

II. Regional Higher Education

Reduction in State Share and Access Challenge

Instructional subsidy and student tuition will continue to be the primary sources of income for Regional Higher Education (RHE) in FY 03.

State support in the form of state share and Access Challenge funding were reduced by 6.3% and 6% respectively from original levels in FY 02. This constituted a loss of funding equaling approximately \$1,300,000 for Ohio University's regional campuses. Actual state share received was only 0.2% higher than the amount received in FY 00; Access Challenge funding declined by 11%.

Since appropriations in House Bill 94 have been reduced by approximately 6% from levels initially approved by the Ohio Legislature, neither state share funding nor Access Challenge funding are projected to grow. A small amount of additional funding in state share may be realized through enrollment growth.

RHE is committed to its mission of access and outreach, and funds are necessary to provide the resources needed to offer relevant, high-quality University programs throughout the region. RHE is committed to keeping tuition as reasonable as is possible in this current environment of state budget reductions. In this spirit, we request approval of a tuition increase of 9.9% at both graduate and undergraduate levels--the same percentage increase requested for continuing students on the Athens Campus.

General Operating Expenses—a 2.15% Increase over FY 02

General operating expenditures in RHE will be budgeted to increase 2.15% in FY 03. Expenditure budgets will decrease at one campus due to enrollment declines and increase between 2.6% and 5.3% at other campuses. Two centers have been identified separately in this budget: the Pickerington Center, operated in conjunction with the Lancaster Campus, and the Proctorville Center, operated in conjunction with the Southern Campus. The Pickerington Center's budgeted expenditures will increase by 37% next year due to

dramatic enrollment increases. Expenditures in the Office of the Vice President are planned to increase 2.15% and by 5.71% for centrally paid items such as university overhead, technology infrastructure, program support, operation of compressed video and microwave systems, profit-sharing with campuses, and targeted system-wide initiatives. Expense increases and decreases are linked to enrollment and income growth and are needed for increases in salaries, purchased utilities, new building costs, new faculty positions, supplies and equipment, including postage, to support academic and support programs, and new programming initiatives.

Lifelong Learning in the RHE Budget

The Office of Lifelong Learning Programs (LLL) budget will become part of the RHE budget beginning with FY 03. This change is planned to foster greater cooperation and involvement of RHE faculty in development of non-traditional approaches such as distance learning in serving the region and beyond. This match will provide more resources to LLL and broader education opportunities to RHE. Currently, LLL programs include Independent and Distance Learning Programs, Community and Professional Programs, Hong Kong and International Programs, the Ohio University without Boundaries Office, and Summer Sessions Programs.

Restricted Expenses—15.6% Increase

Additional expenditures in restricted accounts are estimated to increase by 15.6%. Increases in grant income secured from the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio Department of Human Services, the Ohio Board of Regents, and several federal agencies account for this projected increase in restricted expenditures.

New Academic Partnerships

Over the past year, RHE has forged new partnerships with the College of Education and with the College of Health and Human Services. Regional campuses are working with the dean and department chairs in the College of Education and in the College of Health and Human Services in hiring several fulltime tenure track early childhood education faculty members at each campus that meet the credentialing requirements of both colleges. In addition, hiring of

tenure track regional campus faculty to teach in middle and secondary education is being reviewed by the College of Education and RHE.

In cooperation with the College of Health and Human Services, a new nursing division has been created. This division will be jointly managed by RHE and by the College of Health and Human Services, with academic leadership being provided by the College. Programs offered in this new division include the associate's degree in nursing and the BSN completion degree in nursing (both are currently offered primarily on the regional campuses). A master's degree to be offered in the region is currently being planned. A search for a new nursing director is underway.

Partnership with Lorain County Community College

In cooperation with the College of Communication, RHE is managing a bachelor's degree program in general communication offered at Lorain County Community College using videoconferencing as the primary means of instruction. Ohio University's Eastern Campus is playing the lead role in this initiative by scheduling classes, advising students both on-site and via the Internet, and by coordinating faculty staffing issues with the College of Communication.

Organizational Communication Degree—A Regional Success

The Bachelor of Science Degree in Interpersonal Communication with a major Concentration in Organizational Communication was approved to be offered last year on the regional campuses through a cooperative agreement between the School of Interpersonal Communication, the College of Communication and RHE. This program has been a tremendous success across the region, with ten tenure track faculty members across the system and with a significant number of students majoring in and taking these courses. This program extensively utilizes the videoconferencing system.

The Pickerington and Proctorville Centers: The New Low Cost Center Model

To meet the needs of students in the extreme regions of regional campus service areas, RHE has successfully experimented with a new low-cost higher education center model at Pickerington. The

Pickerington Center is operated as a joint venture between the Office of RHE and the Lancaster Campus. It is located in the high-need area of northern Fairfield County. It has doubled enrollments this year and it is offering two evening master's degrees. Primary services and day-to-day oversight of the Center are provided by the Lancaster Campus. The previously leased site and buildings were purchased this year to enable programming to expand and to provide lease income to help defray the costs.

The Proctorville Center, located in Southpoint, Ohio, across the river from Huntington, has been operated by the Southern Campus for several years in a leased building along Route 7. Land has been donated for the construction of a higher education center at Proctorville that is similar to the existing center at Pickerington. Fundraising is currently underway to generate funds for constructing a new building. The expanded Proctorville Center will serve the Huntington metropolitan area that includes a significant number of Ohio residents.

TOPS Program Funding Secured for Two More Years

The TOPS program (Training Opportunities for Program Staff) has been administered by Ohio University through RHE since 1994. Through a statewide competitive bidding process, Ohio University through RHE was once again awarded the contract to administer the TOPS program working with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. The administrative portion of this contract consists of 3.5 contract staff and 2 classified staff. Funding for this program is \$2.9 million over two years and includes 45% federal indirect overhead costing. Through this contract, Ohio University coordinates a system of 25 state universities and community colleges in a job-related tuition-based training program serving over 20,000 state and county job and family services employees in Ohio. The separate instructional TOPS contract provides \$900,000 of tuition support for job and family services employees in Ohio University's regional service area. Students taking part-time evening graduate programs make up the majority of Ohio University's TOPS students.

Project RAVEN Partnership and the Regional Degree Initiative

Ohio University through RHE has been funded as a partner in a Board of Regents grant to provide better student services throughout southeast Ohio. The project, entitled RAVEN (Regional Appalachian Vision for an Education Network) will provide funds to develop a regional computer-based transfer articulation system so that students will more easily know how to “package” credit hours from different institutions into associate and baccalaureate degrees. Other members of project RAVEN include Belmont Technical College, Hocking College, Jefferson Community College, Kent State University—East Liverpool, Muskingum Area Technical College, Rio Grande Community College and University, Shawnee State University, Southern State Community College, and Washington State Community College serving as the fiscal agent. Ohio University’s funding in this initiative is approximately \$90,000 to support the purchase of a video switching system upgrade. In conjunction with Project RAVEN, RHE has been coordinating meetings and planning with Project Raven partners to develop regional baccalaureate opportunities for students in southeast Ohio through improved information about transferability of course credits between two-year and four-year schools.