



BEFORE THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
REPRESENTATIVES OELSLAGER AND CALLENDER CHAIR

TESTIMONY OF

MICHAEL BARHORST  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION  
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SHAWNEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
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Chairman Oelslager, Chairman Callender, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera and members of the House Finance Committee. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony today on House Bill 670, capital reappropriations, on behalf of Shawnee State University, the regional open-access public university for southern Ohio. My name is Michael Barhorst and I am Vice President for Finance & Administration at SSU.

Our institution serves the most underserved population in the state – two-thirds of our students are Pell-eligible, three-fourths are the first in their families to attend college, and most stay in the region after graduation to pursue an in-demand career in fields like health care, education and applied engineering. Nine out of every ten students at Shawnee State is an Ohio resident. To ensure higher education access, tuition at Shawnee State University is among the lowest in the state and has increased the least of all Ohio public universities over the past decade. We are a relatively young campus and do not have a large endowment. As a result, our institution is particularly reliant on state funding to maintain its basic operations.

We respectfully request that House Bill 670 be amended to include reappropriations for public higher education projects, specifically those for Shawnee State University as more fully described herein. Projects for Shawnee State University previously approved are not designed for large expansions and new buildings. Rather, they are critical to extending the life of existing structures through basic renovation and repair – a philosophy to which we have been committed for years to leverage existing assets and preserve precious resources.

We understand the significant financial strain facing the State of Ohio and its citizens. As a comprehensive regional public university, we are particularly committed to the residents of our local communities, the economic and workforce development needs of our employers, and often the only opportunity for our citizens to access higher education and social mobility in southern Ohio. The return on this investment will be significant for the state of Ohio. Our Director of Facilities, Planning & Construction will now present to you the specific projects for which we are requesting a reappropriation of capital funding.

My name is Butch Kotcamp and I am Director of Facilities, Planning & Construction at Shawnee State University. On June 2, Bruce Johnson, President of the IUC, testified before this committee in support of amending House Bill 670 to include higher education capital projects reappropriations. The first three projects President Johnson proffered in his testimony were the following Shawnee State projects and, according to the IUC, “[f]unding these projects now will allow us to maintain our state assets and avoid deferring maintenance -- which adds costs to projects in out years making them more expensive to repair”:

1. Shawnee State University. Clark Library Rehabilitation \$1,800,000. Project in Design Phase. This project repurposes and modernizes existing library space into a more dynamic academic/student-focused learning environment and replaces obsolete mechanical systems extending the building's life cycle, and eliminates increased maintenance and high utility costs due to aging and obsolete equipment.

2. Shawnee State University. Academic Buildings Basic Renovations \$2,708,954. Ongoing. Funds are to be utilized for planned and emergency equipment replacement and renovation projects, as well as energy conservation and life safety projects. Funds will be used to address high priority projects i.e. aging roof systems, older, inefficient HVAC equipment, and to modernize classrooms; If these funds are not reappropriated, operating funds will be utilized to address emergency repairs.

In addition, we respectfully request your consideration to reappropriate \$81,753 for cybersecurity workforce training and equipment and \$700,000 for the Shawnee State University Kricker Innovation Accelerator and Hub community project.

3. Shawnee State University. Workforce Based Training & Equipment \$81,753. This lab equipment is critical to finishing equipment for our new cybersecurity applied degree program.
4. Shawnee State University. Academic Buildings Basic Renovations \$700,000. The \$700,000 in state capital funds previously appropriated were pledged by SSU as matching funds for a \$2.78M federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) project grant and these funds will be lost without the state match. The total project, valued at \$4.5M, is in the architect selection phase with construction slated to begin in 2020. This innovation hub and business incubator project has been a showcase project for campus and downtown Portsmouth with broad support from the private sector, state government and federal government. It was highlighted as one of three high priority projects by the IUC in its May 4, 2020 letter signed by Bruce Johnson, President of the IUC, and all of the collective IUC Presidents, to the Senate President Obhof and Speaker of the House Householder. It was also featured in a May 22, 2020 Gongwer Ohio article. In this case, the project itself will stimulate the local economy through a wide variety of construction and trades contracts that will employ regional workers. Furthermore, once constructed, the center will house a range of programs specifically targeting at small business incubation and job creation in Portsmouth, Ohio.

We are happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you Chairmen and members of the committee.