

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON



R.J. NEMER
PRESIDENT

December 12, 2025

The Honorable Keith Faber
Ohio Auditor of State
88 E. Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Auditor Faber:

On behalf of The University of Akron and the UA Board of Trustees, I'd like to express my gratitude to your office and team for the diligent, informative work completed in UA's recent performance audit. When asked if the University would voluntarily participate in a performance audit, the Board of Trustees and I happily engaged your office. Several months ago, the University began work on a major Revitalization plan focused on maximizing efficiencies in operations and ensuring fiscal accountability. The AOS report validates many of the actions UA has already incorporated into that comprehensive Revitalization plan and provides insights into additional areas to explore.

The following paragraphs will briefly outline the University's response to the core themes in the report. We look forward to continuing our engagement with AOS as we finalize the implementation plan and complete our annual reporting on the progress made on these recommendations.

Academic Programs, Course Sections and Faculty Workload

The performance audit concluded that University course sections are not optimized. As such, the committee recommended better alignment between section offerings and student demand. Additionally, the audit committee determined that enhanced section optimization would give UA an increased opportunity to evaluate a comprehensive impact on instructional staffing. The University appreciates the team's recognition of our well-developed array of programs. As brought forth in the analysis, many of our programs are aligned with growing professions and in-demand occupations in Ohio's job market. The institution will continue to use market analyses and student demand indicators to continuously monitor and adjust program offerings to meet the needs of students, the community, the state of Ohio and beyond.

In 2023, the institution purchased Stellic as a platform to support student success and persistence; that software is also an ideal tool for optimization. Now that the platform is fully functional and integrated, the University will strategically use it to find efficiencies while maintaining a schedule that meets students' needs.

BUCHTEL HALL 114 • AKRON, OH 44325-4702
330-972-7869 OFFICE • 330-972-8652 FAX • PRESIDENT@UAKRON.EDU

The performance audit also identified UA's lack of centralized faculty workload tracking and recommended a better system for housing workload letters. Although *teaching workload* has always been well articulated and tracked by our Department of Human Resources, the process of assigning and tracking the *full workload* for all faculty has historically been decentralized to the departments. Due to new workload policies, now is an ideal time for the University to implement a centralized tracking system. As we will outline in our implementation plan, the new process will be in place for next academic year.

UA Athletics: Strategic Plan and Budget Process

The performance audit committee analyzed several aspects of our intercollegiate athletics programs and flagged current potential to bolster efficiencies. The department has contracted with an external consulting group to develop comprehensive strategic and budget plans for UA Athletics. The University of Akron recently conducted a national search for the director of intercollegiate athletics position, hiring Dr. Andrew T. Goodrich. Under Dr. Goodrich's leadership, the department has partnered with the Huron Consulting Group. Huron is renowned for work in higher education, financial services and public sector entities.

Together, over the next several months, Huron will work with UA Athletics to develop a forward thinking, five-year strategic plan that aligns with UA's mission, vision and aspirational culture. Through this work, the department will update its business model and improve all aspects of business operations, with the goals of increased revenue, cost saving and improved investments. This will give UA Athletics an opportunity to enhance budgetary benchmarking and complete a financial model assessment, including an economic impact study of the department's contributions to the City of Akron and the surrounding region.

Insurance Offerings

The performance audit concluded that the University could accomplish significant annual savings by evaluating and adjusting employee insurance contributions. Currently, the University offers two self-funded PPOs—the Gold Plan and the Blue Plan—to provide personnel with competitive options and balanced cost sharing.

The Gold Plan features a market-competitive PPO structure, with the University covering an average of 81% of the premium equivalency. The Blue Plan offers lower premiums and benefits, but the University's dollar contribution toward premiums is the same for both plans, ensuring institutional cost neutrality. We will strive to ensure the health plans remain fiscally responsible, competitive and supportive of employee well-being.

Facilities and Financial Strategies

Finally, the audit committee assessed facility and space usage, the University's revenue potential, and various financial strategies to accomplish stability and sustainability. Through this process, numerous recommendations were made, ranging from a facilities master plan, residence

The Honorable Keith Faber

December 12, 2025

Page | 3

hall optimization and office space usage data collection, to establishing a minimum fund balance policy and formalizing an action plan. The University is initially addressing these recommendations in concert, as they are already inextricably linked to the Revitalization plan that has been underway for several months.

As part of the Revitalization plan, the University has strategized and implemented a budget improvement plan, updated its five-year financial forecast, and submitted a six-year capital plan to the State of Ohio. As an ongoing effort to maximize campus space utilization, the capital plan includes a proposed space reduction by 2028. Per the recommendation of the analysis, we will continue to conduct inquiries into and collect data about office space usage.

Following the University's investment grade rating from S&P in late August 2025, UA has worked toward a Public-Private Partnership (P3) housing project, with a deal scheduled to close on December 17, 2025.

The University of Akron appreciates the opportunity to submit this initial response and earnestly commits to continued implementation of the audit committee's recommendations and full execution of our institutional Revitalization plan. We are eager to continue this partnership with the Office of the Auditor of State and look forward to submitting our implementation plan.

Sincerely,



R.J. Nemer
President