

Can Private Independent Colleges and Universities Join the Depositories?

The five depositories in the state were built through bond money (Capital) especially for the thirteen state universities. It has been a question for some time whether the private independent colleges and universities around the state could participate in the depositories. Anita spent some effort pursuing a legal answer to this question. She sought advice from the legal council for the Ohio Board of Regents, Michelle Chavanne, who refer the issue to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) due to the nature of the funding to build the five depositories. Jim Bennett from OBM, after conferring with the Bond Counsel, stated that OhioLINK could allow access to Ohio's private, not for profit institutions of higher education contingent upon following.

1. The material stored in the depositories by the private institutions must be available to and accessible by all OhioLINK libraries to borrow and make use of, and
2. No payment can be collected by the Regional Library Depository system from the private institutions in exchange for this access.

This ruling was discussed with the Regional Depositories Governing Council. It was recognized that this ruling does allow access to the depositories by the private independent colleges and universities by the state. It was also recognized that current participation by the private independent colleges and universities is being prevented by two major concerns:

1. There is currently no space available in any of the depositories to add additional libraries' materials. The depositories are essentially full of the current public university materials.
2. That allowing the private independent colleges and universities access to the depositories without being able to assess fees for operations is prohibitive to the operating of those facilities.

OhioLINK has requested additional Capital funds to build another module. If these funds become available and a new module is built, then this decision could be revisited.