



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Katherine Fell

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Dear Chair Manning, Ranking Member Jarrells, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education:

Thank you for your support of better lives for Ohio's citizens and a strong future for our great state. As the president of the University of Findlay (UF), I am particularly grateful to Governor DeWine, Chancellor Gardner, and to you for considering the bold proposal to increase OCOG by 92 percent for Fiscal Year 2023 and an additional 60 percent in FY 2024.

I pledge to you that the University of Findlay will continue to do its part to deliver a return on the state's investment. A few key examples follow below:

Partnerships for Workforce Development--Select Examples on Our Campus:

Healthcare: UF already provides the largest number of health professions programs among higher educational institutions in northwest Ohio.

UF's Colleges of Health Professions is forming a new partnership with Principle Business Enterprises and the H and B Family Foundation to improve patient care throughout Ohio and to fill a gap in the job market. Better patient outcomes start with well-trained frontline health care workers such as State Tested Nurse Aides (STNAs). This is often the most in-demand position for assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, hospitals and medical clinics.

Plans are for 30 STNA candidates to receive a minimum of 80 hours of training in summer 2023 by a certified nursing instructor including hands-on scenarios in preparation for the written exam and manual skills test. COHP students who receive STNA certification will be able to earn employment and gain invaluable experience within the healthcare field while earning their degree at UF.

UF and Blanchard Valley Health System (BVHS) have a formal partnership to provide financial support for students already in health profession studies at UF and for employees of BVHS who wish to continue their education at UF. Also, of tremendous benefit, are the experiential learning opportunities provided by BVHS to our students, ultimately to the benefit of both institutions and the Ohioans these institutions serve.

Pre-Veterinary Medicine/Animal Science is a nationally acclaimed program at UF. Undergraduate students manage 1,000 farm animals daily under the supervision of a barn manager and licensed veterinarian at our 31,000-square-foot Dr. C. Richard Beckett Animal Science Building, beginning their first year and continuing until graduation.

The employment of veterinarians is projected to grow 19% over the next decade, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Driving this trend are increases in consumers' pet-related spending and advancements in veterinary medicine.

Additional OCOG resources would directly benefit our healthcare students and, in turn, the healthcare workforce serving Ohio.

Business and Manufacturing:

UF's Environment, Health, Safety, and Sustainability (EHSS) programs help meet the workforce need in this area but many more graduates are needed. Additional OCOG support would enable more students to enroll in these programs.

- The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (2019) reported there are annual openings for 331 environmental scientists and 228 occupational health and safety specialists in Northwest Ohio alone.
- Demand for our EHSS professionals is 11 times higher than the average number of EHSS graduates annually.
- UF's graduates have 100% job placement within six months of graduation.
- Ours is the only U.S. program accredited by the National Environmental Health Science & Protection Accreditation Council.
- UF has the only undergraduate ventilation laboratory and hands-on training center in the nation.

Our All-Hazards Training Center, at which our students train, is the nation's leader in providing environmental, safety, health, and security training and consulting for both private and public sector entities. Findlay's AHTC has trained more than 250,000 people in all 50 states and produces both a podcast and blog for safety and security.

The Center for Advanced Manufacturing

- UF is partnering with BGSU and Owens CC in the Center for Advanced Manufacturing, developing training opportunities in robotics, logistics, safety, emergency preparedness, leadership, team-work, and communication that will help companies in the NW Ohio region upskill and retain their employees.
- The same Center will also allow students from the participating institutions the ability to engage in original research in areas listed above as well as solve real world problems for participating companies. Those students will be prepared to become the manufacturing employees and leaders of the future.
- We are working to expand the number of higher education institutions at the 2-year and 4-year levels, independent and public, in this partnership.

UF's College of Business's BRITE Center (Business Resource for Innovation, Teamwork, and Entrepreneurship) is located in the Garner Trucking Big Ideas Incubator on our campus. The

director of the BRITE Center guides current students and alumni through the business plan process, connects them with coaches, and connects them with other resources for their small business. The BRITE Center also hosts the Innovation Competition every year, awarding cash prizes to current students, and we have a high school category. Finally, the BRITE Center runs the Pivot workshop every fall in partnership with the athletic department. The workshop teaches student athletes how to take the skills they learn from being a student athlete and pivot into the workforce.

Affordability

UF's Commitment: UF brings to the table \$56 million in discounted tuition for its undergraduates in addition to privately donated scholarship aid of \$1.5 million annually from scholarship endowments. Our undergraduate loan total upon graduation is at a 5-year average of \$28,035.00, and the default rate averages under 4.8%, the most recent data showing the 2018 default rate at 2.5%.

Innovative Partnerships That Keep Costs Manageable: In addition to the scholarship aid to students in the partnership with Blanchard Valley Health System described above, we have recently signed an agreement with Barnes & Noble College to launch the Oiler Day One program, in which students receive required course materials--in both digital and/or physical format--before the first day of class. Course material costs are covered by the University, and students have the materials they need from day one.

A Start-to-Finish Bachelor Degree Fully On-Line Option: Another important move toward greater access for our students is the expansion of our affordable online offerings at the undergraduate level, adding full undergraduate degrees alongside our current degree completion program--significantly lower than the traditional rate.

As I close, I respectfully request that you approve the proposed increase in OCOG for the benefit of Ohio's current and future workforce, and I pledge in behalf of the University of Findlay to keep bringing our own financial and human resources to the development of Ohio's citizens who will bring their own character, discipline, and skill to the strong and agile workforce Ohio needs. More than 60 percent (16,500) of UF's living alumni of record (26,000) live in Ohio. With increased support from the state and our increased commitment of campus resources, together, we can grow that number and make a great state even greater.

Sincerely,



Katherine R. Fell, Ph.D.
President