Hope Springs Eternal: Private Colleges, the State, and the Promotion of the Common Good

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Higher education has become a necessity for the attainment of a career, success and, most importantly, knowledge and wisdom. Students who pursue a college degree have a variety of options: public, private, and technical career colleges. The private nonprofit colleges in America enroll 3.4 million full-time students, which equates to about 30 percent of the population of students attending four-year institutions (Chingos). During the 2013-2014 academic year, Ohio private nonprofits enrolled 31% of the full-time students in the state (Chingos). Evidently, there is a sizable demographic of students who seek out private colleges for education. These private institutions have managed to attract such students for a variety of reasons; those in the liberal arts tradition have done so through a holistic approach to learning that “helps [students] stand out among the outstanding” (Matesich Rotary). Evidently there are a great deal of students enrolled in these institutions because of this unique approach. Since Ohio’s private colleges continuously adapt to provide a strong, timely, and cost-effective education for their students, they are an asset to the students they enroll and the communities in which they operate. For the sake of the community and the common good, these institutions must be assisted in their mission to educate the next generation of citizens.

According to R.W. Carstens, “Education involves the manner in which people define themselves in the world by the use of knowledge for true personal development,” which is the goal of a liberal arts institution (1). A liberal arts education must include certain facets, such as classes that confront modern dilemmas in a diverse world and allow for introspection, to develop individuals (Carstens 2). Ohio’s private liberal arts higher education institutions develop their students to confront modern issues and find personal fulfillment throughout their lives. Ohio’s
private institutions do this in a variety of ways: academically, professionally, etc. One specific way that these institutions fulfill this mission is by providing timely, cost-effective education.

Ohio’s private higher education institutions ensure their students graduate on-time and at minimal cost in comparison to the state public institutions. Students who attend these institutions graduate faster than those at public colleges and universities. 53.3% of students at Ohio’s independent colleges graduate within four years compared to only 35.9% of students at public colleges (Get to Know). Moreover, Ohio’s private colleges are more cost effective than public institutions. The average price of a bachelor’s degree for Ohio families with an average family income less than $30,000 is costly, but not as much for the students who choose independent colleges. A bachelor’s degree at an Ohio independent college on average costs $72,227; at an Ohio public institution, it is nearly $10,000 more (Get to Know). Students who attend Ohio’s nonprofit institutions have the lowest default rate on their loans. According to the U.S. Department of Education, students who entered federal loan repayment in 2013 who also attended Ohio’s nonprofit colleges had the lowest default rate among students who attended Ohio’s colleges at only 8.1% (qtd. in “Graphs”). Students who attend Ohio’s independent colleges typically save more money and pay off their debts faster.

In addition to providing timely and cost-effective education, Ohio’s independent colleges provide educational opportunities for minority students and students in economic need. In the past decade, minority enrollment at Ohio independent colleges has increased by 50%, reaching 21,501 students (Get to Know). Additionally, these institutions serve students in economic need: 28.3% of enrolled students at these colleges and universities receive federal Pell Grants (Get to Know). These institutions continue to provide for all students from all backgrounds.
Most importantly, Ohio’s independent higher education institutions prepare students for their futures. A college degree is increasingly necessary for success. In Ohio, the better educated one is, the more likely one is to be employed. 85% of Ohioans who have attained a bachelor’s degree or higher are gainfully employed. In comparison, only 67% of those who have a high school degree or the equivalent are employed (Get to Know). The higher-level degree one has, the higher earning potential of that individual. Median weekly earnings in the U.S. for those with a bachelor’s degree in 2016 was $1,155. High school graduates on average earn $679 a week (Get to Know). In addition to current employment and income potential, half of today’s current well-paying jobs require at least a bachelor’s degree, and only a third of U.S adults have that level of education. Carnevale and others demonstrate this in their study “Good Jobs that Pay Without a BA,” in which they discover that in 2015, 55% of available jobs required a bachelor’s degree or higher-level degree (qtd. in “Graphs”). The anticipated jobs coming to Ohio will require postsecondary education. According to the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services and the U.S. Census Bureau, 41% of Ohio’s “Top 50” jobs—those with the estimated best growth and earning potential in the state from 2010 to 2020—require a bachelor’s degree; however, a 2013 estimate of Ohio’s 25 and older population shows that only 16% of Ohioans had a bachelor’s degree (qtd. in “Graphs). This gap in the necessary education for these projected jobs demonstrates the continued need for a college degree. Postsecondary education is essential for opportunity and fulfillment in Ohio.

By providing opportunities and the potential for personal fulfillment to their students, Ohio’s private institutions of higher learning demonstrate that they are contributing to the common good, which means that they should be readily supported in their missions by the state of Ohio. According to Gaudium et Spes, the common good is “the sum of those conditions of
social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment” (26). The common good provides for the betterment of the individual’s life and simultaneously provides for the betterment of the entire community through certain social conditions. For the common good to exist, “there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human . . . [including] the right to education [and] to employment” (26). Therefore, education and similar social conditions must be adequately developed and thoroughly assisted through the community and certain institutions, such as our modern educational institutions but also through the state. The state’s main obligations to its people are to protect, defend, and augment the common good. As Andrew Latham states:

The purpose of associating in political communities is to contribute to the fulfillment of their members’ distinctively human nature—that is, to their full flourishing as rational, moral, and social animals—through education and through laws that prescribe certain actions and prohibit others. The common good of the political community is not merely the provision of the material necessities of life but the promotion of what Aristotle called “the good life” (22).

According to Latham, Aristotelian thought asserts that the political community (the state) has one goal: to enable human fulfillment and the common good (22). Since education is a condition of the common good, the state must ensure the promotion of educational opportunities for its citizens. Since private institutions in Ohio excel at providing such opportunities for fulfillment, the state of Ohio should include private higher education in its cultivation of the common good.

Despite the state’s charge to promote the development of all educational opportunities—including those opportunities at private colleges—this task is not an easy one. For example,
public perception towards higher education is a challenge. In a joint study conducted by Gallup and the Lumina Foundation in 2014, it is evident that post-secondary education is considered a necessity for success. 96% of all American adults say that further education is important for success in a new global economy. Additionally, 69% of all American adults “say a degree or professional certificate will be more important in the future to get a good job” (“The 2014” 6). According to Gallup’s research, having a good job is essential to living a good life for most Americans, so the attainment of a post-secondary education is considered essential to fulfillment (“The 2014” 7).

Yet the American public has its doubts about higher education. Most Americans worry about college affordability. Gallup and the Lumina Foundation’s study demonstrates that “More than three-quarters (79%) of adults in the U.S. do not think that education beyond high school is affordable for everyone in this country who needs it” (“the 2014” 11). Concerns about affordability cause most Americans to take the price of college and the potential for debt into account when choosing a college (qtd. in “The 2014” 13). In addition to affordability, most Americans do not think a college education prepares graduates for the real demands of work. For example, Gallup and Lumina found that only 13% of Americans “strongly agree that U.S. college graduates are well-prepared for success in the workforce” (“The 2014” 15). This gap between college and career makes most American adults in this study uneasy but also demanding; they desire institutional change. When asked what colleges should prioritize in their students, “nearly three-quarters of U.S. adults (72%) say teaching students skills and knowledge that can be applied in the workforce” (“The 2014”16). The modern American, therefore, sees college as necessary for future success, but also financially damaging and lacking in the teaching of skills they need for success.
The contemporary American freshman reiterates some of these concerns. In its yearly survey of American freshmen, the University of California at Los Angeles’ Higher Education Research Institute discovered that the typical 2016 college freshman is worried about college affordability. According to the study, “Over half (55.9%) of incoming students have some concern about their ability to finance college while 13.3% report that they have major concerns about their ability to finance college” (Eagan et al 7). Most notably, these concerns are more prevalent in women, minorities, and first-generation students. Major concerns with financing college education are more common in women, Latino, African American, and first-generation students than white men and/or those who have parents who attended college (Eagan et al 7). The cost of a college education is daunting to those who seek it out.

However, the modern American college freshmen is not just in college to get a degree and then get a job. In fact, the number of students who decided to attend college mainly for the sake of better economic opportunity has been dropping since 2012 (Eagan et al 8). In the years following the Great Recession, economic opportunity was the main reason cited for attending college, but no more. Instead “first-time, full-time students entering college in the fall of 2016 placed less weight than previous cohorts on economic considerations when deciding whether to pursue higher education; instead, they drew their motivation for a college degree from a place of personal and intellectual development” (Eagan et al 8). 75.4% of the members of the 2016 incoming freshmen class claimed that gaining an education and learning new ideas were very important reasons to attend college; this is the highest rate ever reported on this part of the survey in this portion’s 46-year history (Eagan et al 8). To the average American freshman, college is about learning for learning’s sake, not just about career-readiness.
Both these studies demonstrate similar views and concerns by the public about higher education. The majority of Americans believe a post-secondary education is necessary for success and believe its purpose is to develop intellectualism, but do not believe college is preparing young people for the workforce in an affordable way. Poignantly, the state of Ohio has been attempting to address these concerns in its higher education policy, mainly due to an understanding that these concerns are valid to its citizens and because the value of a college degree is essential to the state’s economy and the welfare of its citizens. The state is attempting to increase the attainment of post-secondary education by reducing the costs of higher education and establishing workforce development plans and agencies that encourage specific policies which create better, faster, and more efficient pathways for degree completion. The private higher education sector has been providing this productive form of degree completion, yet is still affected by these policies.

Ohio has a major dilemma to face: an underprepared workforce. According to the Ohio Department of Education, the majority of Ohioans lack the necessary requirements for the state’s future jobs—the main prerequisite being post-secondary education. By the year 2020, 64% of Ohio jobs will require some type of post-secondary education, yet only 43.2% of Ohio’s working age population (25 to 64-years old) have attained a degree or certificate of this nature (qtd. in “The Case” 2). At the current educational rate, 2 million working age adults in Ohio will lack the necessary requirements for Ohio jobs by 2025, which means to combat the skills gap, Ohio will need to generate 1.3 million degree or certificate holders by that year (“The Case” 2). To tackle this issue, the Ohio Department of Higher Education has set a massive state-wide goal: that, by 2025, 65% of working age Ohioans will have attained a post-secondary education (degree, certificate, etc.) of value (“The Case” 3). This goal was set because the department and the state
both claim that “College-level learning is key to individual opportunity, competitive advantage and economic prosperity – for individuals, for businesses and for the state,” which means that Ohio and its higher education system have substantial work to do for the sake of its citizens and students (“The Case” 4).

Ohio has since begun this work. In 2012, the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents assembled a task force to study college completion and recommend how to increase post-secondary educational attainment (Ohio Board of Regents 6). The Complete College Ohio Task Force made 20 recommendations that all relied upon “focused, intentional, sustained action at the campus level” at public institutions (Ohio Board of Regents 8). The first and main recommendation that was made was for all public institutions to develop individual Campus Completion Plans that encompassed other recommendations made by the task force (Ohio Board of Regents 8). Other recommendations included expanding the ability of high school students to earn college credit, creating systems that keep students on track to graduate within or sooner than four years, and to further develop the state’s articulation and credit transfer programs (Ohio Board of Regents 9-11). In 2013, the task force’s main recommendation was solidified into law in House Bill 59. H.B. 59 included a provision that required “the board of trustees of each state institution of higher education to adopt, by June 30, 2014, an institution-specific strategic completion plan designed to increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded to students” with all plans required to align with the state’s workforce development goals and the requirement that each institution must update its plans every two years (Parker et al. “Final” 559). In addition to the solidification of the strategic completion, the bill required that the Chancellor of the Board of Regents establish plans for a “College Credit Plus” program by the end of 2013 (Parker et al. “Final” 181). The goal of the program would be for high school students to earn college credit
through public and participating private higher education institutions (Parker et al. “Final” 248). Thus, the state of Ohio began its insistence upon ensuring its colleges and universities prioritized efficient degree completion.

A similar task force was convened in 2015 by Ohio Governor John Kasich to further study how to increase degree completion with a specific emphasis on examining how to alleviate the cost of college. The Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency released its own set of recommendations in October 2015, and these have developed into real policies (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 1). The task force discovered that in-state tuition and fees at Ohio public four-year institutions was 14% higher than the national average in the 2014-2015 academic year (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 2). Despite establishing a performance-based state funding model for public institutions as well as adding tuition caps, the cost of receiving an education at Ohio public institutions was still unbearably high (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 2-3). To combat costs, the task force recommended that institutions find ways to drastically cut institutional spending and asserted that any financial savings “should be redirected to have a clear and direct benefit for students, and primarily in the form of making college more affordable,” specifically by attempting to reduce student costs, increasing student services that would promote faster degree completion, and increasing student aid (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 9). To do this, the task force recommended that each public institution set a goal for these savings and their application through fiscal year 2021 (9). In Amended Substitute H.B. 54, this recommendation became a real policy: the General Assembly required that “all state institutions of higher education, by July 1, 2016, must complete an efficiency review based on the report and recommendations of the Task Force” (Parker et al. “Bill” 280). As a result of this mandate, Ohio’s public institutions submitted these
goals to the task force. Combined, the 14 public universities in Ohio planned “to generate nearly $1.2 billion in efficiency savings and new resources” between 2016 and 2021 (“Affordability and Efficiency Task Force”). This budgetary provision forced public institutions to reduce costs for themselves and their students.

Of particular note, the task force directly mentioned time to degree in its recommendations. The task force asserted that “One of the most effective ways that colleges and universities can lower costs for students is to ensure that students complete their degrees in an efficient manner” (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 31). The task force recommended that each public institution must develop strategic completion plans that ensure its students are aware of the course loads needed to graduate on time (31). In addition to strategic completion plans, the task force also recommended that each institution modernize its graduation requirements to ensure its students graduate on time and develop more active summer programs and classes for students (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 32-33). Moreover, the task force recommended the continued creation of pathways between community and technical colleges and four-year institutions, especially 2+2 pathways, to increase degree attainment and lower tuition costs (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 34). To further the state’s attainment goal, the task force suggested that colleges and universities further expand College Credit Plus options and review the possibilities of developing 3+1 articulation and transfer policies (Ohio Task Force on Affordability and Efficiency 48-59). With these proposals, the task force continued the development of faster, cost-efficient degree completion in Ohio’s public institutions.

The 131st General Assembly responded to the task force in its biennium budget, Amended Substitute House Bill 64. First, the budget ensured that the state share of instruction
formula, which is how funds are calculated and distributed to public institutions, is shifting to be based on degree attainment and completion outcomes, not based on enrollment alone (Millane and Harris 2). The budget included provisions that capped in-state tuition and fees once again for the 2016-2017 fiscal years and a new provision that required all public institutions to develop plans that would reduce in-state student costs by 5% (Parker et al. “Bill” 270). The “5% challenge” gave leeway for each institution to do this in a variety of ways, such as reducing the number of credit hours needed for degree completion, fast-tracking degree paths, increasing the use of College Credit Plus, and offering discounts (Parker et al. “Bill” 270-271). The budget also updated the state’s push for transferability. The bill requires that by December 1, 2018, the Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education ensures that “Any associate degree offered at a state institution of higher education may be transferred to any other state institution of higher education and applied to a bachelor degree program in an equivalent field” (Parker et al. “Bill” 274). This provision has completely updated Ohio’s transferability push and has become a significant measure to increase degree attainment at a lower cost.

Both of these task forces helped to establish policies to increase degree attainment in a fast, efficient, and cost-effective manner, but two key pieces of policy that are being consistently adapted developed from them: the College Credit Plus Program and transferability programs. First, the College Credit Plus program, which replaced a prior post-secondary credit program, was established in 2014 and began operating in the 2015-2016 academic year through its founding legislation, Am. Sub. H.B. 478 (Burgraff et al. “Final” 23). The program allows participating students to earn college credit from any participating higher education institution through two different means: first, the student pays to earn only college credit or both college and high school credit or, second, the student chooses to earn both college and high school credit
with the state paying for that student’s tuition and fees (Burgraff et al. “Final” 24). The funds to pay for students in public high schools would come from the district’s appropriated funds, but for students in non-public high schools the funds would come from a state appropriation as determined by the General Assembly (Burgraff et al. “Final” 25). According to the original legislation, all colleges would be paid based on a funding formula which multiplies the credit hours earned by participating students by the fees charged per credit hour, but also based on default amounts depending upon how the college credit is earned—on campus, at a participating high school, etc. (Burgraff et al. “Final” 25-27). For private colleges, each participating private institution can enter into alternative payment agreements with the Department of Higher Education paying at least a default amount but additional fees being agreed to separately by the college and the district (Burgraff et al. “Final 28). Through these measures, high school students can earn college credit at participating institutions to shorten the length of time to earn a college degree, thus promoting fast post-secondary degree attainment.

The program has been updated consistently since its inception, especially in terms of costs to students and time of attendance. Public high school students who attend public universities still do not pay for costs incurred, but students who attend private universities may be charged depending upon the arrangements made between the college and the school district. Privates, however, can now only charge up to $158.76 per credit hour according to the Ohio Department of Higher Education (“College Credit Plus Frequently”). College Credit Plus participants can now also attend summer term at the college they choose due to 131st General Assembly’s budgetary changes (Parker et al. “Bill” 151). Through these updates, high school students are getting a financial deal to attend college early and fast-track themselves to a college degree. With the benefits of the program itself and the updates made, College Credit Plus has
saved Ohio families $262 million dollars in tuition costs and has led 90% of its participants to earn college credit (“College Credit Plus: Second”). Through the program, high school students can complete the equivalent of their freshmen year of college or more (“College Credit Plus Frequently”). College Credit Plus is also part of the “3 Year Degree” initiative since it is one of many pre-college programs that lead many students to earn their bachelor’s degree in only three years (“The 3-Year Degree”).

In addition to preparing high school students for college with credits already in their pockets, the state of Ohio has been further pursuing better options for transferability between institutions to reduce costs and increase degree attainment. As mentioned above, the 131st General Assembly mandated that the Chancellor of the Department of Higher Education create pathways between state two-year colleges and state four-year colleges so those who earn associate degrees can seamlessly transition to earning their bachelor’s degrees, which is otherwise known as the 2+2 Pathway model. The process must be developed by the end of 2018. The Department of Higher Education established the Ohio Guaranteed Transfer Pathways Statewide Steering Committee to work on the program development. The committee has members from various regional community colleges and public four-year institutions (“Ohio Transfer”).

The committee has a structured way of reaching this goal. The pathways will be developed in “clusters” based on various academic disciplines and will vary from the Arts and Humanities, to Business, to Education, to the Health Sciences, to other areas of study. To do this, Cluster Faculty Panels staffed by faculty members from participating institutions will develop the pathways with each public institution being represented (“Ohio Transfer”). Moreover, the Guaranteed Transfer Pathways will be predominately established between different regional
institutions since “students that transfer within the same region have higher success than when transferring outside of their region” (“Ohio Transfer”). Guidelines for the development include the promotion of “academic rigor and quality, as well as student choice and success” in addition to allowing students to earn a bachelor’s in less time with less cost by “reducing unnecessary duplication and institutional barriers upon transfer” (“Development”). The pathways are expected to be completed in May of 2018 (“Ohio Guaranteed”).

Despite the fact that the 2+2 pathway model is almost finished, the Ohio Department of Higher Education was given another directive as part of the 2018-2019 budget: a “3+1” degree program model. According to the Legislative Service Commission’s analysis, Amended Substitute House Bill 49, which was passed in June of 2017, requires the Chancellor, the Inter-University Council of Ohio, and the Ohio Association of Community Colleges to develop a model for students to spend three academic years at a community or technical college and then transfer to a university to finish their degrees. This model is to be finished by the end of June of 2018 (Millane et al. 5). Additionally, the latest state budget also requires the Chancellor to work with state institutions and industry leaders to “develop program models that include project-based learning to increase continuing education and noncredit program offerings” to ensure more people are able to compete for Ohio’s “in-demand” jobs (Millane et al. 5). In the eyes of the state of Ohio’s leaders, transferability is key to cost-efficient degree attainment.

The attainment of post-secondary education is a prominent goal for Ohio’s leaders, which means the work never ends. The state of Ohio is continuing its desire to reach Attainment Goal 2025 today. The recent budget requires the Chancellor and Department of Education to submit annual reports on the progress being made towards reaching the state’s attainment goal (Millane et al. 6). Moreover, Ohio’s leaders are still concerned about college affordability; the budget
created the Joint Committee on Ohio College Affordability to further study how Ohio public institutions can further drive down educational costs. The committee is to finish its report on the issue later this year and submit its findings to the Governor, Ohio Senate President, and Ohio House Speaker (Millane et al. 6). Senate Bill 5, which is sponsored by Senators Hottinger and Eklund, was the original catalyst for this committee (Archer 1).

Finally, Ohio has begun the process of allowing community colleges to develop applied bachelor’s degree programs. Under the Am. Sub. H.B. 49, the Chancellor can approve of applied bachelor’s programs if the programs have certain qualifications, such as: established agreements between the college and an industry or business that ensures students will be trained for in-demand jobs and will be employed upon graduation; the assurance that the field is in-demand and sustainable for long-lasting careers; and proof that the workforce need lacks an equivalent educational program at regional public or private institutions (Millane et al. 4-5). Since the budget was passed last summer, the Chancellor has approved of five programs at three community colleges: Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Lorain County Community College and Sinclair Community College. The programs include land surveying, micro-electronic manufacturing, and aerial technology to name a few. These programs still need to be reviewed by the Higher Learning Commission, but—if approved—will be in operation by the fall of 2019 (“Chancellor”). The state is continuing its mission to increase degree attainment in a timely, cost efficient manner by developing new solutions.

The state’s goal and forward-thinking policies affect Ohio’s private high education sector. First, Ohio’s private colleges and universities naturally adapt to what occurs in the state and the nation. This fact is evident in the histories of three central Ohio private institutions: Otterbein, Capital, and Ohio Dominican. All three institutions adapted to changes that occurred
in their times: the educational needs of the local populations, the financial strains of economic downturns, and the changing attitudes towards minorities, women, and education in general. Furthermore, Ohio’s private educational institutions have also been meeting the current needs of the state already. As previous statistics demonstrated, private colleges and universities in Ohio already produce more cost-effective and time efficient degree holders than Ohio’s public colleges. Despite already fulfilling the state’s goals, these institutions continue to adapt themselves to current state policies in order to continue providing such educational opportunities.

First, Ohio’s private colleges and universities have consistently adapted to meet the needs of new generations, the changes that time has brought to higher education, and personal and political issues; all this while still trying to complete this mission. This development over time can be seen in the individual histories of colleges, such as central Ohio’s private, religious colleges: Otterbein University, Capital University, and Ohio Dominican University.

The first of these private and religious liberal arts institutions, Otterbein University, was founded in 1847 by the United Brethren Church “to benefit the church and the nation” through spreading knowledge to the faithful and those of “modest means” in central Ohio (MacLean 404). The college’s name came from Philip Otterbein, who was an evangelist during the 1700’s and the founder of the United Brethren (MacLean 404-405). The church wanted to establish the college to confront modern problems and continue their evangelization and mission through education (Garst 18). In 1864, the church began considering locations for the college. At this time, two Brethren ministers were discussing the options on their travels when a man from Westerville, Ohio, overheard them. The curious man’s mind went directly to the available location in Westerville that once housed a Methodist seminary. He took his information to a few prominent Westerville citizens, who called together a meeting and a committee to present the
United Brethren Church with a proposal. The committee and the church reached a deal on the old property and the rest, as they say, is history (Garst 24-27).

Otterbein opened its doors in September of 1847 to eight students, but within the first year the student body grew significantly. However, the curriculum “was not above that of a high school or academy”; the 1852 curriculum barely covered 4 years and was not spread between Otterbein’s college and preparatory classes (Garst 68-70). This problem was most likely due to the lack of faculty and deficient finances. Based on the frustration of students, the college’s board adopted a college course load in 1853 to prevent a drop in enrollment, and the graduation of the first class was held in 1857 (Garst 71).

Academic issues were not the only dilemma for the young college. Financial issues plagued Otterbein early in its establishment. The college relied on its founding church and its members for its initial funds (Garst 89). This became a problem when tuition ended up not being enough to cover the faculty’s wages. Soon “the needs of the college grew more rapidly than the funds” (Garst 90). The situation eventually led the church to hire solicitors to raise funds from parishes and members, but this strategy ended up costing the church and the college (Garst 90-91). The college borrowed money to pay the solicitors, who only managed to get promissory notes. Some of them, however, did manage to earn enough to allow the college to tread water (Garst 95). Luckily the college earned enough in 1853 to initiate a building program for student living space. The male and female students were so scattered they needed dormitories, and through a gift in 1854, a new dorm was finished in 1855 (Garst 100). To cover other costs, the college created an endowment plan that sold university scholarships to potential students and their families in 1865 (Garst 166). The interest kept the college operational, but led to free tuition becoming the norm among the students. Three years later, the goal amount of scholarships sold
was hit, but the debt grew substantially to the point that the university asked the church for a bailout (Garst 102-103). The college was barely surviving.

These struggles, however, did not stop the college from thriving. Otterbein was offering an undergraduate classical education in the liberal arts with the majority of students studying ministry, teaching, and law. Literary societies were established early in the college’s history. At Otterbein, the development of the mind and character of each student was seen as key to the educational experience. Seniors participated in capstones in which ethics were applied to issues (MacLean 507). These opportunities were offered to all willing students and applicants. Women and minorities were welcome to the university at its inception.

The United Brethren Church was always open to women, including in leadership roles, since it saw women in “a position of equality with men” (Garst 75). A third of the first students were women; in fact, two of the college’s first graduates were women (MacLean 408). These women started in a ladies’ course, through which most became homemakers (MacLean 408). Soon the female students pushed to be included in the ranks of the male students (Garst 85). The admittance of women as students and as faculty members angered the board and the male faculty in the beginning, but the resistance would not last long (MacLean 408). This result and the overall mission of the coeducational college was said to “open the way to women into the wider sphere” of the world (Garst 88). Otterbein was ahead of its time in this.

In addition to being open to women, Otterbein was open to minority students, including African Americans. The college “threw open its doors” to students of all races despite slavery, which the United Brethren overwhelmingly opposed (Garst 124). In 1854, the board passed a resolution specifically to encourage more African American students to attend (Garst 128-129). Eventually Otterbein became “a strong anti-slavery center” that historical figures such as
Frederick Douglass visited (Garst 129-130). In addition to having prominent abolitionists visit the campus, the home of the president was even a part of the Underground Railroad (Garst 130). Moreover, 125 students served in the Union Army during the Civil War for the sake of freedom and the nation (Garst 131-132).

After the Civil War, Otterbein adapted to a new era of industry and technology by updating its curriculum to a modern liberal arts structure. More classes in the sciences, fine arts, and literature were offered, which led to the redefinition of the college as a Christian liberal arts institution (MacLean 409). Tragically in 1870, a fire destroyed the main building, the laboratory, library and chapel with the loss totaling $40,000. Yet the college’s duties continued as they sought to rebuild (Garst 167). The temptation to move the university after the devastation was only quelled by the city of Westerville offering $37,000 to the university to restore the lost buildings (Garst 168-169). With the financial backing of its host city and the work of its faculty and staff, Otterbein stayed in Westerville and thrived, especially under the leadership of President Henry Thompson.

During his tenure, Thompson helped the university survive its difficulties because of “his skill and success as a lobbyist” (Garst 177). For example, he participated in an effort to unite and improve Ohio higher education institutions by joining the Association of Ohio Colleges. The association worked to ensure that Ohio’s institutions of higher learning were conferring degrees of worth and not “cheapening these degrees” through lax standards (Garst 178). Improving educational standards, then, was the main goal of the Association, and in 1877 its members, including Otterbein, agreed to new standards (Garst 178-179). In part, this explains why Otterbein adapted its curriculum in the late 1800’s. The college’s participation in the Association also gained the institution better finances through better solicitors (Garst 180).
In the early 1900’s, change once again knocked on Otterbein’s door. Academic majors and minors were developed in 1918, and after the 1920’s brought separate academic departments and specialized programs, such as a business major which accounted for 20% of the student body’s choice of study (MacLean 410). At this time the college was still promoting Otterbein’s goal as the development of “good citizens with a Christian understanding of life and a commitment to unselfish service” (MacLean 410-411). This mission could still be seen in the makeup of the students, who were still predominately members of the United Brethren Church. The students, however, were becoming more modern despite their religious leanings. They petitioned the university for fraternities and sororities despite the university claiming the organizations to be immoral; regardless of the college’s position, the students won and began to form social organizations (MacLean 411). After World War II and the GI Bill, a substantial population of veterans came to campus, bringing new ideas and morality. In 1947, the veterans and civilian students managed to get a dance on campus (MacLean 411).

Despite the new ideas and groups of students on campus, Otterbein struggled in the 1950’s and 1960’s. By 1960, 1,200 traditional students were at the college, but the endowment and federal grants could not relieve the college of its dependence on the church and student fees. Luckily the college knew that the baby boomers were preparing for the chance at higher education, so the curriculum was updated in 1968 to meet their needs. The new liberal arts consisted of “common interdisciplinary courses in the humanities, social sciences, arts, and natural sciences” and Integrative Study Courses meant to “enlarge [the students’] awareness and understanding of the world and of the diversity of human nature and experiences” (MacLean 412-413). Its restructure earned Otterbein national recognition and was utilized by other colleges (MacLean 413).
A College Senate was established with all the campus’s constituencies represented to create “channels of communication” for the sake of the university’s future (MacLean 413). Otterbein continued its tradition of welcoming all students regardless of color or creed. Japanese Americans from internment camps, minority students, and international students were prevalent on campus at this time. Moreover, the courses became equally diverse; in fact, a Contemporary Black Thought Course became part of the curriculum (MacLean 414). Social movements in the decade caused students to become concerned about their world, leading active members of the student body to found student organizations to confront these issues (MacLean 414). Otterbein was put “under the Methodist umbrella” in 1968 when United Methodist Church was formed (MacLean 414).

By the 1980’s, Otterbein’s enrollment declined as the baby boomers graduated and the federal government’s aid lessened (MacLean 414). A new market then emerged for Otterbein to serve: adults. Westerville had become a prominent suburb of Columbus, which was “growing by leaps and bounds” to make it a perfect market for the institution (MacLean 415). Otterbein modernized and professionalized itself through the establishment of Weekend College, master’s programs, and new majors. In 1996, Otterbein continued this trend with the creation of six new undergraduate majors, such as business administration and leadership and the liberal arts, that were flexible for adult, nontraditional students. By 2000, 37% of students at the university were nontraditional (MacLean 415). The addition of new undergraduate programs, including broadcasting, sports medicine, and public relations, begun at this time as well, (MacLean 416). These new programs would lead many potential students to Otterbein’s doors. Between 1984 and 2000, the undergraduate enrollment increased from 1,114 to 1,832 students (MacLean 416). Due to these updates, Otterbein redefined itself as a comprehensive liberal arts college with
professional programs in 1993. The university was ranked as one of the top ten comprehensive liberal arts colleges in the nation at this time due to its modernization and tradition (MacLean 416).

Today Otterbein University is still thriving. In the fall of 2016, the university had a total undergraduate enrollment of 2,475 students. 61% of these students were women and 15% were minorities, which demonstrates Otterbein’s continued commitment to educating those from diverse backgrounds (“Otterbein University”). In addition to still providing a sound education for women and minorities, Otterbein remains a military friendly institution. The institution was ranked “11th in its category on the “Best Colleges for Veterans” list in U.S. News & World Report” and is considered a Military Friendly School by G.I. Jobs magazine. The college has been ranked 11th in U.S. News & World Report’s 2016 “Guide to America’s Best Colleges” Regional-Midwest Category and has been recognized multiple times for its community service achievements, most notably by the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll in 2014, the President’s Award for General Community Service in 2008, and Washington Monthly for being a top 50 school for “contributions to the public good” in 2015. Otterbein now offers over 70 majors and 40 minors with independent study programs available to students for customized degree paths. Additionally, Otterbein has five graduate degree programs that range from business administration to nursing (“About Otterbein University”). Most notably, 100% of the students receive some form of financial aid (“Otterbein University”).

Another private college in central Ohio founded in a religious tradition is Capital University. The school was originally founded as a seminary by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1830 with its original location in Canton, Ohio (Burke 78). Its foundation was based on a meeting of church leaders in 1830 in Zanesville, Ohio, that called into question the teaching
and training of ministers. The church wanted to establish a seminary, but worried about financing and faculty hiring. Leaders overcame these fears and passed a resolution to start the school. Wilhelm Schmidt of Canton offered to teach, and other church members offered their services to find books and other resources for the college (Owens 10). A seminary constitution was written that claimed the mission of the school was to be training ministers and offering “advantages to other citizens by granting admission to the instruction imparted in [the seminary] to all applicants, whether they are German or English, or connected with the Evangelical Lutheran or with any other church” (Owens 35). Classes began this same year with one professor and two students (Owens 9-11).

The next year, the seminary moved to South High Street in Columbus, Ohio. The move was due to the influence of two supporters from Columbus who convinced the small city’s 3,000 citizens to contribute finances to the seminary and its building project. The citizens and other local churches donated to the seminary because it “promised to become a real asset to the ambitious young capital of the state” (Owens 36). At this time, the seminary had nine theology students and a handful of other students studying languages. The curriculum at the seminary was considered “rather pretentious” at the time. It was based squarely on theology, languages, logic, and philosophy and German was the predominant language used (Owens 13). Despite its elitist reputation, the students slept in drafty upper rooms of the main building or rented cabins (Owens 11-12). Unfortunately, the students were too poor to care for themselves and became “dependent on the charity of their friends” to make ends meet (Owens 15). Despite low tuition, many could not pay and dropped out. Luckily an education society was founded to help students survive and study (Owens 15).
A lack of tuition and a small student body became a problem for the young seminary’s wallet, especially considering its debt of more than $1,000 and the board’s consistent borrowing to pay off the land (Owens 15). To expand its student body, the seminary’s board moved toward the creation of a preparatory school, a plan to build a new dormitory, and a goal to clear its debt in 1834 (Owens 18). This plan started working rather quickly; soon student living spaces were full because more local students attended the seminary to study languages. Between 1840 and 1842, the Seminary board improved the property, finished new housing for students, and planned for a second building, which was ready in 1843 (Owens 19-20). To expand the student base further and decrease the debt, the seminary made adjustments to its language requirements, so students would be taught in both German and English (Owens 24). All the debts were paid off by 1848 (Owens 26).

With a new age dawning in which other churches were founding colleges, the Evangelical Lutheran Church wanted to establish its own. A Joint Synod met in May of 1939 to discuss the possibility of founding a college and sent members out to seek donations for the venture (Owens 36). The church was hopeful the college would be of benefit to the seminary and the community at large. Another Joint Synod met in 1842 and decided to work with “the Legislature for a college to be combined with the seminary” and both the Ohio and Pennsylvania synods agreed to finance the institution (Owens 38). In 1843, the church got a charter from the Ohio General Assembly to start “Germania College” (Owens 26). Unfortunately, the Pennsylvania Synod pulled its funds in 1844 (Owens 38). Due to the lack of funds and “severe financial constraints caused partly by an economic recession,” the institution did not survive past a few years (Burke 79).
The church tried again. In 1850, the state legislature passed a charter that allowed the church to found Capital (Owens 41). The name was chosen because it was located in “the seat of state government in Ohio” (Burke 80). The college was to be “a corporation for the promotion of religion, learning, and morality” based in the liberal arts with classes in Greek, Latin, math, and history (Burke 79). In addition to the liberal arts, classes were established in law, medicine, theology, and letters (Owens 43). The first term began on September 12, 1850, at the new location at East Town Street (Owens 48). Combined, the college, preparatory school, and seminary housed 125 students (Burke 80). The college students lived under strict rules and even stricter schedules with a burdensome course load. Freshmen studied subjects from algebra and geometry, to botany, to Latin and Greek (Owens 49-50). This initial course load was established “to provide for more than a purely professional training” (Burke 80). Capital was officially a thriving liberal arts institution.

The college, however, “existed on a hand-to-mouth basis” financially for the first few years (Owens 55). The fledgling college did find “a strong support in the seminary” for building and financing (Owens 56). Help also came from Columbus native and doctor Lincoln Goodale, a member of Capital’s board of trustees who donated property for a new building on North High Street. The building was erected in 1853 as a dorm and recitation hall (Burke 80). Still the 1850’s brought considerable enrollment and financial issues (Burke 80). In 1857, a new president named Reverend William F. Lehmann was appointed to handle the issues and proved that “Over and over again in critical times, a person [emerges] to save an institution from ruin” (Burke 81). Lehmann entered office with the university’s enrollment dropping and its debt increasing with the Civil War looming (Owens 73). At the time, only ten students were enrolled in the college and the Civil War further reduced enrollment, which brought more financial issues.
The college was in trouble with the state for delinquent taxes, and operating expenses were barely met (Owens 77-80). The church and Lehmann began working together to end the financial storm. The Joint Synod began sending money to the college, and Lehmann wrote news editorials and did campaigns with parishes and church members to solicit donations (Owens 81). In 1870, the Synod concluded that each parish had to donate funds, and in 1872 the church’s treasury began paying for the college. A joint appeal for funds began in 1875 (Owens 84).

Lehmann also increased enrollment. In 1859, only 10 students were enrolled in the college, but this number jumped to 30 in 1867 despite poor finances. By 1880, 100 students were enrolled in all three schools (Burke 81). In 1864, Lehmann also led an update to the curriculum in which composition, debate, and music classes were added (Owens 104-108). He also increased the number of faculty members during the Civil War to account for a growth in enrollment when the war ended (Burke 81). During this time, a consideration to move occurred by the board, and property on the east side of Columbus was chosen and moved to in 1876 (Owens 97). The hope was that the new location would get students away from the hustle of the growing city (Burke 81). By the end of his presidency, Lehmann got Capital back on track.

Yet in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, Capital began developing a reputation as a “preacher factory” because the college began mainly preparing students for the seminary. This led to a considerable drop in enrollment (Owens 123). A lag in academics caused this massive enrollment drop, especially since the college was taking six years to develop its students for graduation (Owens 137). To handle this issue and to ensure its attainment of accreditation, Capital attempted to change how it was perceived (Owens 138). Due to alumni pressure, a science curriculum was developed, and a Bachelor of Science degree began to be offered in 1896 (Owens 140-141). Formal instruction of music also began in 1889 (Owens 145).
The real development happened in the presidency of Otto Mees. During his time in leadership, “Capital truly began to develop into a liberal arts university” because Mees built up the science, letters, and music programs (Burke 82). Capital’s famed School of Music was founded in 1918 during the Mees presidency, and the Chapel Choir was established a decade later (Burke 82). At this time the teaching program at Capital was highly regarded. In 1924, two-year teacher training courses were added, and by 1926 a full bachelor’s degree in education was offered (Burke 83). In 1920, Mees established the Million Dollar Offering, a fundraising drive which was used to fund remodels and building projects (Owens 173). Through the funds, Mees managed to build new academic buildings, dormitories, and plan for a new science building and library (Owens 170). He also remodeled Lehmann Hall in 1923 (Owens 172). During his presidential career, the board allowed up to 25 women to be admitted to the college, which helped boost enrollment. In 1916, the number of students enrolled was 243. By 1948, enrollment surpassed 1,000 students (Burke 82). Mees’ leadership can be credited with this.

Hard times did hit Capital in the early 1900’s though. The Great Depression led to a horrific financial situation for the whole country, and even Capital was affected. To help, faculty members took pay reductions and even taught summer classes for free (Burke 83). Some students even participated in New Deal National Youth Association Projects to pay for school (Burke 84). World War II brought a number of enrollment issues. After the war, Harold Yochum became the president of Capital. Yochum solidified “Capital’s tradition of blending a liberal arts education with preprofessional training” (Burke 84). He also “firmly believed that Capital University should become an integral part of the Columbus community” and personified that idea in his community works (Burke 85). Under his leadership, “enrollment increased threefold, the campus doubled in size, [and] three new buildings were constructed” (Burke 84). In 1950, the
nursing school was founded, and in 1966 Capital purchased Franklin University Law School, which allowed the college’s enrollment to hit 2,000 students the next year (Burke 85). With the college thriving, Capital and the seminary separated in 1959 due in part to the administrative burden of running both operations (Burke 85). The college continued to expand. In 1968, 12 acres of property were bought to house athletic facilities (Burke 85). Capital boomed.

After the boom came the bust. The 1960’s and 1970’s saw a decline in undergraduate enrollment and over 5 million dollars’ worth of debt due to the massive and sudden development of the college. To survive, Capital stopped physical construction and began to financially reconstruct by focusing on the endowment and enrollment (Burke 86). The new president of Capital, Dr. Thomas Langevin, “developed a considerable amount of time to civic activities” (Burke 86). To benefit the community and the college simultaneously, Langevin started the law school’s full-time day program and developed an adult degree program with multiple branches and flexible schedules. By 1979, the adult degree program was serving 126 students in the state and 880 by 1990 (Burke 86-87). Langevin also worked to increase minority enrollment and the number of female staff (Burke 87).

In 1979, Reverend Henry Stegemoeller became president and sought to better the endowment and enrollment. Over the course of three years, Stegemoeller went to over 300 different Lutheran congregations to raise funds for the college. By 1981, there was a 25% growth in enrollment due to his work and the recruiting efforts of faculty, staff and alumni (Burke 87). Stegemoeller also began a mission to educate more first-generation students, which added to the enrollment. In 2003, nearly 40% of students were first-generation college students (Burke 88). By adding to enrollment and growing the endowment by $5 million dollars, the debt was alleviated by 1987 (Burke 88). When Josiah Blackmore took over the presidency in 1987, he
continued Stegemoeller’s work by soliciting $50 million in gifts, campus-wide improvements, and other means. In the 1995-1996 academic year, the enrollment hit 4,000, which made Capital “the largest Lutheran institution of higher education in the country” (Burke 88). Capital still remains one of central Ohio’s prominent private colleges.

Today, Capital’s work continues due to the dedication of those who founded and loved its mission. In the fall of 2016, Capital had 2,718 undergraduate students enrolled with 61% women and 19% minorities, proving the institution is still succeeding in its mission to educate those from all backgrounds (“Capital University”). Capital now has more than 60 majors and 50 minors from music to business to the natural sciences and humanities. Additionally, the university has multiple graduate programs, including its law school (“About Capital”). 99% of undergraduate students receive some form of aid to attain Capital (“Capital University”). Capital University is still succeeding in its purpose.

A little later than Otterbein and Capital came a small, private Catholic institution founded by religious women. Ohio Dominican University was founded in the Dominican tradition in 1911, but its story begins rather untraditionally. Its founders, the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs, were originally based in Kentucky until their move to Somerset, Ohio, in 1830 (Varrasso 60). Once settled, the sisters established St. Mary’s Academy to educate the few Catholics in Perry County (Varrasso 60-61). By the time four years passed, St. Mary’s had become known “as a competent educational facility and as a bridge builder between the Catholic Church and the residents of Ohio” (Varrasso 63). The sisters were carrying out their mission: to educate their students in a tradition that would give them lifelong benefits.

Tragedy struck the sisters and their academy in the summer of 1866 when a massive fire destroyed St. Mary’s. The sisters continued their work in the region by utilizing St. Joseph’s
Catholic Church as a school building (Varrasso 63). Two years later, the sisters got an offer they could not resist: a businessman in Columbus, Ohio, Theodore Leonard, offered the sisters property and building supplies in East Columbus. Considering the decreasing population in Perry County as well as the lack of transportation and other resources, the sisters knew they could not expand there, but knew the new offer would give them this opportunity. In July of 1968, they set out for Columbus (Varrasso 64). Once they arrived, the Dominican Sisters immediately established a new academy “that promoted both the spiritual life and the cultivation of intellectualism” (Varrasso 65).

The reputation of the academy became widespread, causing the sisters to expand their educational mission. Noting the beginning of Trinity College in Washington, the sisters realized that they wanted to establish a college for women. In 1911, the sisters received a charter from the state of Ohio which allowed them to open a literary college named The Ladies Literary Institute of St. Mary (Varrasso 67). Yet the sisters did not stop there. When Sister Stephanie Mohun became Mother General, one of her main objectives was to develop the institute into a Catholic, four-year, liberal arts college. In 1924, this goal was met when the first college classes were taught at the College of St. Mary of the Springs. The three main goals of the college were to “know the God-given purposes of life,” “prepare for life and a work in life,” and promote the ideals of “the Catholic life” in women with an emphasis in Scholastic philosophy (Mullay “Ohio Dominican University” 368). Mohun and her congregation accomplished this feat through collaboration, which became the essential piece to the college’s growth and survival (Varrasso 69). For example, the sisters collaborated with and learned from secular schools nearby, including Ohio State University. Two Ohio State University lay faculty came to teach, aid in the
college’s accreditation, and even donated their salaries to keep the college running in its early years (Varrasso 70).

Collaboration between the Dominican Sisters, individuals, and outside communities eventually saved the sisters and their new college from financial ruin. Despite the lack of funds, the sisters funded two colleges: The College of St. Mary of the Springs and Albertus Magnus in Connecticut. In 1927, the sisters began building Erskine and Sansbury Halls at St. Mary. In addition to the financing of Albertus, St. Mary’s finances became “cause for both extreme anxiety and deep faith” and led to Mother Stephanie calling the sisters to have an “unbounded trust” in God (Mullay *A Place* 195). This trust was necessary when the sisters realized they were $275,000 in debt for the Albertus Magnus property. With the financial plummeting caused by the Great Depression, the situation was dire and required the sisters to make sacrifices for the colleges to survive (Mullay *A Place* 195).

To meet the Albertus debt plus the $500,000 debt of the building projects at St. Mary’s, the sisters dedicated themselves to paying off their loans by mortgaging St. Mary of the Springs (Mullay *A Place* 198). However, when the Great Depression struck the country, “cutbacks in industry, wage and salary reductions, [and the rise of] unemployment and tax delinquency” affected even the small private college in Columbus (Mullay *A Place* 199). In fact, “many families could not afford to pay the tuition for the academies or the colleges,” causing enrollment and revenue to decline (Mullay *A Place* 199). The sisters made major personal cutbacks by conserving utilities, clothing, and other necessities; they also took up collections outside of parishes. Mother Stephanie also began “the first major fundraising appeal to benefactors and friends” for the sisters and the college (Mullay *A Place* 199).
Despite these cutbacks and works, the financial situation even affected the accreditation of St. Mary’s. In 1934, St. Mary sought accreditation from the North Central Association. The college met the academic requirements but not the admission requirements due to the Depression’s impact on enrollment and competition with Ohio State. St. Mary of the Springs needed to be accredited by September of 1935 or it would lose its ability to grant state teaching certificates (Mullay A Place 200). Sisters enrolled in the college to meet the enrollment requirement, and the college earned its accreditation (Mullay A Place 201). The sisters continued to do whatever it took to save the college.

At this time, the Dominican Sisters defaulted on the loan they owed the Ohio National Bank, leading Ohio and New York bondholders to sue for their money (Mullay A Place 200). The lawsuits were held back by congregational attorneys for two years while the sisters sought a way to reorganize the debt. The Ohio National Bank refused an extension and threatened to foreclose on the college until Bishop Hartley told the bank that the diocese would pull its money from the bank. Mother Stephanie Mohun then did whatever she could to refinance. She traveled to Washington D.C. to petition the Federal Reconstruction Finance Corporation for a loan and failed. She tried pursuing New York Mutual Life and even had the sisters in New York have New York Governor Al Smith “use his influence on behalf of the congregation” and failed (Mullay A Place 202). It was not until another sister introduced Mother Stephanie to William Albers of Cincinnati that a plan was solidified. Upon meeting him in January 1936, they made a financial plan with Provident Savings and Trust Company. The bondholders and U.S. District Court of Southern Ohio approved. Another major development helped the sisters. James Boulger, one of two congregational attorneys, managed to reorganize the debt to lower the cost
and the interest (Mullay *A Place* 203). The College of St. Mary of the Springs was saved through its collaborative efforts.

After the financial turmoil of the Great Depression, the college eventually saw improvements in its finances due to better enrollment. In the post-World War II 1950’s, a boom in Catholic school enrollment hit the country due to the integration of 12 million service members into society, a growing economy, and the baby boom (Mullay *A Place* 327). Columbus Catholic schools, such as Holy Spirit, Bishop Watterson and St. Philip, began to be staffed by sisters to accommodate the growing number of students (Mullay *A Place* 327-329). By 1965 more than 5 million students were enrolled in all Catholic schools in the nation, including Catholic higher educational institutions (Mullay *A Place* 351). This enrollment hit the College of St. Mary as well. By the end of the 1950’s, the college hit its largest enrollment number ever with 340 women (Mullay *A Place* 378). Additionally, the college joined the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges, “ensuring it of a steady stream of unrestricted income,” received a grant from the Ford Foundation, and paid off the building development debt (Mullay “Ohio Dominican University” 370).

In the 1960’s, the North Central Association’s accreditation team said that the college needed to expand its resources, specifically its library and living spaces (Mullay *A Place* 378). This report led to the sisters building Fitzpatrick Hall in 1966 to accommodate the growing number of students (Mullay *A Place* 352). To do this effectively, the sisters applied for a federal loan that was being offered to colleges to build for the baby boomers, but to meet the requirements for the loan, the sisters had to have the college and the congregation “separately incorporated” (Mullay *A Place* 379). To allow the continued growth of the college, the sisters closed St. Mary Academy in 1966 (Mullay *A Place* 368). Soon, men were admitted to the college
the next academic year, leading to the college’s name being changed to Ohio Dominican College (Mullay A Place 369).

Ohio Dominican also began the process of restructuring its board of trustees due to the “need to secure federal funds to accommodate increases in enrollment” (Mullay A Place 380). The concern stemmed from a 1966 case in the Maryland Court of Appeals, which ruled that three religious colleges could not receive state aid under the First Amendment. President Sister Suzanne Uhrhane and Sister Thomas Albert Corbett developed a new plan for the board in which the sisters held a maximum of six positions on the board. Under this plan, the congregation sponsored the university and the board of trustees owned it (Mullay A Place 380).

The 1960’s also brought social change and social justice issues to the forefront of the American political arena, leading the Dominican sisters to become involved through the college. In fact, 10.92% of the college’s graduates were African American in 1963 (Matesich Notes from OCCUP 1). In 1966, Sister Thomas Albert Corbett led the Columbus Interracial Council. By 1968, she began directing the Upward Bound Program at Ohio Dominican College. The program was offered to low-income students at the college through a federal grant from the U.S. Office of Urban Affairs, thus encouraging those students to thrive at ODC (Mullay A Place 356). The North Central Association would praise ODC in its accreditation report for being an exceptional college for minority students due to its commitment to social justice and its Dominican roots (Mullay “Ohio Dominican University” 373).

Ohio Dominican continued to look outward in this way despite the congregation no longer having ownership or as much influence. It accomplished this feat through the leadership of Sister Mary Andrew Matesich, who became the president of the college in 1978 when Sister Uhrhane resigned. The 1970’s brought new diversity to the student body with more minority and
international students walking the halls. The college began “admitting a greater number of students of lesser academic achievement” (Mullay “Ohio Dominican University” 375). As Academic Vice President and Dean, Matesich spearheaded the creation of a new humanities program through a grant to the university that made the humanities a 16-credit program with great works incorporated into writing courses (Mullay “Ohio Dominican University” 374). Through a grant from the Exxon Foundation, Matesich was able to have the entire university revamp its mission statement (Mullay “Ohio Dominican University” 375). As president, Matesich focused mainly on the college’s financial issues by growing the endowment, adding onto the science building, and constructing new athletic facilities at little cost (Mullay “Ohio Dominican University” 375). Over the course of her presidency, she increased the endowment by 450% and raised $12 million for capital and operating funds from private sources, which allowed the renovation of buildings to be almost fully paid for (Matesich Resume).

In addition to her work on the endowment and academics, Sister Matesich made it her goal to turn Ohio Dominican into “a multicultural college” (Matesich Ohio Dominican College 1). Matesich began this mission in 1989 “to improve the campus climate for minority students, increase minority enrollment and degree attainment and reach out to the neighborhood surrounding the college” (Matesich Diversity). Her strategy to accomplish this feat was multifaceted. First Matesich had the desire to improve the campus climate for all students. Through the Lilly Project and Aetna Project, the college restructured its courses to include broader academic and cultural experiences (Matesich Ohio Dominican College 1). The Lilly Endowment gave Ohio Dominican the ability to establish a mentoring program for its faculty with African American scholars, create a college reading program featuring a minority text, and begin an experimental cross-cultural course (Matesich Diversity).
Sister Mary Andrew wanted to further open the university to nontraditional students and other diverse groups. She established Operation Second Chance to encourage college dropouts to come to ODC to earn their degrees. She also helped create the Patriots Program, which gave veterans a better opportunity to attend college. Ohio Dominican already offered flexible courses and established credit for experience, but the program also developed veterans’ benefits and helped aid veterans in their transition to college (Matesich Ohio Dominican College 1). In 1981, Weekend College was offered at Ohio Dominican to expand its academic offerings in the community (Matesich Notes from OCCUP 2). Sister Mary Andrew also established community outreach programs to extend the college’s services to potential students in the neighborhood (Matesich Ohio Dominican College 1).

Most notably, Sister Mary Andrew founded the Village to Child Program (Matesich Ohio Dominican College 1). The program started in 1994 based on the knowledge that middle-schoolers in the area needed educational help. Through the program, the university adopted the zip code of Ohio Dominican (43219) to benefit its local students. Sister Mary Andrew wanted to “foster academic achievement, provide academic enrichment, and support neighborhood improvement through community service” with this program (Matesich Village 3). Ohio Dominican students, faculty, and staff became mentors and tutors to over 200 middle-schoolers, whose school attendance, GPAs, and test scores increased substantially (Matesich Diversity). The college students and program participants bonded as well; in fact, the young students would eventually attend their college mentors’ graduation (Matesich Village 5). By expanding the mission of Ohio Dominican, Sister Mary Andrew benefitted the university’s future students as well as the community at large.
Sister Mary Andrew grew the college’s reputation through her efforts outside the campus community. As a formidable force in Columbus and the country, Sister Mary Andrew chaired the Ohio Ethics Commission and served on multiple commissions for the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. She also served on the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities’ Board of Directors and the Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges (Matesich Resume). As the president of Ohio Dominican and a member of a variety of advocacy organizations, Sister Mary Andrew promoted the mission of Ohio Dominican and other private liberal arts colleges on the state and national levels.

Sister Mary Andrew promoted Ohio’s private colleges in many ways but mainly through her speeches and testimonies. In the early 1980’s, Sister Mary Andrew gave speeches to show what made private institutions like Ohio Dominican essential to the community in a unique way. In 1982, she claimed that “Small colleges can help you make it big” (Matesich Rotary). According to her, private colleges help their students “stand out among the outstanding” because the “spotlight [is] on the student” while promoting independent innovation with an “unbeatable spirit” (Matesich Rotary). At this time, private colleges in Ohio enrolled over 26% of undergraduate and graduate students. These schools enrolled 56,000 undergraduates, two-thirds of which were native Ohioans (Matesich Rotary).

Based off this information, Sister Mary Andrew began advocating for private colleges in the public sector. She accomplished this feat through her participation in the legislative process. Sister Mary Andrew testified on multiple higher education policies at both the state and federal levels. At the state level, Sister Mary Andrew testified in favor of financing state financial aid and grants for low-income students. In 1993, Sister Mary Andrew provided proponent testimony for an increase in funding for Ohio Instructional Grants and Student Choice Grants. She argued
that over 13,000 students in private Ohio colleges received these grants and without them they would not be able to afford their education (Matesich Testimony on Amended, 1). She kept advocating for state aid as her presidency continued. During the budget cycle in 2001, Mary Andrew argued that Ohio Instructional Grants help “the neediest students in [the] state” (Matesich Testimony on H.B. 94, 1). In addition to state aid, Sister Mary Andrew testified at the state level for the sake of private colleges’ academic independence. In 1998, Sister Mary Andrew testified on H.B. 458 at the Ohio House Education Committee on state accreditation for teacher education. In her opposition testimony, she argued that the bill allowing for new teachers’ education standards “forced [Ohio Dominican] into a straitjacket” due to the difficulty of compliance (Matesich Testimony on H.B. 458). Her testimonies on these issues allowed private institutions such as Ohio Dominican to have a voice in policy. Moreover, Sister Mary Andrew exemplified what it means to promote the common good.

By the end of Sister Mary Andrew’s presidency, Ohio Dominican was a revitalized institution. According to the North Central Association’s 1997 report, Ohio Dominican’s board, faculty and staff were phenomenal, the finances were significantly improved, the technology was modern, and visibility and leadership in the community were noticeable (Matesich “Ohio Dominican University” 364). The university also displayed concern for diverse student groups, such as first-generation, minority, low-income, and adult students (Matesich “Ohio Dominican University” 364). Evidently, Sister Mary Andrew left Ohio Dominican in a good place upon her retirement at the turn of the century.

In the 2000’s, Ohio Dominican went from a college to a university and began offering master’s programs, including the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies. The university also expanded its dormitories and other academic offerings to adapt to social change while attempting to
maintain its mission and identity. Ohio Dominican enrolled 1,796 undergraduates in 2016. Over half were women and a quarter were minorities, which demonstrates the university’s continued commitment to educating all people (“Ohio Dominican University”). Now Ohio Dominican looks to continue its founding mission—to contemplate Truth and to share the fruits of its contemplation—in the complex 21st century.

All three of these institutions have different stories that develop them into unique universities, but they all share a substantial amount in common beyond being private and religious in their foundations. In their origins, Otterbein, Capital and Ohio Dominican all contribute to the world around them through their missions. All three institutions develop students in a way that prepares them intellectually and professionally for life after college. These universities have and continue to admit and accept students of diverse groups, such as women, African Americans, and international students. They help their students have access to and afford their education, and seek students who are nontraditional, from adults to veterans to former college drop-outs. All three institutions have been led out of trouble and into the future by leaders who wanted to ensure that their colleges were serving the public through good works. Most importantly, these institutions mold people into leaders who continue the traditions today. The traditions of excellence and the adaptability seen in these institutions prove that they contribute to the students, the community, and the common good.

In addition to adapting in their pasts, these private colleges have adapted to recent state policies to continue their educational missions in new, broader ways. For example, many Ohio private institutions have established transfer partnerships with community and technical colleges. Otterbein, Capital, Ohio Dominican, and six other central Ohio private colleges have entered into a “Preferred Partnership” with Columbus State Community College. The program allows
students to spend two years at Columbus State and transfer to a four-year institution to finish their bachelor’s degrees. Columbus State’s partnership program allows students to graduate with less debt in a timely fashion; during the 2015 to 2016 academic year, 76% of Columbus State preferred partnership students took on no student debt (“Preferred Pathway”). Moreover, private institutions are able to participate in College Credit Plus. Otterbein University is one such private college. The university accepts College Credit Plus students into the Otterbein Collegiate Institute to take classes on campus or at their high schools. College Credit Plus students at Otterbein can take classes in political philosophy, history, art, and mathematics. Otterbein’s program is competitive with students needing to provide adequate ACT or SAT scores to be admitted (“College Credit Plus / Otterbein”). These transfer options and College Credit Plus opportunities demonstrate that private colleges and universities adjust themselves to state initiatives that benefit Ohioans.

Ohio’s private higher education institutions have consistently proven they already meet the state’s needs, specifically for affordable and efficient degree attainment, and that they adapt to state policies to make themselves comparable and competitive with public institutions’ developments as well as to better serve Ohioans. Since these institutions have consistently provided for the common good of the state and its citizens, Ohio’s private colleges need to be assisted in their missions to continue providing for their students and the future well-being of the Buckeye State. To be assisted, however, these private higher education institutions need to promote themselves and their policy priorities well. One way that Ohio’s private colleges and universities do this is through their lobbying efforts.

The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio (AICUO) was created in 1969 to promote its member colleges and universities at the state and federal government
levels. The organization’s 51-member institutions—which include Ohio Dominican, Capital, and Otterbein—are located across the state. Specifically, the AICUO “seeks to strengthen student financial aid programs and bring about a greater understanding of the benefits and contributions of Ohio independent colleges and universities” (“About the Association”). The organization’s Vice President of Government Relations, Emily Tully, is in charge of this advocacy. Emily Tully has been with the association since 2014 after spending years in both state and federal politics. Not only was she an aide to prominent Ohio legislators, she also led a successful Congressional campaign in 2010 and become a Senior Policy Advisor to an Ohio Congressman. For the past four years, she has used her experience in policy to promote Ohio’s independent colleges (“Staff Biographies”). Tully’s main assertion is that Ohio’s private colleges and universities provide essential skills through their programs and degree paths, but they need state support to ensure that college is still affordable for in-need students who desire the opportunities post-secondary education offers. To obtain this state support, Tully argues that private institutions need to do two tasks: promote themselves by involving themselves in the political process and advocating for policy priorities, the main one being the funding of state-based student aid (Tully). Past university leaders have done exactly that. Sister Mary Andrew Matesich of Ohio Dominican testified in favor of increasing state aid grants multiple times during her tenure as president of Ohio Dominican, and she was a member of the Board of Directors of the AICUO when she was Ohio Dominican’s president. Tully agrees that involved leadership such as Sister Mary Andrew’s fully benefits the policy priorities of private colleges by making the issues real to political leaders (Tully). By getting involved in the process, Ohio’s private higher education institutions and their leaders can impact policy.
As Tully argues, state student aid is one of the main policy priorities Ohio’s private colleges need to focus on. Academics tend to agree. According to William Zumeta, state student aid is one of the main policies that impact private higher education institutions, especially institutions that that serve “a mostly local market and must moderate their “net prices”--tuition minus aid--in order to compete with tax-subsidized public competitors” (Zumeta 430). Previous research conducted by Zumeta demonstrates that state aid levels can directly affect the enrollments of private institutions, specifically the enrollments of minority students (qtd. in Zumeta 430). State aid can directly impact enrollments at private colleges, which means that it is a policy priority for Ohio’s private institutions.

However, student aid is not always a priority to states. According to Marvin Titus, state aid is not a priority to the states as much as other needs, especially when economic downturns strike. Titus argues that states invest in higher education since a population with more college degree-holders typically contributes more to the state—such contributions include “increased tax revenue . . . [and] workforce flexibility, decreased crime rate, increased community service, and social cohesion” (qtd. in Titus 439). Unfortunately, other priorities have developed in states since the 1990’s, and funding has moved to those priorities, most notably entitlement programs such as Medicaid as well as K-12 education and corrections programs (Titus 440). In the 1990’s states also began to prepare their budgets based on “revenue forecasts” (Titus 441). Since priorities shifted and budgets began to be prepared differently, “spending for higher education served as the “balance wheel” of state budgets, decreasing disproportionately relative to other areas when state revenues drop and increasing at a faster pace than other budget categories when state revenues rise” (Titus 441). This “balance wheel” effect on higher education spending directly impacts student aid spending—even in Ohio.
One of the major student aid programs in the Buckeye State is the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG), which is “a need-based aid program for Ohio resident undergraduates” that a student is eligible for if he or she wants to attend an Ohio public or private college and has an Estimated Family Contribution of $2,190 or less and a family income of less than $96,000. The average award size in the 2016-2017 academic year for a full-time student attending an Ohio private college was $3,072 (Counselor’s Guide).

However, over the course of the past twenty years, this type of need-based program has received less money than it used to (“Student Financial Aid” 1). In 2007, when OCOG was established, the award levels for types of institutions (public, independent, etc.) were capped and set in stone in the law. In 2009, the two-year budget took off the cap numbers for awards, thus causing instability in potential award levels (“Student Financial Aid” 2). In 2009, $224.9 million was spent in need-based state financial aid compared to $90.3 million in 2015 (“Student Financial Aid” 3). In the recent budget cycle, OCOG appropriations ticked up slightly by 2.5% to hit $99.4 million for fiscal year 2018 (“Budget In Detail” 41). That total is still nowhere near the original amount spent.

The reason for the cap removal in 2009 was the Great Recession. Following Titus’s research, Ohio had to make budgetary cuts due to an economic crisis and state aid for college students was one of the first programs to be hit. In 2007, the budget passed for 2008 and 2009 appropriated $140.0 million for OCOG in 2008, an increase of 140.7%, and $151.1 million for 2009 (Zhan and Morris 162). During these fiscal years, the Great Recession dramatically hit Ohio, spurring then Governor Ted Strickland to propose “changes in the way state student aid is distributed that would nearly halve the amount of money available for students at private colleges” for fiscal year 2010 (Eckstein, A20). His proposal took hold as the 2010 appropriation
for OCOG was only $95 million dollars and only $76 million in 2011, causing the Chancellor of the Board Regents to have to develop a dispersion formula that accounted for “at risk” and “academic performance” measures if the funds were “insufficient for all eligible students” ("Budget in Brief” 3). The money has slowly been increased but too slowly; the funds are still not back to their original levels despite the fact the recession has ended.

A substantial case can be made for the increase of funds to OCOG beyond the fact that the funds are insufficient in comparison to previous years. Not only does state aid benefit students attending Ohio private colleges and universities, it also directly benefits the state itself. Zumeta and Huntington-Klein attempted to determine if state student aid programs have an impact on private institutions’ enrollments and any effects on states. To do this, the two researchers simulated what would occur if state student aid were increased by $1,000 or $2,000 for those who already receive state aid. Zumeta and Huntington-Klein chose five diverse states—California, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Virginia—based on various factors, such as a high number of high school graduates and emphasis on STEM development, to run the simulation on (28-29). Zumeta and Huntington-Klein hypothesized that:

An increase in state grant aid, if it drew students to PND [private, nondoctoral] colleges from similar public institutions, should increase degree production, because PND colleges in general have substantially better degree completion and time-to-degree rates (28).

The simulations demonstrated validity to this hypothesis. State grant aid increases at the two levels in the study “would likely move a significant (but not large) number of students” to choose private colleges over public colleges for their undergraduate education (Zumeta and Huntington-Klein 36). In some states such as Georgia and Virginia, the movement of students
towards the private sector could save millions of dollars—an estimated $100–$300 million—in public sector capital investments and projects since expansion may not be as necessary for publics due to population shifts (36). Additionally, private undergraduate institutions “are shown to be far less costly to taxpayers, especially state taxpayers, per bachelor’s degree produced than comparable public institutions” so savings could also come from taxpayers spending less on public institutions’ students (39). Zumeta and Huntington-Klein claim that since private undergraduate institutions also produce degrees faster and produce more graduates in high demand fields such as STEM paths than their public counterparts, investing in grant aid for private colleges and universities could further promote the efficient attainment of college degrees (36). Therefore, based off this study and the goal of the state of Ohio, an increase of state grant aid in Ohio for private college students could further the education and career advancement of Ohioans; by doing this, state grant aid could also promote the state’s desire to make it faster and more cost-efficient to attain a post-secondary education while potentially saving taxpayer dollars on public institutions.

Private higher educational institutions have significantly benefitted Ohio’s students and, in turn, the Buckeye State. The adaptive and strong histories of individual colleges and the current work of these institutions across the state prove that Ohio’s private institutions are fulfilling a main goal of the state: the production of quality degree-holders in an efficient, cost-effective manner. By providing such quality education to Ohioans of all backgrounds and consistently adapting themselves to their students’ needs and changing times, these private institutions are also promoting the common good. For these reasons, Ohio’s private colleges and universities should be assisted in their missions, specifically by the state. To do this, private colleges must promote themselves and their policy priorities, such as state grant aid for students in financial need. State
grant aid benefits Ohio’s students and private colleges, but could also benefit the state by saving taxpayer dollars on public higher education instruction, which is a goal Ohio is already working towards fulfilling. Therefore, by promoting their histories, missions, accomplishments, and students, Ohio’s private institutions demonstrate they are an asset to the state since they promote the common good; these institutions can continue this work, especially by involving themselves in political affairs.
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