

OSU CHASE CENTER: SUMMARY OF FACULTY CONCERNS SUBMITTED TO SENATE AND AAUP

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By ensuring thorough, long-term planning now, OSU can support a functional and effective Chase Center, as required by [SB 117](#). Here are some of the concerns faculty have raised regarding the Chase Center. Addressing these, and doing so with transparency and accountability, will support positive working relationships between the Chase Center and OSU's existing programs. An appropriately conservative reading of the statute clarifies what OSU *must* do and establishes broad latitude for enacting the Center responsibly, which means:

1. at no cost to the university beyond the legislative appropriation,
2. with a focus on aligning Center activities with OSU's mission, and
3. with explicit recognition of the existing contributions of OSU's programs to the stated goals of the statute.

This document organizes faculty responses into two areas of concerns: **FISCAL CONCERNS** and **ADMINISTRATIVE, CURRICULAR, AND PROGRAMMATIC CONCERNS**.

These summaries of concern are followed by an **ANALYSIS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATUTE** and an appeal that the university focus on fulfilling what is *required* and avoid extending university resources beyond what the legislature has funded. Suggestions are provided for how the goals of the statute may be supported without undermining the existing programs of the university or taking on financial burden.

FISCAL CONCERNS

A key aspect of trust-building with existing programs will be the Center taking responsibility for budgeting to ensure no long-term fiscal burden to the university. Responsible administration of the center will limit financial commitments to what is covered by existing legislative appropriations and any grants or donations the center secures. **We cannot know at what level the center will be funded by the legislature in the future.**

Data Regarding Hiring Costs

Without the Center's specific plans, the cost we can best estimate is that of filling any tenure-track (TT) positions, including the director's. OAA provided [this spreadsheet](#) to Senate showing **salary and benefit projections for the total estimated cost of the director's position (based on his actual starting salary) and of professor positions at full, associate, and assistant levels, from present to possible retirement.** (Total costs have been added.) The projected costs are as follows:

Assumptions	Projected cost
Director costs are shown over 20 years	12,867,551
Assistant professor starts at age 30 and costs are shown over 36 years	7,940,393
Associate professor starts at age 40 and costs are shown over 26 years	5,655,402

Professor starts at age 45 and costs are shown over 21 years	5,126,782
Total projected cost for director and 3 professors (1 asst prof, 1 associate prof, and 1 full prof)	31,590,128

Director Strang's position alone has a lifetime cost of nearly **\$13 million**. If Strang were to hire 14 assistant professors, the total cost of salary and benefits alone would exceed **\$124 million**. These estimates do not include any other likely center costs, such as speaker fees, physical space, or staff. All of these costs are of great concern, too, but *faculty hiring is most significant because tenure-track positions are a lifetime commitment on the part of OSU regardless of the changing will, or budget allocations, at the Statehouse*. **Responsible administration of the Center suggests that no additional new TT hires occur beyond the director's hiring since the Center already has a projected expenditure, with the director's salary alone, that exceeds the current legislative appropriation of funds**. A close reading of the statute makes clear that the Center is *authorized* to make tenure-track hires, not that this is required (see below).

Strategies to Address Fiscal Concerns:

- Chase Center plans should allocate current funds to fully cover future costs of keeping on any TT faculty hired through the center, including the director.
- To ensure cost neutrality, the Chase Center director could consider other approaches to faculty development:
 - identify talented and interested faculty with relevant research areas from across OSU
 - create visiting professor or faculty fellow positions that could be converted to allotted TT lines once the director has identified additional funds
- To hire new TT faculty to the Chase Center who are not currently at OSU, the director could:
 - engage in external fundraising to endow additional positions
 - petition the Statehouse for additional allocations of funds to endow faculty positions
 - first build a curriculum, demonstrate the sustained interest in the Center's courses, and use the internal funds from enrollments to finance hires.
 - establish TT positions that are conditioned on the faculty member securing "soft money" via grants to fund a portion of the position (with the remaining cost paid out of legislative funds)

ADMINISTRATIVE, CURRICULAR, AND PROGRAMMATIC CONCERNS

With the narrow exceptions established by a strict reading of the statute (may house TT faculty, reporting structure), the Center must abide by the procedures and practices that govern other programs and centers. Our processes for center and curriculum approval are checks of quality that will improve outcomes for the center and the broader OSU community. The legitimacy of the Center's activities is a direct function of the degree to which it embraces these processes.

Strategies to Address Administrative Concerns:

- follow the university's established practices for course development, approval, oversight, and assessment,
- emphasize the value and legitimacy of the existing departments, centers, and programs of The Ohio State University, which already robustly address the goals stated in SB 117 (intellectual diversity etc.),

- follow the regulations, hiring by SHIFT standards, tenure practices, fiscal policies, and other regulations by which all other OSU centers and programs are governed

Strategies to Address Curricular and Programmatic Concerns:

- seek concurrences as appropriate when courses overlap with the offerings of other units and centers.
- embrace the university's commitment to citizenship for a just and diverse world, as outlined by the General Education curriculum.
- recognize expertise: many at OSU have done substantial work on the areas identified as a focus for the Center and should be consulted. Look to these scholars for recommendations on speakers and programming.
- establish practices (e.g., an OSU speakers' selection board) for including OSU community in the envisioning of "intellectual diversity." **A wider range of perspectives must be invited for the Chase Center to fulfill the mission as outlined in the legislation.**

ANALYSIS OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATUTE

Responsible enactment of the statute calls for careful attention to what is—and is not—required by the statute as well as the current appropriation language.

1. The language on hiring/faculty in SB 117 (e.g., "with the authority to house tenure-track faculty who hold their appointments within the center," "Not fewer than fifteen tenure-track faculty positions shall be allotted to teach under the center") mandates that the center be **authorized** to house TT faculty with an appointment in the center and that 15 positions be **allotted**. However:
 - The statute does **not** mandate that the positions "allotted to teach under the center" or the tenure-track faculty "who hold their appointments within the center" be **new** hires.
 - The statute does **not** mandate that all positions be filled immediately or ever (just that they be allotted).
 - The statute does **not** mandate that all hires to the center be TT.
 - The statute does **not** mandate the starting salary of any position.
2. A serious fiscal concern is that the statute currently does not automatically reappropriate funds to the Center. This is a major barrier to responsible longer-term planning since it allows the state to take back unused funds, leaving the university at the whims of a changing legislature. And there is no guarantee of funding beyond this 2-year budget.

A conservative reading of the statute in no way prevents the Chase Center from being able to pursue the mission outlined in SB 117. It simply calls for adjustment of the approaches by which this mission is pursued to ensure long-term fiscal responsibility.

Faculty senators—and OSU faculty more broadly—stand ready to engage in fiscally responsible problem-solving. Sincere engagement with the university's processes and existing programs, and a commitment to financial self-sufficiency, will aid in ensuring the solvency of the Center and the success of SB 117's aspiration to "enhance the intellectual diversity of the university."

CALL FOR INPUT

Faculty Council (OSU's body of faculty senators) is seeking input on the implementation of the Chase Center. To help AAUP coordinate delivery of faculty concerns, please send suggestions to osuaap@gmail.com, perez.390@osu.edu (Ashley Pérez), and galvan.8@osu.edu (Jill Galvan). Ashley and Jill are faculty senators and AAUP members working on this issue in the OSU Senate.