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## Ohio News Watch

# McPheron focus: Cut student debt

BY JENNIFER KIEL

**N**EXT year's Ohio State ag students may find funding their education a little more affordable through additional scholarships.

During the Farm Science Review luncheon Sept. 22, Bruce McPheron, vice president for agricultural administration and dean of the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, announced an additional \$1 million financial commitment to the college's undergraduates.

While underlining the successes of the college, McPheron said the need to support students has never been greater.

"Unless you've been under a rock, we all know we have an issue with affordability in education," he said.

### Average debt: \$28K

McPheron noted that CFAES students graduate with an average debt of nearly \$28,000 for students on the Columbus campus and just over \$17,000 for students on the Wooster campus.

"Our most valuable product as a university are those graduates," McPheron said. "We want them to invest in their

careers and families, rather than paying back for education."

The additional \$1 million will add to the nearly \$2.1 million in financial support to undergraduate students on the Columbus and Wooster campuses for the current academic year. McPheron said donors are willing to invest in students whom they have never met because they want to invest in education and those students, as well as the future of the agricultural industry.

### Donor appreciation

"Our donors continue to step up to help us make college more affordable, demonstrating their generosity toward young people," he said. "Thanks to them, we have surpassed our fundraising goal in the current campaign. Additionally, last October we received the largest gift in the college's history, \$7 million from the Delma Roush estate, to support our students."

He challenged those attending the luncheon to leverage dollars.

"We are going to take a very hard look at what we can do as a college to create a sustainable model that takes into consideration all the complexities of financial



**MORE FUNDING:** Ohio State's CFAES Dean Bruce McPheron announced that the college will have an additional \$1 million for undergraduate scholarships next year. The announcement was made during the inaugural day of the 2015 Farm Science Review.

support for our students," he said.

Michael Drake, OSU president, also spoke at the review and emphasized educational access and affordability as top priorities. He called for partners, while also acknowledging support from downtown — state legislators and the governor's office.

### Call to action

McPheron said it was Drake's call to action that prompted an additional \$1 million in scholarships.

"President Drake's focus on affordability has really gotten a lot of attention at Ohio State and beyond," McPheron said.

"We share his goal at our college. It was a call to action, and we felt we needed to double down on our efforts. That's what prompted us to commit an additional \$1 million in scholarships for the next academic year," he added.

In an effort to make college more affordable for students, McPheron said the college is focused on three goals:

- tackling unmet financial need to reduce debt
- ensuring that our students progress through their curriculum to graduate in a timely fashion
- helping students prepare for careers through education both inside and outside the classroom

Learn more about CFAES scholarships at [cfaes.osu.edu/students/money-matters/scholarships](http://cfaes.osu.edu/students/money-matters/scholarships).



**SCHOLARSHIP HELP:** Ohio State President Michael Drake said agriculture is at the center of what a land-grant university does, and students need additional funding to help cover tuition, making the college more accessible.



**USDA SUPPORT:** Ann Bartuska, deputy undersecretary at USDA's Research, Education and Economics, said 1 in 7 jobs is ag-related in Ohio. "It's phenomenal what is being produced, including value-added products."