

THE ISSUE

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The Ohio Board of Regents: 40 Years of Service 40th Anniversary of the Board of Regents

American psychologist Walter B. Pitkin coined a popular adage in 1934: "Life begins at 40!" While likely intended to encourage mid-lifers along in their journey, Pitkin's declaration couldn't be more appropriate for the 40-year journey of the Board of Regents. With already much accomplished, the challenge of coordinating and improving higher education, so that more citizens of Ohio can enjoy productive and fuller lives, is only just beginning.

In the Beginning...

There's no question about it— a lot has changed in forty years. In 1963, when the Board of Regents was created, there were six state assisted universities including Ohio University, 1804; Miami University, 1809; The Ohio State University, 1870; Kent State and Bowling Green State Universities, 1910; and Central State University, 1951. After World War II, as a result of the return of veterans, Ohio universities were dealing with a "tidal wave" of new students and policy makers soon realized that Ohio would need a state-level coordinating structure for higher education.

Gubernatorial candidate James Rhodes capitalized politically on the need to organize a state-level structure to

oversee Ohio's higher education system. On October 2, 1962, he launched his "Blueprint for Brainpower" campaign, which provided the framework for a state board of regents and helped propel him to governorship in November 1962. As Governor, he signed House Bill 214 into law on June 19, 1963. Ninety days later, the Ohio Board of Regents became the state's legal coordinating body for higher education. Its first broad mission was to create a "Master Plan for Higher Education."

Forty Years of Accomplishments:

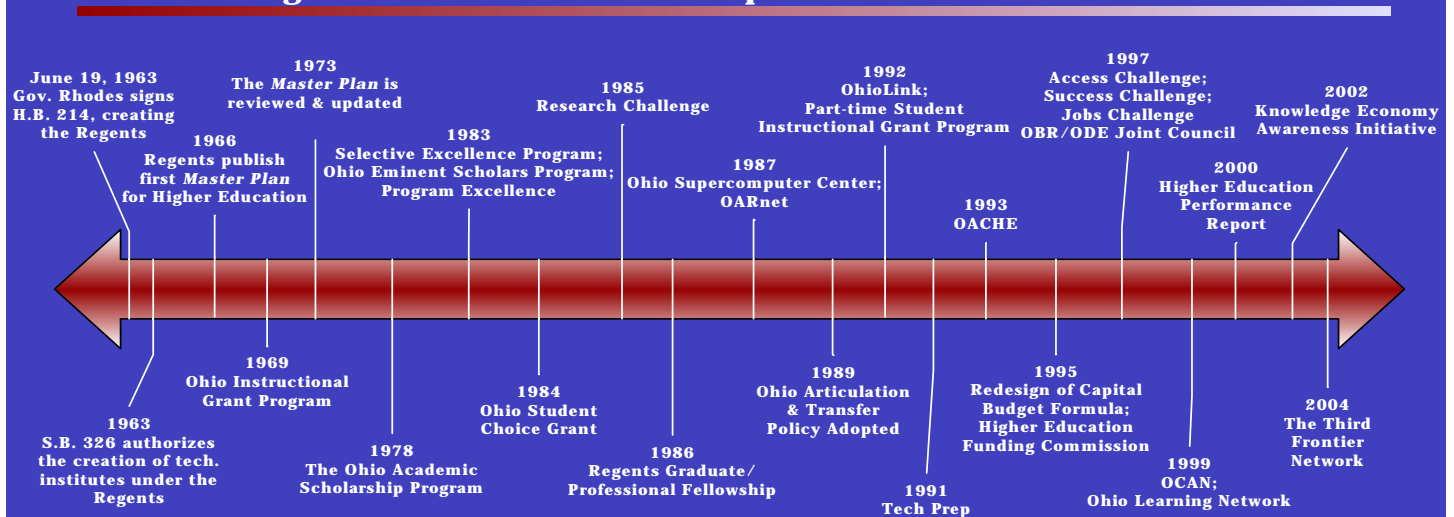
Guided by a "Master Plan" and a legislative mandate, the work of the Regents has been far-reaching and widespread. But one of the greatest accomplishments over the past forty years has been helping Ohio meet the higher education needs of its citizens. Enrollment at Ohio's public colleges and universities has increased from 115,157 students in 1963 to an estimated 469,887 students in 2003. Since 1967, Ohio's public colleges and universities have awarded more than 1.9 million total degrees.

Here is a sample of initiatives enacted by the Regents within its forty year history:

Improving Access to Higher Education Opportunities and Resources

- **The Ohio Instructional Grant Program**, Ohio's financial aid program for low and moderate income families, was enacted by the G.A. in 1969. The Regents administer the program, along with the eight additional state grants and scholarships, including the **Ohio Student Choice Grant Program** (1984) and the **Ohio Academic Scholarship Program** (1978).
- **OhioLINK**, which merged its first six library catalogs in 1992, was created by the Regents as a consortium of Ohio's college and university libraries, in tandem with the State Library of Ohio. This cost-effective organization minimizes duplication in the purchase of library materials and saves the state money by taking advantage of economies of scale in the acquisition of resource databases.
- **OACHE (Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education)** was created in 1993 to increase the low educational attainment of Southeastern Ohio students.

Board of Regents: 40 Years of Accomplishments



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OACHE has helped close the higher education achievement gap that plagues Southeastern Ohio. Today there is only a .3% gap separating Southeastern Ohio from the rest of the state for associate degree earners.

- The **Ohio College Access Network (OCAN)** was developed in 1999 by the Board of Regents, in collaboration with the KnowledgeWorks Foundation. OCAN has established 25 new college access programs that provide one-on-one advising on financial aid, college selection and career awareness, and last dollar scholarships for low-income students. OCAN has assisted over 350,000 young people in gaining access to and succeeding in college.
- The **Ohio Learning Network**, also created in 1999, was designed in collaboration with the Regents to raise the overall educational attainment for all Ohioans by expanding access to key on-line learning opportunities. Currently 3,500 on-line course sections and 115 degrees and certificates from 66 colleges and universities are available through the Ohio Learning Network.

Promoting Innovation and Technology in the Knowledge Economy

- **Research Challenge** was established in 1985 to stimulate new and expanded research efforts at Ohio's colleges and universities. It has had a dramatic impact on the amount of federal dollars universities have been able to attract to Ohio, reaching almost \$1 billion in FY 2001.
- The **Ohio Supercomputer Center**, created in 1987 by the Regents, was designed to place Ohio's research universities and private industries in the forefront of computational research. The Ohio Supercomputer Center provides statewide access to state-of-the-art high performance computational services and equipment for use by the students, faculty, and staff of Ohio's colleges and universities as well as key Ohio industrial strategic partners working with the Wright Centers of Innovation.
- Also created in 1987, **OARnet**, is the network division of the **Ohio Supercomputer Center**. OARnet

serves as the internet service provider for nearly all of Ohio's colleges and universities, connecting them to each other and to the world through the 3rd Frontier Network. OARnet also manages Ohio's connection to national research networks like Internet 2.

- In 1991 the first **Tech-Prep consortium** was formed as a partnership among business, industry, labor, secondary and higher education. In addition to preparing students for careers in high technology fields, Tech Prep lowers student remediation rates—students in Tech Prep have remediation levels 12.4% lower than students entering 2- & 4- year college programs who are not enrolled in Tech Prep.
- The **Knowledge Economy Awareness Initiative** was enacted in 2002 to increase community leaders' awareness about the challenges facing Ohio in the Knowledge Economy. As a result of this initiative, over 250 presentations have been held throughout the state, reaching over 6,000 community leaders.

Promoting Statewide Teamwork and Accountability

- The **Eminent Scholars program** came online in 1983 to provide matching grants for endowed professorships at Ohio's universities. The Eminent Scholars program has been emulated by a number of other states, including Georgia and Florida, as an economic development strategy to bring high-powered scholars and researchers to universities to strengthen programs of excellence.
- The **Ohio Articulation and Transfer Policy** was adopted in 1989 and redefined in 2003 to include a broader transfer agenda. Today Regents' staff and university representatives are working around the clock to ensure the ease of transferring courses and to guarantee that transferred coursework applies to related degrees.
- The Regents convened the 1st meeting of the **Higher Education Funding Commission** in 1995. This Commission, which consists of university representatives, other state agencies, members of the

business community, and legislators, makes recommendations about higher education's priorities to the Board of Regents.

- **Access Challenge, Success Challenge and Jobs Challenge** were each implemented in 1997. Respectively, these programs were designed to: a) help more Ohioans get started in college by making tuition more affordable; b) help colleges give students who are less likely to succeed a better chance to do so; and c) make Ohio's economy more competitive by building a more skilled workforce.
- The First Annual **Higher Education Performance Report** was released by the Regents in 2000. This report provides information such as student academic progress, graduates' outcomes, and employment and earnings for use by students, parents, policymakers, and campus leaders.

What's next?

The upcoming work of the Regents can be categorized into five goals:

- 1) Increase seamless access to affordable, quality higher education for Ohioans.
- 2) Identify and encourage academic programs of distinction and excellence.
- 3) Eliminate unnecessary duplication in programs, services and facilities.
- 4) Elevate the technical competence of all of Ohio's citizens to meet the needs of the 21st century economy and enhance their quality of life.
- 5) Focus and expand research to create economic opportunities and assure the success of the Third Frontier program and other key initiatives.

The Regents look forward to optimizing the return on the state's investment in higher education through productivity, efficiency and innovation. With your continued support, we can ensure a productive and economically sound future for the citizens of Ohio.

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