

Creating Synergy Among Miami's Domestic Campuses

Report to the First in 2009 Coordinating Council

March 9, 2005

Charge to the Task Force

Review the Ohio Board of Regents and other appropriate State of Ohio Documents regarding goals and priorities for higher education, and review the respective *First in 2009* goals. Then, take the following steps:

- ❖ Identify the most important issues facing the regional campuses that need attention, prioritize them, and develop recommendations for action
- ❖ Consider the most appropriate relationships among the three campuses
- ❖ Determine the strategic and programmatic directions for the regional campuses, including the appropriate mix of degree programs and the appropriate degree of outreach and public service

Task Force Membership

- ❖ Judith Delzell, Miami University Oxford, Interim Associate Provost, co-chair
- ❖ Michael Governanti, Miami University Middletown, Executive Director, co-chair
- ❖ Daniel Hall, Miami University Hamilton, Executive Director, co-chair
- ❖ Marilyn Anderson, Miami University Middletown, Nursing
- ❖ Donald Byrkett, Miami University Oxford, Computer Science & Systems Analysis
- ❖ David Hergert, Miami University Hamilton, Engineering Technology
- ❖ Rebecca Hickam, master's student in College Student Personnel, graduate assistant at Miami University Middletown
- ❖ Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, Miami University Oxford, English
- ❖ Diana Royer, Miami University Hamilton, English
- ❖ Rob Schorman, Miami University Middletown, History

Work of the Task Force

The task force met on the following dates: November 3, 2004; November 9, 2004; December 16, 2004; January 14, 2005; February 4, 2005; February 11, 2005; and February 18, 2005.

The task force advertised and held six open forums on the three campuses, as follows: Miami University Hamilton on January 24, Miami University Middletown on January 20, and Miami

University Oxford on February 4. The total attendance was 149 (excluding task force members), and included faculty, staff, students on regional campuses, relocated students enrolled on the Oxford campus, and community members (see Appendix A for minutes from these forums).

Reports and Data Reviewed

We reviewed a number of reports, including Governor Taft's recent CHEE report (*Building on Knowledge, Investing in People*). We also looked at benchmarking data from similar institutions, as well as internal data from the Hamilton and Middletown campuses.

Increasing access to and success in higher education has been and continues to be a major goal for the Ohio Board of Regents and the State of Ohio. (See

<http://www.regents.state.oh.us/mainpages/planning.html> for the higher education planning reports published during the last decade.)

Miami's regional campuses have been dedicated to these overarching goals since their inception in the 1960s. Indeed, their mission and vision statements are congruent with the Ohio Board of Regents Operating Manual for Two-Year Campuses and the related University Regional Campus and University Residence Credit Center definitions therein. (See <http://www.regents.state.oh.us/progs/2yrmanual.pdf>)

More recently, Governor Taft's "Knowledge Economy" initiative for strengthening Ohio's economy and ability to thrive in the 21st century, *Ohio Knowledge Economy Awareness*, and the recent report of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy, *Building on Knowledge, Investing in People*, emphasize the crucial importance of increasing access to and success in higher education in associate degree programs and particularly in baccalaureate degree programs. (See http://www.regents.state.oh.us/kea/kea-template.cfm?doc_id=22 and <http://www.chee.ohio.gov/index.asp?p=0&text=0>)

In addition to reviewing the above reports, the task force reviewed benchmarking data about degrees and program offerings at other regional campuses and found that many university regional campuses in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania offer a much greater number and variety of bachelor's degrees and master's degrees than Miami's regional campuses. For example, OSU-Lima (Ohio), IU-East (Richmond, Indiana), and Penn State Harrisburg, serving regional communities similar in socioeconomic background to Hamilton and Middletown, offer 11, 16, and 26 bachelor's degrees and 3, 4, and 20 master's degrees, respectively.

Key Findings of the Task Force

The large and quickly developing competition in both the two-year and four-year markets seriously threatens the future of Hamilton and Middletown. There are a number of institutions aggressively seeking students in our region, including University of Phoenix, Indiana Wesleyan, Mt. Vernon Nazarene, Wilmington College, and UC in Warren County. Of particular concern is that Sinclair Community College has recently announced a plan to aggressively push into Warren County, including an intention to build a \$20 million facility in Middletown. All of

these institutions have identified the I-75 corridor as an area of focus, given its population growth. (Middletown is, of course, immediately adjacent to I-75).

After a decade of continuing increases in enrollments, Fall 2004 showed a flat enrollment at Hamilton and a 2-3% decline at Middletown. Though one year does not mean that a pattern is necessarily developing, these enrollment figures are still disturbing at a time when the population in the service area is rapidly increasing and thus should be resulting in continued enrollment growth. The concern, of course, is that competing institutions are taking a greater market share.

If Hamilton and Middletown are to reverse this trend, they will need to address the market's interest and needs. The demographics of Butler and Warren counties are shifting from blue-collar workers to professionals, with the latter population having less interest in associate degrees and more in the other types of degree programs. As demonstrated in marketing studies completed in the mid and late 1990s and in the comments received by the Task Force, the community desires additional degree programming at the regional campuses--new associate, baccalaureate, and selected professional graduate degree programming (e.g., part-time or executive MBA, and M.Ed. program), along with professional certificate programs.

The economic, intellectual, and cultural outreach of the regional campuses are clearly valued by members of the community. This outreach occurs not only through academic course offerings, but also through their Offices of Continuing Education, business and industry centers, arts and cultural programming, and service of the faculty and staff.

Though regional campus faculty and staff expressed interest in greater autonomy they did not express any desire to become independent of Miami University. Faculty members feel strongly about their affiliation with Miami University and want to continue their connections with their home departments. Students see the value of a Miami education, and prefer a Miami University diploma rather than one from a neighboring institution.

Forum participants, however, did state that existing administrative structures at Miami University seem to hinder the regional campuses from fully realizing their mission, serving their constituencies, and responding to the increased competition in an effective and expeditious manner. Approval of curricular items (degree programs, new courses, and so forth) is perceived as slow and cumbersome, given the multiple levels of review.

Individuals who attended the forums perceive an increasing divergence between the Oxford campus mission and objectives (to become an elite university with heightened emphasis on research) and the mission and objectives of the regional campuses (to provide an open access, high quality educational experience that meets the needs of the local community). In addition, there does not appear to be a common understanding about how the two divergent missions can co-exist and function in harmony. Given our three campuses in this region, Miami University is in a powerful position geographically to impact this part of Ohio, but to some people we come across as caring more for our national reputation than our potential contributions to Ohio. The regional campuses are especially well positioned to change that sentiment.

Overall, the relationships among the three campuses are productive and positive. However, faculty relationships with their home departments are inconsistent and uneven. There is also a general sense that the two regional campuses would benefit from greater collaboration with one another.

Many people at the regional campuses are concerned about poor, inconsistent, and occasionally nonexistent communication of needed information from units on the Oxford Campus. This includes unwritten departmental policies and procedures that become barriers for students. Similarly, many at the regional campuses indicated that decisions affecting the regional campuses were often made in Oxford without appropriate consultation at the regional campuses. Some regional faculty and staff members are increasingly frustrated by this "oxfordcentricity" and their morale is suffering as a result, not only because they are being overlooked, but because of the hardships created for students.

Many regional campus students are academically able to relocate in Oxford; however, a smaller number than would seem desirable actually relocate. Students who have relocated to Oxford do not have academic problems or concerns, but do have a great deal of difficulty in becoming oriented to the campus, both socially and geographically. There were several related stories about discontinued financial aid and advising problems. Upon relocating to the Oxford campus, many students, particularly nontraditional students, reported feeling stigmatized by their classmates and some instructors. Though most of the students were happy with their decision to relocate to Oxford, several students said they would have preferred to finish their degree on the regional campus if it had been possible.

For financial, social, and practical reasons, many regional campus students defer relocating to Oxford for as long as possible. This results in scheduling problems that sometimes delay graduation. For example, when students arrive in Oxford with everything completed except upper-division major courses, which must be taken over several semesters, the student is only able to create a part-time schedule. Other relocation roadblocks cited by students and faculty include: parking for students who commute daily; loss of merit-based scholarships upon relocating, increased costs, and overall paucity of merit-based aid; experiencing a stigma in classes as a relocated student; and poor communication of deadlines pertaining to program applications.

Overall, forum participants stated there needs to be greater recognition and celebration of the strengths and contributions the regional campuses make to Miami University, such as providing open access, high quality education to citizens of the region; a high quality faculty, especially as compared to competing institutions; and a sense of ownership felt by all constituencies of the regional campuses--faculty, staff, students, and community. Other strengths noted were location and size of the campuses; use of practicing professionals as part-time faculty; involvement of the faculty and staff in the local communities; and diversity of student body (economic, age, race, and so forth).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most Urgent Recommendations

- A statement from the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees concerning their vision for regional campuses is needed. Specifically, endorsement, revision, or disapproval of the direction set out in this report should be immediately sought. Following such action, it is further recommended that a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) be formed to outline a five-year strategic plan that is consonant with the vision. Depending on the vision articulated, this plan could include:
 - a. the addition of new associate degree programs (e.g., criminal justice and health office management) and high demand baccalaureate degree programs (e.g., business technology or secondary science education) to be offered on the regional campuses.
 - b. possible new relationships with two-year institutions (such as Sinclair and Cincinnati State) for the development of baccalaureate completion programs at the regional campuses.
 - c. the possibility of selective graduate degree programming; for example, offered in conjunction with the School of Business (part-time or executive MBA) or School of Education (M.Ed.).
 - d. certificate programs for professionals and other workforce development programs.

The SPC would work collaboratively with the divisional Academic Deans during this process. The plan should be presented to the Provost by December 2005.

- Consider possible new models of administration structure to give the regional campuses the flexibility and autonomy needed to fully realize their mission, to better serve the community, to act with unity, and to be more competitive. Examples of possible administrative structures include: (a) having a Vice-President for Regional Campuses and Continuing Education, or (b) having Executive Directors report to the President and having chief academic officers on both campuses become academic deans. The creation of a new academic division for academic departments and programs found only at the regional campuses should be considered as well.
- Address Sinclair Community College's encroachment in our service area with the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR). Assure the OBR that we will be more responsive to the needs of the community. (We recognize that if we are not willing or able to offer the programs requested by the community we are not in a position to address encroachment of those who are.)
- Find a source of funding for the Voice of America Learning Center so that Miami University has another site to service the region. Update the educational needs assessment plan and develop a full strategic plan for use of the facility.

- Develop an accelerated process for curricular review for programs only offered on the regional campuses.
- Include appropriate consultation and input from regional campuses on all policies that affect the regional campuses.
- Find a means for regular interaction with the Miami University Board of Trustees to address issues related to the regional campuses.
- Increase merit-based aid for relocated students. In addition, when a regional campus student who holds a merit-based scholarship relocates to Oxford, continue his/her merit-based scholarship (excluding those scholarships only awarded for a single year).

Additional Recommendations

- Foster greater collaboration between Hamilton and Middletown campuses, as well as greater collaboration with Oxford. The regional campuses should work in unison on important broad-based matters, such as public relations, marketing, curriculum, and faculty development.
- Expand curricular offerings at the regional campuses using distance education, both by synchronous (interactive video) and asynchronous (web-based) delivery.
- Increase the size of the Engineering Technology Program using distance education, given the large, unmet statewide need for spaces in our current Engineering Technology baccalaureate degree.
- Do a better job at marketing the educational opportunities on the regional campuses. Pool marketing resources between the two campuses for greater effectiveness.
- Faculty members on all four Miami campuses have expectations for service. However, given the mission of the regional campuses, faculty members on the regional campuses have special responsibilities to provide service to the community and service to the respective regional campus. Department chairs and deans need to be sensitive to this primary service responsibility and bear it in mind when considering overall faculty productivity and contributions.
- Clarify expectations of department chairs pertaining to responsibilities related to regional campus faculty members. Encourage the use of "best practices" across the Oxford campus. Examples include scheduling departmental faculty meetings at a time that allows regional campus faculty to attend (if not for all meetings, at least for some on a regular basis); holding one department meeting a year on a regional campus (this would also acquaint Oxford

faculty with the campuses); and doing faculty exchanges in which a regional campus faculty member teaches on the Oxford campus for one semester or year, while an Oxford faculty member (either visiting faculty or permanent faculty) teaches in their place on the regional campus.

- Give greater consideration in academic policy development to allow variations to best meet the needs of all Miami students. For example, are there types of student petitions that could be acted upon at the regional campus without necessarily going through the full ID Committee? Could prior-but-dated documentation of a learning disability be used by an older student to eliminate the replication and high cost of disability assessment? (Presently, an older student who was assessed for a learning disability while in high school must be reassessed [approximately \$800] to be eligible for disability services.)
- Figure out ways to gain greater student participation in relocation orientation programs, especially for students who relocate in January. Students expressed concern about becoming oriented to Oxford, but many did not participate in the optional orientation programs offered. Improve the quality of the orientations and strive for a more welcoming environment overall.
- Improve the advising given to students on all three campuses. Make sure regional campus students are aware that some Oxford programs have enrollment caps and specific criteria for admission (e.g., business, communication, education, and fine arts). Students need to be advised that simply meeting the criteria for relocation to Oxford does not guarantee admission into their desired major. Encourage Oxford departments to do a better job communicating important matters to majors (declared and prospective) enrolled on the regional campuses.
- Investigate the desirability of a Living Learning Community for relocated students that would be attractive and supportive, especially during their first year of transition.
- Improve the parking situation for students who commute to Oxford on a daily basis. (This recommendation would affect not only relocated students, but also those who complete all their coursework in Oxford.) Could there be a designated parking lot in closer proximity to central campus for those students who commute daily?
- Establish a regular assessment cycle with regional campus students to monitor issues raised by the task force. The assessment should include barriers to relocation, as well as interest in particular academic programs.
- Maintain constant vigilance for "oxfordcentricities" and develop a process, conducted on a regular basis, to assess campus climate relative to this matter.
- Communicate and celebrate the mission, contributions, and successes of the regional campuses on the Oxford campus, as well as throughout the region.

Appendix A

Listing of Reports and Data Reviewed

Miami University Regional Campuses 15th Day Undergraduate Enrollment—Students Taking Regional Campus Courses

Miami University Regional Campuses Associate Degree Departments—Number of Courses, Enrollment, and SCH (2000-01 through 2004-05)

Excerpt from "Relocating to Oxford and Improving the History Program in Middletown." Report of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Miami University Middletown

State of Ohio Regional Campuses Enrollment Data

State of Ohio Regional Campuses Degree Information

Indiana University (regional campus) Degree Information

Penn State University (regional campus) Degree Information

Sinclair Community College, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College Degree Information

Ohio Board of Regents Operating Manual for Two-Year Campus Programs. Two-Year Campus Mission (p. 100.01) and Definitions/Recommendations (pp. 201.03 & 201.04). April 1998.

Functional Mission Statements for the Oxford Campus, Hamilton Campus, and Middletown Campus

The Vision and Major Goals (and mission) of Miami University Middletown

Managing for the Future: Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education in Ohio. Ohio Board of Regents, July 1992.

Securing the Future of Higher Education in Ohio. Ohio Board of Regents, December 1992.

Service Expectations for Two-Year Colleges and Regional Campuses. Ohio Board of Regents, September 1993.

Performance Measure for Service Expectations for Ohio's Two-Year Colleges and Regional Campuses. Ohio Board of Regents, June 1994.

Tuition and Fees, 2004-05 Annual Tuition and Fees (Ohio regional campuses)

Tuition and Fees (Ohio regional campuses, 1995-96 through 2004-05)

Success Strategies for the Knowledge Economy: Ohio...A Heritage of Leadership. Charts on Percent of Population With a Bachelor's Degree, Educational Attainment—Where Ohio Stands Today, Higher Education Equals Higher Earning, Confirming the Connection—Income and Education. Ohio Board of Regents, September 2004.

Final Report: Voice of America Training /Education Site Feasibility Study. Paragon Opinion Research, Inc., September 1997.

Educational Needs Assessment Final Report, 1997. Robert L. Seufert and Teresa D. Newton. Applied Research Center, Miami University Middletown, 1997.