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### **Editorial: Enterprise U. plan frees power of education**

Since the arrival of the Kasich administration, Ohioans have come to clearly understand the state leadership's agenda for change. From reining in collective bargaining with government workers to leasing state assets to taking public initiatives private, the status quo is being vigorously shaken. In that environment, would it be any surprise that a similar drive should also surface in Ohio's educational sector?

Regents Chancellor **Jim Petro** got into the act last week when he unveiled his Enterprise University plan, an effort with noble intentions that would be deployed with a carrot and a stick. The program would, in essence, attempt to free state universities from red tape, give them freedom from some burdensome state oversight and allow them greater independence. In return, the schools would need to meet operational, financial and academic goals. It is all in the name of getting more Ohioans educated at more affordable cost, arming them with degrees and skills that are in work-place demand, keeping them in the state after they graduate and, in a sop to fiscal conservatives, reducing costs.

The proposal has merit. In a state with a rich history of innovation, returning Ohio to its entrepreneurial roots comes with rewards, among them the promise of a stronger, more vibrant business community.

By making universities more accountable, productive and accessible, more degree-holders are certain to pursue personal economic dreams that can only be achieved by securing a degree. Tie that with administration efforts to improve the attractiveness of Ohio as a business destination, and the expectation is that more of those grads will remain in the state to start businesses, adding to payrolls, putting their money to work in Ohio's economy.

At the same time, taxpayers would feel more assured that the capital they provide their educational institutions is being wisely spent – used for the practical purpose of turning out graduates with skills that can get them hired, paid well and not saddled with exorbitant tuition expense, thereby allowing grads to add more investment and brainpower fuel to the state's economic engine.

Of course, Petro's proposal must pass through state lawmakers. In this highly charged political climate, getting approval of the General Assembly might prove daunting. For Ohio's sake, let's hope lawmakers from both sides of the political aisle set aside demagoguery and parochialism to accomplish the task.

Wise parents counsel their children about the value of an education. Its power is enormous. Untying state universities to do the job as they see fit would help multiply that power, which is necessary if Ohio hopes to get over its economic and social ills.

**Article continued here:** <http://www.bizjournals.com/columbus/print-edition/2011/08/26/enterprise-u-plan-frees-power-of.html>