

- "February 11, 2011"

Posted by gavazzi.1

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*"We must go beyond textbooks, go out into the bypaths and untrodden depths of the wilderness and travel and explore and tell the world the glories of our journey."* (John Hope Franklin)

Hello everyone,

An extremely important meeting took place on campus this week that may well become a harbinger of many good things to come in the not-too-distant future. The reason for my excitement about this meeting stems from the convergence of certain elements of my "old life" as a family research scientist on the OSU Columbus campus with some of the specific responsibilities I have in my "new life" as Dean and Director of OSU Mansfield. The elements of my "old life" were represented by the out-of-town guests who were present at this meeting. The visiting group included several people I knew from my data collection efforts regarding the "Governor's Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative" that took place in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. This impact of this initiative has been nothing less than dramatic, so much so that more than 80% of the program participants are on track to graduate from high school (that's compared to the 40% graduation rate in many of the high schools within the Cleveland system). Most importantly, these Closing the Achievement Gap students are graduating this year, which means they are looking for colleges to attend next year!

That's of course where the responsibilities of my "new life" kick in. The OSU Mansfield strategic plan calls for our enrollment growth to be fueled in large part by recruitment efforts in Northeast Ohio. And because I knew that these students were going to be ready to attend college this fall, I thought it might be important to let school district leaders know more about all of the great things that our campus has to offer.

Therefore, as you might expect our Director of Admissions and Financial Aid – Ken Sigler – was in this meeting in order to create a plan for making formal presentations to school district leaders about our campus. In turn, Ken also is readying himself and his staff to make similar presentations to parents and students that will kick off and then sustain our targeted recruitment efforts in Cuyahoga County.

Dametraus Jagers, our Coordinator for Multicultural Affairs and Student Success, also was present in the meeting in order to plan for the enhancement of the recruitment process by connecting these students to our Office of Multicultural Affairs. Dametraus also will lay the

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groundwork for retention efforts by focusing on the creation of programs and services for these students that build early and sustained opportunities for success in the classroom and beyond.

As well, Nick Orosan, our Director of Development, was on hand in order to initiate opportunities for the external funding of these recruitment and retention efforts. These new sources of support will be aimed at a variety of activities, including the creation of scholarship funds and the funding of mentoring-related activities. As our plans take more solid shape, we expect to take advantage of several promising individual, corporate, and foundation support mechanisms within the Greater Cleveland area as well as grant opportunities at both the state and federal level.

Together, Ken, Dametraus, and Nick are helping to build the foundation of a pipeline that will allow the best and brightest of Cleveland and other school districts in Cuyahoga County to come to the OSU Mansfield campus as a first choice destination. And this preparatory work may well be an ideal time for other members of our campus to explore the merits of their own involvement. Therefore, if you have ideas about how this new initiative may connect to your research interests, your classroom activities, and/or your service efforts, please know that this group would like to hear from you!

Other similar opportunities may soon arise with other school systems, and so of course I will be keeping you all informed along the way. In the meantime, please take the time to enjoy the weekend with family and friends!

Steve Gavazzi