

Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
HB 33 – Biennial Operating Budget
Proponent Testimony

Melissa Gilliam
Executive Vice President and Provost
The Ohio State University
May 9, 2023

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, I am Melissa Gilliam, executive vice president and provost of The Ohio State University. I appreciate the opportunity to present written proponent testimony to the committee on HB 33, the state's biennial operating budget.

We are grateful for the existing state support we receive and for your consideration of the resources we are requesting in the current operating budget. Ohio State has a deep commitment to access and affordability and has made significant progress on decreasing debt at graduation among our students. The resources invested below have an immediate and direct impact on students and their families:

- The Buckeye Opportunity Program, a \$200 million student financial aid initiative created in 2018-2019 out of university funds, covers any gap in the cost of tuition and general fees for Pell-eligible, in-state students.
- The President's Affordability Grant program, established in 2015, provides up to \$2,250 to approximately 15,000 low- and moderate-income Ohio students annually.
- The Ohio State University started its undergraduate tuition-guarantee program in 2017. Ohio undergraduate students and their families now have certainty for tuition, general fees, and room and board as they attend the university. Prior to the guarantee program being implemented, Ohio State had frozen in-state tuition from the 2012-2013 academic year through the 2017-2018 academic year.

Ohio State's efforts to address access and affordability, like the examples provided above, are paying real dividends for our students and families.

About five years ago, more than half of our students graduating with a bachelor's degree graduated with some amount of student debt. In 2020, we've flipped that number and now more than half of our students (53%) graduate with no student loan debt. Of the students who do graduate with student debt, the amount of total debt is also decreasing.

As Ohio's flagship land-grant university, part of our accessibility mission includes prioritizing Ohio students. With an enrollment encompassing more than 53,000 undergraduate students, our student population includes 73% Ohio residents, and in the 2021-2022 academic year, Ohio State awarded a total of 17,528 degrees.

Governor DeWine, Chancellor Gardner, and the General Assembly are to be commended for Ohio's support of higher education. I would respectfully request that the Senate consider restoring SSI and OCOG funding to the levels in the governor's as-introduced version of HB 33, with targeted increases in a few other strategic areas.

- State Share of Instruction (SSI) – This line item is the main source of state support to state-assisted colleges and universities for operating costs associated with instruction. I thank the Governor for his proposal to increase funds for SSI by 3.0% in FY24 and by an additional 3.0% in FY25. With inflation rates of 4.7% and 8.0% in calendar years 2021 and 2022, respectively, the 3.0% increase in SSI is critically important to maintain accessibility for our students. We would respectfully request that SSI funding be restored to 3.0% in each fiscal year, up from 1.5% per fiscal year in the budget passed by the House.
- Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) – OCOG is Ohio's main need-based aid program. When introduced, HB 33 contained more than \$230 million dollars in additional funding across the biennium and significantly expands the program to support middle-income families. The House's version of the budget significantly reduced the levels of funding in the Governor's budget and eliminates the expansion of OCOG intended to help middle-income families. We respectfully request that the Senate strongly consider adding funding for OCOG.
- Cooperative Extension – Ohio State University Extension provides services, in partnership with all 88 counties, as part of our land-grant university mission. Program areas include agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth programs, and family and consumer science. Extension receives just enough resources to meet the needs of current programming and will remain at capacity with the current levels of funding included in the budget. With additional strategic investments in this line item, Extension will move beyond simply meeting needs and, instead, extend into new program areas and services sought by our local partners.
- Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC) – OARDC is the research operation of Ohio State's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. As another component of our land-grant mission, OARDC enables Ohio's farms and agricultural industry to improve competitiveness and profitability at 12 locations across the state. Ohio State is grateful for the 3.0% funding increase in both years of this line.
- Sea Grant – This appropriation supports the Ohio Sea Grant Program in the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. This program is part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Sea Grant College Program, which works to protect Lake Erie and coastal resources. In addition, the Sea Grant partners with the Ohio Department of Higher Education and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency on water-quality assessment, protection and improvement. Please maintain the current levels of funding in the Governor's as-introduced version of the budget.

- Ohio State University Clinic Support & Ohio State University Clinical Teaching – The Clinical Teaching and Clinic Support line items assist with Ohio State University’s laboratory and clinical teaching components of medical and other health-related curricula. I would ask that these line items be restored to the 3.0% increases in the as-introduced version of the budget, and that the Senate maintain these individual line items that directly support the costs associated with training new medical professionals.
- State of Ohio Action for Resiliency Network (SOAR Network) – I strongly support the full restoration in the Statewide Treatment and Prevention line item for FY24. In addition to funding the buildout for Ohio’s transitional step-down housing, these resources will also be used for behavioral health, innovation, and research.
- The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine (OSUCVM) – More than 80% of practicing veterinarians in Ohio graduated from the OSUCVM. This state support is vitally important to the college’s mission to educate the next generation of Ohio veterinarians, protect Ohio’s food supply, prevent infectious disease outbreaks, and assist agricultural production. Additionally, this appropriation will help with access and affordability for in-state students. We are requesting enhanced support in this line item with funding totaling \$7.5 million in FY24 and \$10 million in FY25. The OSUCVM is the only college of veterinary medicine in Ohio, and these increases will help maintain the national and global excellence achieved by this college as well as enable efforts to serve the entire state of Ohio.
- Co-Op Internship – This line item positions the state’s colleges and universities as assets to encourage collaboration with the business community, enhanced work-based learning opportunities through expansion of internships, externships, and co-ops, and allow Ohio to continue as a net importer of students. Ohio State, along with many of our peers, supports the funding in this line item. Please continue to support this vital funding for our students.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today. We remain deeply committed to Ohio and our core mission as a land-grant university. Ohio State’s success is Ohio’s success—for our students, families, businesses, and our economy. I look forward to working with you as a key partner in the years to come.