

“5% Reduction Plans” at Ohio Faculty Council Institutions

Executive Summary

Ohio House Bill 64 Section 369.600 requires the board of trustees at each state institution of higher education to develop an implement a plan to provide all in-state, undergraduate students the opportunity to reduce the student cost of earning a degree by five per cent. Plans needed to be submitted to the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education by October 15, 2015. The complete set of those plans for both the four-year universities and the two-year community colleges can be found at <https://www.ohiohighered.org/affordability-efficiency/five-percent-reduction-plans>.

Furthermore, House Bill 64 (Section 369.550) requires each institution’s board of trustees to complete an efficiency review (based on Governor Kasich’s 2015 Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency recommendations) by July 1, 2016. Findings and an implementation plan must be submitted to the Chancellor by August 1, 2016. These submissions will serve as the data for the 2016 Efficiency Advisory Committee Report for each public institution of higher education in Ohio.

The most common strategy for cost savings appears to be to reduce the number of credit hours necessary to earn a degree to 120. Institutions that propose to adopt this strategy generally make exceptions for “licensing and accreditation requirements.” Most institutions have created new programs/initiatives to comply with Ohio House Bill 64 Section 369.600 though some institutions simply point to existing opportunities to reduce tuition costs (e.g. by taking 15 or 16 credit hours per semester for the same bulk rate that would be paid for 12 credit hours).

Members of the Ohio Faculty Council have been asked if any special groups or committees have been charged with overseeing the implementation of these board-approved plans. A summary of each institution’s five per cent cost reduction and implementation plans in response to House Bill 64 Section 369.600 are provided below (total cost of in state attendance, and tuition/fees per year are shown in parentheses for each).

Akron

- “Many” (60 to date) degree-completion criteria are being lowered from 128 to 120 credit hours.
- Full-load tuition raised from 16 to 18 credit hours per semester.
- GenEd Core course offered at \$50 per credit hour.
- Approximately 70 degree programs can be completed in three years.

(\$26,311; \$11,215)

Bowling Green

- During the past three years, BGSU has focused on the strategic alignment of resources with recruitment, enrollment, and retention goals to support student success and degree completion.
- Most degrees will be reduced to 120 credit hours.
- BGSU charges the same rate for 12 to 18 credit hours.
- Students who enroll in distance (online) programs or eCampus programs benefit from a cost differential associated with reduced general fees (\$15 per credit hour rather than \$62.25 per credit hour). Three degrees can be completed completely online (with two more in development).
- University library purchased a total of 42 textbooks for high enrollment courses.
- BGSU currently has more than 90 different three-year degree pathways for students who enter with 30 transfer/prior learning assessment/examination credits.
- A technology-infused advising system provides student with a continuum of support and feedback throughout their undergraduate experience (reducing student credit hours by 6 to 15 over the course of their degree).

(\$12,061; \$5,295)

Central State

- Most degrees will be reduced from 124 to 120 credit hours.
- Average student credit hour load increased from 14 to a minimum of 15 per semester.
- 10% reduction to students taking 6 credit hours or more during summer.
- 10% discount for online courses (up to 12 credits).

(\$19,140; \$6,246)

Cleveland State

- Cleveland State adopted an open access textbook for its freshman orientation to college course.

- 12 credit hours per semester is considered full-time. Students pay the same tuition for 12 to 18 credit hours per semester. Students are encouraged to take an “optimal” 15 credits per semester.
- 2% tuition credit and \$200 textbook stipend for students who successfully complete 30 credit hours in an academic year.
- More than 30 three-year degree paths are offered (typically for students who start the first year with credits from one or more program).
- Establishing a 120 credit hour benchmark for the attainment of an undergraduate degree (an average reduction of 8 credit hours).

(\$25,654; \$9,696)

Kent State

- Most degrees will be reduced to 120 credit hours.
- Expand the number of hybrid degree programs.
- Allow students to take two more credit hours for the same amount of tuition cost (full-time tuition plateau is set at 18 credits).
- Three year pathways are available for 54 academic majors. That number will be increased by 20%.
- Attend at least one year on a Kent State University regional campus with a 43% savings in tuition for each semester before transferring to the Kent campus.

(\$25,650; \$10,012)

Miami

Miami’s student profile differs from most other public colleges and universities. Its students are academically better prepared than at most other public universities; they arrive with more college credit already completed; they enroll in a larger course load each semester; they graduate with more credit hours and accomplishments; and they graduate within four years at a rate faster than all other public universities in Ohio (with a current average of 4.1 years to a degree). More than 60% of majors offered at Miami include a three-year path to degree completion.

- Data-driven, predictive modeling programs will be used in conjunction with more intentional/proactive and personalized advising to better ensure students are on timely path to graduate.
- Highly demanded and bottleneck courses will be offered during nonstandard terms such as winter and summer. These critical courses will be available in multiple formats including hybrid and online modes.
- Improve student familiarity with existing options that offer them the opportunity to graduate earlier.
- The university will implement a comprehensive suite of loan counseling tools to assist and inform students of their overall loan indebtedness.

(\$29,414; \$14,288)

Ohio State

The Ohio State University values student choice and seeks to provide students with a menu of options (for everything from academic programs, to living/learning environments, to dining plans) that can be applied to their individual circumstances.

- Students may take up to 18 credit hours that are charged at the same rate as for 12 credit hours.
- Options to reduce summer tuition and a new academic schedule to offer students more flexibility to support a shorter time to degree are being evaluated.
- Increase general education courses offered online.
- The university is helping faculty create hundreds of courses, textbooks and other teaching and learning resources that are accessible at little or no cost to students by utilizing its combined expertise in digital pedagogy, instructional design and strategic partnerships across campus and books and supplies.
- In-state tuition and mandatory fees have been frozen since the 2012-13 academic year. Many students who began that year will be able to graduate in four years without ever experiencing an increase.

(\$22,977; \$10,037)

Ohio University

- Fixed rate savings for taking 12.5 to 20 credit hours.
- Double the fraction of degrees awarded in three-year pathway programs from 1.8% to 3.6%.
- Freshman enrolled in summer session prior to cohort at prior cohort rate discount for freshmen subset.
- \$75M scholarship endowment.
- Reduced tuition increase to 1.6% to 2% cap.

(\$20,141; \$11,548)

Shawnee State

- While ensuring continued compliance with accreditation standards for health science programs, consider reducing the credit hours for specific clinical courses by changing the credit to clock hour ratio (e.g. instead of receiving 4 hours of credit for 8 hours of a clinical experience a student would earn 2 hours of credit).
- Examine all courses currently over 3 credit hours with a goal of restructuring and reducing hours where possible (15.5% of the university's courses are greater than 3 hours).

- Investigate offering a 10-20% tuition discount for summer term if a student completes a full load (30 semester hours) during the regular academic year.
- Working with faculty to develop online offerings to satisfy the majority of the university's General Education Program requirements.
- Build on success of existing textbook rental program by encouraging faculty to adopt course materials earlier.
- The university has paid faculty members \$2,000 to \$4,000 to develop lab manuals that are used in all sections of several STEM courses and will explore other subjects in which this may be a feasible model.
- The university will explore discounted overload rates for enrollment in 18-21 semester hours but a higher rate for 22+ credit hours (as many students are not prepared to handle excessive overload hours).
- The university has very few fees that could be reduced (e.g. there are no parking, activity, application, facilities, library, or major-specific fees).

(\$22,326; \$7,366)

Toledo

The university has frozen tuition for undergraduate students four of the last ten years and has the lowest net tuition and general fees of all the four-year public universities in Ohio (not counting Shawnee or Central State). It also has the highest percentage (86%) of its students receiving institutional scholarships.

- Increase scholarships (the Direct from High School Scholarship budget has been increased by \$7.5M for FY2016).
- Decrease in housing costs (the university offered a 25% reduction in room rates to those not required to live on campus).
- Open source materials (a program is being developed to assist faculty in transitioning to open source materials).
- Developing financial literacy (the university is developing a comprehensive strategy for enhancing student financial literacy, communication and family counseling).
- Starfish initiative (the university has purchased the Starfish Retention Platform which identifies at-risk students in real-time, reduces DFW rates, pinpoints areas of concern, connects students with valuable services, and helps assess which services and interventions will keep students on track to degree completion; after one semester the institutional retention rate for full time students rose by 2%).
- A proposal has been introduced to lower the minimum number of credit hours for a degree from 124 to 120.
- The university has created several programs (and is developing more) where students can begin the first year of a graduate program during their senior year of undergraduate studies and apply the graduate courses taken both toward completing the bachelors and toward the graduate degree).

(\$16,217; \$8,021)

University of Cincinnati

- Tuition freezes in 2013-14 and 2015-16.
- Textbook Affordability Initiative.
- College Credit Plus (average of 5.6 credits per student)
- Enrollment in 15 credit hours during one semester (rather than 12, 13 or 14).
- Summer school incentive program (pay for five and receive six credits; increases utilization while decreasing student time to degree).
- Transition students (start on a regional campus).
- Co-op earnings of approximately \$4,000 per rotation

(\$24,714; \$11,000)

Wright State

- All remaining degree programs exceeding a 120 credit hour completion requirement will be reduced to a 120 course credit hour requirement (unless otherwise required by an accrediting body).
- All students who complete 24 credit hours in a given fall and spring semester of an academic year will earn a 20% discount on their first course that following summer semester.
- Increase availability of most affordable textbook mediums (e.g. used rental, digital rental) through textbook adoption policies targeting early adoption and longer span of use.
- Offer the opportunity for any high school within a 50 mile radius of Dayton or Lake Campus to partner with the university in English Composition (3 hrs) and Mathematics (3 hrs) College Credit Plus programs.
- Flat tuition rate tier begins at 11 credit hours rather than 12 (translating to a 1 credit hour per semester savings relative to all other IUC schools).

(\$21,990; \$8,730)

Youngstown State

- Reduction in hours required for bachelor's degree from 124 to 120 effective fall 2015.
- Penguin Jump Start program allows entering students to take up to 6 credit hours for \$500 per course effective summer 2015.
- Raising tuition bulk rater by two credit hours from 12-16 credit hours to 12-18 effective fall 2016.
- Almost all auxiliary fees (including course fees, college fees, parking fees and service fees) have been frozen.

(\$22,029; \$8,087)

