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**OBR CHAIRMAN, CHANCELLOR APPLAUD  
SENATE'S COMMITMENT TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – Thomas W. Noe, chairman of the Ohio Board of Regents, and Chancellor Roderick G.W. Chu offered words of praise today in response to the unveiling of the Senate's proposed changes to the state budget bill.

State Senator Bill Harris, chairman of the Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee, today announced an increase of \$226 million for higher education over the House-passed Fiscal Year 2005-05 budget.

"It is reassuring to see that Ohio policymakers understand the crucial tie between higher education and the prosperity of Ohioans," Noe said. "This commitment to higher education in these challenging times underscores the important role our colleges and universities play in the Knowledge Economy."

"Indeed, it is admirable for a legislative body to support educational initiatives in times of plentiful revenue," said Chu, "but it is especially astute of governmental leaders to make post-secondary education a priority during tough economic times.

"We appreciate the Senate committee's considered decision to restore funding for Ohio's colleges and universities and to carefully reconsider some of the actions called for in House Bill 95."

Higher education appropriations have sustained cuts of \$313 million since Fiscal Year 2001. These cuts, coupled with a surge in enrollment, have forced Ohio's colleges and universities to cut positions and programs, erode financial reserves and increase tuition.

The Ohio Board of Regents is the coordinating body for higher education in the state. Created in 1963 by the General Assembly, the 11-member public board has a direct, non-governing relationship with all of Ohio's colleges and universities.

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