



**Testimony before the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
Dr. Michael V. Drake, President, The Ohio State University
March 7, 2017**

Chairman Perales, Ranking Member Ramos and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

My name is Dr. Michael V. Drake, president of The Ohio State University. I'm delighted to join you as we discuss the governor's budget proposal and our views on how it may impact Ohio State and other public institutions across the state.

First, I'd like to start by noting that our momentum at Ohio State has never been stronger. This fall, we welcomed—once again—the most talented and diverse class of incoming students in university history. Incoming minority students on the Columbus campus increased by a record-high 11 percent over last year, and about 1-in-5 new students are first-generation college students.

Our faculty continue to receive significant recognition for their outstanding scholarship and groundbreaking research. In the last academic year, they received citations of excellence from or were elected to at least 115 national and international learned societies—up from 82 the previous year.

We launched the University Institute for Teaching and Learning to enhance classroom instruction, provide mentorship and research and, we are confident, create national best practices in the classroom. And, in December, Ohio State was proud to be among 30 top colleges and universities to announce the American Talent Initiative, a national coalition collectively seeking to increase the number of middle- and low-income students enrolled on our campuses by 50,000 over the next decade. ATI is a partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Aspen Institute and Ithaka S&R, and we were pleased to be among the founding members.

As a national flagship public research university, Ohio State remains fully committed to expanding access to an affordable and excellent education. We have frozen in-state, undergraduate tuition and general fees since fiscal year 2013—three years before the mandatory state freeze took effect.

We have pledged to identify \$200 million in efficiency savings and another \$200 million in innovative funding to lower the cost and improve the value of an Ohio State education by 2020. Of that \$400 million, \$100 million will go directly to affordability grants for middle- and low-income students in Ohio.

We launched our affordability grant program in 2015, allocating \$15 million in new affordability grants to 12,000 students. This academic year, we allocated an additional \$20 million to 15,700 students—including, for the first time, 3,000 Buckeyes on our regional campuses around the state.

And, beginning this year, we will implement a 25 percent discount on undergraduate summer tuition at our Columbus campus.

As we look to the future, our partnership with the state remains vital to our continued momentum—which benefits students and families across Ohio. While we appreciate the increases to SSI and OCOG in the governor’s budget, the proposed textbook and fee-freeze provisions will negatively impact our ability to maintain current levels of student support.

We respectfully request that the textbook proposal be removed from the budget. Ohio State is at the forefront of promoting open source and affordable text alternatives. In fact, in the course that I teach, all of the required texts are available online for free.

From providing access to free texts through OhioLINK and Ohio State libraries to open education resources and digital materials, we are working to reduce costs without compromising quality or academic excellence.

We also seek greater flexibility on instructional and general fee authority and to clarify the phrase “all other fees” to exclude non-instructional program fees and reimbursable pass-through expenses.

As I mentioned earlier, Ohio State proactively froze in-state undergraduate tuition and general fee expenses three years before the mandatory state freeze. Granting public institutions some authority to increase instructional and general fees allows for additional investment in excellence and quality.

And by striking the phrase “all other fees” from section 381.150, we can ensure this bill will not unintentionally capture fees passed through at cost—such as student health insurance and third-party certifications—and prevent recoupment of reimbursable costs like materials in engineering and aviation fuel. Of course, we welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters further with the governor’s office and our partners at the Statehouse.

In closing, everything we do at Ohio State is representative of our unique role as a national flagship public research university. I look forward to continue working with all of you as we transform Ohio State into an evermore accessible, affordable, excellent, engaged and inclusive university. And with your support, I'm confident our future is bright.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.