



STATE OF OHIO  
**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OHIO INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION FINDS AN APPEARANCE OF IMPROPRIETY  
RELATED TO A REAL ESTATE LEASE FOR THE FORMER OHIO UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT  
Columbus, Ohio, September 18, 2018

The Office of the Ohio Inspector General determined that relationships between Ohio University (OU) and John Wharton, a local businessman with a history of donating monies to the university, fostered an appearance of preferential treatment when OU leased a property owned by him for the university president. The investigation found that Wharton was engaged in discussions with the athletic department about a conditional \$100,000 donation contemporaneously to his negotiations with the OU Real Estate Department to lease/purchase a property for the university president. The investigation found no evidence that the athletic department and real estate department shared information regarding the communications with Wharton.

As part of the investigation, payments related to the lease for the president's home were reviewed and a wrongdoing was issued based on \$20,449.84 in payments made by the university to Wharton that were contrary to the terms of the lease.

The report of investigation detailing the findings of the investigation also contains seven recommendations to Ohio University.

Ohio Inspector General Report of Investigation file number 2015-CA00016 is now available at:  
<http://watchdog.ohio.gov/investigations/2018investigations.aspx>

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