2026

Trustees CONFERENCE

PRESENTED BY GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE AND
THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION



AGENDA · SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Ohio Department of Higher Education

AGENDA



PURPOSE

Boards of Trustees at state colleges and universities have the last word on all matters before their institution. The Ohio Trustees Conference is an opportunity for trustees to better understand the role they can and should play in the governance of their institution in partnership with presidents.

NETWORKING BREAKFAST — 8:00AM - 9:30AM

OPENING REMARKS — 9:30AM - 10:00AM

MIKE DEWINE
70TH GOVERNOR OF OHIO

GALLUP PRESENTATION — 10:15AM - 11:00AM

ZACH HRYNOWSKI
SENIOR EDUCATION RESEARCHER, GALLUP

TRUSTEE CHALLENGE — 11:00AM - 12:00PM

MIKE DUFFEY
CHANCELLOR, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

JIM BENNETT
CHIEF OF STAFF, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

DR. JENNIFER ADAMS
PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

DR. MIKE SHERMAN
VICE CHANCELLOR FOR HIGHER EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

HOST REMARKS — 12:00PM - 12:15PM

RAVI BELLAMKONDA
18TH PRESIDENT OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

LUNCH — 12:15PM - 1:15PM

BOARD GOVERNANCE — 1:15PM - 2:00PM

ROSS MUGLER
PRESIDENT AND CEO, ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS (AGB)

- The committee structure and function of a board of trustees
- The duties of the executive committee of a board of trustees
- Professional accounting and reporting standards
- Methods for meeting the statutory, regulatory, and fiduciary obligations of a board of trustees
- The requirements of the public records law
- Creating and implementing institution-wide rules and regulations

AGENDA

FACILITIES AND PLANNING — 2:00PM - 2:30PM

Overseeing planning, construction, maintenance, expansion, and renovation projects that impact the state institution's consolidated infrastructure, physical facilities, and natural environment, including its lands, improvements, and capital equipment

- **Construction/Maintenance/Demolition**
  JASON J. TOTH
  SENIOR ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR CAMPUS PLANNING & FACILITIES, UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO
- **Strategic Square Footage Reduction Fund**
  KELLY WEIR
  VICE CHANCELLOR, FINANCE, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

STATE AND FEDERAL LAW — 2:30PM - 3:00PM

State and federal anti-discrimination laws and a state institution's obligations under sections 3345.0217, 3345.0218, and 3345.88 of the Revised Code

MELISSA CARLETON
PARTNER, BRICKER GRAYDON WYATT LLP

BREAK — 3:00PM - 3:15PM

STUDENT EXPERIENCE — 3:15PM - 3:45PM

Student welfare issues, including academic studies, curriculum, residence life, student governance and activities, and the general physical and psychological well-being of undergraduate and graduate students

Fixing student general and instructional fees, and other necessary charges, including a review of student debt trends

RYAN LOVELL
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING AND DEAN OF STUDENTS, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

PARA M. JONES, PH.D.
4TH PRESIDENT OF STARK STATE COLLEGE

MICHAEL A. BASTON, J.D., ED.D.
5TH PRESIDENT OF CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT — 3:45PM - 4:15PM

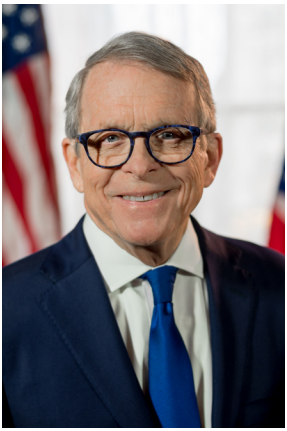
Institutional advancement, including philanthropic giving, fundraising initiatives, alumni programming, communications and media, government and public relations, and community affairs

JIM TRESSEL
67TH LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF OHIO

CLOSING REMARKS — 4:15PM - 4:30PM

MIKE DUFFEY
CHANCELLOR, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION





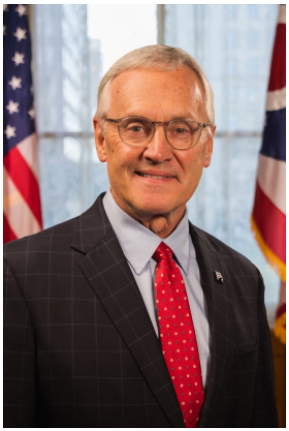
Mike DeWine's story is a true Ohio story. Raised in Yellow Springs, Ohio, Mike DeWine and Fran (Struewing) met in the first grade and married while students at Miami University. They've been blessed with eight children, 28 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Family is at the core of everything Mike DeWine does, and that's why he has devoted his life to fighting for Ohio's families. He knows when families are strong, Ohio communities are stronger, and our future is bright.

Mike DeWine loves Ohio and cares passionately about our state's future. He will fight for an Ohio that works for everyone – every person and every family in every corner of our state. From world-class cities to some of the best small towns in America, Mike DeWine knows that to build our state into an economic powerhouse, we must have strong schools, a great quality of life, and compassion for those who need our help.

Mike DeWine's family started a seed company in Yellow Springs. Working alongside his parents and grandparents, Mike learned early the value of hard work, strong leadership, and fiscal responsibility.

Growing up, he loaded seed bags onto trucks and boxcars, shoveled wheat out of trucks during harvest, worked in wheat fields to help ensure the purity of the seed, and basically did whatever it took to get the job done for their customers. Inseparable to the end, his parents were married for 65 years and died within four days of each other. The values he learned from them still live within him today.

On November 6, 2018, Mike DeWine was elected to serve as the 70th Governor of the State of Ohio. The Governor has had a long and distinguished career in public service, focusing on protecting Ohio children and families. He was previously the 50th Attorney General of Ohio and has previously been elected to serve as Greene County Prosecutor, Ohio State Senator, U.S. Congressman, Ohio Lt. Governor, and U.S. Senator.



Jim Tressel was nominated by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine to serve as Ohio's lieutenant governor in February 2025, and was subsequently confirmed by the Ohio Senate and House of Representatives. A longstanding champion of education and workforce development, Lt. Governor Tressel intends to build upon Ohio's record of achievement in these and other key areas during the remainder of the DeWine administration.

A preeminent educator and football coach, Tressel most recently served as president of Youngstown State University (YSU) from 2014 to 2023. Under his leadership, YSU saw stronger freshman classes, rising retention and graduation rates, and record fundraising. The Honors College grew from 300 to more than 1,200 students, and the campus added private housing, academic research, and workforce training facilities. Before YSU, Lt. Governor Tressel was executive vice president for student success at the University of Akron. Throughout his academic career, Tressel has shared Governor DeWine's commitment to helping Ohioans reach their potential.

Tressel's focus on equipping young people for success was also evident during his football coaching career. After assistant coaching roles at Akron, Miami University, Syracuse, and Ohio State, he became YSU's head coach in 1986. Over 15 years—including six as athletic director—YSU made 10 playoff appearances and won four national titles. In 2001, he became head coach at The Ohio State University, where he led the Buckeyes to seven Big Ten championships and the 2002 National Championship.

Among his many honors, Tressel has received numerous national coaching awards and was inducted into the YSU Athletics Hall of Fame (2013), the Ohio State Athletics Hall of Fame (2015), and the College Football Hall of Fame (2015). He and his father, Lee Tressel, are the only father-son duo enshrined in the College Football Hall of Fame.

A native of northeast Ohio, Tressel shares the state's values. He graduated from Berea High School, earned a bachelor's degree from Baldwin-Wallace College, and a master's degree from the University of Akron. He currently serves on Baldwin-Wallace's board of trustees. Tressel has published two books and given hundreds of presentations nationwide. He and his wife, Ellen, donated $1 million to establish the Jim and Ellen Tressel Student Work Opportunity Endowment Fund. The Tressels also served on the board of the James P. Tressel Institute for Leadership and Teamwork.

Ellen Tressel, a YSU graduate, is an accomplished businesswoman and philanthropist who remains active in community organizations. The Tressels have four adult children—Zak, Carlee, Eric, and Whitney—and three beloved grandchildren.



Mike Duffey was appointed by Governor Mike DeWine the 11th Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) in January 2024.

As Chancellor, he oversees the state's two-year and four-year colleges and universities and Ohio Technical Centers. In addition, the Chancellor provides policy guidance to the Governor and the Ohio General Assembly and carries out state higher education policy.

Prior to being named Chancellor, he served ODHE as Senior Vice Chancellor for five years, collaboratively working on policy proposals for the administration that include tuition guarantees, transcript release, student debt relief, short-term credentials, Ohio's new merit scholarship, increases to need-based aid, and support for innovation and technology commercialization, among other topics.

Before the DeWine-Husted administration, Duffey served eight years in the Ohio House of Representatives, where he chaired the Higher Education and Workforce committee, vice-chaired the legislature's Joint Committee on College Affordability, and co-chaired the Ohio Tuition Trust Authority.

Duffey currently serves as the Governor's designee on the Midwestern Higher Education Compact. From November 2021 to August 2022, he chaired the State Committee on Computer Science. And from 2019 to 2021, he also served as deputy director of InnovateOhio, an initiative led by then-Lt. Governor Jon Husted in support of innovation and entrepreneurialism.

As State Representative, Duffey sponsored legislation that established the Chancellor's authority to review special fees and the state auditor's authority to conduct performance audits of Ohio's public colleges, and he led efforts to involve students in college governance. Duffey was the primary sponsor of HB1, the legislation that created JobsOhio in 2011.

Among sports fans, Duffey is known for having initiated the legal theory and evidentiary basis for the state lawsuit that saved the Columbus Crew Major League Soccer franchise. For this work, he received the Spirit of Columbus award from The Columbus Foundation.

Duffey has a Master of Business Administration from The Ohio State University and a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Michigan. He graduated as a Weidler Scholar at The Ohio State University. Prior to serving in the legislature, Duffey was twice elected to Worthington City Council and worked in the private sector in external relations, communications, and journalism.

Duffey and his wife, Lindsay, a public-school teacher and librarian, live in Worthington and are the parents of two children, Jack and Annie. The family has two goldendoodles, Comet and Clover.



Ravi V. Bellamkonda serves as the 18th president of The Ohio State University.

As president, Bellamkonda leads Ohio's flagship public research university, with six campuses and more than 67,000 students. The university also includes the nationally recognized Wexner Medical Center and a leading athletics program.

He helped lead early phases of the Education for Citizenship 2035 strategic plan, including initiatives focused on student success, faculty investment, and artificial intelligence. Under his leadership, Ohio State launched AI Fluency, integrating AI into the undergraduate experience; a Career Center of Excellence connecting students with internships and career opportunities; and faculty hiring programs attracting top scholars.

Bellamkonda, a bioengineer and neuroscientist trained at Brown University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, joined Ohio State in January 2025 as executive vice president and provost. As chief academic officer, he oversaw 15 colleges, four regional campuses, and more than 8,800 faculty, along with university-wide programs supporting research, innovation, and faculty and student success.

Before Ohio State, Bellamkonda served as provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Emory University, where he led initiatives in faculty recruitment, artificial intelligence, student flourishing, well-being, and ethics.

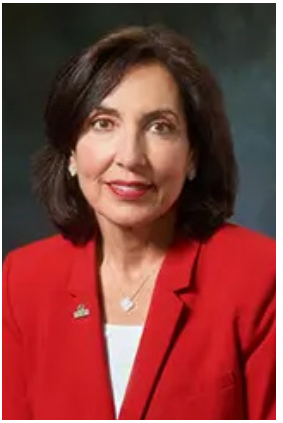
Previously, he served as the Vinik Dean at Duke University's Pratt School of Engineering and held leadership and faculty positions at Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University, including chair of biomedical engineering and associate vice president for research. He began his academic career at Case Western Reserve University.

An internationally renowned biomedical researcher, Bellamkonda's laboratory has developed novel approaches to treat pediatric and adult brain tumors. He served as president of the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering from 2014 to 2016 and has received numerous honors in biomedical engineering and biomaterials.

In 2021, he received a National Institutes of Health Director's Transformative Research Award. The tumor monorail device developed in his lab was recognized as a breakthrough technology by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. He is the scientific founder of Exvade Bioscience, which is pioneering clinical trials of the device. In December 2025, the first patients were enrolled in a Phase 1 trial evaluating the device for monitoring recurrent glioblastoma.

Bellamkonda is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, International Academy of Medical and Biological Engineering and Society for Biomaterials, and a senior member of the National Academy of Inventors. He holds 11 U.S. patents.

Bellamkonda and his wife, Dr. Lalita Kaligotla, are the parents of two adult children and C.J. the goldendoodle.



Stark State College President **Para M. Jones, Ph.D.**, is deeply committed to Northeast Ohio students, businesses, and communities, as evidenced by her 37 years of service at Stark State.

Dr. Jones began her academic career at Stark State and worked in various leadership capacities, from director of marketing to vice president, before being named President of Spartanburg Community College in South Carolina. After three years at Spartanburg, Dr. Jones returned to Stark State College in 2012, where she has served as President for 14 years.

Prior to academe, she worked in corporate marketing and communications for Roadway Express and as a technical editor for Goodyear Aerospace.

Dr. Jones holds a Ph.D. from the University of Nebraska, an MBA with honors from Ashland University and a bachelor's degree magna cum laude from the University of Mount Union.

Dr. Jones's passion for the community college mission is driven by her belief that students are best served by affordable, quality education that leads to rewarding careers in the community and region.

She currently serves or has served many state and local boards and professional organizations, including: Governor's Executive Workforce Board, Executive Committee of Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, Executive Committee of Stark Economic Development Board (SEDB), Strengthening Stark Governance Committee, Stark and Tuscarawas County Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ) Workforce Development Board, Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, Stark Education Partnership, Akron Urban League, Akron Growth Council, Cleveland Clinic/Akron General's Community Advisory Council, ConxusNEO and MAGNET (Manufacturing Advocacy and Growth Network).

She also is a member of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) Education Council in Washington, D.C. and served on TeamNEO's Business Development Council.

Dr. Jones and her husband, Greg, live in Canton. They have twin sons and twin granddaughters.



Michael A. Baston, J.D., Ed.D., has served as president of Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C), Ohio's oldest and largest community college, since 2022. The college serves nearly 40,000 students annually. During his tenure, more than 10,000 students have graduated from credit and noncredit programs, a 10.4% increase in completions. Credit enrollment has increased 13.2%, while delayed-entry student enrollment has grown 50% and College Credit Plus enrollment has increased 18.7%.

Baston has overseen the development of 24 new employer-aligned programs since 2022 in areas including advanced manufacturing, clean energy, healthcare, and artificial intelligence. Within one year of completing their programs, 93.8% of credit students and 98.1% of noncredit students had entered the workforce, continued their education, or pursued additional credentials.

During Baston's tenure, Tri-C has secured $65.5 million in philanthropic and public investment. The funding has supported program expansion, scholarships and student support services. Endowed assets have increased 20%, and 16 new endowment funds have been established.

Before joining Tri-C, Baston served as president of Rockland Community College in New York during the COVID-19 pandemic. He led the college's transition to remote learning while maintaining enrollment and continuing services for its diverse student population. Earlier in his career, he served as vice president for student affairs and associate provost at LaGuardia Community College. He began his career as an attorney representing educational and nonprofit organizations.

Baston serves on the boards of the National Association for Community College Entrepreneurship (NACCE) and the League for Innovation in the Community College and is a fellow with Complete College America. In Northeast Ohio, he serves on the boards of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, United Way of Greater Cleveland, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Team NEO, Playhouse Square, Downtown Cleveland Alliance, Downtown Cleveland Inc., Unify Jobs/Unify Labs, the American Red Cross of Northern Ohio, and Bluecoats Inc. He is also a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland's Community Advisory Council and graduated from the Cleveland Leadership Center's Leadership Cleveland Class of 2024.

Baston has received recognition from Crain's Cleveland Business, the NAACP, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In 2025, he was named Entrepreneurial President of the Year by NACCE.

Baston earned his B.A. from Iona University, his J.D. from Brooklyn Law School and his Ed.D. in Executive Leadership from St. John Fisher University. He is married to Dr. Tasha S. Baston.



Ross A. Mugler is a lifelong advocate for higher education and public service with more than three decades of experience in policy, governance, and institutional leadership. He serves as president and CEO of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), championing best practices in higher education governance.

Mugler is the longest-serving board of visitors member at a single institution in Virginia, having been appointed to the Old Dominion University Board of Visitors by five governors. He served as rector, helping advance the university's mission, strategic priorities, and financial stewardship.

His public service career includes serving as commissioner of the revenue for the City of Hampton, Virginia, from 1992 to 2024. He also supports educational excellence through service on the Virginia Peninsula Community College Education Foundation Board of Directors and other academic and community organizations.

Mugler holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Old Dominion University and completed executive education at the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. His honors include the Coastal Virginia Renaissance Award, Strome College of Business Outstanding Achievement in Public Service Award, and Sam T. Barfield Award of Excellence.

Mugler and his wife, Martha, a member of the Hampton City Council, have three children.



Jim Bennett has served as Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to three state higher education system chancellors and one university president. Currently, he serves as Chief of Staff and Senior Policy Advisor to the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE).

In this capacity, Bennett is responsible for overseeing all administrative and operational functions of the Cabinet-level state agency, guiding the agency's comprehensive policy agenda, and leading the Department's Senior Staff.

He has held prior positions as Vice Chancellor of Finance and Data Management (CFO) at ODHE, as well as Budget Section Chief, Senior Higher Education Analyst, and Higher Education Analyst at the Ohio Office of Budget and Management (OBM).

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree, a Master of Science degree, and a master's degree in Public Policy and Management, all received from The Ohio State University.



Jason Toth is senior associate vice president for campus planning & facilities and chief facilities & real estate officer. He leads facilities operations and maintenance, capital improvement and construction projects, aligning them with the University of Toledo's strategic and master plans. He also oversees real estate acquisition and divestiture and the university's supply chain division, including procurement, shipping/receiving, mail services, surplus property, central distribution, and linen services.

Toth joined UT in 2011 as director of facilities/civil engineer, where he re-engineered the Construction Project Management Team, streamlined processes and improved efficiencies, customer satisfaction, and deferred maintenance. He was promoted to university chief engineer in 2012, associate vice president in 2013, and senior associate vice president in 2019. Under his leadership, his departments strive to provide exceptional environments and service while advancing the university's mission.

He earned a bachelor of science in civil engineering from Case Western Reserve University, is a LEED-accredited professional and attended Harvard Graduate School of Education's Institute for Educational Management.



Zach Hrynowski is a senior education researcher at Gallup. He has contributed to more than 30 public sector survey research projects, primarily within Gallup's higher education practice, since joining Gallup in 2019. In his role, he conducts quantitative data analysis, authors internal and public release reports to highlight study findings, and assists in survey instrument design. He also contributes to Gallup's national higher education research and has been a writer for Gallup News. Prior to joining Gallup, he served as director of student programs at the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations, where he administered the organization's academic programming for university students and faculty, which included conferences across the United States, internship programs, fellowships, and international study visits to the Arabian Peninsula. He received his bachelor's degree in political science from Northeastern University.



Dr. Jennifer Adams graduated from Washington & Jefferson with a bachelor's degree in biology, followed by graduate degrees from the University of Pittsburgh in exercise physiology and public health. Working at Youngstown State University since 1999, she's held various roles, including interim provost, earning accolades that include two Distinguished Professor in Teaching awards. Committed to transforming higher education, Dr. Adams' philosophy emphasizes engagement. With two college-bound daughters who share her passion for education and the outdoors, she balances her professional and personal endeavors.



Dr. Mike Sherman serves as the Vice Chancellor for Higher Education Effectiveness at the Ohio Department of Higher Education. Prior to joining ODHE, Dr. Sherman had been at Youngstown State University since 2018, serving as special assistant to the president while overseeing the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning. He also spent five years at the University of Akron, where he served as senior vice president, provost, and chief operating officer, and 25 years at The Ohio State University, where he was a faculty member, inaugural school director, and vice provost. His higher education experiences are multifaceted and broad-based across nearly every aspect of the operations of higher education institutions, boards of trustees, and higher education systems. He has collaborated in numerous ways with the boards of trustees at each of the three institutions that he's had the privilege to serve. Dr. Sherman has experience with academic program review for academic portfolio optimization at virtually every level of the process.



Melissa Carleton advises higher education entities in a variety of areas, including student affairs, student conduct, disability accommodations, student confidentiality, policies, contracts, governance, accreditation, and employment matters. She takes a practical and proactive approach to legal issues. She particularly enjoys working on collaborative matters between educational entities.

Carlton has a great deal of experience in guiding the institutional response to allegations of sexual abuse. She regularly works with colleges, universities, career-technical schools, K-12 school districts, and private elementary and secondary schools to comply with Title IX and, where applicable, the Clery Act, as well as implementing guidance and regulations. She is available to conduct impartial investigations, as well as to provide reviews of policies, procedures, and case files from a neutral perspective. She trains administrators, staff members, and other investigators using real-world examples to help learn how to navigate the trickiest situations with regard to sexual misconduct.

Carlton also works with religious entities to address allegations of sexual abuse in a manner that is respectful of the parties and their privacy, is transparent and fair, and is attentive to religious beliefs and the safety needs of the community.



Kelly Weir began her role as the Vice Chancellor of Finance at the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) in September, 2024. In that role she oversees development and management of the agency's operating and capital budgets, internal fiscal operations, institutional fiscal monitoring and oversight, the Strategic Square Footage Reduction Program, and regulatory requirements related to institutions' capital projects and fees. Prior to joining ODHE, she spent 10 years at Columbus State Community College focused on resource planning and analysis, and 16 years working on K-12 policy and budgeting at the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce and the Ohio Office of Budget and Management.



Ryan Lovell serves as associate vice president for holistic student support and well-being and dean of students at The Ohio State University. In this role, he provides leadership and oversight of Student Life units focused on student support, leadership and service, and health and well-being. Lovell earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry and biology from West Chester University and a master's degree in college student personnel from Bowling Green State University.

Department of Higher Education