

Directive to the Board of Regents

August 2, 2007

Establishing the University System of Ohio

1. **Ohio Has a Great Higher Education Tradition.** The State of Ohio currently supports thirteen public universities, twenty-three public two-year colleges, and numerous adult career centers. The state's biennial budget for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 increases funding for these schools, providing funds which will, among other things, enable them to freeze tuition for two years. For these schools to best serve the needs of all Ohioans, it is imperative that these funding increases be matched by increases in quality, productivity and sustained improvements in affordability.
2. **Collaborative Efforts will Improve Higher Education in Ohio.** The best state systems of public higher education across the nation are more than just a collection of institutions. They work together in a rational, coherent way that creates sums worth well more than the individual institutions themselves. The power of unifying resources and making sure each maximizes its potential allows the best public university systems to shine in seas of mediocrity. We need to build such a system here in Ohio.
3. **Establishing "The University System of Ohio".** In order to realize the benefits of collaborative and coordinated activity between Ohio's institutions of higher education, I direct the Chancellor of the Board of Regents to refer to those institutions, collectively, as The University System of Ohio. Further, I direct the Chancellor to manage the state's investments in higher education to build The University System of Ohio so that it ensures affordable, high quality higher education opportunities for all Ohioans.

4. **Planning for the Future.** In order to maximize the quality and affordability of higher education for all Ohioans, I further direct the Chancellor to prepare a ten-year plan for The University System of Ohio that sets clear goals for the System and provides a timeline for accomplishing those goals.



Ted Strickland, Governor

I want to thank Governor Strickland for his comments and for his leadership on higher education issues. His Presence here today underscores his strong commitment to Ohio's college and university system.

Governor, I am sure that everyone here joins me in applauding you and the Ohio general assembly for the historic investment in our colleges and universities -- an investment that allows us to freeze tuition for the next two years; an investment that makes college more affordable and accessible to Ohio's students and adult learners.

Higher education is now at the top of Ohio's priorities. And this commitment comes not a moment too soon.

I do not have to remind this audience that Ohio's competitiveness in the global economy is directly tied to the knowledge, skills and creativity of our workforce. The governor and the legislature have shown they understand this new reality. Now it is up to us to meet the challenge.

As I have said on many occasions, the increased funding in the new state budget must not be viewed as a reward for past performance, but as an investment in a transformed system of higher education that meets the needs of the state and all its citizens in the 21st century.

Fully realizing our goals will require the participation of both public and private colleges and universities. Of the roughly 600,000 students in higher education institutions in Ohio today, approximately 470,000 are in our public system, with the remainder attending private institutions -- a percentage that mirrors the national average.

The state assists private colleges in many ways, and they in turn provide great benefit to our state. We will continue to look for ways to support private institutions wherever their work and the state's goals intersect, while respecting their right to pursue their own missions in accordance with their founding principles and charters.

But today's meeting is about building our system of public higher education. Meeting together in this manner is important not just because eighty percent of all students will be educated in the public system, but also because public higher education has a special mission, a special obligation to the state and its people. As once and future Ohio state president Gordon Gee said recently, public institutions are "the front door of the American dream." This has been true in Ohio throughout our history, and it must be true for the next century as well if this is to be another "Ohio century."

We meet here today to begin the process of renewing that promise for our state.

You have heard Governor Strickland's message, and so have I. It is time to stop competing and start collaborating, to recognize and value the contributions each college and university makes to the overall success of our state.

That is why we are asking you to embrace your role as a leader in Ohio's system of public higher education, and to align your missions and actions to advance the success of your institutions and the system as a whole.

Let me be clear -- the success of your institutions and the success of the system are not contradictory goals. Indeed, history has demonstrated the opposite. When we each act on separate agendas, we produce mediocre results for our students and our state. When we work together, the sky is the limit - as we showed during the budget deliberations.

Governor Strickland's executive directive to the board of regents, ordering me to create and build the university system of Ohio, is one way we are advancing our goal.

This is not, as the governor has pointed out, a change in the way we govern higher education either at the state or the institutional level. But neither is it a symbolic name change. It reflects our philosophy that we are a unified system of higher education, a philosophy we will carry into each and every decision we make about the future of the system. This philosophy explicitly includes the adult career centers and adult basic literacy programs, all of which will formally become part of the university system of Ohio on January 1, 2009.

It also reflects a new way of talking to our constituents, the people of Ohio. Later today, Governor Strickland will publicly announce the executive directive and unveil a new web site. At the conclusion of my remarks, I will preview the website for you.

The website is just the beginning. We look forward to working with you and your public information offices to develop a comprehensive approach to marketing all public colleges and universities in Ohio. The core of this marketing effort is clear – all of our schools belong to all of the citizens of Ohio, and we want all Ohioans to know what opportunities exist for them across the system, not just in the schools closest to their home.

The university system of Ohio will not be a new bureaucracy – indeed, I believe we can use this new delivery system to eliminate bureaucracies, both at the state and institutional levels. But it will be a unifying theme that guides our work.

As the seventh chancellor of the board of regents, I have spent what little free time I have reading about the history of higher education in Ohio and reviewing some of the old master plans that gather dust in our library.

Here's what struck me. At each point in our history, our leaders understood they had to do more, that they had to invest in education for the future of their children and the well being of the state of Ohio.

From the beginning, the importance of education to the future of the northwest territory was recognized and acknowledged. The northwest ordinance declared: "religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged."

Large tracts of land were conveyed by congress to create Ohio university in 1804, and in 1809 to create Miami University. In 1870, the Ohio agricultural and mechanical college was established, better known today as the Ohio state university. It was in 1878 that the Ohio general assembly began to provide biennial appropriations for operating purposes for public universities.

In 1913, the Ohio general assembly decreed that any high school graduate in Ohio is entitled to admission to a state-sponsored college or university.

In the decade and a half following WWII, Ohio's "system" of five state universities and one state college – which then included Bowling Green, Central State, Kent, Miami, Ohio and Ohio State - established 32 regional campuses to accommodate the veterans returning from the war.

One of Ohio's great educational leaders was John D. Millett, a former president of Miami University and the first chancellor of the board of regents. In 1962, President Millett prepared a white paper on higher education in Ohio that is remarkable for its prescience. In that paper, Millett wrote "there is no need, at this late date to assert the argument that higher education should be open to all those who can profit from it. That argument was won a hundred years ago." With great foresight, Millett said that the most effective way to increase college attendance is to bring the colleges to the students rather than the students to the college.

In the 1960s, Governor Rhodes and the general assembly decreed a community college district in one or more contiguous counties having a population of not less than 100,000 people. The legislation limited

course work to arts & sciences, but it was soon realized that the system needed to add technical and vocational training facilities for work force development.

Individual institutions have also evolved to meet the challenges of a new era:

- The university of Cincinnati was once Cincinnati college, later becoming a municipal university, before joining the state system.
- The university of Akron began life as Buchtel college, then operated as a municipal university for 50 years.
- Kent state university began with a private land grant from William Kent as Kent State Normal College.
- Lima Technical College was chartered in 1971 to satisfy the employment demands of area businesses, then evolved into James A. Rhodes state college in 2002.

These changes did not come easily, or without political risk. It must not have been easy for municipal leaders in Akron or Cincinnati to give up control of "their" universities, but they did it because they knew their communities could not, on their own, support a world-class university. Leaders across the state who campaigned for community college charters and levies were opposed by those who did not understand the need to have higher education at the core of an area's economy. I spent time today on a brief history lesson for a reason: at each step in Ohio's history, we had leaders who changed to meet the times.

And now it is time to change again. In this still-young century, we must compete across the globe, not compete amongst ourselves. Together, we will form a shared vision of how to make this change. Our vision will then be embodied in our next master plan, which must be submitted to the general assembly no later than March 31, 2008.

Over the last month, I have talked with each college and university president either in person or by phone. These conversations have left me exhilarated and proud. You told me that you are ready to consider new ideas and to embrace change. You told me that you are prepared to address many of the long festering issues that we know plague our system. As chancellor, I will not disappoint you. We will not produce a "plan to plan." We will put the tough issues on the table and we will make decisions.

As governor Strickland has directed, the master plan we will develop will cover a ten-year period. A university system – and a state – can be transformed in that period of time. We will establish clear benchmarks to measure our progress, and describe in specific terms what Ohioans will have a right to expect from us at the end of a decade of growth and change. As the governor and the general assembly have directed, the plan will address both affordability and quality.

We will set a specific affordability goal for our system. To achieve that affordability goal, we will make recommendations regarding the role to be played by state support, tuition, financial aid, scholarships, low-interest loans, tuition tax credits, savings plans and productivity gains. These programs cannot be considered in isolation from each other; they must be addressed in concert.

We will guarantee that every student in Ohio has access to a comprehensive community college education. We will do this by building a flexible system that enables all Ohioans to participate in the educational opportunities offered by all two-year schools, by filling the gaps in service areas for community colleges, by integrating the university regional campuses into our two-year system, and by taking full advantage of the opportunities to reach adult students presented by the transfer of the adult career centers and the adult basic literacy programs to the board of regents. We will also make real the statutory mandate that all associate degree programs in Ohio fully transfer to four-year institutions.

And we will take advantage of the great diversity of our institutions to build a system renowned across the world for the quality of our scholarship and our teaching. Our university presidents, deans and provosts understand that the proliferation of knowledge has made it impossible for their schools to be world leaders in every field. Differentiating the missions of our universities and building centers of excellence that are recognized across the globe is both an opportunity for our system to excel – and a necessity in today's world.

John Millett's 1962 higher education paper, the paper I referred to earlier, led directly to the establishment of the board of regents, functioning, he said, "in an advisory capacity, [but] if this power proves too weak to be effective, more dramatic measures may be taken later." As you all know, we have recently taken a dramatic step in passing h.b.2, making the chancellor a member of the governor's cabinet, moving the chancellor from an advisory role into a policy-making position.

Though H.B. 2 gives governor Strickland and me the ability to act in ways not possible before, we both recognize that we cannot accomplish the outcomes we seek without your help. And so the governor and I are here to ask for your help and support in building a system that serves all Ohioans, a system that trains our students for the new economy.

I will be calling on you and your staff often during the coming weeks and months. I don't plan on wasting your time – we will get quickly to the issues we must decide and talk as long as it takes to reach a decision. We will then create the committees needed to implement our decisions. But committees don't make decisions – leaders do.

And you are leaders - the best Ohio has to offer. You did not get to your position without proven leadership.

Our vision of a world-class system of higher education Ohio begins with those of you who are in this room today. I ask you to join the governor and me on this journey.