

Monday, October 7, 2013

## **Spending teamwork: editorial**

### ***Collaboration on budget priorities should benefit state and taxpayers***

The leaders of Ohio's 37 public universities and colleges did an exemplary job last year of cooperating to prioritize state spending and craft a single capital-improvements wish list.

It worked so well that Gov. John Kasich has decided to let them do it again.

In the past, each institution would present a wish list to the state and the governor and legislators would hash out who would get what. Conducted properly, the Kasich method should promote cooperation and coordination, and curb creation of redundant facilities.

The new method focused on basic long-term needs — repairs to masonry and roofs — while investing in work-force development, public-private partnerships and interdisciplinary approaches. For instance, dollars were targeted to consolidate laboratories so engineers and other scientists could speed basic research into marketable products.

Kasich has reconvened the higher-education budget-collaboration team as work begins on the 2014-2015 spending plan due to the General Assembly early next year. The administration expects that bill to at least match the \$400 million for higher education in the current budget.

The governor has asked Ohio University President Roderick McDavis and Southern State community College President Kevin Boys to lead the commission of university presidents to prioritize projects for the new budget.

They take over the helm from retired Ohio State University President E. Gordon Gee, who deserves credit for pioneering Kasich's collaborative process and producing the template for compromise. OSU, however, will still have a strong voice in the process as the new budget is crafted: Interim President Joseph Alutto is on the budgeting commission.

The amount of money at play in the capital-improvements budget is significant, and the challenge of spending it effectively is formidable. In all, the 2012-2013 spending plan contains about \$1.74 billion for K-12 schools, higher education, prisons and other building projects.

By using this successful model again, Kasich assures Ohioans will wring more value out of each dollar. And not just at the state's colleges and universities.

**Editorial continued here:**

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2013/10/07/spending-teamwork.html>

###