

**Testimony before the Ohio Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee**

**David T. Harrison, Ph.D.**  
**President, Columbus State Community College**  
**May 16, 2017**

Chairman Gardner, Vice Chair Williams, and members of the Senate Finance Higher Education Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on HB 49 and Ohio's higher education policy. My name is David Harrison, President of Columbus State Community College.

Columbus State has grown into one of the largest and most comprehensive colleges in Ohio serving students from more than 130 countries and all 88 Ohio counties. The College contributes nearly a billion dollars annually in regional economic impact, and has earned recognition as a trusted steward of taxpayer and tuition dollars. We do this while maintaining our commitment to expanding access to an affordable, high-quality education for an increasingly diverse student body. We have a partner-first focus at Columbus State, and have forged strong partnerships with employers, K-12 districts, and with universities to ensure a high-quality, affordable education for all students.

I want to start by thanking you for the support you've provided higher education in recent years. Performance-based funding combined with increases in SSI, College Credit Plus, an array of efficiency measures, a commitment to strengthen state transfer policy, and a collaborative approach to capital investments have all been important reforms that community colleges have embraced. As a state we have momentum, and we are starting to gain a national reputation as a place where public officials and higher education leaders work together on innovative solutions.

The policy changes the Senate is considering in HB 49 builds upon the progress already underway. In particular, the modest, capped tuition increase for community colleges will allow us to bring to scale promising practices on behalf of students, families, and employers. The revenue generated would be used for career and transfer advising, textbook affordability, student

scholarships, and faculty and staff support to expand K-12, university, and employer partnerships. A \$10 per credit hour increase would cost the average Columbus State student an additional \$90 per semester, and would not cost the State a penny in GRF. Columbus State would still be the lowest higher education provider in our region by far. We recognize the difficult situation of the State budget, and understand that there won't likely be additional investment in the State Share of Instruction. With the steps Columbus State has already taken for cost containment and affordability, tuition revenue is critical to continued advancements on issues important to the State.

At Columbus State we have worked hard to reduce costs and ensure affordability for students, while allocating resources to improve student success and completion.

- We did not raise tuition for 6 ½ years, foregoing nearly \$30,000,000 in tuition revenue.
- From 2008-12, cost of tuition at Columbus State dropped by nearly 8% when adjusted for inflation. An analysis by the Legislative Service Commission has shown that by forgoing these tuition increases, Columbus State left more revenue capacity on the table than any college or university in the State. This analysis is included as Attachment 1.
- Our tuition is:
  - 10% below the Ohio community college average
  - 12.8% below the Ohio non-levy community college average
  - 32% below any college in our region; which is really the measure that families monitor.
- 76% of our students have zero student loan debt.
- We have aggressively reduced textbook costs, saving students nearly \$4,700,000 over the past four years. I refer you to Attachment 2 for a summary of the work our faculty and staff have done in recent years to lower textbook costs. We have:
  - Used funds from the last State capital allocation to develop a digital lab for our faculty to develop coursework that doesn't require a traditional textbook, and allocated more than \$2,000,000 of institutional funding in support of the work.
  - Provided training for faculty to create their own digital learning content or adopt Open Educational Resources.

- Partnered with K-12 districts on Straight A grants to develop digital materials for the highest enrollment College Credit Plus courses.

We have reallocated institutional resources to focus on student success, and we're seeing results. In the past four years we have closed the performance gap, as measured by course completion, for low income students by 50% and for students of color by 24%. We had our largest graduating class in Columbus State's history last Friday, when our enrollment is nowhere near historic highs. And the number of credentials awarded to African American students increased by more than 11% in the past year.

We declared war on remediation, partnering closely with high schools to ensure that students are graduating from high school ready to do college-level work, and creating alternative approaches to readiness for adults, including contextualized math courses aligned with technical coursework and self-paced approaches that improve success, saving students time and money. We have reduced the number of credit hours for our technical programs, again saving students time and money. We have invested millions of institutional dollars into student scholarships. Our data show that students who receive even a modest scholarship take more classes and complete their program of study more quickly. It has become an important student success intervention that we want to expand.

These results have garnered Columbus State national recognition. Of the 1200 community colleges in America, we are the only one involved in three prominent national initiatives. In 2015 we were named one of only 19 Leader Colleges nationally through the Achieving the Dream network in recognition of three successive years of improving student success. We are one of only 30 colleges nationally selected as part of the American Association of Community Colleges Guided Pathways initiative, a Gates-funded project establishing best practices in student success and completion, to be replicated throughout the U.S. We are one of only 20 colleges selected as a Right Signals college, a Lumina Foundation program ensuring that certificates and degrees are closely aligned with regional employment needs. In short, we have done our homework. We are now ready to implement an aggressive plan to graduate more students and help them move

directly into a high-growth career or transfer to one of our great university partners to complete their bachelor's degree.

Community colleges are purpose-built to address two of Ohio's most urgent challenges: rising student debt and unmet workforce needs. Columbus State is addressing both of these challenges through creative partnerships.

### **Community Colleges are the Answer to Student Debt**

Current student debt is a startling figure. Nationally, total student debt now exceeds \$1.3 trillion. The average debt of bachelor's degree holders is over \$37,000 and it will take these graduates an average of 21 years to pay off those loans. Students who are borrowing the most money in many cases are those who can afford it the least. Community colleges are the solution to this problem. Better utilization of community colleges in bachelor's degree education would dramatically reduce the average debt load of university graduates.

Ohio ranks in the bottom quarter in the U.S. both in terms of the number of students who graduate with debt, and in the amount of debt they take on. States with strong 2+2 policies and incentives score much better on both measures. Florida, for example, scores in the top quarter in the U.S. on student debt measures, and their community college system leads the nation in completion rates as a result of strong 2+2 state policy. If Ohio is serious about achieving the 65% Goal as announced by the Ohio Department of Higher Education – where 65% of our citizens will hold a postsecondary credential by 2025 – we should emphasize associate degree completion and 2+2 pathways to make bachelor's degrees affordable for everyone.

Columbus State has established its own regional 2+2 policy through a program called *Preferred Pathway*. Six years ago we partnered with The Ohio State University to provide guaranteed admission to OSU for our graduates, and created deeper alignment of curriculum, advising, and other processes. Soon other universities including Ohio University, Miami, Capital, Columbus College of Art and Design, Franklin, Ohio Dominican, Ohio Wesleyan, and Otterbein joined the

partnership. By completing the freshman and sophomore year at Columbus State, the Preferred Pathway partnerships save students between 30-45% on their tuition expenses. That's a savings of between \$12,000 and \$75,000 dollars on bachelor's degree tuition, depending on the university. The savings is even greater when you factor in expenses for room and board.

In addition, our extensive adoption of College Credit Plus both shortens time-to-degree and maximizes savings to students and families. This past school year more than 4,800 high school students enrolled at Columbus State through College Credit Plus. They are from 140 high schools in 60 school districts spanning 11 counties. We expect this growth rate to continue as more students and families look to Columbus State for a high quality, affordable pathway to their future.

### **Employer Partnerships Drive Workforce Innovation**

Employers throughout Central Ohio partner with Columbus State to address their talent development needs. The college has a Workforce Advisory Council comprised of business leaders from target industries in our region. Together we have a regional strategy to prepare the emerging workforce – recent graduates and others entering employment for the first time; the incumbent workforce – those currently employed whose skills must grow as technologies and other factors change; and the transitional workforce – mature workers who are in declining industries or re-joining the workforce.

We have partnered with Honda of America to develop a pipeline of electro-mechanical engineering graduates to address an urgent need. This co-op program enables students to start while still in high school, work at Honda as students, and transition to full-time employees upon completion of their associate degree. We also have faculty assigned full-time at Honda's facility to train their current workforce.

We have partnered with the Insurance Industry Resource Council which includes 13 leading Ohio-based insurance companies to prepare the industry for the 26,000 jobs that will be open over the next 5 years. This partnership has resulted in an educational pathway that mirrors the

professional career path in the industry, ranging from a Claims certificate to a graduate program in Insurance. The program has been designed to attract mature workers in transition, including military veterans.

Most recently, we have partnered with Amazon Web Services to develop a solution to the changing skills required as a result of the rapid adoption of Cloud technologies. This partnership will enable us to build Cloud skills into our certificate and associate degree programs, including College Credit Plus, and will also provide a framework to help current programmers, data analysts, and cyber-security professionals transition to Cloud architecture. We are working closely with CIOs of early Cloud adopters to address this need as rapidly as possible.

In conclusion, we believe this is a moment in time for community colleges. We have embraced performance-based funding and have implemented meaningful efficiency measures. Tuition policy as recommended in HB 49 would enable us to operationalize proven student success initiatives; expand 2+2 university partnerships, which will increase Ohio's completion rates while dramatically reducing the cost of the bachelor's degree and debt obligations for students and their families; and respond to the needs of employers to position Ohio's workforce as a global competitor.

Thank you once again for your support of our State's colleges and universities. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

## ATTACHMENT 1

<b>Estimated Tuition and Fees with Maximum Allowable Increases Compared With Actual Tuition and Fees Charged in FY 2017 - Community Colleges</b>				
<b>Community College</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>		
	<b>Actual Annualized Full-time In-State Undergraduate Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>Estimated Annualized Full-time In-State Undergraduate Tuition with Maximum Allowable Increase FY 2007 - FY 2017</b>	<b>Actual Annualized Full-time In-State Undergraduate Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>Difference</b>
BELMONT TECH	\$ 3,784	\$ 4,654	\$ 4,409	\$ 245
CENTRAL OHIO	\$ 3,600	\$ 4,456	\$ 4,296	\$ 160
CINCINNATI STATE	\$ 3,867	\$ 4,742	\$ 4,717	\$ 25
CLARK STATE	\$ 3,485	\$ 4,333	\$ 4,195	\$ 138
<b>COLUMBUS STATE</b>	<b>\$ 3,555</b>	<b>\$ 4,408</b>	<b>\$ 4,078</b>	<b>\$ 330</b>
CUYAHOGA	\$ 2,416	\$ 3,188	\$ 3,276	\$ (88)
EASTERN GATEWAY	\$ 2,700	\$ 3,492	\$ 3,330	\$ 162
EDISON STATE	\$ 3,450	\$ 4,296	\$ 4,219	\$ 77
HOCKING	\$ 3,546	\$ 4,399	\$ 4,390	\$ 9
JAMES RHODES ST.	\$ 4,229	\$ 5,130	\$ 4,806	\$ 324
LAKELAND	\$ 2,726	\$ 3,520	\$ 3,315	\$ 205
LORAIN COUNTY	\$ 2,400	\$ 3,171	\$ 3,077	\$ 94
MARION TECH	\$ 3,660	\$ 4,521	\$ 4,382	\$ 139
NORTH CENTRAL	\$ 3,634	\$ 4,493	\$ 4,718	\$ (225)
NORTHWEST STATE	\$ 3,930	\$ 4,810	\$ 4,720	\$ 90
OWENS STATE	\$ 2,972	\$ 3,784	\$ 5,160	\$ (1,376)
RIO GRANDE	\$ 3,482	\$ 4,330	\$ 4,685	\$ (355)
SINCLAIR	\$ 2,025	\$ 2,769	\$ 2,971	\$ (202)
SOUTHERN STATE	\$ 3,390	\$ 4,231	\$ 4,412	\$ (181)
STARK STATE	\$ 3,810	\$ 4,681	\$ 4,608	\$ 73
TERRA STATE	\$ 3,610	\$ 4,467	\$ 4,304	\$ 163
WASHINGTON STATE	\$ 3,555	\$ 4,408	\$ 4,490	\$ (82)
ZANE STATE	\$ 3,825	\$ 4,697	\$ 4,596	\$ 101

## ATTACHMENT 1

<b>Estimated Tuition and Fees with Maximum Allowable Increases Compared With Actual Tuition and Fees Charged in FY 2017</b>				
<b>University</b>	<b>FY 2007</b>	<b>FY 2017</b>		
	<b>Actual Annualized Full-time In-State Undergraduate Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>Estimated Annualized Full-time In-State Undergraduate Tuition with Maximum Allowable Increase FY 2007 - FY 2017</b>	<b>Actual Annualized Full-time In-State Undergraduate Tuition and Fees</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Bowling Green State University	\$ 9,060	\$ 10,817	\$ 10,726	\$ 91
Central State University	\$ 5,294	\$ 6,451	\$ 6,246	\$ 205
Cleveland State University	\$ 7,970	\$ 9,522	\$ 9,768	\$ (246)
Kent State University	\$ 8,430	\$ 10,064	\$ 10,012	\$ 52
Miami University	\$ 11,994	\$ 14,319	\$ 14,233	\$ 86
Ohio State University	\$ 8,667	\$ 10,347	\$ 10,037	\$ 310
Ohio University	\$ 8,847	\$ 10,562	\$ 10,602	\$ (40)
Shawnee State University	\$ 5,832	\$ 7,068	\$ 7,364	\$ (296)
University of Akron	\$ 8,383	\$ 10,008	\$ 10,270	\$ (262)
University of Cincinnati	\$ 9,399	\$ 11,221	\$ 11,000	\$ 221
University of Toledo	\$ 7,927	\$ 9,472	\$ 9,380	\$ 92
Wright State University	\$ 7,278	\$ 8,728	\$ 8,730	\$ (2)
Youngstown State University	\$ 6,721	\$ 8,089	\$ 8,317	\$ (228)

# Textbook Affordability Advisory Committee

## Implemented in 2011

The committee is a cross-functional group comprised of representatives from Arts & Sciences, Bookstore, Career & Technical Divisions, Digital Learning & Instructional Services, Disability Student Services, Instructional Design & Innovation, and Library. The committee charge is to collaborate and determine opportunities to reduce the financial impact to students resulting from the rising costs of textbooks and learning materials.

In accordance with Section 371.60.50 of House Bill 153, the State's FY12-13 biennial budget bill, this Committee sought to accomplish the following objectives:

- Establish a framework for adoption of textbook and e-learning content materials.
- Maintain textbook affordability and quality for students as guiding principles.
- Reestablish a vital and collaborative relationship between faculty and the bookstore team.

## Completed Action Items:

- Reviewed the process of textbook selection and adoption.
- Identified what our students are interested in with respect to learning materials.
- Explored faculty perspectives and roles regarding affordable textbooks.
- Examined textbook and learning material trends.
- Identified options that allow faculty to create their own content.
- Developed a learning module for COLS 1100, First Year Experience Seminar.
- Offered learning seminars to educate faculty, "I Can't Afford My Textbooks! Make book buying easier and more affordable for your students."
- Hosted statewide Textbook Affordability Summits.
- Implemented textbook price comparison tool.
- Eliminated textbook costs through faculty created learning content.

## **Our combined efforts have resulted in an overall savings to Columbus State students of \$4.7 million as of February 2017.**

The savings are a result of ongoing training and education of both students and faculty, the development of digital content, textbook price negotiations, expanded used book quantities through open source buying, textbook rental, books on reserve in the Library, and reduced margins on high cost books.

## Where are we today with the work?

Our main goal is still to reduce textbook costs for students. The committee is focused on educating faculty and encouraging the development of digital content. The long-term goal is to help Columbus State transition into the digital era of learning modules.