

- "January 13, 2012"

Posted by gray.15

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Dear Ohio State Mansfield Colleagues,

This is my first Bi-Weekly Report of the new year, so let me begin by wishing everyone all the best in 2012!

Winter Quarter 2012 is now well underway, and with it comes a number of important new developments. Perhaps most significantly, the final version of the Regional Campus Cluster Strategic Plan (RCC-SP) was submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) last week. My participation in meetings with the other regional deans prior to this plan's release had prepared me for the fact that a number of suggestions made by our campus strategic planning committee were not going to make it into this final document. In large part, this was because our campus clearly has interests and emphases that are not shared by the other regional campuses. Fret not! This is exactly the reason behind the next step in this process, which is to formulate our Campus Implementation Plan (CIP). In essence, the CIP is meant to be an articulation of how the RCC-SP "comes to life" on each of the regional campuses, and of course there were expected to be many variations on this overarching vision. Please note that the first 2012 meeting of the CIP committee has been set for Thursday, January 26th from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., and I will be in attendance to discuss next steps and deadlines with this committee. Also, a joint announcement from the regional deans is forthcoming regarding the availability of the final version of the RCC-SP on the OAA website.

Starting next academic year, Access Challenge funds from the state (which previously had been automatically applied to student accounts on all regional campuses) will be decoupled from student tuition, leaving the funds unmarked. The RCC Deans were informed by RCC Executive Dean Bill MacDonald that the four regional campuses now had flexibility in the use of these funds. * Various deliberative bodies – including the Executive Committee, Senior Administrative Staff, and members of the Ohio State Mansfield Board Fiscal Committee – have discussed this situation and the variety of ways this money could be employed, including its use for a strategic hire in advising or retention, continuing to direct it to all students to partially offset tuition costs, and/or to create targeted scholarships for specific populations that we hope to recruit to or retain on our campus. I discussed these ideas in a meeting with the other regional deans this week, and there was general support for doing these sorts of things on all of the regional campuses. The RCC Executive Dean will be gathering some initial feedback on these preliminary ideas from a number of sources, and will articulate some guidance on this matter in the near future.

Last week, members of the Ohio State Mansfield Board's External Relations Committee met with several members of the Mansfield Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance – including Rev. Thomas Hunt (Providence Baptist Church), Rev. Dr. Larry Rawls (Mt. Sinai Baptist Church), Pastor Tommie Carter (Spirit and Truth Christian Center) Rev. James Cosby (Cosby Educational Heritage Center), Rev. Clifton Chandler (Mt. Calvary Baptist Church), and Elder Aaron Williams, Jr. (Maddox Memorial COGIC) – in order to discuss ways in which our family engagement and outreach efforts can better meet the needs of Mansfield minority community members. There was a great support offered up by these Ministerial Alliance members. Some short term strategies for collaboration involved their identification of high school students who are college ready but not necessarily “college savvy” in order to link these individuals and their families to our admissions staff. Longer range plans include our partnering with congregations throughout Mansfield in order to increase the college aspirations of younger students and their families. There will be more information forthcoming from the External Relations Committee in the weeks and months ahead as our family engagement efforts are further advanced.

Last but certainly not least, I wanted to highlight the fact that Professor Terri Fisher officially started in her role as our new Assistant Dean at the beginning of this month. While her work has been front ended with a great amount of attention given to duties associated with providing leadership to our advising unit, faculty members also will have noticed how Terri has started to create an inventory of research and grant-related activities on our campus as well. These two sets of responsibilities – advising and research – increasingly will become the source of many new activities over time. Please join me in wishing Terri all the best as she makes the transition into this important new administrative position.

* These funds should not be confused with ACCESS program funds that have been distributed to non-traditional students attending the Mansfield campus specifically. However, this funding stream, which comes from our own general revenue budget, also is being revamped at present as well.