received in the service. But until now, Ohio has lacked a uniform and effective process for awarding that credit. Gov. Kasich stepped up to address this issue through an MBR initiative that now requires Ohio's higher education system to develop a set of standards and procedures for granting college credit for military experience. The Military Transfer Assurance Guide will provide a baseline of standards, procedures and tools for granting college credit for military experience for any public college and university providing more consistent services across our system.

- Additional MBR provisions now ensure that no veteran is ever asked to pay for the military-training credits he or she is awarded. While the majority of Ohio's state-supported colleges and universities do not charge veterans for such

credits, this has not been universal. State law now ensures that Ohio's public colleges and universities cannot charge for evaluation, transcription and application of college credit for military experience.

Helping Ohio Veterans Make the Transition to College: When reentering civilian life as a college student, veterans often struggle to learn of their options and the many opportunities available on a college campus. There are colleges and universities in Ohio with first-rate veteran offices or specifically assigned counselors to support transitioning veterans. The MBR now ensures that these "best practices" are in place on every public campus in the state. In addition, veterans and active military members are now provided priority course registration at our public institutions ensuring they have access to the classes they need to succeed and thrive in civilian life.

BOTTOM LINE: Ohio's world-class higher education system more effectively meets the needs of students and job creators when it focuses more closely on graduation, is more accessible to more Ohioans and responds to the unique needs and skills of our veterans.

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