



# Workforce Development

2009-2010 Key Issue Overview (page 1 of 2)

As an employer, having access to quality workers is essential to your competitiveness. In order to grow and succeed in today's economy; businesses must adapt and change at a faster pace. That change requires better trained, highly skilled employees. Technology-based jobs are slated to grow at a rapid rate in the 21st century, meaning that the jobs of the future will require better educated and better prepared employees.

But it's not just growth in new industries that will require better-prepared workers. All industries – manufacturing, health care and service sectors to name a few – need to know that when older workers retire or expansion opportunities materialize, they will be able to find qualified individuals who are ready to help their business succeed.

## Chamber Agenda: *Where We Stand*

- ▶ Implement the Ohio Skills Bank (OSB) to identify regional skills shortages and to provide a seamless link among regional educational institutions, workforce development organization and businesses.
- ▶ Incentivize individuals to pursue career paths or upgrade their skills in line with key employer in the region and their strengths and workforce skills shortages.
- ▶ A robust, coordinated stackable certificate program through community colleges and adult career center, adequately funded, is a key component of the workforce development strategy.
- ▶ Push for the establishment of high-quality, work-study partnerships and provide state funding for local chambers of commerce to assist local businesses in establishing high quality, effective internship programs in partnership with Ohio's colleges and universities.  
Urge strategic use of limited state resources by aligning course offerings and degree programs with a particular institution's mission.



**CHAMBER ACTION ALLIANCE**

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## What to Expect: *Looking Ahead through 2009-2010*

As the global economy becomes more complex and demanding, Ohio's employers need a better trained workforce to meet their needs. Keeping this in mind, the legislature and the Governor will continue to address issues such as increasing college graduation rates, sustaining state support, elevating enrollment levels and lowering tuition costs. In fact, after passing a budget two years ago that contained no tuition increases for Ohio students, the governor is again proposing a tuition freeze in 2010 for four year colleges and no more than a 3.5 percent increase in 2011. For 2 year colleges and branch campuses, there would not be any tuition increases in 2010 or 2011.

### Governor Ted Strickland

Last year, the Governor and the legislature worked to provide the executive branch with more oversight of higher education. As a result, the Chancellor of the Board of Regents now reports directly to the Governor. This move is designed to create more accountability from Ohio's universities and colleges. Chancellor Fingerhut also released his 10 year strategic plan for Ohio's university system. The plan has three major objectives; graduate more students, keep more of our graduates in Ohio and attract more degree holders from out of state.

We expect more of the same commitment from the governor in terms of higher education. His seniors to sophomores program aims at getting more seniors in high school to earn college credits before graduating. We also expect to see more efforts from Ohio institutions in better utilizing their branch campuses and establishing a seamless system for transferring credits among Ohio's universities and colleges.

### The Ohio General Assembly

At the beginning of the 127th General Assembly the legislature answered the Governor's call to provide more funding to Ohio's public universities and colleges with the passage of Ohio's two year operating budget. By providing these institutions with more than \$300 million in new funding they were able to ensure a two year tuition freeze at all public institutions. These are necessary steps toward making Ohio a more attractive place for students to earn a degree and for employers to hire the talent they need.

Funding in areas such as STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) will continue to be a focus. These are areas that will greatly benefit Ohio businesses because they are the disciplines that are needed by the industries of the future and allow us to build on our manufacturing and research strengths.



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