

Adams County Campus Project Put on Hold

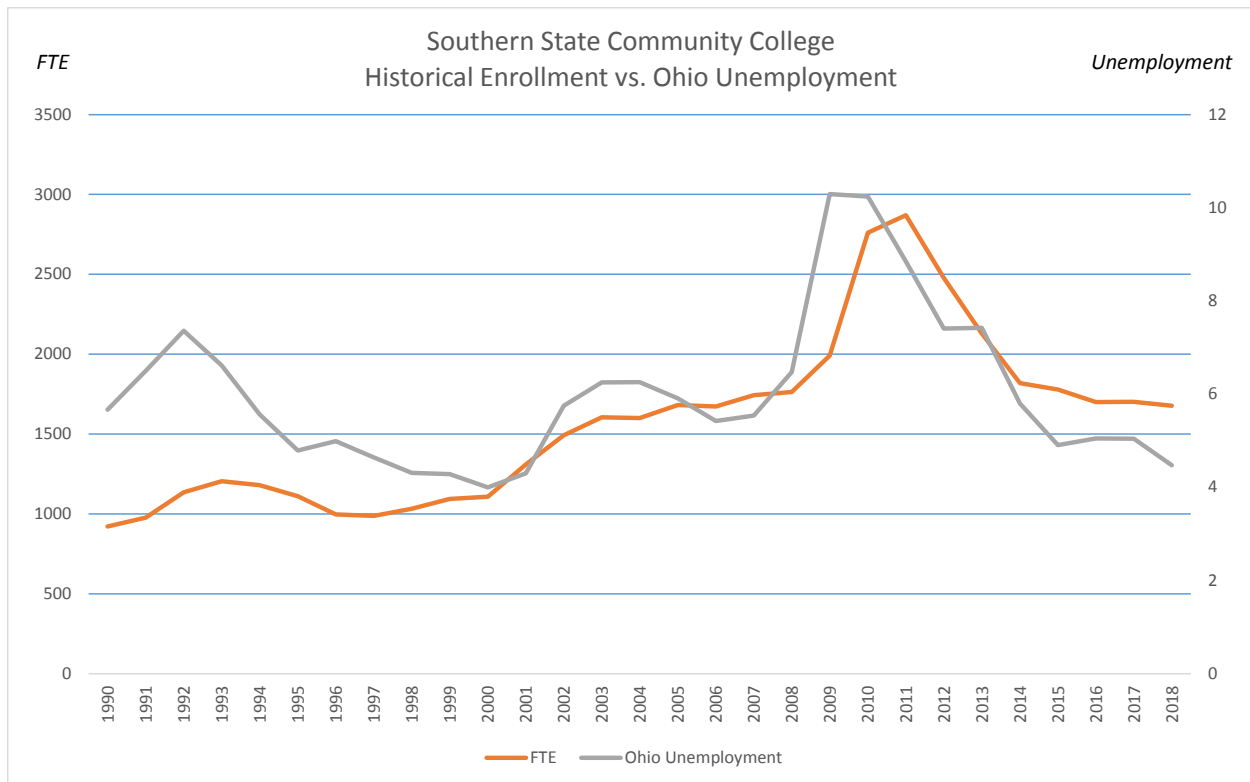
At its regular September 19 meeting, the Southern State Board of Trustees unanimously voted to reject all of the bids submitted by three construction firms to build the Adams County Campus. The lowest base bid submitted was \$1.3 million over the advertised estimate of \$3.25 million dollars. State law prohibits a state entity from entering into a contract on a project that exceeds its estimate by 10 percent or more.

In advising the board of this legal requirement, President Kevin Boys reminded the board of trustees that the Capital appropriation from the state of Ohio for this project remains in place and will be available for this project in the future. "That money is not going anywhere" Boys remarked. "We will continue to look for additional resources and a more competitive bidding environment." Mike Pell, college trustee and Adams County resident added, "We've already made a significant investment in purchasing 15 acres and architecture services for this shovel-ready project. We still believe in this project and commit to revisiting it in 2019."

Earlier at the Board's Finance Committee meeting, Jim Buck, Vice President of Business and Finance advised the board of the financial impact of an additional 8 percent decline in the College's enrollment. "The robust economy and the low unemployment rate across the country continue to negatively affect enrollment in the nation's community colleges," remarked Mr. Buck. "Even after a half million dollars in personnel reductions this summer, the current deficit in this year's budget is at least \$370,000 due to the enrollment decline" he added. Despite the overall decline in enrollment, a simple table indicated high school students taking advantage of the college's on-line course offerings through College Credit Plus grew nearly 20 percent.

"We're in extremely challenging times right now and the demographics of our region don't seem to point to any relief" says Boys. "All of us celebrate the robust economy. Community colleges run counter-cyclical to the economy, so it's simply not a good time for us."

Include chart with press release (*on next page*).



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