



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

ENTERPRISE FOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION  
AND KNOWLEDGE

**Written Testimony for the House Technology and Innovation Committee**  
**Grace Wang, Executive Vice President, Enterprise for Research, Innovation and Knowledge**  
**The Ohio State University**

Good afternoon, Chair Fraizer, Vice Chair Hall, Ranking Member Lightbody and members of the House Technology and Innovation Committee. I am Grace Wang, Executive Vice President for the Enterprise for Research, Innovation and Knowledge at The Ohio State University.

As a public land-grant university, we take our motto – *Education for Citizenship* -- seriously. Ohio State currently has over 67,000 students enrolled across our six campuses, including main campus and five regional campuses. We recognize the important role we play in developing tomorrow's leaders by providing high quality college learning, reimagining curricula to better prepare students for the modern workforce and strategizing new partnerships to create multiple career pathways for our students after graduation.

**The Ohio State University Innovation District** will complement these efforts to provide new opportunities for our students by enabling research advances, technology translation, experiential educational opportunities, and new startups. It will build upon our existing partnerships, grow talent, and create a live-play-innovate environment unleashing Ohio State's potential to transform the region, fuel economic growth, and serve Ohioans.

The Innovation District encompasses 270 acres on the west side of our campus, and our first phase is currently under construction and set to open in 2023. The cornerstone of phase 1 is the **Interdisciplinary Research Facility**. It will provide new ways to solve societal challenges in life sciences and biotechnology while providing additional opportunities for our students, the community and industry to engage Ohio State researchers. This facility, and more importantly the people working in it, will be key as we work to double our annual research expenditures from nearly \$1 billion now to \$2 billion over the next ten years.

We have also started construction on **The Ohio State University Outpatient Care West Campus**, which will be a cancer-focused patient care facility serving our community and increasing our capacity in cancer diagnosis and treatment. It will also include central Ohio's first proton therapy treatment facility in partnership with Nationwide Children's Hospital. In addition, we intend to break ground soon on the **Energy Advancement and Innovation Center**, which will be a hub for Ohio State researchers, local entrepreneurs and industry experts to work together on the next generation of smart systems, renewable energy and sustainability solutions. This center is being built in partnership with Engie, the university's energy supplier as a result of a 50-year contract to optimize our energy use and limit our environmental footprint.

Future phases for the Innovation District include the development of a mixed-use town center and space for corporate partners and joint research institutes.

A key to our work to establish and develop the Innovation District is strong partnerships. Some of these partners are represented on this panel today. In February 2021, JobsOhio with support from Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted announced a \$100 million investment that will fast-track our work to further new paths, with a focus at the interfaces of life sciences, biomedical, computer sciences and smart systems. Our researchers and innovators also continue to work with the team at the Ohio Department of Development to accelerate the creation and growth of investable and scalable technologies and tech-enabled companies through funding from the Third Frontier.

Another important partnership is with the city of Columbus. Through our combined work, we are ensuring that the opportunities the Innovation District will provide will be accessible for those who already live here. For example, we recently announced a partnership with the city, Columbus City Schools, and Columbus State Community College that will help prepare our youth to capitalize on these investments and opportunities. Through a new initiative, called STEAMM Rising Columbus, these partners are collectively developing STEAMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics and Medicine) talent in Columbus to ensure our youth have access to multiple educational pathways for the exciting career opportunities in the Innovation District and elsewhere.

Our commitment to the Innovation District coupled with some of the investments that I have highlighted today will help us reach our goal to graduate 22,500 STEM students in high-demand areas in the next 15 years. This is important as these graduates will not only help grow the central Ohio economy but will also be a needed talent pool for businesses in each of your districts. To help meet this ambitious goal, we will need to hire more research-active faculty in some of the most competitive academic specialties including computer sciences. Ohio State President Kristina M. Johnson is committed to hire 350 net new tenure-track faculty members, with at least 150 of these being in high-demand fields.

We are proud of our work to develop the Innovation District that will provide opportunities for new research and innovation for decades to come and provide our students transformative pathways to further their education. This work truly embodies our motto and commitment to provide *Education for Citizenship*.

Thank you.