



OHIO HOUSE FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY

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Chairman Carfagna. Ranking member Sweeney. Representatives Edwards, Miller and Perales.

Chair Carfagna and members of the House Finance Higher Education subcommittee, it is my privilege to testify before you today on behalf of Franklin University, in support of House Bill 166 and Governor Mike DeWine's proposed budget. My name is Christopher Washington. I serve as the Executive Vice President for Franklin University with its main campus located here in Columbus, Ohio. In my role I serve as the chief executive officer of Urbana University, a branch campus of Franklin University located in Urbana Ohio.

Mr. Chair, on behalf of Franklin President, Dr. David Decker, and the entire leadership team at Franklin, I want to publicly recognize and applaud your efforts to get to know us by your recent visit to Franklin University. We appreciated that you shared your vision, exchanged ideas with members of our leadership team, and expressed your dedication to advancing education and workforce development in Ohio. My hope today is that more legislators get the opportunity to learn about Franklin University's efforts to align with the state of Ohio's goals for affordable and attainable higher education.

Franklin University: From YMCA to the International Arena

Distinguished members of the committee, Franklin University is a student-centered, nonprofit, independent institution that provides high quality, relevant education enabling the broadest possible community of learners to achieve their goals and enrich the world. At Franklin, we are the proud inheritors of a long and consistent history of serving adult students, a history that spans more than a hundred years. Franklin was founded in 1902 at the Columbus YMCA, under its sponsorship as the YMCA School of Commerce.

Today Franklin continues to offer professionally oriented programs of study, but now grants degrees at the Associates, Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degree levels, not just at our downtown Columbus campus, but also at our Urbana University branch campus in Urbana Ohio, and at various locations throughout our state, and around the globe, largely in partnership with community colleges. Since 1998, Franklin has also offered degree programs of study to students all over the state, nation, and around the world via online and hybrid formats that take advantage of the best features of face-to-face and online teaching and learning modalities.



Franklin University students are diverse in many respects, including work and life experience. Working adults can find a traditional full-time academic schedule restrictive, and therefore their needs are different from those of 18-21 year old students who can dedicate to full time academic study and life on a college campus. Today, Franklin's average student age is 35, split almost evenly between male and female students. Enrollment includes more than 300 international students from more than 72 countries and the ethnic diversity includes 25% American Indian, Asian Pacific Islanders, and Hispanic ethnicities, in addition to 18% African American, 55% White and 2% other. Franklin has also maintained military and Veteran friendly designation since the late 90's.

In 2009, the university began offering its MBA at the WSB Universities in Poland. Since signing this agreement with WSB, Franklin has entered into educational agreements with educational institutions in eight other countries.

Guiding Principles

As a nonprofit institution dedicated to helping working adults by providing them with relevant education to meet their goals, Franklin University operates to make college accessible and affordable to everyone. I am here to testify that Governor DeWine's proposed executive budget includes a number of education investments that support Franklin University's ability to achieve our mission and to operate in the best interests of our students, their families, and our community.

In pursuit of our mission, Franklin University is guided by a set of very specific principles. These principles include providing greater access to educational opportunities, adapting to the needs of our current and future students, and responding to changes in society, the professions and the business community. Given these operating principles, we anticipate that the Governor's planned investment in higher education, if passed, will have a compounding positive effect on social and human capital outcomes of our University.

The operating philosophy at Franklin guides our efforts to anticipate and prepare the broadest population of students for the future. We seek to tightly align our curriculum with corporate efforts to reinvent and modernize their workplaces, work, and worker knowledge and skills. In order to do so we have taken a partner-centric approach to determining the relevance of our educational programs. We find it necessary to continuously engage with internal and external constituencies to gain insight into their educational needs and expectations, and to learn about societal and workforce trends.

Through our partnerships we've noted:

1. A dramatic increase in the mobility of labor and capital in world markets.
2. An ever-increasing reliance on technology and the resulting interconnection of the global market. Automation, machine learning and robotics are often designed to replace low wage tasks with work requiring higher levels of knowledge and skills. This phenomenon has the



potential to increase the wage gap by educational levels by growing high wage jobs while shrinking low wage jobs.

3. A trend of American students away from math, science, and technology-related careers, compromising the nation's ability to compete on a global scale.

Franklin works to define and to respond to these trends by:

1. Pursuing multiple strategies to increase the affordability of higher education.
2. Providing access to education via our operational policies and practices.
3. Providing students with an education that prepares them to accept the inevitability of change and develop the mindset and skills to adapt to those changes throughout their career.

Affordability

Franklin University strives to meet the state of Ohio's goals for affordable and attainable bachelor's degree education. We partner with other educational providers through friendly transferability of college credit and streamlined cost.

For starters, the annual cost of attending Franklin University is approximately \$16,300 as compared to \$33,000 for private Universities. However, approximately 90% of our students transfer in credit from other institutions, and Franklin University students transfer in over 60 credit hours on average from prior learning experiences.

How did this happen? In support of being a transfer friendly institution, in 1998, Franklin University created the Community College Alliance (CCA), a program designed to ease the way for students from career tech, community colleges, and universities to transfer the maximum number of college credits toward completing a bachelor's degree at Franklin. More than 265 community colleges across the U.S. have partnered with Franklin University in this way.

The cost implications of this program are significant. Many of Franklin University students participate in either 2+2 partnership agreements or 3+1 agreements. In a 3+1 agreement, students earn an associate degree from a community college while enrolling at the community college for three years at an average cost of between \$6,000 and \$6,800 a year, transfer to Franklin to enroll in higher level courses and satisfy bachelor's degree requirements at the Franklin rate. This could reduce the overall cost of a four-year degree to approximately \$35,000.

Our support for Ohio's **College Credit Plus (CCP)** program and commitment to collaborating with our high school partners enable us to further reduce the cost of education to Ohio families. A student who takes 30 credit hours via one year of participating in College Credit Plus, subsequently enrolls for two years at a community college in Ohio, and enrolls in their final year of study in one of Franklin University's Bachelor degree programs could achieve the goal of a college degree at a cost of under \$28,000 based on 2018-19 academic year costs.



With regard to innovations in support of our educational partnerships,

- Under the leadership of our Chief Information Officer, our programming teams created an online [College Credit Portal](#), enabling more efficient transfer credit consideration and has saved over 1,000 hours of manual administrative work for our partners.
- In support of expanding Ohio's College Credit Plus opportunities to more schools, we have worked to address the challenge faced by many small and rural school administrators, who often find it more difficult to hire High School teachers who satisfy the credentialing criteria of CCP, which requires a Master's degree and 18 graduate credit hours in discipline in order to teach college level courses. Franklin has leveraged instructional technology, design faculty expertise, and college faculty to develop a blended course model. Blended courses rely on a collaborative team consisting of our Faculty and the High School teachers who can deliver courses onsite at the high school.

Operational Policies and Practices

Over years of serving busy working adults, we have learned that our diverse student population is cost sensitive, needs and expects a relevant education, desires an experience that is convenient, efficient, and services that are friendly and relate to their educational experiences. Our access strategies recognize that our students come from a wide range of range of work-life circumstances, socioeconomic and academic backgrounds, and locations. Keeping the needs of students at the forefront of Franklin's operations is reflected in our University-wide committed to:

- Replacing pricy textbooks with far less expensive e-books and often free online resources available through OhioLink and other sources.
- Offering programs and courses at multiple physical locations and in collaboration with community college partners
- Providing a variety of course formats including face-to-face, online, hybrid, and accelerated courses.
- Supporting our open admissions policies in our decision making and student support services.
- Offering flexible scheduling, multi-year scheduling, and rolling admissions.
- Accommodating students' class section requests.
- Maximizing transfer of college credit.

Relevance: Preparing Students for the Future Workforce

In taking a partner-centric approach to assuring the relevance of our education, we have engaged in a number of practices that assure strong partner relations and increase students' employment or promotion potential. These include:



- Professional advisory boards for each major.
- Career services.
- Undergraduate and graduate degree curriculum and activities that enhance the academic and personal development of students.
- FranklinWORKS Partnerships.

In 2017, we established the **FranklinWORKS** office. FranklinWORKS partners with more than 60 organizations in Ohio ranging from non-profits, state and city governments, corporations and associations. FranklinWORKS provides onsite courses and programs, training sessions, and certificates of completion.





Near Term Innovation: Micro-credentials

Franklin University understands the need to make higher education more accessible to more students and their learning experiences more stackable to more advanced credentials.

Leveraging our design services through the International Institute of Innovative Instruction, online courses, workforce partnerships with FranklinWORKS, a transfer-credit focus, and long-history of successfully serving the adult student, Franklin is well positioned to pursue and become the micro credential leader for Ohio's workforce.

Franklin University is piloting four partnership projects to create best practices for developing and delivering micro credentials to increase workforce skills.

- 1) **Data Driven Leadership Pilot:** Franklin surveyed our graduate alumni to gauge their interest in receiving micro credential courses to learn more on how to be successful in meeting the challenges facing today's workplace environment. The topics selected were: Data Analytics for Decision Making, Data Analytics for Persuasion, Data to Action: Managing Change, Data to Action: Leading Organizations, which will be offered this Summer.
- 2) **Partner Pilot:** Franklin is working with our FranklinWORKS partners to provide certifications for graduate courses where students can take a single course, or a series of courses, based on their skillset needs, without having to register for the entire graduate program.
- 3) **Industry Pilot:** Franklin is working with an Association to offer soft skills micro credentials in the areas of Professionalism, Verbal and Written Communication, Time Management, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, and Self Reflection.
- 4) **Center for Cybersecurity:** Franklin will create micro credential courses in the areas of Intrusion Detection, Cloud Computing + Security, Robotics Process Automation (RPA), and Python Programming Fundamentals.

Franklin University understands the value that micro credentials, nano degrees and certificates can bring to the individual and workforce in the short term.

These pilots will be designed in ways that enable lifelong learners to complete credentials that stack to degree programs, enable learners to pursue education at *their own pace based on career needs and interests* without losing the credits/certificates they earned along the way, thus saving them time and money.

Advancing Quality

Working with the full-time faculty at Franklin University, the International Institute for Innovative Instruction is designed to advance quality instruction and foster continuous improvement of student learning and success through continual assessment. Through assessment, we are able to demonstrate



student learning and elucidate areas of opportunity to improve student learning. Aims of the assessment process include:

- Setting appropriate criteria and high standards for learning quality.
- Gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence to determine how well performance matches standards.
- Analyzing the assessment data to inform, explain, and improve performance.
- Create a shared academic culture dedicated to assuring and improving the quality of higher education.

Conclusion

At Franklin University, we believe that higher levels of education will be in greater demand as employers increase their sophistication in the use of information technologies, automation, and robotics. Our aim is to assure that the education we provide prepares our students for the jobs of tomorrow, while maintaining our commitment to accessibility and affordability. I hope this testimony demonstrates our continued commitment to these aims.

Chair Carfagna, and members of the committee, thank you for your consideration of my testimony today on behalf of Franklin University. We hope to continue to partner with the state in preparing Ohioans with the knowledge and skills needed to finish, advance, and succeed in their careers and communities.