QUALITY OF PLACE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATING STUDENTS, IMPACTING COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Ohio University (OHIO) improves the quality of life in southeast Ohio by providing access to the arts, culture, and recreation. Its students and faculty contribute to quality of place by working with local organizations and initiatives to build capacity. And through formal and informal partnerships with local governments, agencies, and organizations, OHIO helps to strengthen its communities.

The University is the primary source of cultural enrichment in southeast Ohio, as well as a prominent source for recreation. Visitors participating in and enjoying Ohio University’s cultural offerings account for over $74.5 million in total economic activity in the state annually.

The University also contributes to quality of life through service. OHIO’s greatest impacts on community development are evident through its service-learning and volunteering, its collaboration with K–12 schools, and its community education and therapeutic services.

In Athens and the regional campus communities, Ohio University works with cities, schools, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to improve the quality of life, providing access to resources that would not otherwise be available to some of the most rural parts of the state.

INTERNATIONAL STREET FAIR

Ohio University celebrates peoples from nations around the world every year during International Week, with special programming intended to bring aspects of a range of cultures to campus. This signature event allows students from diverse backgrounds to experience and learn from the traditions of their friends, classmates, and fellow members of the Athens community.
ENRICHING LIFE THROUGH THE ARTS

Over the last 75 years, Ohio University’s College of Fine Arts has built a nationally recognized program of post-secondary arts education, including the fifth-ranked ceramics program and the state’s only graduate-level fine arts film degree. Faculty members have performed nationally and internationally at prestigious and iconic venues, had their productions screened on television and at international film festivals, and had works chosen by high-profile museums and private collections.

OHIO also has a highly regarded creative writing program, which was formally recognized in 2011 as the nation’s third-best doctoral writing program by Poets and Writers magazine. Its faculty are well known, award-winning authors of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction.

This world-class arts education program also is a hub of cultural and artistic activity for the region, opening doors for community access and engagement and enriching quality of life. Visitors participating in and enjoying the cultural enrichment offerings of Ohio University account for over $74.5 million in total economic activity within the state annually.

WOMEN IN APPALACHIA EXHIBITION
The exhibition showcases the way in which female artists respond to the Appalachian region as a source of inspiration.

OHIO UNIVERSITY’S FINE ARTS PROGRAMS HIGHLIGHTS

#3
Ranked creative writing doctoral program (Poets and Writers, 2012)

#5
Ranked ceramics program (U.S. News and World Report, 2012)

#14
Ranked printmaking program (U.S. News and World Report, 2012)

#53
Ranked School of Art MFA (U.S. News and World Report, 2012)

FIRST
Graduate photography program in the U.S.

FIRST
Interdisciplinary PhD program in the University

EXCLUSIVE DEGREE
Only graduate-level fine arts and scholarly film degrees in the State of Ohio
NOTABLE
OHIO UNIVERSITY ARTS ALUMNI

Deborah Cavanagh
Associate publisher of creative services at Vogue magazine

Jim Dine
Internationally renowned Pop artist

Edwin Gordon
World-renowned proponent of music education

Jenny Holzer
World-renowned conceptual artist; first woman chosen to represent the United States in the Venice Biennale (1990)

Ed Lachman
Academy Award nominee for cinematography for Far From Heaven and Erin Brockovich

Herman Leonard
Renowned photographer of iconic images of jazz musicians from the 1940s to the ‘60s.

Piper Perabo
Actor in major motion pictures (Coyote Ugly) and independent films (Lost and Delirious); Golden Globe nominee for her lead role on USA Network’s Covert Affairs

Thom Sharp
Emmy Award-winning composer.

Betty Thomas
Actor (Hill Street Blues), director (28 Days, Dr. Doolittle), and producer (I Spy, Charlie’s Angels)

Chris Whitney
Member of Pilobolus Dance Theater

Unparalleled Access to Art Collections

OHIO’s historic museum and multiple art galleries provide unparalleled access to permanent and visiting collections in rural southeast Ohio, with more than 20,000 visitors annually.

The Kennedy Museum of Art is the only major collecting art institution in southeast Ohio. The American Association of Museums Accreditation Visiting Committee called it “a cultural touchstone for the region” that “serves as a vital connection to a broad constituency of families, senior citizens, and tourists.”

The Kennedy Museum’s collections include a renowned contemporary print collection and a southwest Native American textiles and jewelry collection that the American Alliance of Museums Accreditation Committee called “extraordinary.” The Kennedy Museum’s permanent collection numbers over 5,000 paintings, prints, photographs, sculpture, and ceramics.

Between July 2011 and June 2012, the museum hosted 4,174 attendees of various programs, workshops, and tours, including nearly 1,700 preschool, elementary, and secondary students and 1,200 students from Ohio University and other colleges. The museum’s impact is international as well: in 2010 it sent 23 weavings from its Edwin L. and Ruth E. Kennedy Southwest Native American Collection to museums in Guatemala and Bolivia.

KENNEDY MUSEUM COLLECTION

The Kennedy Museum’s collections include a renowned contemporary print collection and a southwest Native American textiles and jewelry collection.

The Performing Arts

Each year, the College of Fine Arts produces more than 300 events with an estimated attendance of 45,500 from the University and regional communities. Thousands of elementary, middle, and high school students come to campus to view performances by the schools of dance, music, and theater. Performances include music recitals and opera, dance concerts, plays, and the Seabury Quinn Jr. Playwright’s Festival.

The Performing Arts and Concert Series connect the University and the surrounding community through the presentation of arts and ideas. Every year, the series brings national and international artists to Athens, allowing students and community members to experience concerts and performances by large professional touring companies at reasonable cost (tickets cost one-third to one-half what they would be in other areas) and without traveling over 75 miles to venues in Columbus, Ohio. Approximately 26,500 individuals attended Performing Arts Series events in the 2011–12 academic year alone.

Regional campuses also are key sources of performing arts in their communities. At Ohio University Eastern Campus, the Dean’s Cultural Series offers a myriad of free arts and cultural events including plays, musical performances, and presentations. Many productions combine University and community performers; cast and crew from the 2011–12 theatrical production of Romeo and Juliet included six community members, making up around 30 percent of the company. Five general public performances and two matinees for high school students brought total attendance to nearly 700 individuals.

45,500
Individuals from the University and regional communities attend more than 300 events of the College of Fine Arts each year

26,500
Individuals attended Performing Arts Series events in the 2011–12 academic year
A Showcase for Independent and Art Films

Operated by the College of Fine Arts, the Athena Cinema is one of Uptown Athens’ unique historic treasures. Since OHIO restored the theater in 2001 and 2002, it has become the region’s primary source of international and art films. Recently, the Athena Cinema partnered with Arts for Ohio and the Patton College of Education to offer a free public screening of the documentary Bully, allowing educators on campus and in local school districts to open dialogue on this pressing social issue.

The Athena also supports local business. Programs such as the Holiday Film Series, for example, lure visitors into Uptown businesses, generating foot traffic and sales income for local restaurants and shops. The Athena also directly supports local charities and organizations: in 2012, the Holiday Film Series collected over 1,560 pounds of food for the Athens Food Pantry.

Founded in 1974, the Athens International Film and Video Festival has featured independent films from around the world. The festival annually brings approximately 7,000 festival-goers, filmmakers, and university and community members to the campus. In 2012, the festival included 319 films, many of which challenged audiences with avant-garde programming, punctuated with traditional feature narratives and content-driven documentaries.

In 2010, Ohio University Zanesville Campus hosted the three-day Charlie in the Heartland: An International Charlie Chaplin Conference — the first such gathering ever held on American soil. More than 100 people attended the conference, which commemorated Chaplin’s first visit to the United States in October 1910. Activities included free film showings and discussions on Charlie Chaplin’s life and travels in America.

The Athena Cinema directly supports local charities and organizations: in 2012, the Holiday Film Series collected over 1,560 pounds of food for the Athens Food Pantry.
Broader Horizons through Music and Dance

Founded in 1979, the Athens Community Music School (ACMS) is the principal source of organized and qualified music instruction for adults and children in southeast Ohio and portions of West Virginia. A program of the School of Music, ACMS offers individual private lessons in piano, voice, wind, and percussion, and is the only source of instruction in stringed instruments within a 60+ mile radius in Ohio. As of March 1, 2013, more than 200 students and countless community members have benefited from this access to quality musical teaching.

To further broaden students’ and community members’ cultural horizons, the schools of Music and Dance have sponsored the World Music and Dance Festival to Athens for the last three years. The most recent festival included dance and drumming workshops, along with an interactive concert. Students and community members enjoyed music and dance from countries as diverse as Ukraine, Japan, Azerbaijan, Guyana, and Italy, among others. Students reported the concert to be a “celebration of diversity” and “an amazing performance.”

Ohio University Lancaster Campus is the venue for the region’s largest music festival, the Lancaster Festival. This nine-day celebration of music and art includes seventy-five events—many of which are free to the public—as well as an Art Walk and a 5k series with 230 participants in 2012. The festival promotes the artistic growth and outreach of the Lancaster Festival Orchestra as the community’s cornerstone of classical music programming, and offers visibility for local artists. More than 15,000 people attended the 2011 Lancaster Festival.

WORLD MUSIC AND DANCE FESTIVAL

Since 2010, the schools of Music and Dance have sponsored the World Music and Dance Festival in Athens. The most recent festival included dance and drumming workshops, along with an interactive concert.
Promoting Literature and Literacy

Ranked third in the nation by Poets and Writers (2012), OHIO’s creative writing program not only molds new generations of authors, but also exposes residents of the southeast Ohio region to the best in poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.

Since 1986, the Spring Literary Festival has brought some of the world’s finest and most distinguished writers of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction to the Athens Campus. The three-day festival, held on the Athens Campus, includes readings and lectures by five authors, all of which are free and open to the public. The event also includes presentations of awards to students for fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, as well as promotions of the program’s literary journals. Some 1,000 people participate every year. Past authors have included John Ashbery, Russell Banks, Billy Collins, Donald Hall, Barry Hannah, Kathryn Harrison, Elizabeth Hardwick, Tony Hoagland, Denise Levertov, Barry Lopez, W.S. Merwin, Czeslaw Milosz, Lorrie Moore, Susan Orlean, Grace Paley, Richard Rodriguez, George Saunders, and John Edgar Wideman.

The program also gives back to the community through Writers Harvest, the nation’s largest reading series working to help fight hunger. Each October, members of the Creative Writing Program faculty hold a public reading of their work; admission is $5, with all proceeds benefiting Southeastern Ohio Food Bank’s Second Harvest program, which distributes surplus food from farmers, grocery stores, and restaurants to needy families. The 2012 event raised $900 and drew 150 listeners.

Broadcasting for the Tri-State Region

One of the University’s widest-reaching cultural assets is the WOUB Center for Public Media, which provides public broadcast services, student professional development, and non-broadcast educational services to the region. The center operates one AM and five FM (the WOUB Radio Network) radio stations; two public television stations, WOUB-TV and WOUC-TV; and one cable channel, WOUB II. Including delivery by cable systems and direct broadcast satellite services, WOUB radio and television services cover over 50 counties in Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky, reaching up to 634,000 households.

WOUB also operates and provides technical and logistical support for the Ohio University Learning Network, which brings Athens-campus courses to all seven Ohio University regional campuses and centers, surrounding post-secondary colleges, businesses, and hospitals via a compressed video network (with both IP and ISDN connectivity).

WOUB provides community outreach in a variety of ways. In 2012-13, for example, WOUB held 44 Ohio Ready to Learn Professional Development workshops for home-based care providers. These workshops reached 400 adults in a train-the-trainer model. For comparison, public media stations of similar size offered an average of only nine workshops.

634,000

Households reached by WOUB radio and television services annually, including delivery by cable systems and direct broadcast satellite services.
Through its numerous athletic facilities, venues, and outdoor spaces, Ohio University is among the most prominent sources of recreation in southeast Ohio. Athletic events sustain a vital connection with alumni and local communities; University facilities provide venues for large-scale community gathering and events as well as possibilities for outdoor recreation.

**Athletic Offerings to Benefit Community**

A source of pride for the community and alumni, OHIO’S NCAA Division I athletics program serves over 400 student-athletes each year in six men’s and nine women’s sports. Attendance for ticketed sports exceeded 272,000 in the 2011–12 school year across 131 home games and other Ohio Athletics events. Ohio Athletics generates significant economic impact for the region, with $70 million in total economic output annually, representing over 800 Ohio jobs (2012). Ohio Athletics also gives back to the community through regular volunteer opportunities. Annually, student-athletes, coaches, and staff donate over 4,000 hours of community service to more than 50 organizations throughout southeast Ohio.

Among Ohio Athletics’ most significant community programs are youth summer camps, which allow aspiring young athletes to improve their skills and experience campus firsthand. In summer 2011, nearly 2,000 students chose from among nine camps on the Athens campus, including men’s and women’s basketball, women’s softball, field hockey, and football.
Outstanding Recreational Facilities

Some OHIO facilities offer unique opportunities to southeast Ohio residents. For example, Bird Arena—the only ice rink in Athens—hosted more than 30,000 participants in youth hockey and adult hockey events in 2012. Bird Arena also opens its doors to the community with a variety of recreational programming, including figure skating and private rink rentals, and is the home venue for the Appalachian Hell Betties roller derby team.

Baker University Center offers 183,000 square feet of office, meeting, and event space for public and private use. Between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012, the Baker University Center hosted meetings and events with total estimated attendance of nearly 40,000 non-University users and 3.9 million total attendees. In total, the Baker University Center generated more than $410,000 in revenue in 2011–12, including more than $40,000 from external users.

Unrivaled Recreational Amenities

Ohio University’s grounds are a source of beauty and provide outdoor recreation space for student and community members. OHIO provides access to bike paths and jogging trails, including a portion of the 19-mile Hockhocking Adena Bikeway. The historic College Green, the Athens Campus’ central lawn, is home to Cutler Hall, a registered National Historic Landmark, and the Athens County Soldiers and Sailors Monument, erected in 1893 to honor the 2,610 residents of Athens County who served in the Civil War.

In 1988, the state of Ohio gave the University the grounds and buildings that had once been the Athens Lunatic Asylum. Over the years, OHIO has renovated many of the site’s historic buildings to house the Kennedy Museum of Art, the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, and administrative offices. The buildings occupy only a small part of the property; most of this area, known as The Ridges, is undeveloped. The hilly, wooded site is popular.
CREATING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION AND SERVICE

Two of OHIO’s core values, community and citizenship are built into the fibers of the University’s vision. These values shape OHIO’s relationship to its local and regional communities, creating a collaborative culture that amplifies the impact any single organization—OHIO or its partners—could have on its own.

In Athens, OHIO works both formally (through memoranda of understanding) and informally with the city, local schools, and nonprofit organizations and businesses to improve the quality of life and place. Regional campuses, too, are pillars of their communities, providing services and access to resources that would not otherwise be available to some of the most rural parts of the state.

Community Support through Volunteerism

Service learning and volunteering permeate OHIO’s culture and programs—so much that more than 770 OHIO alumni have served in the Peace Corps since its founding in 1961. Many campus organizations help address the region’s challenges with hunger and poverty through food drives and charitable donations. Others make Athens a better place to live through cleanup projects that beautify the city and demonstrate pride in OHIO’s location.

Student initiative also yields benefits for community nonprofits. Since 2011, the Center for Sports Administration (part of the College of Business) has partnered with O’Bleness Health System to produce Race for a Reason. The largest charity-based race event in Athens, Race for a Reason allows competitors to solicit pledges and donations for the charity of their choice. The 2012 event raised $30,000 for 88 charitable organizations through a triathlon, a 5K race, and a “mud run.” The goal for 2013 was to exceed 1,000 participants and reach $60,000 in donations and pledges.

with hikers and history buffs; it also serves as a learning and research land lab for faculty and students both from the University and area secondary schools.

Ohio University’s regional campuses also invite community residents with parks, bike paths, walking paths, pavilions, and large open-air arenas. For example, the Ohio University Zanesville Campus partnered with the Muskingum Valley Park District to preserve and renovate the 63-acre Collegial Woods. The Woods feature trails ranging from family friendly to rigorous and provide opportunities for special events and student transformational learning.

63-ACRES

Ohio University Zanesville Campus partnered with the Muskingum Valley Park District to preserve and renovate the 63-acre Collegial Woods.
OHIO students also donate time and support to the region’s natural surroundings. Embodying Ohio University’s commitment to citizenship and community, OHIO students and faculty volunteer alongside community members to clean, plant, mulch, and otherwise care for the streets and parks in Athens on the annual Athens Beautification Day organized by Student Senate’s Off-Campus Life Commission (see sidebar).

The Annual Food Drive through the Sociology of Poverty Course (SOC 3300), for example, dovetails lessons on hunger and food insecurity locally and throughout the world. Since the first food drive in 2006, students have collected more than 1,500 pounds of food for local residents in need. In recent years the food drive has expanded to include other faculty members and students in additional courses, making it truly a departmental effort.

“I was involved in the Athens community and a lot of community organizations. That idea [of community service] is very strong in Athens, so when people find out about the Peace Corps, it’s easy for them to jump to, ‘I could see myself doing this, and I could succeed at that.’ …Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are a valuable commodity to our communities. Even now, I can’t stop volunteering and can’t stop serving.”
— Jeff Rhodes, BSJ ’04

ATHENS BEAUTIFICATION DAY

Each year, the Off-Campus Life Commission of Ohio University Student Senate organizes Athens Beautification Day to clean up the city and make it a more inviting and attractive place to live.

In 2012, volunteers from more than 70 student organizations picked up 25,000 bags of trash, planted flowers, mulched trees, and cleared brush. Participation included more than 1,400 volunteers, a 75 percent increase from 2011. Among these volunteers were roughly 600 Greek students (about half of the Greek student population) and hundreds of other students, faculty and community members. The 2013 event received more than $10,000 in donations from supporters such as uFUND and the City of Athens, in addition to in-kind transportation OHIO provided for projects around the area.

FOOD DRIVE

The Community Assistant Program supports the Off-Campus Living mission through education and outreach in off-campus student neighborhoods. This initiative promotes civic responsibility, forging a more positive relationship between the Athens community and students who live off campus.
K-12 Collaboration

Among OHIO’s most significant community impacts is its involvement in the K-12 school system, where the University both serves and collaborates with students and faculty to improve science, math, and language performance. Ohio University’s outreach and collaborative programs cultivate resilience and confidence in regional students as they pursue their educational goals and prepare to enroll in and complete postsecondary education.

Each year, for example, the College of Arts and Sciences runs a variety of science outreach programs that expand the breadth and depth of opportunity available to Athens County students, including open houses by the Department of Physics and Astronomy that bring hundreds of community members onto campus to tour facilities and meet students and staff.

In the 2011–12 school year, the Scripps College of Communication hosted an Ohio Scripps Regional Spelling Bee for the first time, attracting 70 students in grades five through eight from 33 Ohio counties. The estimated economic impact from this one-day event was approximately $9,000. The event was so successful that OHIO has been asked to split it into two days for the following year, resulting in an estimated economic impact of up to $15,000.

OHIO SCRIPPS REGIONAL SPELLING BEE

In 2011-12, the Scripps College of Communication hosted the regional spelling bee, which attracted 70 students in grades five through eight from 33 Ohio counties

$9,000
Estimated economic impact from the Ohio Scripps Regional Spelling Bee one-day event
in revenue for the community from the large number of students and families visiting Athens. In addition to the spelling bee itself, participating students had access to a wide variety of enrichment activities while on campus, including video game design sessions in the Game Research and Immersive Design Lab; access to two sessions about dinosaur research with renowned dinosaur anatomist Dr. Larry Witmer; and options to attend Civil War and World War II exhibits and discussions at Alden Library.

Ohio University Upward Bound partners with 17 area high schools to provide readiness skills and support services for potential first-generation college students in their freshman or sophomore year. The program cultivates resilience, confidence, and preparation for a healthy and successful transition to, and graduation from, a college or postsecondary institution. Upward Bound increases motivation, fosters social leadership, and cultivates cultural awareness by broadening the perspectives of and opportunities available to area high school students.

Community Education and Therapeutic Services

Ohio University is a comprehensive institution of higher learning—which means that it opens the world of ideas not only to students and faculty, but also to the residents of its campus communities. With a wide range of workshops and outreach efforts, OHIO adds to quality of life and community vitality in southeast Ohio.

The Kennedy Lecture Series is perhaps the most prominent example of the rich—and free to the public—access to ideas and people from around the world. The series’ guest pre-eminent scholars, writers, and speakers offer new and stimulating thoughts on major public issues, cultural affairs, and important scientific issues. In 2012 and 2013, lecturers included the founding president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, two New York Times best-selling authors, and the inspiration of the Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act.

The Stevens Literacy Center in The Gladys W. and David H. Patton College of Education provides a wealth of enrichment programs and resources for teachers and community members. Writing to Assess Mathematical Practices (RAMP) Up combines writing-to-learn strategies, formative assessment practices, and mathematical practices from the new Common
Core state standards to engage fourth- through sixth-grade teachers in student-oriented math.

In 2011 and 2012, the Scripps College of Communication hosted two-week Communication for Development Workshops for officers of community groups as part of a nine-month blended learning course. UNICEF staff members from 37 different countries offered professional communication counsel to members of 12 community groups. In 2011, the project also included collaboration with Paper Circle, a local nonprofit, in which UNICEF officers developed a Communication for Social Change Toolkit based on community research and input. Feedback from Paper Circle indicates the kit will save “incredible amounts of time and money” in the years ahead. In summer 2012, Ohio University partnered with UNICEF for a two-week training workshop on campus, specifically focusing on local organizations in southeast Ohio.

OHIO’s regional campuses, too, provide significant resources for their local communities. The Ross County/Ohio University Chillicothe Child Development and Family Service Center is home to several community agencies, including Head Start, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, Walnut Street United Methodist Church Outreach Program, and the Chillicothe City Schools–Preschool Program, as well as classrooms for Chillicothe Campus students majoring in education and nursing. Because of its relatively rural and sparsely populated location, the center is a critical centralized source of family services.

The Ohio Horse Park at Ohio University Southern Campus is a center of learning and opportunity for students and the public. In addition to its acclaimed Center for Therapeutic Riding—which uses equine therapy to assist individuals with disabilities—OHP offers summer camps for disadvantaged children, field trips for secondary school students, and riding lessons for the public. It also is a venue for local organizations’ events, including nationally recognized National Barrel Horse Association shows.
CONCLUSION

Ohio University’s impact on quality of place and community development is significant in both its variety and scope. Through arts and cultural events, recreation and athletics, and volunteerism and a culture of service, OHIO—as an institution and as a collective of individual students, faculty, and staff—demonstrates a commitment to improving its communities and its surroundings. 

Through community engagement and collaboration, OHIO assists Athens and its regional campus communities in a way that helps strengthen businesses and improve the lives of residents well beyond the campus borders.