



TRANSFORMING OHIO FOR JOBS + GROWTH

2016 MID-BIENNIUM REVIEW

DRIVING DOWN THE COST OF A COLLEGE DEGREE

Making College More Affordable Will Help More Ohioans Advance Their Education and Strengthen Our Workforce

Controlling college costs, to ensure that more Ohioans can obtain a college degree, remains a top priority for Governor John R. Kasich. Over the past five years, Ohio has taken a number of steps to improve college affordability and encourage degree completion, including holding down tuition growth more than almost every other state, strengthening opportunities for high school students to get a jump start on college and encouraging timely graduation through performance-based funding. Thanks to recommendations by the governor's Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency in Higher Education, Ohio's 37 public colleges and universities are taking a harder look at ways to control costs and pass those savings on to their students. In addition, the governor's 2016 Mid-Biennium Review provides important new initiatives to further reduce the cost of a college degree.

Strengthening Pathways to a Low-Cost Degree: The Kasich Administration continues to open up new, affordable pathways for students to earn college degrees. Recent reforms are helping a record number of high school students earn college credit through Ohio's College Credit Plus program and a growing number of agreements allow community college students to transfer seamlessly to four-year universities.

- **Ensuring More High School Students Are College Ready:** A pilot program will allow high school students to receive remediation in conjunction with a college-credit course, providing just-in-time support to ensure these students succeed in college courses. The initiative is generally modeled after a successful Tennessee program that has helped students needing remedial math and English catch up with the skills they will require to be successful.
- **Encouraging More Opportunities for Students to Study for Three Years at a Community College:** The success of Ohio's efforts to provide a seamless transition between community colleges and four-year universities has paved the way for expanded opportunities to allow students to complete three years of their coursework at a community college and finish their degree at a four-year university. While a number of schools have "3+1" pathways agreements, Ohio will seek to create more "3+1" pathways between Ohio's two- and four-year institutions.
- **Awarding Degrees and Certificates Based on Competency Instead of Just Classroom Time:** A growing number of working, adult learners seek flexibility as they pursue a college degree. Through new authority in the MBR, Ohio will enter a partnership with Western Governors University, a multi-state, nonprofit online institution that awards degrees in four career fields. Success is based on a student's demonstrated competencies instead of just the amount of time spent in the classroom.
- **Allowing Community Colleges to Offer Bachelor's Degrees:** Up to 10 bachelor's degree programs may be offered through Ohio's community colleges. With an average tuition of slightly more than \$4,000 per year at a community college, this provides a lower-cost pathway to a four-year degree.

Helping Universities Drive Down Their Costs: Gov. Kasich's Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency in Higher Education, a team that included business leaders who are experts at controlling costs and balancing the bottom line,

recommended a number of ways for colleges and universities to reduce costs by sharing services, analyzing staff overhead expenses, monetizing assets, examining space utilization, reassessing low-enrollment courses and exploring new revenue streams. At the same time that schools have been asked to implement recommendations of the task force, the governor seeks to jumpstart key areas for potential savings by requiring state universities to:

- Update campus completion plans to integrate on-time graduation pathways and career counseling.
- Integrate undergraduate financial literacy into campus programs.
- Submit plans on how to reduce costs of storing and processing data by migrating that data to the State of Ohio Computing Center.
- Analyze classroom usage during non-peak times, such as the summer months, and develop strategies to increase building utilization.

Addressing Student Debt: A new study by the Ohio Department of Higher Education will look at income-sharing agreements as a possible strategy to help students avoid or lessen the burden of student loan debt.

Offering Low-Tuition Opportunities through the Midwest Student Exchange Program: By becoming the tenth state to join the Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP), an innovative tuition reciprocity program, Ohio opens the door for students to enroll in selected programs at other participating states' institutions at a tuition rate that is lower than what out-of-state students pay. Likewise, Ohio institutions could allow students from other states to enroll in specific programs at a reduced out-of-state tuition rate.

BOTTOM LINE: These changes will build on work already under way by colleges and universities to drive efficiencies and savings, providing increased opportunities for students to earn a college degree at a lower cost and keeping the dream of a better future alive for every Ohioan.

