

□ Although these last two weeks were shortened by the Thanksgiving holiday and extended weekend, there is still plenty of news and updates to report regarding happenings on and around our campus. Let me begin with a quick note about my annual one-on-one meeting this week with President Gee, who expressed his great pleasure with the reports he is receiving about the direction the Ohio State Mansfield campus has been taking over the past year. During our meeting, we spoke at some length about the challenges being faced by higher education in general, and our regional campuses more specifically. It is fitting that there is now a sign at the entrance of his office that reads: "If you don't like change, how are you going to deal with irrelevance?" From the President's point of view, we will either continue to adapt to the shifting landscape, or else our reasons for existence will begin to erode.

Changes in our student body certainly are impacting our campus in a variety of ways these days. We are now much closer to a finalization of numbers related to our enrollment, and hence to our budget. It appears that our overall headcount did in fact go up slightly this quarter in comparison to last year, yet our full time equivalent (FTE) numbers are down significantly. This means that we have approximately the same number of students on campus this year, but they are taking fewer classes. At this juncture, our revenue projections indicate that we will experience approximately a \$500K shortfall this year. Because our expenses have not dropped, we will not be able to put funds back into items that were reduced or eliminated in this year's budget. Therefore, as part of my ongoing consultation with Senior Fiscal Officer Carol Freytag, the Finance Committee of the Ohio State Mansfield Board, and the campus Budget and Compensation Committee, we will seek to minimize the impact of this shortfall through further expense reductions in current budget allocations.

Our campus will continue to feel the effects of these budgetary constraints unless and until we increase our overall enrollment in general, and our full-time student enrollment numbers more specifically. As well, we must continue to develop strategies for reducing the costs of running our campus. These were the central points of a meeting that Carol Freytag and I had yesterday with Michael Boehm, Vice Provost for Academic and Strategic Planning, and several individuals from the Business and Finance office on the Columbus campus. Our financial situation is being monitored closely, and we are being strongly encouraged to explore a variety of ways to increase enrollment and reduce costs. Not coincidentally, a significant amount of my activities

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this quarter have been centered on strategic enrollment and budget management efforts. Some of these activities have been reported to you in previous bi-weekly reports, and others are introduced in the present communication.

With regard to budget management efforts, one of our Regional Campus Cluster strategic planning goals is to work with our co-located technical colleges to gain greater efficiency in operations. I am pleased to report that President Don Plotts of North Central State College and I have begun to explore the possibility of expanding our shared service agreement to include greater collaboration around IT services. Ohio State's Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is being brought in to audit the existing networks, equipment, and related infrastructure of the OSU and NCSC campuses in order to provide recommendations for possible cost savings and resource enhancements for both institutions. Leadership within this initiative is being given by Major Price, our Senior Systems Manager, in cooperation with NCSC's Koffi Akakpo, Vice President of Business and Financial Services. While we are at the very earliest stages of discussion on the topic of merging IT operations, the campus community can expect that we will be actively pursuing opportunities to further streamline the management of our co-located institutions in the weeks and months ahead.

On another note regarding our collaborative efforts with NCSC, President Plotts and I met with the superintendents of 15 local school districts this week in order to explore ideas related to increasing the number of area students who enroll in programs offered on our co-located campuses. I also had the chance to build on dialogue regarding those family engagement efforts that our campus already has initiated with several school districts, including most notably the Mansfield and Galion City Schools. As well, the regional campus deans met last week with Tom Kluding, an NCSC administrator who heads up the Tech Prep (<http://www.techprepohio.org>) initiative in our service areas. Tech Prep is a statewide program designed to strengthen connections between high school students and the colleges and universities that provide more technically-oriented degree programs. The regional deans will continue to monitor opportunities to connect with Tech Prep efforts, especially with regard to efforts that would encourage students to enroll in our education (BSED), social work (BSSW), and nursing (RN to BSN) programs.

Our efforts to increase enrollment on our campus also include exploration of new degree programs that might prove to be especially attractive to place-bound students, and particularly those students who already have earned Associate degrees at NCSC and other local institutions (think especially here of the ATI campus in Wooster). Two representatives from our Curriculum Committee – Professor Gary Kennedy and Professor Bill Putikka—joined Advisor Bill Bauer and me in a meeting on the Columbus campus last week with representatives from the other three regional campuses in order to begin a dialogue about the possibility of creating a bachelor of “integrative studies” degree. As noted in my most recent bi-weekly report, the initial vision for such a program would be centered in Arts and Sciences, would be granted only on the regional campuses, and would allow students with Associate degrees to complete a baccalaureate program by taking a variety of upper level classes in each of the three divisions of Arts and Sciences (Arts and Humanities, Natural and Mathematical Sciences, and Social and Behavioral Sciences). The meeting resulted in a very lively and informative discussion of the pros and cons of such a degree, and plans were made to continue this dialogue amongst faculty and advisors, with the goal of creating a draft document that would specifically outline the elements of a rigorous, yet flexible curriculum.

Our efforts to expand enrollment also are moving forward with outreach efforts beyond North Central Ohio. In my last bi-weekly report, I discussed the initiation of work with the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland. This week, Associate Dean David Tovey and Admissions Director Ken Sigler joined me in a meeting with Lorain County Community College (LCCC) President Roy Church and his staff. This meeting was arranged by Andy Gurd, Vice President of Membership Strategies and Business Development at the Ohio State Alumni Association, who also had served as an LCCC Foundation Board member previous to his accepting a position in our university. At this early point, the LCCC staff expressed keen interest in our beginning to build a relationship through our offerings in social work, especially at the master’s level, so our exploration efforts will start there.

Last week, I was pleased to have met with the ad hoc Student Advisory Committee, convened by Keon Willis, our Student board member. The meeting was dominated by topics surrounding

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student involvement in research activities and the offering of additional majors on our campus, including the development of destination programs. The vast majority of students voiced their desire to have some sort of research experience, and many individuals were open to the idea of gaining such skills outside of their immediate area of study. In smaller follow up conversations, I also was told that highlighting the possibility of gaining real world experiences through research and internship opportunities would in fact make a critical difference in our recruitment and retention efforts; in this latter regard, students indicated that they would be more likely to remain with our campus for additional years if such experiences were readily available on our campus. On another front, students also were excited to learn about some of the degree programs that already are planned to be offered on our campus. In this latter regard, there seems to be a great deal of interest in our emergent ability to offer a sociology degree, and hence my sense is that this is something our campus should be working to publicize soon.

I had the pleasure of holding my second round of informal chats with staff as part of a series of meetings being sponsored by MSAC. I was joined in Riedl Hall by Terri Fisher in anticipation of her having increased contact with the staff in that building as she assumes the role of Assistant Dean next month. Similar to my meetings last spring, much of the dialogue was centered on the relative progress our campus is making in moving toward a more performance-based culture for staff members. There seems to be a growing comfort level with this process, and widespread support for the overall goal of linking salary adjustments to performance indicators.

We face budget challenges to be sure. But we are also presented with possibilities to reduce expenses and at the same time grow enrollment and offer more degree programs for students. In order to move forward, we need each and every person on our campus to be a part of this growth process.

This is the last of my bi-weekly reports for 2011. In closing I want to extend my congratulations to our campus community on the completion of another successful quarter. We bid adieu to the

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last Autumn Quarter ever at Ohio State. To our students, I wish you the best of luck on your final exams. To our faculty, happy grading. And to all, may your holidays be merry and bright!