

- "February 8, 2013"

Posted by gavazzi.1

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Dear Ohio State Mansfield Colleagues,

Three activities have dominated the past two weeks of my life: a party that created a lot of fun, a search process that generated intrigue, and a conference that provided a great deal of illumination. I would like to share a few thoughts about each of these activities in this Bi-Weekly Report.

The party that created so much fun during the past two weeks was of course our Mardi Gras celebration dinner, which occurred this past Saturday (and hence was a commemoration of Ground Hog Day as well). Let me once again extend special thanks to the social task force members – Jenny Borden, Jeff Heyde, Dawn Kitchen, Jen Racer, Kate Shannon, Tammy Smith, Cathy Stimpert, and John Thrasher – who coordinated everything from the original brainstorming to the decorations, as well as Shelly Minck, who served as the liaison to Ed Pickens and his restaurant crew. In large part, this event was designed simply as a way to get faculty and staff members together for some fellowship while beating back the winter doldrums. Although inclement weather presented some of us with travel challenges, over 70 individuals braved the snowy roads and came out to enjoy the evening's festivities. The dinner was spectacular – I especially enjoyed the roast groundhog ☞ – and the karaoke performances were quite memorable. Although attendance far exceeded my expectations for this inaugural event, I would like to set the bar even higher for next year's winter dinner; my hope is that we can attract at least 100 participants. In order to get this even larger group together in 2014, the social task force members wish to hear from you. If you did come this year, please let us know both what you liked, as well as what you would wish to have changed for next year. And if you did not attend this year's dinner, please take the time to let us know what it would take to have you become one of the new participants next year.

The search activities I mentioned have surrounded Ohio State's hunt for a new Executive Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences, necessitated because Joe Steinmetz (the current A&S Executive Dean) will assume the role of Provost this July. I used the word "intrigue" to describe these efforts for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the fact that the last couple of weeks were spent "searching" for a search firm. A total of four groups were selected by the talent acquisition staff members from Ohio State's Human Resources office to make "try out" presentations to a small subcommittee of the larger search committee. Each of the search firms had its own particular approach to the work they would undertake on behalf of our university, resulting in different combinations of strengths and limitations. At the same time, there was some noticeable consistency underlying the methods of these agencies. Search firms provide assistance in making sure that the best known candidates are contacted about the open position, regardless of whether or not they have responded to the advertisements. In fact, we were told repeatedly that the best candidates typically will not respond on her/his own, but instead will have to be actively recruited. Search firms also are involved in the gathering of "background intelligence" on candidates that reduce the likelihood of "surprise information" coming to light in the latter stages of the search (or worse yet, when the candidate is actually hired!). Our subcommittee made a near unanimous choice on the search firm we felt would provide the best overall service to our university, and that selection that is being run past both the present and future Provosts as I write this report. I will keep our campus updated regularly on this search process, and please know that I have been and will continue to place the needs and desires of the regional campuses front and center in conversations with candidates and search committee members.

The conference I am currently attending – the "illuminating" portion of the last two weeks for me – is the Development for Deans and Academic Leaders Conference being put on by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). This kind of training on development and donor relations is coming at the exact right time and in the exact right way, given the full press we are about to make in the closing months of our Gateway Campaign. I have already fired off several emails with brainstorming ideas to a number of campus community members, and I suspect that I will communicate with at least a few more individuals before this conference ends. I am very excited about what will come from all of this, and therefore I am even more enthusiastic about the impending results our Gateway Campaign efforts.

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Parenthetically, I have been struck with how many times it has been stated that the average amount of time that deans spend on development issues is between 20-40% of their workweek. I have in fact been experiencing that very range of workload due to the Gateway Campaign, and will in fact continue to experience those demands for the foreseeable future as our campus shifts into the larger Ohio State Capital Campaign this summer. The irony here is that I cannot remember one question being asked of me during the interview process to become the Dean and Director of the Ohio State Mansfield campus. Not by faculty, not by staff, not by the search committee... not even by the Provost himself! And truth be told, I came in with a very modest amount of development experience despite having spent a full twenty years on the Columbus campus. Fortunately, I am growing into this part of the job, and I have to admit that I am enjoying the activities more and more.

What is becoming ever more clear to me, however, is that I am going to be needing more of your help in the coming weeks and months (and years, really, as there is an important annual giving mode that we also must involve ourselves in if we are to truly grow as a campus) in order to make our development efforts become even more successful. While I knew that fundraising

(and "friend raising") was a team sport, I did not have much in the way of a playbook. That is, until now. So watch out Ohio State Mansfield campus, I am going to be asking many of you to think a little bit outside of the box (and perhaps a little bit outside of your comfort zones), to create joyful givers that will support our teaching, research, and service efforts. Let's go Bucks will take on a very different meaning as you join me in these development efforts!