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NEW STATE BUDGET PUTS MORE OHIOANS ON THE PATH TO REWARDING CAREERS

COLUMBUS, OH – Leaders at Ohio’s community colleges are praising Governor Mike DeWine and members of the General Assembly for their leadership in passing the new state budget, which they say has strengthened workforce development programs in the state to better prepare Ohioans for careers in the fast-changing workplace.

“Ohio is stronger today thanks to this budget,” said Jack Hershey, President and CEO of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges. “By increasing investments in community colleges, while also providing more opportunities for Ohioans who may not want to seek a college degree to earn an industry-recognized credential or short-term certificate, this budget puts us a better position to put more Ohioans on the path to rewarding new careers.”

Among important measures adopted in the new state budget is a 3% increase in Ohio’s performance-based funding formula for higher education over the next two years, an incentive for colleges and universities that rewards student success and program completion. Since that formula was put in place in 2014, Ohio community colleges have achieved an 8.5% increase in the number of degrees and one-year certificates awarded, along with a 22% increase in short-term certificate awards. The new two-year budget appropriates \$30 million to provide microcredentials or short-term training to current and prospective workers.

According to Hershey, Ohio’s community colleges look forward to carrying out the vision of the DeWine-Husted Administration and the General Assembly, leaders who clearly understand the important role our colleges play in Ohio’s workforce development efforts.

To complement the DeWine Administration’s increasing focus on workforce training, Ohio community colleges recently created the Ohio Workforce League, a statewide team focused on strengthening career-readiness training efforts and staying ahead of emerging job trends. The Ohio Workforce League will also help ensure that community colleges are doing all they can to help the state meet its ambitious attainment goals that call for 65 percent of residents ages 25-64 to have a degree, license or certificate by 2025.

Following are some of the statements from Ohio’s community college leaders praising the recent passage of the budget bill:

“On behalf of Clark State’s Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, and students, I want to extend my gratitude to the DeWine Administration for their focus on workforce and their recognition of the critical role that community colleges play in the economic development efforts of the State,” said Clark State President Jo Alice Blondin, Ph.D. “The higher education budget recognizes those priorities, and Clark State will do everything possible to carry forward these initiatives.”

“Stark State College and the students and employers we serve are grateful for the state’s investment in credentials and short-term training programs that lead to in-demand jobs in our community,” said Stark State College President Para M. Jones, Ph.D. “This funding will help Ohio citizens gain the skills and credentials they need to advance their careers and it will help Ohio employers with incumbent worker training. It’s a ‘win’ for individuals, employers and the economy.”

“Governor DeWine not only listened to the voices of community colleges, but he took action to focus the budget on programs proven to be effective in increasing skilled workers and promoting collaboration between community colleges and regional employers,” said Dr. Doreen Larson, president of Edison State Community College. “We are lucky also to have leaders in the General Assembly from our region who visit our campuses and talk to our students. They know that we have students who are eager to gain new skills and the new state funds will fast track these students into good-paying jobs.”

“Investing in degrees, certificates, and short term credentials that lead to great jobs in growing fields is a win-win for students, employers and our community,” said Dr. Ryan McCall, president of Marion Technical College. “This is a smart choice by our governor and state lawmakers to focus on skills students need to succeed in the workforce.”

“Community colleges are an integral component to the overall strength of the local economy,” said Steve Robinson, Ph.D., president of Owens Community College. “Ohio’s new budget brings a greater focus to Owens mission in customizing workforce programs and training to meet the needs of local businesses looking for skilled personnel or upgrading skills of their current employees. We work closely with businesses and industries throughout northwest Ohio, such as with First Solar, Dana Corporation and Marathon Petroleum Corporation, in providing short-term certificate training for their workers.”

“Terra State Community College is very excited with what the governor and lieutenant governor have provided for our students across the state of Ohio,” said Dr. Ronald Schumacher, president of Terra State Community College. “At Terra State, we will be building new programs including certificates and other credentialing initiatives.”

“The essential skills needed by numerous in-demand jobs are becoming more specialized as technology changes. When community colleges and employers work together to design courses that address industry-specific training needs, everyone involved benefits – especially the workers,” said Dr. Vicky Wood president of Washington State Community College. “Through the new budget bill, Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and the Ohio General Assembly have taken a clear step to fortify our workforce. Through these new funds, Washington State Community College and other institutions can further strengthen invaluable partnerships, reach new areas of in-demand jobs, and change more lives of Ohioans who will benefit tremendously by receiving an industry-recognized credential.”

The OACC, representing the presidents and trustees of Ohio’s 23 public two-year institutions, works to advance our community colleges through policy advocacy and professional development. For more information, please visit www.OhioCommunityColleges.org.