

Dear Ohio State Mansfield Colleagues,

A number of recent events compel my return to Resource Stewardship issues in this most recent edition of the Dean's Bi-Weekly Report. This means that I wish to focus on efforts to improve the sustainability of our financial and physical resources, with particular emphasis on **developing processes to align resources with the Regional Campus Cluster's strategies** (4.1.A).

Activities surrounding our attempt to close the budget gap created with the Autumn Semester enrollment decline are nearing completion. Associate Dean David Tovey, in consultation with the Program Coordinators and Advising Core, has trimmed back our Spring Semester course offerings, and the Budget and Compensation Committee will soon be sending its cost cutting recommendations to the Executive Committee. Concurrently, the Budget and Compensation Committee members also are already examining longer-term budget savings for next year and beyond, and Senior Fiscal Officer Carol Freytag will be working with departments to articulate the direct versus indirect connections between budget requests and our Campus Implementation Plan.

On the topic of sustaining our financial and physical resources, I also want to report on the highlights of my attendance last Friday at the quarterly meeting of regional campus deans at the Inter-University Council (IUC), which is the representative body of Ohio's public universities. First, in terms of the big picture, we were told that the state budget is in fairly good shape right now. That's very good news, at least in terms of solidifying our understanding that there are no cuts in state subsidy on the foreseeable horizon. On the other hand, the less than good news here is that there is no new support in the immediate offing either, even though revenues have increased quite significantly as of late. The lack of any new resources is reportedly due to the fact that the governor is "gathering his acorns" (this was the term used in the meeting; I am not being squirrelly here) for a reduction in the state income tax rate. Stay tuned.

Perhaps the most significant information reported in the IUC meeting involved the state taking action to roll up all regional campus subsidies into the "main campus" allocation. The focus of this activity centers on the move away from rewarding schools for how many students are served (i.e. courses completed) and toward greater incentives to increase the number of students who graduate. Currently the subsidy formula split is 20/80 favoring course completion. The new formula proposes a 50/50 split. The regional campuses are forecast to benefit from this new formula because we do not get credit for graduation in the current formula. However, all of this will necessarily be worked out with the Columbus campus, so our discussions on this subject matter will have to begin on the sooner side. As of now, it is anticipated that the current formula for the regional campuses will remain "as is" (20/80) for the upcoming fiscal year, and then be changed over to the 50/50 split in the second year of the next biennium budget.

My last point regarding state subsidy is a quick note about the two-year colleges: there also will be a move to incorporate completion rates in their formula as well. While it is not likely to be at the 50% level, nevertheless there will be a need for our co-located technical partner to become

more attuned to degree (and certificate) related outcomes as well. Undoubtedly, this will have some bearing on how our North Central colleagues will view the need for their students to matriculate into four year programs and degrees that we offer. Coincidentally, the scholarship building efforts we are undertaking in our current Capital Campaign related to the provision of aid to NCSC students who wish to become Buckeyes may come to reflect an uncanny sense of timing in this regard.

Remediation related issues also were a topic of conversation in the IUC meeting. New state standards are being put into place that will create uniform assessment thresholds which will guarantee "remediation free" status to students at any public post-secondary institution who meet or exceed those standards. Primarily geared toward Math and English, these standards will involve the use of ACT and SAT scores to determine those thresholds (the COMPASS instrument is not recommended as a readiness indicator but nevertheless scores generated by that measure will be allowable). In addition, there was a small amount of discussion about the remediation (developmental) classes on the main campuses of four-year universities, which will no longer be made available beginning in the 2018-2019 academic year. Happily, there are no indications that the regional campuses will be similarly prohibited from offering these developmental courses. So far, so good.

On a related note, however, it was interesting to hear that several non-Ohio State regional campuses (including most prominently the Kent State regionals) have moved very aggressively to offer remediation courses through online methods such as ALEKS (<http://www.aleks.com>) and MyMathLab (<http://www.mymathlab.com>). An informal conversation with Wanda Thomas, the Executive Dean of the Kent State regional campuses, yielded information indicating not only that the use of these standardized tools streamlined their remediation offerings, but also created opportunities to offer a variety of math courses to high school students from local school districts. I will be meeting with pertinent individuals on our campus in the coming weeks to discuss possible next steps in exploring the use of this technology.

The last point to be raised in this Bi-Weekly Report is a topic that, unfortunately, was NOT discussed in last Friday's IUC meeting. While the general topic of distance learning was on the agenda, there were no plans to discuss the potential impact of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) on the regional campuses. Having participated in some very preliminary discussions with my regional dean colleagues and representatives of the Columbus campus, I was sensitized to the tremendous impact that MOOCs might have on universities in general, and regional campuses in particular. This coincides with a recent article published in the Chronicle of Higher Education on MOOCs, which I would encourage everyone to read:

<http://chronicle.com/article/MOOCs-Take-a-Major-Step/135750/#comment-709288003>

Although there are many issues to pay attention to regarding the development of MOOCs, for regional campuses there can be no bigger concern than the granting of credit to students as an "equivalent replacement for traditional courses" (quote taken directly from the article hot linked above). While we already allow the transfer of credits through both AP courses and post-secondary education opportunities, there are certain characteristics of MOOCs that should give us pause for greater reflection. Notwithstanding the budgetary implications of credit transfers

- "November 16, 2012"

Posted by gavazzi.1

Created on November 16, 2012 at 2:12pm - Last updated November 16, 2012 at 2:21pm

that might essentially be granted free of charge (or at best at greatly reduced rates), there is a decided emphasis on the development of MOOCs that provide instruction for courses currently taught as part of the general education curriculum. Among other things, therefore, this latter issue can and should be a point of deliberation in our hiring strategies in the years to come.

Given all of this, I have asked that we place the topic of MOOCs on the next IUC agenda for further discussion. I also made the request that the IUC staff explore what kinds of discussions are being generated by Board of Regents staff members – as well as state senators and representatives – about MOOCs and related phenomena. Happily, I seem to have gotten their attention pretty quickly! I have already received word back that the IUC will be seeking to add at least one session on MOOCs for an upcoming conference they will be hosting on “Redefining and Redesigning the Learning Environment.”

And speaking of happy, I wish to end this Bi-Weekly Report on a more cheerful note. Our very own Susan Delagrange is part of an Ohio State team that has just been awarded a Gates Foundation grant that focuses on the development of MOOCs. Susan’s team will be exploring the ramifications of developing a second-level English composition class as a MOOC. Read all about the Gates Foundation work on MOOCs here:

<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/postsecondaryeducation/Pages/massive-open-online-courses.aspx>

As you might imagine, Ohio State can either be a main player on the MOOC stage, or be a bystander. Susan’s team will be at the very vanguard of our university’s effort to remain an actor rather than a reactor on this front. Go Susan and GO BUCKS!