

**Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee Testimony
Scarlett Howery, President, DeVry University, Columbus Campus
May 20, 2015**

Good Afternoon, Chairman Gardner, Vice Chairwoman Cafaro and members of the Higher Education Finance Sub-Committee;

My name is Scarlett Howery and I am the President of DeVry University's Columbus Campus. I am sure you are aware of our sister institution Chamberlain College of Nursing whom we share a campus with as well. DeVry University has four locations in the State of Ohio with over 3,300 undergraduate and graduate students combined, and Chamberlain has two campuses with over 1,900 students. DeVry and Chamberlain are each accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and are members of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

I have worked in higher education for 12 years in several roles including admissions, student services and operations. In all of these roles I have had the wonderful opportunity of meeting and assisting hundreds of students whose goals were all the same...to learn and grow as a person and professional, and find the career of their choice to make a better life for themselves and their families.

Many of my students have life circumstances that make it difficult, if not impossible, to complete a degree in the traditional manner. At DeVry University, 71% of our undergraduate students are adult learners age 25 or older. Most of our students come to us with a family, job, or various other responsibilities that make college one of many competing priorities. They recognize that in order to be successful they will need a program that offers options so they can fit school into their already busy lives. Our degree programs run year round, online and onsite, offering a full-time student the opportunity to graduate in three years.

At DeVry University our mission is to empower our students to achieve their educational and career goals. One of the ways that we do this is by offering our students flexibility to take classes in the manner that best fits their lives. We believe this gives students the greatest opportunity to enroll and graduate on time. Our courses are available onsite, online, or in a blended format. Online courses are taught using an eLearning platform that give students the ability to listen to lectures, complete homework, and engage in classroom discussions all from their computers any time or anywhere. Interactive information technology enables students to effectively communicate with professors as well as to participate in group activities with fellow online students.

Professors for online courses are drawn from DeVry's faculty throughout North America as well as from leading organizations in business and technology. These faculty complete specialized instruction to prepare them to teach in this medium.

Our online students receive the same service excellence as our onsite students. Every student receives robust student services, including personalized financial aid and academic advising from student support professionals, as well as career services assistance.

I also want to briefly explain our blended onsite learning courses. These courses correspond to the dominant reality of the workplace, where onsite and online interaction are combined to accomplish organizational objectives. Students meet with faculty face-to-face onsite in most cases one evening each week and participate in professor-guided online activities. Onsite activities include interactive lectures and discussions as well as demonstrations of problems and concepts.

When we ask students why they chose DeVry University, course flexibility and our unique student services are among the most cited reasons.

It is our goal along within the State of Ohio to increase the number of adults graduating from college to close the growing skills gap we face as a nation.

We are also committed to working within our communities to increase the number students who graduate from high school and then go on to college. Over the past 8 years we have partnered with the Columbus public school district to offer the DeVry University Advantage Academy. This dual enrollment program allows high school juniors the opportunity to leave their home high school and attend the Advantage Academy full-time. These students graduate within two years with both their High School diploma and an Associate degree at no cost to their families. We are proud to have more than 150 graduates from this program so far.

Another program I would like to highlight is Passport to College. This is also a dual enrollment opportunity that provides high school juniors and seniors the unique opportunity to take up to 4 college level courses at no cost. This has been a program we have been committed to for more than 10 years, and all of our surrounding school districts are encouraged to participate.

Before I close, I want to thank you on behalf of our students for your past support with retaining Ohio College Opportunity Grant dollars. With the continued and future demand for an increasing postsecondary educated workforce I would like to also lend my support for increasing OCOG, as well as agree with my colleagues here that all Ohio residents pursuing high demand jobs should benefit from the Governor's proposed Student Debt Reduction Program in this bill instead of a select portion of Ohio residents.

OCOG has given many of our students, as well as students from our sister institution Chamberlain College of Nursing, the funds to make their educational goals and ambitions a reality. In addition to OCOG, the Debt Reduction Program would only help more of our students persist to graduation and enter the workforce sooner.

I would also like to thank you for the continued focus on access in higher education, and for the opportunity to speak with you here today. We are honored to have the opportunity to work with the committee.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.