

President's Budget Message

In the 2001 State of the University address, I discussed my belief that Ohio's policy leaders understood the critical importance of public higher education in Ohio's future. I also indicated that the State's constrained revenue picture would make it difficult for the State to meet all of its needs.

In that speech, I also challenged the University community to plan carefully, and to choose our priorities more thoughtfully, in order to serve our students more effectively and efficiently. I asked that we clarify our mission and goals so that we could realize how to identify our pressing needs, stretch resources, and attain the greatest gains.

This budget document reflects Ohio University's willingness to embrace this process. Under the leadership of Interim Provost Gary Schumacher, many individuals have worked very hard to focus the budgeting process (both additional allocations and budget reductions) on those core activities most critical to the University's mission, to expand planning to a three-year horizon, and to begin efforts to better coordinate the many planning activities in a more comprehensive manner.

The State's fiscal environment is such that we are not anticipating any significant increase in State resources over the next three years. Rather, our budget planning assumes increases in State resources based only on our enrollment growth at the existing rates of reimbursement. Unfortunately, as we continue to move the institution forward, this will translate into higher tuition for our students.

In January, we presented to the Board a bold but carefully conceived plan of investments in people and programs that would significantly enhance the distinctiveness of undergraduate education, foster focused graduate education and research, and allow us to attract and retain high quality faculty and staff.

To help accomplish that end, we presented plans for targeted budget reductions and a two-tiered tuition plan that limited the tuition increases for existing students and moved tuition for new students to a level that would support crucial investments. We believe strongly that this policy is necessary to keep faith with existing students and to more closely associate costs to those students who will benefit from the improvements we are making.

Our tuition discussions in January and similar activities at other universities led to a tuition summit with the Governor. Quite frankly, the tuition limits that came out of these discussions do not provide the flexibility that I had

hoped for. However, the agreement was probably the best option that could be accomplished to accommodate the collective needs of Ohio's public universities.

This budget provides the investments that are necessary to move the University forward. The lack of State resources has made it necessary to generate our own resources. We believe that our budgetary decisions have resulted in an appropriate balance between budget reductions and tuition increases.

It is in this context that we provide you with our budget plan for Fiscal Year 2003. I wish we could share a more optimistic State scenario that would allow lower tuition for our students. That not being possible, let me state that I am confident that our budgetary approach will lead the University to allocate resources in a manner that will enable us continuously to improve the value of an Ohio University education.

Robert Glidden