

**For Immediate Release – November 24, 2009**

Contact: Michael Chaney, Chief Communications Officer  
Office: 614-752-9480, Cell: 614-633-5909, Email: [mchaney@regents.state.oh.us](mailto:mchaney@regents.state.oh.us)

## **Ohio Receives Grant to Boost Higher Education Productivity**

***Lumina Foundation awards \$950,000 to the Ohio Board of Regents for statewide efforts to graduate more students within existing resources while ensuring quality***

COLUMBUS – As part of the University System of Ohio’s efforts to maintain affordability for record numbers of students, Chancellor Eric D. Fingerhut today announced Lumina Foundation for Education will spend up to \$950,000 on a multi-year initiative that focuses on consolidating administrative operations across campuses. The grant, one of seven awarded nationally, is part of the foundation’s effort to increase productivity by promoting significant changes in how states fund and deliver higher education.

“The University System of Ohio is committed to using the state’s investment in higher education as efficiently as possible,” said Chancellor Fingerhut. “The grant from Lumina Foundation for Education will help the system save money on administrative costs, which will in turn help keep college affordable for our students, both of which are core goals of our *Strategic Plan for Higher Education*.”

The grant, which will extend for up to four years, will focus on combining “back office” functions such as human resources and payroll across the University System of Ohio and expanding joint purchasing to realize cost savings that can be directed to graduating more students and holding tuition increases in check. System leaders estimate that these initiatives could yield hundreds of millions in savings once implemented.

Over the past year, the foundation has supported other efforts to increase productivity in the state’s higher education system, including implementation of new higher education funding formulas that reward institutions for students’ progress toward and completion of certificates and degrees and establishment of a statewide council to identify and share cost-saving practices across campuses.

“This round of grants represents Lumina’s next steps in advancing a national agenda for raising the level of productivity within higher education,” said Jamie P. Merisotis, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation. “Momentum is building to serve greater numbers of students by maximizing the use of existing resources and ensuring quality. These grants will move us toward a deeper understanding of how we can implement policies and practices that elicit more value from our shared investment in higher education.”

The grants are part of Lumina’s effort to increase the percentage of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025 to meet economic demand. The state investments are designed to stimulate changes in policy and practice that can be emulated. States also receiving grants today include Arizona, Indiana, Maryland, Montana, Tennessee and Texas.

In an effort to engage more states, the foundation also released [Four Steps to Finishing First in Higher Education](#) a practical guide for state policymakers and higher education leaders. These documents describe steps states can take to achieve greater efficiency.

# # #

**About the University System of Ohio**

*The University System of Ohio is the largest comprehensive public system of higher education in the nation, offering options for every student, from GEDs to Ph.D.s. Consisting of 14 universities, 24 university branch campuses, 23 community colleges, and over 120 adult education program sites, the University System of Ohio ensures that all Ohioans have access to a high-quality, affordable higher education within 30 miles of their home. For more information, visit [www.uso.edu](http://www.uso.edu).*

**About Lumina Foundation**

*Lumina Foundation for Education is committed to enrolling and graduating more students from college — especially low-income students, students of color, first-generation students and adult learners. Our goal is to increase the percentage of Americans who hold high-quality degrees and credentials to 60 percent by 2025. Lumina pursues this goal in three ways: by identifying and supporting effective practice, through public policy advocacy, and by using our communications and convening power to build public will for change. For additional information about Productivity, visit [Lumina's Web site](#) and [www.makingopportunityaffordable.org](http://www.makingopportunityaffordable.org).*