DIVISION OF UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Strategic Plan 2021-2026
Ohio University’s Division of University Advancement supports and enhances the University’s mission by engaging alumni, friends, and partners in the life of the University and of our Bobcat Family. At our very core, Advancement connects joyful givers—of dollars, time, and expertise—to grateful recipients—students, faculty, staff, and the greater community. Our work is, and has long been, essential to the fabric of Ohio University. In fact, when the words to “Alma Mater, Ohio” were penned in 1915, the author closed the opening verse with this sentiment:

“And when there comes a day of parting, still firm and loyal we will stand.”

This steadfast loyalty has sustained Ohio University through good times and hard times. It has inspired four successful comprehensive campaigns that, taken together, have raised more than $875 million in support of OHIO’s students, faculty, programs, and places. It has brought Bobcats together in celebration of decades of Homecomings. It has led countless alumni experts into OHIO classrooms and inspired them to mentor fellow Bobcats. And it has connected thousands of alumni around the nation and the world for the greater good. This loyalty ensures that we are forever OHIO.

The Division of University Advancement will continue and sustain this essential work by being a steadfast partner to the University, its colleges, units, and campuses; by carefully stewarding University and Ohio University Foundation resources; by advancing the University through the meaningful, life-long engagement of alumni and friends; and by securing transformational philanthropic support.

In order to be successful in this work, the Division has built a multi-year strategic plan grounded in Ohio University’s Strategic Initiatives and Presidential Priorities. The priorities and goals outlined in this plan guide us as we work together to move Ohio University forever forward.

Sincerely,

Nico Karagosian
Vice President, University Advancement
President & CEO, The Ohio University Foundation
With a stroke of a pen in 1804, Ohio University became the first university in the new state of Ohio—a bold move in a time when public education wasn’t accepted as a universal right. For more than two centuries, OHIO has blazed trails as a leading public research university. Today, we again find ourselves in uncharted territory. The pace of societal change hastens each year; higher education’s role in this increasingly uncertain future is being questioned and must be championed. It is time to rise and meet this challenge—to demonstrate our worth by forging new paths in service to our people and our communities.

In 1898, The American Naturalist called Manasseh Cutler “a pioneer for truth and civilization in every form.”

At Ohio University, we’re proud of our history and heritage, beautiful campuses, students, faculty, and partnerships across the region, state, nation, and globe. Together with our five core values of character, community, citizenship, civility, and commitment, this pride defines who we are and what it means to be a Bobcat.

Our university was born from the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which stated: “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” Since its founding, OHIO has held this value at its core, developing quality of life and efficacy for all. Our university is what it is today because more than two centuries ago, a group of people chose to make it so. In his time, OHIO co-founder, Manasseh Cutler was called:

“a pioneer for truth and civilization in every form, trying always to push back the limits of the intellectual and physical wildernesses of his time, and to clear the ground; not alone for cities and material gain, but with a view also to the upbuilding of sound learning and the enrichment of the world’s knowledge, which material prosperity makes possible and ought to make certain.”

Community, diversity and inclusion, engagement and experiential learning, excellence, and accountability are core to Ohio University’s values. Grounded in these values, President Hugh Sherman has articulated five strategic priorities, which not only point Ohio University toward an exciting future, but that also represent our history and the value of higher education in our society. These are:

- Continue Improvement of Student Experience and Success
- Emphasize Focus on Enrollment Goals University Wide
- Ensuring Academic Quality
- Serving Our Communities
- Ensuring Long Term Financial Sustainability

These priorities guide decision-making, reassert our place as a higher education leader, reimagine education, and move our institution in a new direction, one rooted in our history and values, but not limited by traditional higher educational models.

So what? WHAT’S NEXT?

Ohio University is called every day to make things better—in our region, state, nation, and world.

We acknowledge that Ohio University is good. It is special. It is a singular place to live and to learn. What we have must be honored and sustained. We also acknowledge that what we have isn’t perfect and that to become better requires change.

Change is up to us. It requires action. It requires a commitment to making a difference. It requires you. It requires us: the Bobcat Community. It requires our collective commitment to be forever OHIO.

What will we decide to do for tomorrow? What will our legacy be?
Division of University Advancement

OVERVIEW

Since 1859, the Ohio University Alumni Association (OUAA) has actively engaged alumni and friends with the University—connecting grads to alma mater in support of students, faculty, staff, and programs. For more than 160 years, generations of Bobcats have found their way back to OHIO’s brick pathways with the Association as their guide. In fact, the OUAA and its volunteer leaders championed the University’s first major fundraising campaign in the 1920s—securing funding to build Templeton Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium. A strong legacy of giving was established when more than 2,000 alumni responded with gifts during the eight-year campaign.

Today, the Association, guided by its strategic plan, advances OHIO through meaningful, lifetime engagement with the University’s more than 267,000 living alumni.

The Ohio University Foundation was established in 1945 by supporters of Ohio University including and encouraged by then-President John C. Baker. The Foundation is the repository for all private gifts to Ohio University through annual giving programs, capital and special campaigns, and planned or deferred gifts such as bequests and trusts. Its mission since its founding more than 75 years ago:

“Philanthropy in service to education.”

To be sure, private philanthropy has had a rich and dramatic impact on Ohio University from as early as 1816 when Christopher and Daniel Herrold forgave the debt for the lumber used to build Cutler Hall; to the campaign to build Memorial Auditorium; to several, more recent capital campaigns. Generous donors have provided for scholarships and financial aid packages, research and faculty development, capital expansion and renovations, technology upgrades and lab equipment, library acquisitions, and vital unrestricted support that has allowed Ohio University to meet unexpected challenges.

Today, generous alumni and friends contribute an average of $35 million each year to OHIO, and the endowments that support the university have grown to more than $746 million.

The Division of University Advancement stands upon and builds out from this rich tradition of engagement and philanthropy. The Division comprises the Ohio University Alumni Association, the Office of Development, the Office of Advancement Services, Foundation Accounting, and the Ohio University Foundation and is responsible for alumni and constituent engagement and outreach; fundraising (including corporate engagement and foundation relations); and the data and systems that support the critical and strategic engagement and fundraising that advances Ohio University and its mission.

ADVANCEMENT’S MISSION

OHIO Advancement builds and strengthens relationships that inspire investment in Ohio University and its mission.

ADVANCEMENT’S VISION

Galvanizing OHIO’s passion into transformational and sustainable impact.

ADVANCEMENT’S CORE VALUES

The Division has identified its core values as: trustworthy, collaborative, strategic, inclusive, transparent, and optimistic.
Under the leadership of Vice President of University Advancement and President and CEO of The Ohio University Foundation Nico Karagosian, the Division has identified three strategic priorities. These are:

1. Increase private support and maximize its impact.
2. Strengthen constituent engagement and outreach.
3. Drive financial stability and operational excellence.
1. Increase private support and maximize its impact.

a. Secure $300 million (over a multi-year period) in gifts and commitments in support of Ohio University’s students, faculty, and programs.
   i. GOAL: $300 million
b. Implement and maintain new tools, technologies and programs to energize alumni/donor base to sustain/increase alumni participation in giving.
   i. GOAL: sustain or increase number of alumni donors annually from FY21-26
c. Implement a strategic corporate engagement plan; and increase private financial support with an emphasis on increasing alumni giving.
   i. GOAL: increase in the number of corporate partners engaged from FY21-26
d. Enhance merit and need-based scholarship support (in particular centrally-awarded, strategic scholarship dollars).
   i. GOAL: $30 million in new scholarship support (gifts AND match) between FY21-26
e. Secure programmatic funding in support of diversity and inclusion initiatives.
   i. GOAL: $2.5 million in new support between FY21-26
f. Secure programmatic funding in support of student success and engagement initiatives.
   i. GOAL: $5 million in new support between FY21-26
g. Secure funding in support of the research and creative activity of OHIO’s faculty and graduate students.
   i. GOAL: $5 million in new support between FY21-26
h. Secure funding to enhance and sustain OHIO’s special spaces and places and their impact on the student experience.
   i. GOAL: $10 million in new support between FY21-26
2. Strengthen constituent engagement and outreach.

a. Provide meaningful engagement and programming for alumni and friends that galvanizes their passions in support of students, faculty, and programs
i. **GOAL:** sustain or increase percentage of engaged alumni (using CASE or similar metrics) from FY21-FY26

b. Engage and activate partners and constituents in all of OHIO’s campus communities as well as in key markets across the nation and around the world
i. **GOAL:** increase the number of constituents engaging in targeted regional, national, and global markets from FY21-26

c. Increase participation and engagement of underrepresented alumni communities in recruitment, mentoring, career development, and giving
i. **GOAL:** increase the number of volunteers engaged from FY21-26

d. Engage alumni to support student enrollment and recruitment efforts and connect our diverse alumni base in retaining an inclusive student body
i. **GOAL:** increase the number of volunteers engaged from FY21-26

e. Connect our diverse alumni (and corporate partner) population with students for mentorship
i. **GOAL:** increase (and track) the number of mentors engaged and quality of mentorship engagements from FY21-26

f. Increase the number of high-quality student internships and enhancing career development by networking with alumni around the globe
i. **GOAL:** increase (and track) the number of internships sponsored by alumni from FY21-26

g. Enhance curricular opportunities for students by bringing alumni (and corporate partners) experiences and expertise into classrooms (virtually and in-person) to enhance student learning
i. **GOAL:** increase (and track) the number of volunteers engaged from FY21-26

3. Drive financial stability and operational excellence.

a. Align staff and resources to deliver a reliable source of philanthropic support and corporate partnership
i. **GOAL:** reduce reliance on university budget support between FY21-26 while securing $300 million in new gifts and commitments (over a multi-year period)

b. Increase unrestricted support to The Fund for OHIO
i. **GOAL:** increase in dollars raised annually for The Fund for OHIO between FY21-26

c. Achieve and sustain effective and efficient operations with an annual operating budget that is rightly aligned with expected and required results
i. **GOAL:** maintain a 60-80 percent return on fundraising investment between FY21-26