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## The Guardian, Week of June 15, 2020

Wright State Student Body

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# The Wright State GUARDIAN

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Music Review: "Chromatica" by Lady Gaga

Maxwell Patton

June 15, 2020

American singer Stefani Germanotta, known in the music world as Lady Gaga, released her sixth studio album "Chromatica" on May 15.

The album is supported by two singles: "Stupid Love" and "Rain On Me," which features Ariana Grande. Other featured artists on the record include Elton John (on "Sine from Above") and Blackpink (on "Sour Candy").

This is a return to form for Gaga with very impressive instrumentation and a stark contrast between the positive, bubblegum pop-ish instrumentals and the album's themes of depression, PTSD and self-worth.

The dance-pop aspects of the album's contents work really well together, and Gaga's vocals, while often touched up with effects, sound incredibly powerful against a beautiful soundscape. Highlights

## 1. "Alice"

"My name isn't Alice, but I'll keep looking, I'll keep looking for Wonderland," Lady Gaga sings in the opening lyrics of "Chromatica."

The pulsating beat of this song helps to establish the album's sound after an excellent transition from "Chromatica I," and the synth in the chorus adds a vibe reminiscent of an old arcade game. Coupled with Lady Gaga's powerhouse vocals, "Alice" is quite a good way to kick off this record.

## 2. "Rain On Me"

The watery bass line flows really nicely, especially during the postchoruses, and Ariana Grande is well-utilized in this bop of the track. The two artists' voices mesh together quite smoothly, as neither of them outsings the other.

## 3. "911"

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Gaga's robotic vocals and a techno-oriented style of production will no doubt have you moving your head to the beat. I do wish that this song would have been longer, but what we do get is a blissful electronic cacophony of sound.

## Background

Lady Gaga started pursuing a music career after dropping out of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. She began working as a songwriter for Sony/ATV Music Publishing.

While Lady Gaga was working here, she signed a record deal with both Interscope Records and KonLive Distribution, a label owned by the musician Akon, in 2007. The next year saw the release of her debut studio album, "The Fame," which yielded multiple hit singles such as "Just Dance" and "Poker Face."

This album was reissued the next year to include songs from Gaga's extended play "The Fame Monster." She embarked on both the Fame Ball Tour and Monster Ball Tour in support of these projects.

Gaga's second album, "Born This Way," was released in 2011, to positive reception from critics and audiences. However, her next record, "Artpop," was released in 2013 to mixed reception.

"Cheek to Cheek," a jazz album with Tony Bennett, was released in 2014 and was positively received. Gaga began starring in the fifth season of "American Horror Story" in 2015, and also starred in the sixth season.

Her fifth studio album, "Joanne," was released in 2016. Two years later, she starred with Bradley Cooper in the 2018 version of "A Star Is Born." Lady Gaga was nominated for Best Actress at the 91st Academy Awards. Though she did not win for Best Actress, the song "Shallow," sung by Cooper and Gaga, won the award for Best Original Song.

"Chromatica" was originally planned for release on April 10, but was delayed due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Upon release, the album peaked at the top spot on the Billboard 200 chart, which brought the singer her sixth number-one album. This helped Lady Gaga break the record for the fastest time to reach that milestone, which was previously held by Taylor Swift.

Although the album isn't too musically diverse, each of the tracks is over-the-top and very fun to listen to.

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The consistency in quality from song to song, as well as the instrumental interludes and the transitions surrounding them (especially the “Chromatica II”/“911” transition), help make “Chromatica” an incredibly listenable pop album that will have you hitting replay over and over again.

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Wright State to layoff employees, 50 impacted  
Makenzie Hoeflerlin  
June 15, 2020

Wright State University announced they would be moving forward with “involuntary position eliminations” in an email to all employees Monday morning.

“It is with a heavy heart that I announce, beginning today, we will commence notification of involuntary position eliminations,” said President Edwards in the email. “This will impact approximately 50 occupied positions on our campuses. Some will not have contracts renewed, some are retiring, while others will be provided notice and/or other applicable options.”

University supervisors and human resources will begin meetings with all impacted employees Monday and will finish on Thursday, June 18.

Due to coronavirus and maintaining safety and health precautions, these meetings will take place via Webex.

The university will provide support for the affected employees that includes career coaching, resume writing, interview preparation, and career learning courses, according to the email.

This decision comes after the coronavirus pandemic significantly reduced WSU’s largest revenue sources: state support and enrollment, on top of the university’s previously struggling financial condition.

35 staff have chosen to partake in the Faculty Retirement Incentive Program and will begin to separate from the University. Over 430 employees are also voluntarily reducing their appointments.

“I recognize these are difficult and uncertain times for all of the Wright State Family,” said president Edwards in the email. “We will continue to make every effort to move through these processes as diligently and compassionately as possible, ensuring that focus remains on the respectful treatment of our employees.”

[Click here for the full letter >>](#)

Retro Rewind: “What’s Going On” by Marvin Gaye  
Maxwell Patton  
June 16, 2020

## **The artist**

Marvin Gaye (born Marvin Pentz Gay Jr.) started his music career as a vocalist with The Marquees. After the group disbanded, he worked as a session musician and songwriter before becoming a successful solo artist and doing duets with several prominent Motown artists (including Mary Wells, Kim Weston and Tammi Terrell).

“I Heard It Through The Grapevine” became his first song to reach the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart in late 1968. After splitting with Motown in 1982, he signed with CBS Records. In total, Gaye recorded 17 studio albums as a solo artist and six collaborative albums with other musicians.

On April 1, 1984, Gaye became involved in a fight with his father, Marvin Gay Sr. and was fatally shot in the chest. He has been nominated for 12 Grammy Awards, winning two of them, as well as a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996.

In addition, Gaye was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1987, and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2016. During his career, Gaye earned the nicknames “Prince of Motown” and “Prince of Soul.”

## **The tracklist**

The opening track, “What’s Going On,” has a mournful tone in response to the faded counterculture movement of the 1960s along with multiple tracks of crowds singing in the background, emphasizing the goodness of humanity and wondering “what is going on in this society?”

This leads into the next track, “What’s Happening Brother,” which was dedicated to Gaye’s brother Frankie. This track discusses how war veterans feel a disconnect when they return to their homes and attempt to integrate back into society.

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“Flyin’ High (In The Friendly Sky)” deals with its subject being addicted to heroin, and takes its name from a United Airlines slogan. Following this is “Save the Children,” a track that acts as a call to action to help struggling children.

“God Is Love” is a song dealing with the aspect of Christianity and how God and Jesus have become friends to Gaye. Next is “Mercy Mercy Me (The Ecology),” which focuses on environmental issues and contains a killer tenor saxophone riff from Wild Bill Moore.

“Right On” is a seven minute jam containing elements of funk rock and Latin soul, and it shows off Gaye’s falsetto quite well. “Wholy Holy” is another religion-inspired song that pleads for its audience to band together and support the idea of love instead of hate as their salvation.

The closing track of this album is “Inner City Blues (Makes Me Wanna Holler),” which addresses poverty in urban areas, with its final moments containing a reprise of the album’s opening track.

## **The production**

The creation of the album and its title track occurred when Renaldo Benson, a member of the Four Tops, was traveling with the band on their tour bus. Benson witnessed Bloody Thursday, an instance of violence between protestors and police that took place at People’s Park in Berkeley, Calif.

Benson, Gaye and songwriter Al Cleveland wrote the tune together in 1969. Crediting the 1965 Watts Riots as a pivotal experience in his life, Gaye asked himself at the time “with the world exploding around me, how am I supposed to keep singing love songs?”

“In 1969 or 1970, I began to re-evaluate my whole concept of what I wanted my music to say ... I was very much affected by letters my brother was sending me from Vietnam, as well as the social situation here at home,” Gaye said in an interview with Rolling Stone. “I realized that I had to put my own fantasies behind me if I wanted to write songs that would reach the souls of people. I wanted them to take a look at what was happening in the world.”

Recording sessions for the song “What’s Going On” began on June 1, 1970 at the Hitsville U.S.A. studio in Detroit. Instrumentation for the song was provided by Motown’s backing band The Funk Brothers. The recording sessions for the single were very laid-back due to “marijuana smoke and rounds of Scotch.”

The layered vocals on the track were an accident; Gaye had wanted engineer Kenneth Sands to show him the two lead vocal takes to help decide which to use on the track’s final mix. However,

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Sands and fellow engineer Steve Smith put both tracks into one mix, which created a sound that Gaye adored.

When Gaye showed Motown founder Berry Gordy the finished track, Gordy was not amused by it, calling “What’s Going On” “the worst thing I ever heard in my life.” However, the track was released to record shops by Motown executive Harry Balk and sales executive Barney Ales, selling over 200,000 copies. Gordy was shocked by the song’s success and discussed making the complete album with Gaye at the latter’s home.

The remainder of the album was recorded in 1971 between March 1 and March 10 at Hitsville U.S.A. and the Golden World studio (also located in Detroit). A mix of the album was finished on April 5, while a more integrated mix was created at West

Hollywood’s Sound Factory at the beginning of May by Gaye and his engineers. The latter version of the album became its finished product.

## **What critics thought of “What’s Going On”**

When “What’s Going On” was released, it became Gaye’s first album to chart in the top ten of the Billboard 200 chart, reaching the sixth position. It also received positive reviews from critics at the time.

Reviewing both “What’s Going On” and Stevie Wonder’s album “Where I’m Coming From,” Rolling Stone’s Vince Aletti mentioned that “ambitious, personal albums may be a glut on the market elsewhere, but at Motown, they’re something new ... the album as a whole takes precedence, absorbing its own flaws. There are very few performers who could carry a project like this off. I’ve always admired Marvin Gaye, but I didn’t expect that he would be one of them. Guess I seriously underestimated him. It won’t happen again.” Meanwhile, Time magazine lauded the album as a “vast, melodically deft symphonic pop suite”.

Later reviews have stayed in a similar vein of positivity. Gary Graff, writing for the guidebook MusicHound R&B, stated that “What’s Going On” was “not just a great Gaye album but is one of the great pop albums of all time.”

David Katz for BBC Music wrote that the record is “one of the greatest albums of all time, and nothing short of a masterpiece” and mentioned that “its non-standard musical arrangements, which heralded a new sound at the time, gives it a chilling edge that ultimately underscores its gravity, with subtle orchestral enhancements offset by percolating congas, expertly layered above James Jamerson’s bubbling bass”.

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In 1985, writers for the music magazine NME called “What’s Going On” the greatest album ever made. A poll by British newspaper the Guardian (unrelated to Wright State’s) in 1997 ranked the album at the top spot regarding the 100 best albums. The album was added to the National Recording Registry in 2003.

## **What I think about the album**

Personally, I am a huge fan of concept albums as well as records addressing social issues, especially when they’re done right and communicate their subject matter without sounding overly preachy.

“What’s Going On” tackles its subjects head-on with plenty of flair, and the result is a groovy masterpiece. This is a great entry point for anyone wanting to listen to Marvin Gaye’s music outside of hits like “Let’s Get It On” or “Sexual Healing.”

With what is currently happening in the world right now, I feel that everyone should listen to “What’s Going On” to see humanity’s issues tackled with soul, passion, and grace after the counterculture movement, Woodstock and the Vietnam War, and I hope that hearing this album will inspire others to take charge and handle the issues we face today in a similar manner.

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Students staying connected despite physical distance

Kyle Jackson

June 17, 2020

Away from campus, students are still finding ways to stay connected with each other by using social media platforms and participating in virtual events and classes.

## **Social Media**

This summer it is harder than ever for students to remain connected to their organizations and their peers. Organizations are relying heavily on social media as well as virtual meeting platforms to stay in contact with members.

“All of my organizations have met virtually,” said Jeffrey Shehee, vice president of black student union. “Some groups use FaceTime because we all have iPhones... In some cases, we’ll already have a certain app on our phone like Zoom.”

Wright State’s website provides a social media directory that lists each organization as well as the social media platforms that they use, so members can stay connected.

Social media is also allowing students to remain in contact with their friends from campus.

“I still talk with my closest friends from campus at least once a day, and that could be over Snapchat, sending TikToks or FaceTiming,” said Jackson Cornwell, SGA college of liberal arts senator. “And I’ve still seen my groups of friends too. Sometimes it’s for a student organization meeting or we just all hop on a Zoom call together to just talk. I really don’t feel any less connected to the people I know than normal.”

## **Live Fitness Classes**

Live fitness classes are another way that students are staying connected.

“We are teaching these classes live on Facebook,” said Kara Donbrock, program manager of fitness & wellness. “We teach yoga, different cardio and strength classes, and people can follow along at home.”

These fitness classes allow students to form a routine and attend the sessions live with others or even participate in them once the live session is over.

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“[The classes] start at specific times and they are usually about half-an-hour to an hour long,” said Donbrock. “If a student or staff member cannot be there at the time it starts, they can always access it whenever they want to on the Facebook page.”

Through these live classes, students can interact with their fitness instructor as well as other members in the class.

“Right now on Facebook they can definitely comment,” said Donbrock. “When we are teaching there is a live stream on the side, and we can see people commenting and I can talk back to them. I can also see who is joining so I can say hi to them, and they can comment emojis too.”

Although these classes are held completely online, this does not affect their outreach.

“I think we definitely get more outreach when we post these videos on social media, which is why we are going to continue to do this even when we are back on campus,” said Donbrock. “We definitely have more people on social media.”

## **Discord**

Many students in the College of Engineering and Computer Science are communicating through a platform called Discord.

“[Discord] is a voice and text chat platform for pretty much any computing device,” said Matt Kijowski, cyber systems program manager.

Discord allows these students to communicate with each other as well as some faculty through text and voice chats. Students can ask questions regarding their assignments or ask fellow students for advice or help.

“We started with putting all of our classes online,” said Kijowski. “[Students] can go into our Discord server and [they] can find any one of the CS classes that are active this summer and can start taking part in discussions in those classes.”

Discord also allows students to have informal conversations and stay in contact with fellow students.

“We created one channel called ‘fun in the sun’, which is for all summer stuff,” said Kijowski. “It’s a social space that people are posting pictures of what they are doing during the summer. We [have] text chats about general fun and text chats about personal projects.”

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Since Discord was implemented, it has gained a following of over 600 members and usually has many members live at one time online.

“I typically see between 100 and 200 students signed in live and usually three faculty and most of the TAs,” said Kijowski.

“It’s really just a chat platform that we rolled out and because of its popularity it seems like we have a lot of students adopting it,” said Kijowski.

This summer students are connecting differently, but through social media and live meetings, students remain involved in their organizations, activities and friend groups.

Opinion: Have you ever heard of pickle showers?

Roxanne Roessner

June 18, 2020

What is a pickle shower? I asked this question to several people in my hometown of Coldwater this past week and received mostly the same response. No one knows what it is.

When asking others about the topic, it turns out that most people have experienced one, but never named it.

### **What is a pickle shower?**

According to Urban Dictionary, a pickle shower is, “A brief 5-10 minute rain shower said to be good for a crop of pickles”. This definition is a loose idea of what a pickle shower is like, but it is not quite what it is really like.

Imagine you are outside on a hot summer day with the sun shining and a soft blue sky hangs above you for miles. There is no cloud in sight, and yet, it starts to rain. The droplets fall fast and hard, but the sun still shines. This phenomenon is a pickle shower. It is when the sky rains for no reason and without warning.

### **A deeper dive**

Robert Klosterman, a recent graduate of Ball State University with a Bachelor of Science, said, “Meteorologically, I’m guessing it is simply a pop-up thunderstorm or rain shower due to intense day time heating and high moisture content”.

Klosterman went on to explain that this event is common in the summer, but that the name “pickle shower” must be a colloquial name for a more complex event.

Pickle showers, or pickle rain as some people refer to it, is something that is a unique experience that hopefully everyone has at least once in their lives.

“Oh, they’re so interesting,” said Ralph Roessner, owner of Roessner Energy Products. “I have no idea how they work or where the name came from, but everyone knows what you mean when you explain it”.

Not even Google knows what to look for when “pickle shower” is typed in the search bar. Pictures of baby shower invitations pop-up along with novelty gifts involving pickles.

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However, the next time this small storm occurs, know that it is a pickle shower and that your cucumbers have been watered for the day.

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Coronavirus ends career for senior basketball players

William Baptist

June 19, 2020

Wright State University says goodbye to eight seniors from the Men's and Women's basketball teams that had their college sports careers end due to coronavirus.

The coronavirus ended the season immediately following the Horizon League Conference tournament. As the men's and women's teams were gearing up to compete in the postseason, they received the shocking news that all postseason tournaments were canceled.

"Everyone was devastated," said Katrina Merriweather, women's head basketball coach. "We were practicing and preparing for post-season. It does hit a little harder for seniors, but the underclassmen were hurt for them as well,"

Merriweather has tried to help and offer guidance to the seniors. They have now graduated and are preparing to go into the next phase of their life.

"We helped them remember that everything happens for a reason... They are no strangers to adversity and they are very resilient. Focus on getting a great start in the next phase of [their] career," said Merriweather.

Scott Nagy, the head coach of the WSU men's basketball team, was frustrated with how the season ended. He understands that this situation wasn't just unique to WSU, and everyone was dealing with these circumstances.

"It was a bizarre season and it's very frustrating the way it ended...but everyone else is dealing with the same thing, and it's certainly anti-climactic," said Nagy.

## **Reflecting on the season**

The men's basketball team is trying to stay positive when reflecting on this past season. They are focusing on the good things that they accomplished and how far this program has come.

"We've built this program to be above average... We choose to look at the positive from the season instead of the negative. We had a really good season, even though we didn't play how we wanted in the last game," said Nagy.

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The men's team was also the regular season champion in the Horizon League, for the second year in a row.

"We did play most of the season and were able to capture a championship, so even though the season was cut short we have a lot of good that came from this past year," said Loudon Love, who will be going into his senior season next year.

Both basketball teams felt compassion for their seniors having their careers cut short due to something out of their control. It is challenging to not always think of that when reflecting on this past season.

"It was tough not being able to watch our seniors walk across the stage. We still managed to let them know that we're proud of them and thanked them for everything that they have done not only for our program but in our lives as well," said Tyler Frierson, who will be going into her senior season next year.

## **Preparing for next season**

This will change how some of the players approach next season, knowing the coronavirus could interrupt at any moment.

"This will definitely change my approach for next season. With this being my last year here at Wright State, and with everything that has happened, I will continue to work hard for this to be another great season," said Frierson.

The players are extremely eager to get back to work, and are very excited for next season.

"I know I will, and believe my teammates will, approach this next season with a lot of enthusiasm. I think this is the most time off we have all had since we started playing basketball. We look forward to getting back to work," said Love.

These unforeseen circumstances could potentially bring the teams closer together.

"I think we will definitely rally together once we can all return and be together as a team," said Love.



Board notes: Approved budget, adjunct cuts, property liquidations  
News Team  
June 19, 2020

Wright State University's (WSU) Board of Trustees heard and approved the fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget for the university. Additionally, the trustees approved numerous resolutions and modified the proposed budget with two amendments.

University leadership also gave an update on FY 2020 finances, which are expected to fall just short of \$1 million surplus.

### **FY 2021 budget overview**

The approved FY 2021 budget is down in projected revenue of nearly \$50 million due to an exacerbated downward enrollment trend and an approximate 20 percent reduction in state share of instruction (SSI).

The university's finance team has reduced budgeted expenditures to nearly \$243 million, down from \$257 million in FY 2021.

With a roughly \$50 million shortfall, the university expects to eat up part of its structural deficit with about \$33 million in reserve funds.

As enrollment continues to decline, university leadership recognizes that it must correct both the institutional footprint and spending strategy to adapt to the new student body.

"We are projecting fall of 20 to be 10,721 students, which is a 22% decrease in headcount from where we were at this time fall of 19," said Craig Woolley, chief information officer.

### **Three-year plan**

In addition to the FY 2021 proposal, university leadership outlined a three-year plan with a goal to reduce the university's footprint.

As revenues continue to drop, the university plans to slowly reduce its expenditures to nearly \$201 million. A nearly \$60 million reduction from FY 2020's adopted budget.

Compensation, the largest budget line, at around 70 percent, will be reduced by almost \$50 million by FY 2023.

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On June 15, President Sue Edwards announced that 50 positions will be eliminated involuntarily. In addition, 35 faculty members took a voluntary retirement package.

WSU is also pursuing an academic unit restructuring — reducing the number of colleges from seven to four and reducing the number of individual departments — creating new, larger academic structures.

### **Cuts to adjunct faculty and union talks**

As an immediate cost-saving measure, the trustees proposed and passed an amendment cutting \$5 million from the adjunct faculty budget, practically eliminating the majority of funding allocated to these positions.

WSU has 433 adjunct faculty, according to WSU's website.

"I was very disappointed that the Wright State AAUP has continued to decline [to meet] formally or informally to discuss how the university can work together on these important issues, said chair Tom Gunlock. "As I told my son as he was growing up, folks can either be a part problem or part of the solution. There is no middle ground."

WSU administration has successfully had mid-term talks with both the Teamsters Local 957 and the Fraternal Order of Police, but had no such luck with the AAUP-WSU.

### **Athletics update and liquidation of Double Bowler**

In the past month, WSU effectively eliminated two sports and three teams, softball and men's and women's tennis.

"[This] will ultimately save us \$2 million a year on the athletics side," said Greg Sample, executive vice president and chief operating officer, C.E.O. of Double Bowler Properties Corp.

The university is actively working on a couple different options right now to liquidate the Double Bowler initiative

The Double Bowler Properties Corp. has been subject to public scrutiny over the years.

According to the Ohio Inspector General, Double Bowler was found to violate state law for improperly paying a former congressman for lobbying. Sample is the sole employee of Double Bowler.

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“We are working through a dissolution of the Double Bowler initiative,” said Sample. “This will be the last year that a Wright State budget has any support for Double Bowler. We will be liquidating those investments.”

The goal is to get it done sooner rather than later in hopes of saving even more money, according to Sample.

The university is also working on space consolidation by executing a sale agreement on the building that WSU owns at research park, anticipated to close within the next 90 days, according to Sample.

All of the programs currently housed at research park will begin moving back to Campus. In addition, The Boonshoft Emergency Medicine program at Kettering Medical Center and the academic operations currently taking place at the Duke Ellis center in downtown Dayton will also move back to campus.

## **WSARC**

The Wright State Applied Research Corp. (WSARC) initiative was started many years ago around WSU’s research footprint.

“That has ebbed and flowed in terms of its relationship with Wright State. There have been periods of time where we have had to provide direct financial support to WSARC,” said Sample.

This affiliation will come to a conclusion in October of this calendar year.

“We anticipate presenting a new relationship with WSARC that will have no direct financial support from the university nor will it have any of the indirect support that it currently has,” said Sample

## **Elimination of certain out-of-state tuition surcharges**

The trustees also approved the elimination of the out-of-state tuition charge for certain WSU graduate students.

The approved resolution reduces the original \$465 charge per credit hour to \$4.65 per credit hour — a 99 percent decrease.

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This resolution applies only to nonresident graduate students who earned their bachelor's degree in Ohio and is still waiting on approval by the chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

This reduction includes all WSU degree programs excluding medical degrees and the school of professional psychology degrees.