

MEDIA ADVISORY – Oct. 2, 2002

Contacts: Jamie Abel, Assistant Director of Communications
614-644-1988, jabel@regents.state.oh.us
Randy Edwards, Assistant Director of Communications
614-752-9480, redwards@regents.state.oh.us

**OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS REACTIONS
TO “MEASURING UP 2002” REPORT CARD FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The staff of the Ohio Board of Regents weren’t surprised by the grades Ohio higher education received in the report “Measuring Up 2002: The State-by-State Report Card for Higher Education,” released today (Oct. 1) by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education ([report](#)).

While the grade for one category – Participation – inched up slightly, grades for two other categories – Affordability and Completion – inched down. Most significantly, the Affordability issue is one that the Regents have targeted in formulating their FY 2004-2005 budget recommendations and through other initiatives.

Under the budget plan, the vast majority of the request – more than 80 percent of the increase – would be devoted to funding the State Share of Instruction (SSI), four performance-based Challenges and a reform of the state’s need-based aid programs. The recommendations call for an increase of 10 percent per year in each year of the upcoming biennial budget, from \$2.5 billion in the current budget year, to \$2.7 billion in FY 2004 and nearly \$3 billion in FY 2005.

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SSI, essential state instructional aid to the public colleges and universities, would be increased by 11 percent each year. That figure includes a 2.5 percent increase just to fund current enrollment growth, 5 percent increase per year to reduce the student share of instructional costs (thereby reducing pressure on campuses to increase tuition), and 4 percent per year to enable campuses to attract and retain talented faculty and staff.

Ohio's four Challenge initiatives are very successful programs designed to help campuses deliver on their missions through performance-based funding. Two of the Challenges – Access and Success – target the issues of affordability and completion.

Access Challenge, which directly helps “buy down” tuition at two-year campuses, would receive a 10 percent increase in the first year of the biennium and a 5 percent increase in the second year. Success Challenge, which rewards university main campuses for having undergraduate students complete their degrees in a timely manner, would receive the same 10 percent and 5 percent increases in the biennium.

Another budget request that will directly affect affordability of higher education is funding to begin a long-term, multi-biennium revision to the state need-based aid programs – the Ohio Instructional Grant (OIG) and the Part-time Student Grant (PTSG). The programs are intended to expand access to higher education by bringing the cost of college within reach of more needy Ohio families.

The short-term goal of the revision will be to focus more aid on independent students with dependents. Research had identified a significant equity gap between the need-based awards provided to that group versus dependent (often referred to as “traditional”) students.

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Additionally, the Ohio Board of Regents has been involved in crafting a statewide strategic access plan that builds on several existing efforts. As a centerpiece of the plan, the agency continues to work closely with the Ohio College Access Network to expand and strengthen community based access programs.

The plan seeks to identify and replicate the best practices of the state GEAR-UP program, the federally-funded program designed to help low-income students stay in schools, take challenging coursework, aspire to and prepare for successful postsecondary education.

The plan also relies upon the work of the Joint Council of the Ohio Board of Regents and the State Board of Education. The Council advocates for systemic change and collaboration to stimulate, develop and implement improvements in K-12 teaching/learning outcomes and teacher preparation.

Also, a statewide awareness initiative aims to tell Ohioans about the impact increased levels of higher education can have on the future prosperity of individuals, regions, states and nations.

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