

**BEFORE THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**REPRESENTATIVES OELSLAGER AND CALLENDER**  
**CHAIR**

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

**JUNE 2, 2020**

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**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

Chairman Oelslager, Chairman Callender, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today on House Bill 670, capital reappropriations, on behalf of the state's fourteen public universities, all of which are members of the Inter-University Council of Ohio (IUC). My name is Bruce Johnson and I am the President of the IUC. The IUC was established in 1939 as a voluntary educational association of Ohio's public universities. It is committed to ensuring affordable opportunities for the more than 329,000 students attending our member institutions without sacrificing the quality of their education or experience.

House Bill 670 as currently drafted does not include reappropriations for public higher education projects. I respectfully request the bill be amended to include these projects and permit the use of previously approved and appropriated funds on the projects for which funding is available and for which debt service already has been budgeted by the state. As the sponsor acknowledged in his testimony before this Committee last week, our projects, like the others presented in the bill, are underway, and the reappropriation of the unexpended amount will allow those capital projects to continue uninterrupted and without delay.

We believe there is good reason to include higher education projects in this bill at this time. State investment in these infrastructure projects puts money into renovating and rehabilitating facilities that will be used to educate the state's future researchers, doctors, nurses, and other allied health professionals -- many of whom will join the State's workforce upon graduation. It is used to modernize laboratories where research is being done to discover new treatments and cures for COVID-19 and other deadly diseases. It truly is an investment in the health and safety of Ohio's citizens and our workforce. We believe it should be prioritized as such.

Additionally, state investment in infrastructure on public university campuses is the appropriate, responsible, and right response to the financial/economic crisis created by the corona virus. Investment in public university infrastructure projects will not only ensure that our campus facilities remain safe and useable for students, faculty, and staff but, just as importantly, it will help jump-start the state's economy by ensuring good-paying jobs for workers. The IUC could not agree more with statements made by state leaders emphasizing the importance of capital construction projects in helping to stimulate the local economy through infrastructure projects. These projects represent a wide variety of trades that employ thousands of people who could be put back to work if the state acts to reappropriate the necessary funding. Projects include mechanical and electrical system improvements and renovations to automation systems in building and facilities used to educate and provide services to our students. They primarily are focused on rehabilitating outdated learning facilities, laboratory facilities, and upgrading campus safety to ensure a high-quality, high-value educational experience for our students.

As mentioned, many of these projects already are in the pipeline and we are ready to begin work now. Our public universities have acted responsibly, done their due diligence, and engaged construction managers and contractors to perform the work and provide supplies. Matching funds and grants have been secured from a variety of sources, and private dollars are being raised to augment state funding. If the state does not act soon, contracts will have to be rebid at likely higher prices. We understand the budget concerns associated with this request and respect the fact the state is doing everything it can to prioritize its spending and to keep its budget balanced -- state institutions of higher education have felt those budget cuts directly. We ask you to understand that Ohio's public university campuses also have a need. We are working to balance our budgets, maintain enrollment, attract new students, and serve our existing students all without compromising either the quality of the education our students expect to receive or their safety. To help us be good stewards of our buildings and educational facilities, your investment in the rehabilitation and renovation of our state's assets at this time is critical and appreciated.

We are ready to move forward with our local and federal partners who have committed matching funds. We are ready to do the work with our local contractors and trades. We deeply appreciate your work and the difficult decisions you must make. We also would appreciate your continued commitment to Ohio's public universities and the financial resources you have in your power to make available to help us serve our students and provide them with the quality education they deserve.

Thank you Chairmen and members of the committee. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

The following examples represent just a small portion of the reappropriations projects at Ohio's public universities. Funding these projects now will allow us to maintain our state assets and avoid deferring maintenance -- which adds costs to projects in out years making them more expensive to repair.

1. **Shawnee State University**. Clark Library Rehabilitation \$1,800,000. Project in Design Phase. This project repurposes and modernizes existing library space into a more dynamic academic/student-focused learning environment and replaces obsolete mechanical systems extending the building's life cycle, and eliminates increased maintenance and high utility costs due to aging and obsolete equipment.
2. **Shawnee State University**. Advanced Tech Center Building Phase 2 \$393,732. Active Project. The Phase II ATC/T&I project completes the modernization and upgrading of two major, physically connected academic buildings. This investment has had a direct and immediate positive impact upon the University's most promising growth programs that offer employability in such industries as business, computer engineering, and plastics, as well as others. The current phase of this project is near completion; roof replacement has been added to project scope.
3. **Shawnee State University**. Academic Buildings Basic Renovations \$2,708,954. Ongoing. Funds are to be utilized for planned and emergency equipment replacement and renovation projects, as well as energy conservation and life safety projects. Funds will be used to address high priority projects i.e. aging roof systems, older, inefficient HVAC equipment, and to modernize classrooms; If these funds are not reappropriated, deferred maintenance would continue to increase and operating funds would be utilized to address emergency repairs.
4. **Bowling Green State University**. Academic Buildings Rehab \$5,405,399. Active. This project is mission-critical for BGSU as tunnels house and connect critical components such as steam tunnels from campus heating plant to individual buildings, IT networks, and replacement of BGSU's 1950's era electric service throughout campus.
5. **Bowling Green State University**. Technology Building Renovation \$6,005,076. Active. Entire amount encumbered for Technology Building Renovation and Technology Building Infrastructure projects. These renovations would support laboratories associated with this building that are used to facilitate research involving some of BGSU's fastest growing majors related to robotics and computer sciences.
6. **The Ohio State University**. Celeste Lab Project \$22,321,066. Active. Addresses significant deficiencies in the building systems. Celeste is a "workhorse" building that accommodates 75,000 credit hours annually. The labs serve over 10% of the student population to deliver core instruction in general and organic chemistry, required courses for chemistry and biochemistry majors as well as all of the science, technology, and engineering (STEM) majors across OSU. State funding is leveraged with local college funding. The available local college funding is being used to address urgent HVAC scope this summer while the building is vacant. Without the reappropriated state funds, the remaining scope will not move forward, and the project will be paused indefinitely.
7. **The Ohio State University**. Newton Hall Project \$6,909,332. Supports the university's nationally ranked College of Nursing programs. The project will allow the College of Nursing to vacate off-campus leased space and accommodate future growth in teaching, research and clinical clusters. Enhanced teaching, clinical, and research space will ensure the College of Nursing continues to graduate the best nursing students at a crucial time to meet the tremendous health and healthcare needs faced by Ohioans. Project funding includes local/college funds, and private fundraising in addition to the state capital. The state funding accounts for over 25% of the total project cost. This project has completed design using local/college funding and has been paused awaiting reappropriation of state capital. Without the state funding, the design costs will be "sunk costs" and the project will not move forward into construction.
8. **University of Akron**. Crouse Hall Ayer Hall Consolidation Project \$4,400,000. Consolidates the programs of Ayer Hall and Crouse Hall into a newly renovated facility in the center of campus. Anticipate the project to be "shovel ready" by July 2020. The renovated facility reduces the overall building area by nearly 30,000 sf; replaces/ renovates HVAC, electrical, plumbing, IT and other systems. Funds would be dedicated to the consolidation of existing space to increase campus operational and energy efficiencies, and the abatement and demolition of an aged facility to significantly reduce footprint and deferred maintenance.

9. **Ohio University.** Clippinger Renovation Phase 2 \$16,188,011. Modernizes and improves critical deferred maintenance building infrastructure systems that were identified as Ohio University's greatest programmatic and deferred maintenance needs. Project will renovate Clippinger Laboratories and bring it up to date while meeting the needs of OU's science laboratories and classrooms both from a mechanical system perspective as well as programmatic considerations. This building is a central hub for the sciences at Ohio University and services most, if not all, undergraduate students during their time at Ohio University.
10. **Ohio University.** Lancaster HVAC and Energy Efficiency Improvements Phase I \$1,354,560. Provides improvements to critical deferred maintenance building infrastructure systems which have exceeded their useful lives to include new boilers at Brasee Hall (53+ year old system), new HVAC building management system, and replacement of two air handlers at Herrold Hall. These two main buildings at the Lancaster Campus are in dire need of improvements to their infrastructure systems in order to continue to adequately provide instructional and laboratory space on this key regional campus.
11. **University of Cincinnati.** Muntz Hall – Blue Ash Phase 4 \$1,828,730. Muntz Hall is UC's 50-year-old flagship building on the Blue Ash campus that houses the majority of the campuses foundational work-horse classrooms and core student functions such as advising and the library. All these functions directly support student success. The plans for this phase addresses modernizing the balance of the classrooms with failing mechanical systems that cause mold and remedy climate comfort issues.
12. **University of Cincinnati.** Vontz Center Roof \$949,474. Reappropriates funds to remaining envelope, systems and supporting lab and research spaces. The Vontz Center Roof/Panel/Window Replacement project addresses recurrent and systemic water filtration into the curtain walls and sloping masonry wall panels, and a roofing system near the end of its service life. Funds will be used to address additional envelope and systems needs that support key laboratory and research spaces for students and faculty.
13. **University of Toledo.** North Engineering project Phase 1 \$50,000+. Allows for completion of the first phase of a three-phase project that transforms a former manufacturing floor into a two-story, state of the art classroom facility. The development of this space not only serves to upgrade and modernize teaching spaces for the students and the University, but through associated master planning it allows UToledo to demolish a 67,000 square foot classroom building which further enhances the overall efficiency of space on campus.