



# 2025 Impact Report



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

MANSFIELD







# Mansfield Campus by the numbers

**450**

Students living on  
or near campus

**25**

Average  
class size

**\$9,772**

In-state  
tuition

**18.1%**

Increase in first-year  
enrollment  
(402 total students)

**7.3%**

Increase in overall  
enrollment  
(911 total students)

**70.4%**

Mansfield new first-  
year student campus  
retention rate

## BOARD MEMBERS

### Alexus Barry

Student Board Member

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Principal, Richland School of Academic Arts

### Amy Goyal

Vice Chair of the Board

### Swapna Kamadana, M.D.

Partner, Kidney Associates, Inc.

### Col. Kenneth Kmetz

Retired Deputy Wing Commander, Air National  
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Owner, PR Machine Works and Slick Automated  
Solutions

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Dean and Director, Jason Opal, in front of Founders Auditorium, attached to Ovalwood Hall, the first building at Mansfield that opened in 1966.

# Q&A with Dean Jason Opal: Reflecting on year one

**IN HIS FIRST YEAR** as dean of Ohio State Mansfield, Jason Opal has led with vision, compassion and a deep commitment to student success. We sat down with Dean Opal to reflect on his journey, the campus's growth and what lies ahead.

**What inspired you to accept the role of dean at Ohio State Mansfield?**

I was drawn to Mansfield's unique blend of access and excellence, as well as to The Ohio State University's unparalleled brand. The chance to lead a campus that so dramatically improves students' lives — as opposed to simply educating those who are already well-resourced, as was the case for me at my previous schools — was really compelling.

**What was your vision for the campus when you began, and how has it evolved over the past year?**

My initial vision focused on student success and the on-site experience at our forest campus. I also wanted to draw the Mansfield campus more closely into the Ohio State universe, as I prefer to think of our vast network of students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and supporters.

**How do you define success for a regional campus like Mansfield?**

Success means that we offer a small campus version of our great university, nothing less. And it means a campus that helps the surrounding community to flourish. Mansfield saw a 7.3% enrollment increase this year, with first-year students up 18%.



### **What do you attribute this growth to?**

It's a testament to our recruitment efforts, our new academic programs, and the welcoming environment our faculty and staff create. It's because of the hard work of our staff and faculty, not because of me.

### **What impact will the Regional Campus Commitment have on the Mansfield campus?**

The Regional Campus Commitment is one of President Carter's flagship initiatives, that represents what the regional campuses were founded upon — the right of every Ohio citizen to earn an Ohio State degree. For families who earn under \$100,000 per year, eligible students who begin at a regional campus can attend tuition-free all four years — either staying at Mansfield or campus-changing to Columbus or another regional campus. This is a significant expansion beyond any previous aid programs. So, the Regional Campus Commitment will boost enrollment especially among local and first-generation students and help more families afford college.

### **You've championed the Student Emergency Fund. Why is this initiative so important to you?**

Many of our students face very serious challenges that can derail their education. The Emergency Fund provides support at these moments of crisis, when their lives teeter between a future filled with promise and a future weighed down by misfortune.

### **How have you worked to strengthen ties between the campus and the Mansfield community?**

We've hosted community events, expanded partnerships, and invited local leaders to engage with our students. Mansfield isn't just our location — it's our partner. I'm amazed at the cohesion and determination of the community. I also try to bring more of the Ohio State universe to that community.

### **What role do local partnerships play in your vision for Mansfield?**

Partnerships with organizations like Richland Area Chamber, Richland Gives, Third Street Family Health Services, and NAMI amplify our impact. They bring resources, mentorship, and real-world opportunities to our students and give them a real sense that they can build futures here.

### **You've prioritized launching a Medical Laboratory Science program. What excites you about this initiative?**

It meets a critical workforce need and offers students a direct path to meaningful careers. It's a perfect example



Education Senior Lecturer Redmond Wood, fourth-year education students and newlyweds Tyler and Cassidy Albright, with Dean Opal celebrate Ohio State Alumni Day with the Cleveland Guardians.

of aligning academic offerings with community needs. It also builds out from Biology, one of our biggest and strongest majors.

### **What other academic programs or areas are you looking to grow or revamp?**

We have traditional strengths in education, social work, and psychology. We're also exploring expansions in engineering technology, biology and health sciences, and digital learning. I'm very interested in the university's AI fluency initiative. The goal is that the class of 2029 will graduate knowing how to use AI in their chosen field. For example, in this year's launch seminar on the Mansfield campus students are introduced to AI where they learn the basics of prompting and evaluating, as well as how to think critically on applying its use across multiple disciplines. It's about learning how to be intentional with its use as a tool, not the answer to a problem. CBS Evening News Plus called it a "first-in-nation initiative."

### **What has surprised you most about working with the faculty and staff at Mansfield?**

Their devotion. Their intensity. I've never seen anything like it, and I've spent my entire adult life in higher education, including places with a lot more resources.

### **What are your top priorities for year two?**

Enhancing student spaces, enhancing academic programs, and deepening community ties. We're on the rise and I expect and demand that we accelerate our ascent.

### **How can alumni and donors support your vision for Mansfield's future?**

Engage with us — through mentorship, philanthropy, or advocacy. Every contribution helps us create opportunities and transform lives. ✨





Biology student, Bre Reynolds, in Professor Carol Landry's program, reviews slides under a microscope, one of the many pertinent lab practices in which students gain extensive experience.

# Biology program sees significant first-year growth

**ONE YEAR AFTER** they were launched, the Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Arts in Biology degrees at Ohio State Mansfield have attracted more than 80 students, plus another 12 who are majoring in zoology.

The new degrees were made official in 2024, following data that showed the demand for workers in biology fields far exceeded supply. The campus collaborates with local employers, such as Avita Health System, Charles River Laboratories in Ashland, Ohio, and Ohio Health, to provide students scholarships, job shadowing and access to internships and other practical experiences.

"We are very pleased with the growth of the biology program since bachelor's degrees were first made

official," said Carol Landry, associate professor of plant ecology at Ohio State Mansfield. "It is exciting to see the number of students who are committed to completing their biology degrees at the Mansfield campus grow each year. Due to the faculty's unwavering commitment to student success, teaching excellence and research opportunities, students will be prepared for high-demand careers in the health and life sciences, whether they enter the workforce directly or need to continue their education after completing the bachelor's degree."

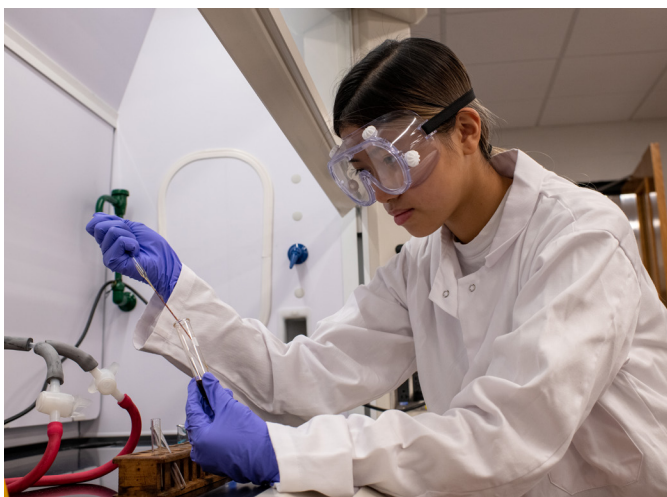
Mansfield's biology program follows the same curriculum as Ohio State Columbus and is designed to meet the needs of students and employers. Professors



are committed to providing a well-rounded experience inside and outside the classroom. Students get hands-on learning in labs, including the outdoor “Ecolab” — a living laboratory comprised of forest, streams, ponds and wetlands.

The health sciences are among the highest-demand employment sectors in northeast Ohio, and the Mansfield campus is within an hour-and-a-half commute of employers in cities like Cleveland, Akron and Columbus.

“These new biology degree offerings respond to students wanting to pursue an Ohio State degree in the health sciences close to home on the Mansfield campus,” said Jason Opal, dean and director of Ohio State Mansfield. “By preparing students for all kinds of careers in health care, we’re also positioning Ohio State Mansfield to address critical and long-term workforce needs in our region.” ✳



## “New biology degree offerings respond to students wanting to pursue an Ohio State degree in the health sciences close to home on the Mansfield campus.”

**JASON OPAL**

DEAN AND DIRECTOR OF OHIO STATE  
MANSFIELD



## Engineering technology graduates thrive locally

Graduates of the Engineering Technology program at Ohio State Mansfield are putting their degrees to work in big ways. In the Fall 2025 edition of the Ohio State Alumni Magazine, two stellar graduates share how they’ve found early career success in their chosen field.

Zachary Ernest and Amanda Becker both graduated in 2024. Ernest is a manufacturing quality engineer at Ashland Conveyor Products, in Ashland, Ohio, and Becker is a drafting and tooling design engineer at CerCo Corp. in Shreve.

Both alumni share personal experiences that led them to study engineering technology. Ernest started at Ohio State Mansfield in 2017 with no clear direction of what he would do. But that changed in 2020 when Ohio State rolled out the engineering technology degree.

He had a few ups and downs along the way, including some personal tragedies that affected him emotionally and physically. He turned to his professors and fellow students for support.

“She (Amber Rader) genuinely cared,” Ernest said. “She was compassionate when I needed it, but there were times she was hard on me, and I needed that too. It’s stuck with me. It’s a unique combination, but one that I want to live up to for those around me.”

Amanda Becker’s first passion was pre-med, but she quickly found that the required 24 credit-hour semesters were not her thing. Like Ernest, she enrolled in Ohio State Mansfield’s engineering technology program in 2020, where everything clicked.

“It’s very interesting, engaging work,” she said. “The hands-on learning at Ohio State made all the difference. We weren’t just reading about machines — we were running them.”

Internships at Gorman-Rupp and Charter Next Generation built her confidence and gave her the edge for her senior capstone: untangling and streamlining a bottleneck within a company’s operations to make it more effective.

“Our success came from the instructors and organizers of the program,” Becker said, who now lives in her hometown near Mansfield, close to friends and family. “It’s exactly what is needed for manufacturing to thrive.”

The full version of both stories can be found on the Ohio State Alumni Magazine website: [alumnimagazine.osu.edu](http://alumnimagazine.osu.edu). Ernest’s story is called “Built for the future,” and is the cover story. Becker’s story is part of a series of alumni profiles called “Precision, passion and possibility.”





Sam Ratvasky, newly minted graduate of the Engineering Technology program, shares his capstone project presentation with Cindy Wood, director of development and community relations.

# Student researchers gain real-world experience

**THE CLASSROOM IS** still the place where the majority of college education takes place, but at Ohio State Mansfield, students also have the opportunity to pursue research.

The psychology program, as well as biology, arts and more offer undergraduate students the opportunity to conduct research with their instructors, as they pursue answers to some of society's biggest questions.

Amy Brunell, professor of psychology, oversees anywhere from one to six researchers each year. This past year, she oversaw a student whose research project on narcissism took her all the way to an international conference in Colorado.

"What they're learning in the classroom becomes something they can see in action," Brunell said. "I think you get a deeper understanding of what you're learning when you have those types of experiences. For a lot of our students, that experience translates into resume

builders, in terms of having the opportunity to present at local events and conferences."

Autumn Meigs, '24, presented research on narcissism at the Community Research Frenzy in Mansfield, at the student Research Forum on campus, and at the international conference for The Society for Personality and Social Psychology, in Denver.

Brunell offered Meigs an opportunity to help study communal narcissism, and the two formed a student-professor mentorship that has flourished.

"I never would have thought about researching narcissism but it's really enjoyable and interesting," Meigs said. "At Mansfield, I can talk to my professors and ask them questions, because the classes are so much smaller."

Agus Muñoz-Garcia, a biology professor at Ohio State Mansfield, is including students in research that





Autumn Meigs, '24, presents her research on communal narcissism at the autumn 2024 Research Frenzy at IdeaWorks in downtown Mansfield.

involves studying how cockroaches and other animals allocate resources for basic life functions like reproduction, growth and maintenance, as well as how they respond to different environmental conditions.

Destiny Moton is a biology major who works in Muñoz-Garcia's lab. She said the hands-on research she is gaining is a perfect fit for her coursework.

"The work we do in the lab really relates to my biology major very well," she said. "We're using a lot of chemistry and we're tracking things that happen not only in insects, but also humans."

Undergraduate research is a great way for students to gain hands-on, real-world experience within their chosen field and it's a great way to prepare them for furthering their education or securing employment.

"This experience makes them more competitive when they are applying to graduate school or even for jobs," Brunell said. ✨



## Faculty extend research and expertise to the community

With more than 50 professors and staff on campus, Ohio State Mansfield is a destination for experts in fields like biology, engineering, mathematics, the arts and social sciences.

Many of our professors live in or near Mansfield and are actively involved in community events. A hallmark event is the Community Research Frenzy, held each fall at a public venue and featuring a half-dozen or more researchers, who present in rapid-fire sessions of seven minutes or less.

"The goal of the Research Frenzy is to take our work into the public and make our fields of study accessible to others," said Amy Brunell, associate dean for faculty enrichment and psychology professor. "I enjoy this event because I get to learn what my colleagues in other departments are exploring and accomplishing."

In September 2025, the campus welcomed a public book reading by Tim Berra, professor emeritus and author of *The Peopling of Polynesia: From Taiwan to Easter Island*.

In early spring, Environment and Natural Resources Professor Gabe Karns, and Kathy Smith, Extension program director for forestry, welcomed the public to see how Ohio State maple syrup is produced, while enjoying a delicious pancake breakfast.

Our professors are also active on community panels and as guest speakers at local events, both on and off campus. You can hear our professors on the radio, see them on local television stations or read their articles in print.

"We have a long and rich history of faculty participating in community events," Brunell said. "They make campus and the Mansfield community a better place to live and work."





Javier Villalon Lopez of Willard and Alayna Rickley of Ontario portray Romeo and Juliet in this year's theatre presentation of the beloved classic.

# Arts move campus to action

**THE ARTS ARE** alive and well at Ohio State Mansfield. In the spring of 2025, associate art professor Kate Shannon was named Artist Laureate for the whole university. She is only the third person to hold this distinction, which recognizes outstanding faculty committed to the arts, and is the first from a regional campus.

As part of her role, Shannon will host a series of hands-on workshops across the state, helping community members of all ages connect with the history of photography and gain a deeper appreciation for its impact on cultural memory. Participants will be introduced to historical photographs and early photographic techniques, examining how the medium

has evolved from careful, hands-on processes to today's quick, easy-to-capture digital images.

Shannon is engaging throughout the state with local archivists, historians and community members, inviting them to share their own photographic materials—from family albums to regional collections—to enrich public awareness of Ohio's rich visual history. In many of the workshops, participants will also be able to create "camera-less images" of objects unique to their surroundings using the 19th-century cyanotype process, which produces blue-toned prints through a light-sensitive chemical reaction.

"We're thrilled and honored to have Ohio State's Artist



Laureate on our campus,” said Jason Opal, dean and director of Ohio State Mansfield. “Kate Shannon is the ideal professor, in that she is every bit as generous as she is talented, every bit as humble as she is brilliant. She’s never satisfied with her teaching, and she’s always willing to try new things and new collaborations.”

Shannon has dedicated much of her creative research at Ohio State to cultivating lasting, positive community engagement and inclusion through the arts. Her work reflects on early photography as a tangible medium for preserving human experience and explores how digital technology continues to define the ways we create, share and consume images.

Recently, she’s been working to integrate AI into her

pedagogy and to partner with Ohio State Mansfield biologists and other colleagues while managing the Conard Art Gallery alongside Professor John Thrasher.

In the area of performing arts, the Theatre program at Ohio State Mansfield is offering a rich season of performances, which began in October with *MLES2GO*, and *Medea*, which was shown in November. In the spring of 2026, the campus will present *1776*, in cooperation with the Mansfield Playhouse.

The Theatre program at Ohio State Mansfield involves community members as actors who perform alongside students, and is a popular venue for entertainment for people of all ages. All programs are led by Joe Fahey, professor and director of theatre. ✳



Associate Professor of Art Kate Shannon pictured with Ohio State President Ted Carter, Vice Provost for the Arts Lisa Florman and Provost Ravi Bellamkonda; Shannon receives the Artist Laureate crown at the 2025 Faculty Awards Celebration.

## Spring Theater Season

# 1776

Book by Peter Stone

Presented in cooperation with  
The Mansfield Playhouse

Philadelphia, a hot summer, and the thirteen colonies about to declare their independence from England ... if only our founding fathers can agree to do it! *1776* follows John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson as they attempt to convince the members of the Second Continental Congress to vote for independence and sign the Declaration. Enjoy this timeless musical with its funny, insightful and compelling story, a striking score and incomparable lyrics.

### Performances in Founders Auditorium:

Saturday, March 7 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 8 at 2:30 p.m.

Monday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m.

### Performances at Mansfield Playhouse:

95 East 3rd Street Mansfield, OH 44902-1323

Friday, March 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 14 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 15 at 2:30 p.m.

### Supported by Ohio America250 Commission and OSU America250

Directed by Doug Wertz, Artistic Director of The Mansfield Playhouse

All Tickets for *1776*: \$10 and \$12 through: [www.mansfieldplayhouse.com/](http://www.mansfieldplayhouse.com/)

Tickets and reservations: 419-522-2883

**Box Office Hours:** Wed-Fri 1 p.m.-6 p.m. and with a box office on site in the location where that day’s performance will take place one hour prior to each performance.





# Growing the Buckeye spirit at Mansfield

Through eye-catching campus enhancements and student-centered spaces, Mansfield has amplified Buckeye Spirit — making it visible, tangible and deeply felt across every building and gathering space.

## Visual identity and gathering spaces

### Brutus in Every Building

A symbol of Buckeye pride, Brutus now greets students in every building — creating a sense of unity and belonging.

### Buckeye Field (in progress)

A selfie-ready Block O installation and new gathering spaces near the Campus Recreation Center are drawing students together in celebration and connection. We hope to launch by December 1.

### Founders Auditorium Billboard

A massive exterior billboard energizes the campus entrance and celebrates our cultural heartbeat.

### Renovated Leadership Room

Under the leadership of Board Chair Nick Gesouras, the Board Room and Student Union are being transformed into a Leadership Room — a hub for student and community leadership.





Spaces that spark connection: New student lounges and gathering areas foster engagement beyond the classroom — advancing Dean Opal's vision for a vibrant, connected campus.

## Student-centered spaces

### Electric Playground

Thanks to New Directions Counseling Services, donated pinball machines create a fun, shared space for both NC State and Ohio State students.

### STEM Student Lounge in Conard Hall

A dedicated lounge for STEM students has boosted collaboration and out-of-class learning.

#### WHY IS THE STEM LOUNGE A SUCCESS?

**“They feel like they have their own space and do use it to mingle with their fellow classmates... The best part is their proximity to classrooms and faculty.”**

NIKKI ROBISHAW, PHD, SENIOR CHEMISTRY LECTURER

**“We hold Bio Club meetings in the lounge... made valentines for foster kids. The informal seating made it easier than a classroom.”**

SUMA ROBINSON, PHD, SENIOR BIOLOGY LECTURER

**“The branding down the hallway makes a huge difference. Visitors love seeing our recent Engineering Technology graduates featured.”**

AMBER RADER, MSEE, ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM COORDINATOR



## Looking Ahead: Ovalwood Hall to celebrate 60 years of access and opportunity

Ovalwood Hall is the academic heart of Ohio State Mansfield — a place where first-generation Buckeyes found belonging, and futures took flight. As we prepare for its 60th anniversary in Fall 2026, we're launching a capital campaign to revitalize this iconic space. Plans include transforming two classrooms into digital learning hubs, creating a new student support center, renovating the public spaces of the first floor and Founders Lobby, and expanding scholarships and emergency funds. This is more than a renovation — it's a renewal of our commitment to access, excellence and community.

**To explore engagement opportunities, contact Cindy Wood at 419-755-4113 or [wood.1183@osu.edu](mailto:wood.1183@osu.edu).**





# Celebrating the Time and Change Campaign (2016–2025)

Through the Time and Change Campaign, we witnessed extraordinary acts of giving — each one a testament to the enduring spirit of our partners who believe in the power of education, community and legacy. Here are 10 gifts representing all sizes that made a lasting impact:

## 1. A Gift-In-Kind of Culture and Wonder

Ljubica Acevska's donation of a ¾-scale replica of the Chinese Terracotta soldiers brought global history to our campus, enriching the arts and inspiring curiosity in every visitor.

## 2. A Legacy of Learning Estate Gift

*Giving Vehicle: Estate Gift*

A transformative estate gift established an endowed chair in the EEOB program, ensuring future generations benefit from world-class faculty and research.

## 3. Named Scholarship Funds Rooted in Love and Honor

Sally Huber honored her educator parents, Barb and Hank Huber, with a scholarship fund that opens doors for students. Michael Cline celebrated 50 years of marriage by creating a scholarship in tribute to his wife, Karla Zeig Cline — turning personal milestones into educational opportunity.





**4. Monthly Recurring Gift of Steady Support in Times of Need**

Education alum and current teacher Bruce Dewey makes consistent monthly gifts to the Student Emergency Fund, offering timely help and hope to students facing unexpected challenges.

**5. Health and Wellness Through Partnership**

Richland Public Health partnered with the Mansfield campus to enhance water access and wellness programming — building a healthier future together.

**6. Fueling Innovation with Grants**

The Richland County Foundation and Ohio’s Super Rapids program invested in engineering technology and robotics, helping students launch cutting-edge careers.

**7. Engineering Excellence Through Industry Support**

The Gorman-Rupp Pump Company and Charter Next Generation Films equipped our engineering labs with state-of-the-art tools, preparing students for real-world success.

**8. Giving from Within**

Our own faculty and staff gave generously to scholarships and study abroad programs, showing that impact begins at home.

**9. A Stage for Creativity and Community**

Friends of the Theatre and Arts provides annual operating support for vibrant programming year after year, ensuring the theatre remains a cornerstone of campus life.

**10. Every Gift Matters**

Each act of giving — large or small — opens doors and creates a sense of belonging for every student. We are deeply grateful to every donor who chose to invest in our students, our campus and our future.





# THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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MANSFIELD



## **Support Buckeyes in Crisis**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!** Richland Gives runs Nov. 17–Dec. 2. Your gift to the Ohio State Mansfield Student Emergency Fund helps students overcome unexpected financial hardships — so they can stay focused on their education and their future.

### **THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AT MANSFIELD**

Cindy Wood, Director of Development and Community Relations

1760 University Drive, Mansfield, OH 44906

wood.1183@osu.edu | 419.755.4113

**[give.osu.edu/mansfield](https://give.osu.edu/mansfield)**