



Testimony before the House Higher Education Committee on SB 120
Higher Education Performance Audits
House Higher Education Committee
June 13, 2019

Chair Keller, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Ingram and members of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 120 (SB 120). I am Tom Walsh, Vice President of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, which represents the presidents and trustees of all twenty-three of Ohio's public two-year institutions. OACC is pleased to support SB 120 – sponsored by Senators McColley and Rulli – to provide more opportunities for institution of higher education to work in partnership with the Auditor of State to increase the number of performance audits that may be conducted each biennium.

The overall cost of higher education in this State continues to be a concern for far too many students and their families. Over the past few years, the attitude towards reducing costs too often has been to treat all institutions the same, regardless of their size, cost structure, or history of managing efficiently. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to making institutions more accessible and affordable for Ohioans, because no two institutions in this state are exactly alike. That said, when it comes to ensuring a postsecondary education remains accessible and affordable for our students, everyone recognized that more needs to be done.

We believe that SB 120 would provide one more tool that institutions can utilize to help identify efficiency and cost saving opportunities, and it is a tool that by definition starts with a more localized examination of the practices currently in place at that institution. OACC was a strong proponent of the original legislation (HB 384 from the 131st General Assembly) that established higher education performance audits and we support giving Ohio's public colleges and universities the ability to seek the expertise of Auditor's office to identify ways to streamline and improve operational expenses.

In order to keep tuition the lowest in the state for our students, leaders at our public community colleges consistently work diligently to identify new and innovative solutions that will enhance efficiencies, reduce waste and identify new opportunities for improved services. We agree with Auditor Faber that a more efficient higher educational institution benefits the institution, its students and Ohio taxpayers.

Performance audits are a welcome tool in our ongoing efforts to continue to deliver high-quality educational workforce training that remains affordable and accessible for Ohio students. Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of SB 120 on behalf of Ohio's community colleges. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.