



Ohio Dominican University
Connie L. Gallaher, President

Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education
March 21, 2023

Chair Manning, Ranking Member Jarrells, and everyone on the Ohio House Finance Subcommittee on Higher Education, on behalf of Ohio Dominican University, and the colleagues from higher education throughout the great State of Ohio, I thank you for your time today to intently listen to the benefits and need of higher education in our state.

You are working fiercely towards ensuring our great state is characterized by prosperous growth, financial strength, and the opportunities for all of us to enjoy a rich and rewarding career and life in Ohio. I also thank you for caring deeply about today and tomorrow's workforce – a workforce that will benefit from your efforts and from partnerships between employers and higher education. Students everywhere appreciate that you are interested in their education and their futures. Together, we can work to retain our valued students and graduates in the State of Ohio.

I am honored and humbled to have this opportunity to speak with you today and share what I have learned and what I see with respect to higher education. You see, I am a licensed registered nurse with 44 years of health care experience in Central Ohio. After retiring, a calling came to bring different thinking and leadership to Ohio Dominican University. I am also a first generation college graduate. As I reflect back, I know that attending a four year college vs. pursuing an associate degree in nursing set me on a far different – and stronger – career path. Today, this dynamic remains. Our four-year colleges and universities provide students with learning that goes beyond a task based education. While not everyone will choose to attend college, nor is it the right path for some, ensuring we have the kind of colleges and universities that can produce graduates that can contribute to the prosperity of our state is essential.

As a lifelong Ohioan, I have watched the ups and downs that our state has faced. We are on the cusp of incredible growth. We are also still recovering from a pandemic and are experiencing unprecedented workforce growth and demands. We know that education changes lives and careers. But change and transformation also needs to occur in how we approach, educate and partner with students and also, collaborate with the employers who so desire talented, strong and committed workers. Three areas I will address include affordability, partnerships, and workforce development.



Affordability

Having state support, like the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG), is essential. Providing such support truly has a return on investment for the state through the generation of increased individual earnings, increased tax revenues, and sustainability of Ohio businesses. Through OCOG, we are able to give more students an opportunity to change their lives and also, the lives of their own future family. At Ohio Dominican, the OCOG recipient is often from underserved minorities and/or are first generation students. I respectfully encourage you to continue to support this invaluable program. It is programs like OCOG that will help students and families realize dreams that otherwise would be unattainable. At ODU, we have had a tradition of serving underrepresented minorities, first generation students and PELL eligible students. We are grateful for this program and certainly, supportive of any increase.

We believe ODU is doing our fair share to ensure affordability. We are also different compared to many other colleges and universities throughout the state given our diverse student body. Some important facts about Ohio Dominican University are the following:

- 22% of all undergrads are first-generation college students
- 45% of first-time, first-year students in our fall 2022 incoming class and 37% of all undergrads are from underrepresented groups
- 38% of all undergrads are Pell eligible
- 99% of full-time undergrads received some sort of financial aid in 2022-23
- \$628,158 was awarded to students from endowment-funded aid in 2021-22
- \$14,193,888 was awarded to students from unfunded aid in 2021-22; we will award over \$14million unfunded aid in 2022-23 as well
- Since 2018, ODU has welcomed 151 students as part of its Panther Promise Program, which allows low-income students who graduate from Columbus City Schools, South-Western City Schools and Whitehall Schools to attend ODU at little to no out-of-pocket cost.

Partnerships

We are partnering with Ohio businesses to produce graduates and ensure they would have jobs and stay in Ohio. One such example is our partnership with Encova Insurance. At ODU we have the Insurance and Risk Management Academy (IRMA). Through this academy, our students are able to gain experience and knowledge by working directly with Encova leaders



and employees. They get a chance to see the vast opportunities that exist in the insurance and risk management industry. They are guaranteed jobs upon graduation.

A few years back, we created the Center for Innovation Entrepreneurship (CIE). It was created by students and is for students to provide them what is needed to become inspired, entrepreneurial and socially conscious leaders. Through the CIE we provide programming, mentorship and connection for students interested in becoming more innovative and entrepreneurial. It is a safe space to practice becoming an entrepreneur and where we foster healthy competition, create challenges and have fun!

ODU has developed partnerships with more than a dozen institutions, organizations, agencies, and corporations to create opportunities for our students and serve as a resource for these organizations' employees. Examples of ODU's partnerships include:

- Intel Workforce Development Partnership – ODU has partnered with the Ohio Technet Northeast Ohio (OTN NEO) Semiconductor Workforce Consortium, consisting of a number of Ohio based colleges and universities to advance STEM curriculum development in support of STEM education and future graduates in the field.
- Encova Insurance and ODU's Insurance & Risk Management Academy – Provides Risk Management & Insurance students with an opportunity to gain industry experience on campus before graduation.
- University of Dayton Schools of Law and Engineering – Provides students with an opportunity to earn their bachelor's degree from ODU and a Juris Doctor or Master of Engineering from UD in as few as five years.
- ODU-to-OU Med School Early Assurance Program – Allows outstanding high school students to earn assured acceptance into the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine upon the completion of their undergraduate studies at ODU.
- Additional partnerships include: Amazon, CoverMyMeds, OhioHealth, Quantum Health, City of Grove City, Columbus City Schools, Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce, and Financial Planning Association of Central Ohio.

Workforce Development

Being located in Columbus, we are keenly aware of the tremendous growth on the horizon and the need to deliver a workforce that not only brings talent, leadership and commitment, but also stays in Ohio. We are proud of the fact that over 80% of our graduates remain in Ohio and predominantly, remain in central Ohio. We are also aware of the desire – on behalf of a majority of businesses – to expand their workforce with intentionality hiring minorities. In fact, Intel has specifically called out their intent to hire women, underrepresented minorities and veterans. ODU is well positioned as we have such a large percentage of our



students representing minorities and we are also a Collegiate Purple Star. This designation is testimony to our commitment to serve veterans, active duty service members and military families.

A “best in practice” example of workforce development is our Insurance and Risk Management Academy in partnership with Encova. Here is the essence of this program.

- Students major or minor in RMI (Risk Management Insurance). Either would offer opportunities in the industry and provide the foundation for taking advantage of them.
 - The student has the opportunity to earn a digital badge by going through the IRMA program and taking three courses in the RMI program.
 - There is a certificate program, but it requires taking the same courses as the major requires.
 - The MBA program has a concentration in RMI which requires taking two courses in RMI over the course of studies.
 - Since the program is relatively new, we have only had a handful of students complete the IRMA program. Each of those students received a job offer and is now working in the industry with a starting salary of \$50,000 or more.

Another example of developing a workforce is our Appalachian Ohio Manufacturer’s Coalition. The *Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship* (CIE) at Ohio Dominican University (ODU) has partnered with the *Appalachian Ohio Manufacturers’ Coalition* (AOMC) to help prepare the next generation of leaders in the state’s manufacturing sector.

Through this partnership, participating AOMC companies and their skilled professionals will work alongside ODU students to help them understand how their manufacturing organization operates, the challenges they face, and steps taken to overcome those challenges. In addition, students will have greater access to internship opportunities during their studies at ODU, as well as potential career opportunities following graduation.

AOMC organizations benefit by having access to student talent, skills and knowledge; opportunities to secure student interns during the summer or academic year; and potentially hiring students upon graduation to support their workforce needs.

Summary

We have a proud tradition at Ohio Dominican of fulfilling our mission. A mission that develops individuals intellectually, spiritually and professionally... to become a lifelong learner... develop as ethical and effective leaders in a global society... while pursuing truth, justice and peace. We have a history and tradition of serving those who would otherwise not get a chance to pursue higher education and truly change their lives. We have a belief



and commitment that we have a duty to serve our communities and to offer students an education that does more than prepare them for a job. Rather, an ODU education helps them develop as citizens and leaders and they leave with a sense of serving and helping their own communities and fellow citizens.

Aside from helping students transform their own lives, we are transforming ourselves. We are leaning into employers to hear of their specific needs. We are also awarding digital badges, certifications and associate degrees so that students, if they choose, may “stair-step” towards degrees and enter the work force earlier. It also helps the students with affording a bachelors’ or masters’ degree as many employers will offer tuition support with the added benefit of retention of the student / worker.

As the only Catholic full service university in the Columbus Diocese, we know that we offer the greater Columbus area a religious based education and a strong community partner. As example, we have partnered with Central Ohio Primary Care (COPC) to offer a clinic that serves the 43219 community – a community that struggles with health care access. Our institution, needs to be the example that we teach our students; that is, teaching students to become productive and contributing citizens of Ohio.

On behalf of the students of today and tomorrow, ODU alumni, ODU faculty and staff, I encourage you – as elected leaders of our state – to do all that you can do to ensure higher education in Ohio continues to be the supporting partner for business, industry and the citizens of Ohio. I am grateful for your service and appreciate this opportunity to share our story and commitment to Ohio.

Thank you again for your time, your interest, for your consideration, and your efforts on behalf of our present and future students. Please do not hesitate to call on me if I may be of assistance in any way as you strive to address the issues important to our students and to the independent higher education sector.

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