

**BEFORE THE HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION
AND
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**REPRESENTATIVE MIKE DUFFEY
CHAIR**

AM. SUB. HOUSE BILL 66

**TESTIMONY
OF
BRUCE JOHNSON
PRESIDENT
INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL OF OHIO**

OCTOBER 25, 2017

The Public Universities of Ohio

The University of Akron
University of Cincinnati
Miami University
Ohio University
Wright State University

Bowling Green State University
Cleveland State University
Northeast Ohio Medical University
Shawnee State University
Youngstown State University

Central State University
Kent State University
The Ohio State University
The University of Toledo

Chair Duffey, Vice Chair Antani, ranking minority member Sweeney, and members of the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today as an interested party to House Bill 66. My name is Bruce Johnson and I am the President of the Inter-University Council of Ohio.

The IUC was established in 1939 as a voluntary educational association of Ohio's public universities. Today, the association represents all of Ohio's fourteen public universities. The IUC values providing access to a high quality, affordable education. It is committed to ensuring affordable opportunities for the more than 330,000 students attending our member institutions without sacrificing the quality of their education or experience.

On behalf of Ohio's fourteen public universities, thank you for your support of higher education. Your leadership, dedication, and commitment to quality education on behalf of our institutions and students are appreciated and to be commended. We are grateful for your efforts to help us help our students attain their educational goals by earning a degree in the most efficient and affordable manner possible while ensuring a quality experience.

I also would like to thank the sponsor of the bill, Representative Ron Young, for his desire to ensure a quality educational experience in the classroom for our students.

As you know, the bill, in its current iteration, now establishes a committee to study and evaluate each state university's efforts to secure participation by tenured undergraduate faculty in the institution's undergraduate mission. This version is better than previous versions requiring faculty to spend an arbitrary number of additional hours teaching in the classroom or establishing a new tenure or post-tenure review process for faculty that would have involved the state department of higher education. This version is a more rational and workable approach to achieving what we believe is the sponsor's true intent.

We support the changes already made, including adding the chairperson of the Ohio Faculty Council to the study committee. That said, we do have an additional request. We respectfully ask this committee to amend the language requiring an external reviewer to rank each state university with respect to the university's contribution to the undergraduate mission. The IUC believes it would be more appropriate to grade each institution individually on its efforts in encouraging faculty to contribute to the undergraduate mission than to rank them against each other. It may be more appropriate for this external expert to indicate whether the university is exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, or needs to improve upon its efforts to ensure that tenured faculty participate in the undergraduate mission. We have raised this issue with the sponsor and are working on an amendment.

The IUC is testifying today as an interested party on this bill primarily because, on top of the forty-seven new mandates recently enacted in Am. Sub. House Bill 49, the biennial operating budget, House Bill 66 places additional requirements on Ohio's public universities. This comes at a time when the state's public universities are being "encouraged" to be more efficient and affordable, which we are, and at a time when the state has mandated price controls, frozen tuition for the fourth consecutive academic year, and held funding for state support flat for the next two years. The new requirements in House Bill 66 will result in administrative work that must be done both during the course of the study and then after the study is completed and the recommendations are adopted and required to be implemented. Despite this concern, however, the IUC believes that the added administrative burden actually presents an opportunity.

That is, this bill presents an excellent opportunity for faculty to demonstrate just how vital their role is to the public institution's undergraduate mission, how they are contributing in that role, and how integral it truly is to the overall mission.

I am confident that as this study committee digs into its work, it will discover just how strong faculty's commitment already is to ensuring a quality education for our students. It will create a forum in which faculty will have a voice and a platform to testify and present evidence of their work in the classroom to the benefit of students and in furtherance of the institution's undergraduate mission.

Faculty are the backbone of every institution. Their research and teaching is the essence of the university. Without faculty, we could not serve our students. Without question, we are confident in them. We are not afraid of the challenge that House Bill 66 presents. Quite the contrary; we welcome the review and believe that it will prove educational for all the participants.

In fact, I would argue it probably could not come at a better time. One of the forty-seven challenges issued in the budget bill came in the form of an "attainment goal." The Administration correctly recognized that a severe and well-documented talent gap threatens our state's continued economic competitiveness and growth. They indicate that the threat is serious and there is ample evidence to suggest that they are correct. According to the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, 64% of Ohio jobs in 2020 will require a postsecondary education. A Lumina Foundation report shows that just 43.2% of working-age adults in Ohio have a postsecondary certificate or degree, which is below the nation's overall postsecondary attainment rate of 45.3%. If we are going to compete for job expansions, like the one recently announced by Amazon, our state must make an effort to provide adequate education and training for its citizens.

The state's new goal is to have its institutions of higher education produce, by 2025, an estimated 1.7 million more adults with high-quality postsecondary certificates or degrees. The goal is very worthwhile both for the state's economy and for the individual citizens who will seek these new degrees, which all the data shows is well worth the investment. Consider that at Ohio's current rate of production, by 2025 almost 2 million Ohioans will *lack* the postsecondary education or training needed to be competitive in the labor market. Even if we improve Ohio's performance by increasing college access and increasing college credentials to the same level as leading states, we still will have a shortfall of hundreds of thousands of credentialed workers with the knowledge and skills needed to fill projected workforce needs in Ohio in 2025.

This Herculean challenge is not lost on our faculty. They know our mission. They contribute to that mission every day. If the goal really is to close the attainment gap and to attract the best and brightest students from around Ohio, the country, and even the world, then we need the best and brightest faculty in the world. We need them directly engaged with our students. We look forward to the opportunity to demonstrate to you that our faculty are second-to-none and that they do play a pivotal role in building the state's innovation capacity and strengthening our ability to compete globally for investment, talent, and jobs by providing a quality education for our students at our public universities.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am happy to answer any questions.