

House Finance and Appropriations Committee

House Higher Education Subcommittee

Higher Education Panel Testimony

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Submitted by:

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On Behalf of:

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges

Chairman Celeste, Ranking member Gardner, I am honored to appear before you to discuss the higher education budget for Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011.

As Ohio Association of Community Colleges' President Ron Abrams noted, I am Roy A. Church, President of Lorain County Community College, and I will be focusing on the local impact of the State budgeting trends in community colleges. First, I want to add just a bit more context to the trend charts that President Abrams shared with you. Clearly, the preponderance of growth in higher education enrollment has been generated through Associate Degree institutions, the vast majority in community colleges. In fact, this semester in the public institutions, 70% of all freshmen and sophomores are being served by these Associate degree campuses; and actually, 52% of all undergraduates are using this delivery system.

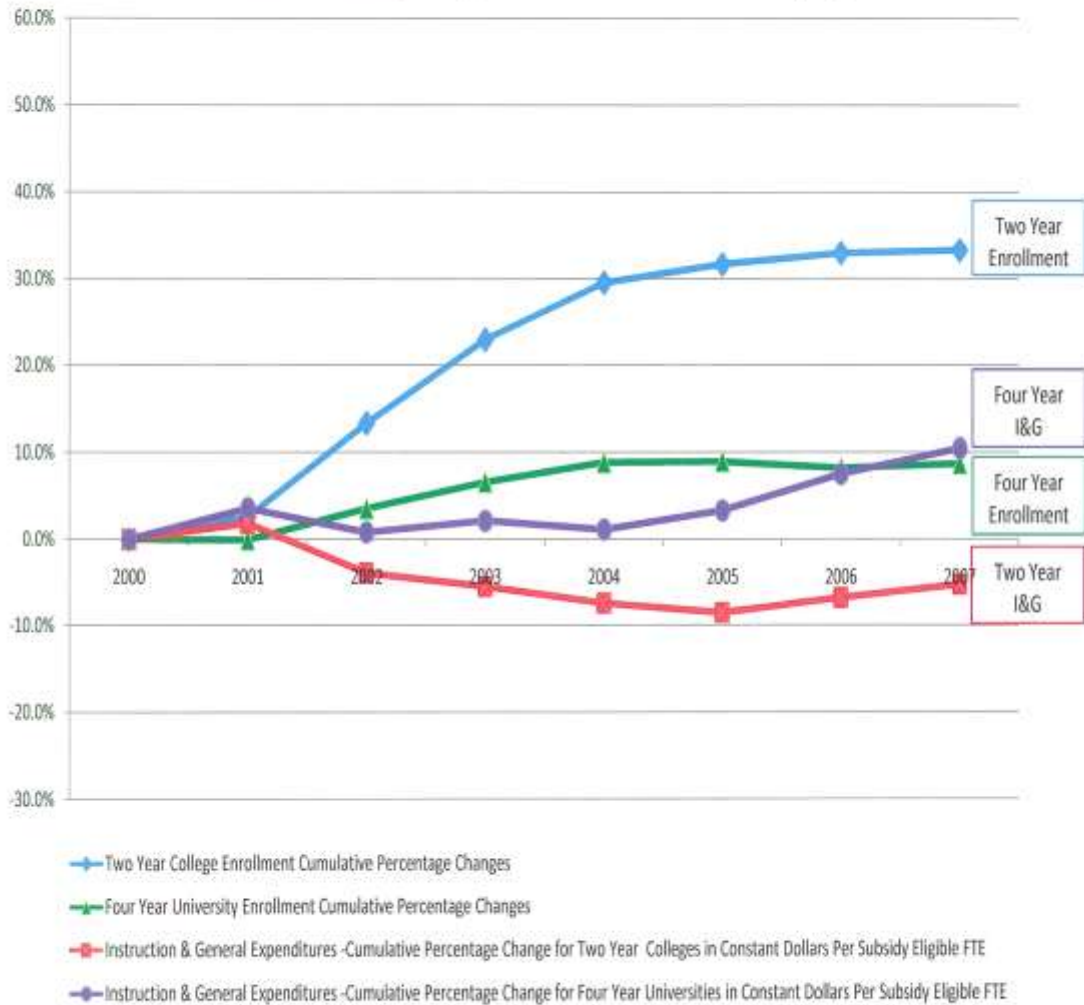
As you know, Ohio ranks 39th out of 50 states in the rate of participation in higher education. We are closer to Mississippi and Alabama than Pennsylvania, Michigan and Illinois. For us to move up in the rankings to 10th, we need to enroll 230,000 more students over the ten period envisioned in the Chancellor's University System of Ohio plan. Where will these students come from?

Well, some will undoubtedly come from an increase in high school students going to college. Ohio ranks about average out of 50 states – we can do better. However, the greater need is to have more adults (25 and older) pursue the further education they need to be successful in the 21st Century Knowledge economy. Ohio ranks 47 or 48 in the percent of adults in higher education. Consequently, the USO Strategic Plan calls for 180,000 or about 80% of the 230,000 increase to be adults. Adults will have to have access close to home, in convenient forms and times that enable them to fit further education into busy lives, jobs, families, etc.

The majority of these new students will be the first in their families to go to college and close to 60% will be earning less than \$50,000 per year. In fact, many will be low wage earning adults trying to improve their earning potential.

So, what are the impacts of these trends in state budgeting? Well, here is a corollary chart to the one President Abrams shared in his testimony.

State of Ohio - Public Higher Education
Cumulative Enrollment Trends vs. Instructional & General Expenditures
Cumulative Percentage Changes Per Constant Dollars Per Subsidy Eligible FTE



It clearly shows despite the promising increase in State support in the last biennial budget, there continues to be a trend toward decreasing Instructional and General Expenditures per student in two year colleges.

How have two year colleges managed to serve so many more students with decreasing resources for every student? Well, certainly we have all been working hard to operate more efficiently. However, we, also, have had to use increasing numbers of adjunct and part-time faculty to deliver coursework at substantially lower costs than full-time faculty. While Ohio is blessed with a substantial pool of well qualified professionals who can be recruited to teach part-time, we worry that at some point we may begin to experience diminishing returns in consistency and quality.

Another major impact of the budgeting trends is that more students enter who would be considered non-traditional—length of time out of school, age, income level, family circumstances and life experiences. Many of these students require a greater investment of staffing resources for advisement, counseling, trouble shooting, intervention services, etc. The increasing cost of delivery necessary to produce success at times of diminishing resources per student is a major challenge.

Not only do community colleges provide access and high quality education at the collegiate level, we also, provide the current workforce of companies throughout Ohio with high quality customized education and training experiences on a not-for-college credit basis. This form of education enables current workers to be more productive and to enable companies to be more competitive. 85% of the workforce needed in the next 10 years is already working. Getting a larger percentage of these students engaged in college-credit learning is a major strategic opportunity for the US. Over 100,000 students in non-credit offerings in community colleges join the 100,000 plus in Adult Career Centers as a pool of learners to encourage and nurture toward achieving higher educational goals and aspirations.

The last point I would make is that community colleges help students and companies apply learning in real world settings. Whether it is through cooperative education, internships or clinical experiences, we have a rich history of taking abstract concepts and helping people translate them into action. We are doing this more and more through entrepreneurship education and training and in working with companies and entrepreneurs in helping them commercialize research into new products and businesses which help grow the new jobs and industries of the future. We are working hard at growing talent and growing jobs.

Community colleges are flexible, innovative, creative and resilient, and we are excited by the challenges and opportunities to provide Ohioans the educational opportunities they need to succeed in this global economy and to provide the workforce necessary to enable Ohio's economy to grow and prosper. We embrace and are committed to the full implementation of the USO Strategic Vision and look forward to working with the Chancellor and the General Assembly to bring it to fruition.

Thank you for your continuing support.