



Ohio House of Representatives Education Committee
Opponent Testimony - House Bill 62
Robert Callahan, Assistant Vice President and Executive Director, Ohio University
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Chair Fowler Arthur, Vice Chair Odioso, Ranking Member Robinson and Members of the Education Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding House Bill 62 and its proposed changes to the College Credit Plus (CC+) program. My name is Robert Callahan, and I serve as Assistant Vice President and Executive Director at Ohio University, which serves approximately 1,200 CC+ students each year across our 6 campuses in Southeastern Ohio. I am also a past president of the Ohio Alliance of Dual Enrollment Partnerships (OADEP).

Ohio University fully supports the mission of the College Credit Plus program and its goal of providing affordable, high-quality college coursework to high school students. House Bill 62 introduces several provisions aimed at increasing affordability and transparency in the program. We recognize and appreciate the intent behind these measures, particularly the efforts to expand access to Open Educational Resources (OER) and improve cost efficiencies in CC+ tuition rates.

However, we also have concerns regarding the financial and operational impact of certain provisions on institutions of higher education. This testimony outlines some of the potential serious consequences HB 62 would have if implemented, which would include reduced student access to CC+ courses, weakened university-school partnerships, and limit long-term sustainability of the program.

Textbook Provisions

HB 62 contains the following provisions regarding course textbooks:

- 1. If a college uses a textbook that must be purchased, and an OER or open-source alternative is available, the college must cover the full cost of the textbook.**
- 2. If no open-source alternative exists, the college and the student's secondary school must each pay 50% of the textbook's cost.**

While Ohio University supports the principle of reducing textbook costs, shifting financial responsibility from school districts to universities by forcing OER and open-source adoption presents challenges.

Financial Impact on Ohio University

A cost analysis estimates that Ohio University would assume a cost burden of approximately \$100,000.00 in textbook costs annually under these provisions. This estimate does not include additional administrative costs necessary to manage textbook operations.

Challenges & Areas for Improvement

- The bill does not specify how institutions would determine whether an OER is a suitable comparable replacement for a traditional textbook. This could lead to inconsistencies in course quality across institutions and pose an infringement on academic freedom.
- Institutions must ensure at least 70% alignment with state-mandated learning outcomes. Without clear quality controls, OER adoption could compromise course transferability.
- The bill does not specify who is responsible for sourcing, vetting, and managing OER adoption, or who owns the textbook when there is 50% cost split, which could place a significant administrative burden on institutions.

Recommendations

- Require ODHE to conduct a statewide feasibility study on OER availability before implementing mandates.
- Establish state-supported training and funding for OER adoption to ensure a structured, sustainable transition.
- Allow flexibility in OER adoption, ensuring faculty can choose materials aligned with course quality and student success goals.
- Task Ohio Articulation and Transfer Network faculty panels, who are responsible for determining statewide course learning outcomes with also making open-source textbook recommendations.

Proposed Tuition Structure Changes

The language in HB 62 also includes the following changes to the CC+ tuition structure:

1. Online Tuition Rate Reduction

The bill cuts the per-credit-hour rate for online CC+ courses by 50%, which would result in an estimated \$500,000.00 annual revenue loss for Ohio University.

2. Alternative High School Location Instruction CC+ Tuition Rates

The bill reduces payments for College Credit Plus (CC+) courses taken on-campus or online if the same course is offered by a credentialed high school teacher in a district building. Ohio University estimates an additional annual revenue loss of approximately \$10,000 as a result of this provision.

The current CC+ tuition structure was carefully crafted by the legislature in 2014, following extensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders from both secondary and higher education. The goal was to develop a model that balances broad student access to college level coursework at no cost or expenses for the student, with financial sustainability for both school districts and colleges and universities.

The structure in place today achieves this balance. Even in cases where a CC+ student enrolls full time in college coursework, the school district retains 17% of the per-pupil foundation funding. That ceiling placed on tuition was set to protect the school district's expenses. At the same time, the tuition floor ensures that higher education institutions can recover a portion of the instructional and administrative costs necessary to deliver high-quality coursework. As a reminder, colleges and universities are required to provide CC+ students with the same academic and student support services as traditional students,

including orientation, advising, and academic success services—resources that are essential to student achievement.

During last week's committee meeting, concerns were raised regarding the rigor and quality of online CC+ courses. It is important to emphasize that Ohio University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), which requires that course quality and rigor be consistent regardless of delivery method or location. Our online CC+ courses are the same credit-bearing courses taken by degree-seeking students, and most include a mix of CC+ and traditional college students.

Additionally, the most recent College Credit Plus Annual Report, published by the Ohio Department of Higher Education and Department of Education & Workforce, provides useful insight into student performance by delivery modality. Notably, the report shows that the average GPA for online CC+ courses is lower than that of courses taught in high schools by approved high school teachers or those delivered on college campuses. If GPA is considered a proxy for academic rigor, this data suggests that online CC+ courses may be more academically rigorous than other delivery formats.

Challenges & Areas for Improvement

Online Tuition Rate Reduction

- A 50% tuition reduction will make online CC+ financially unsustainable, leading to course cancellations and reduced access for students.
- Many rural students rely on online CC+ courses due to limited local offerings. If universities reduce online CC+ options, these students may lose access to college courses altogether.
- Online courses require specialized instructional design, faculty support, and technology infrastructure, which the proposed tuition rate does not adequately cover.

Alternative High School Location Instruction CC+ Tuition Rates

- The reduction in per-credit-hour payments significantly reduces financial incentives for universities to seek out new school district partnerships or continue those that already exist.
- If universities withdraw from partnerships, students in schools without credentialed teachers may lose CC+ opportunities.
- Colleges and universities currently have no way of knowing which courses are being offered by other institutions within a student's school building. This lack of transparency could lead to reporting inaccuracies, payment discrepancies, and challenges in complying with the proposed language.

Recommendations

- Task the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and Ohio Department of Higher Education with convening stakeholders with a goal of updating and modernizing the CC+ tuition model.
- Consider alternative pricing models based on course format, faculty involvement, and student support needs.
- Increase the floor rate for high school-delivered CC+ courses or require ODHE to conduct a cost study before finalizing rates.

Conclusion

House Bill 62 raises important questions about the financial sustainability of the College Credit Plus program. We appreciate the intent behind these proposals and support efforts to reduce costs for students while maintaining high-quality instruction. However, certain provisions require additional review and modifications to prevent unintended consequences that may reduce student access and weaken institutional partnerships.

Key Recommendations:

- Ensure flexibility in OER adoption and provide faculty support and faculty driven solutions for a smooth transition.
- Reevaluate tuition reductions to ensure CC+ courses remain financially sustainable while maintaining access to the program.
- Engage higher education stakeholders to refine implementation strategies before enacting these provisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I welcome any questions from the committee.