

Student Access and Success Coordinating Council of Ohio
Minutes
June 11, 2004

I. Welcome

Co-Chair Bruce Beeghly opened the meeting. Members in attendance included:

David Williamson – Ohio Department of Development
Shane Hollett – Ohio College Access Network
Leonard Hubert – Ohio Commission on African American Males
Larry Christman – Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Ohio
Jennifer Stewart – Ohio Department of Education (for Deborah Owens Fink)
Jeannette Grasselli Brown – Ohio Board of Regents
Geraldine Hayes Chavez – Kent State University
Samuel Gresham – Columbus Urban League
Lisa Mitchell – Sallie Mae Student Loan Funding
Maureen O'Brien – Ohio Tuition Trust Authority (for Jacqueline Williams)
Jennifer Conner – KnowledgeWorks Foundation (for Chad Wick)
Wendell Schick – Ohio Northern University
Brian Paskvan – Owens Community College

II. Discussion on State Access Mission and Marketing

Kristina Frost, Vice Chancellor for Operations for the Ohio Board of Regents, discussed the need to make sure that more Ohio students (including adults) and their families hear the message about the importance and benefits of higher education. Adults who lack education beyond high school or need retraining can also benefit from marketing messages. Kris informed the Council that the Board of Regents has carried out some marketing strategies in the past (including the Success Express campaign), and we need to find a way to make good use of lessons learned from past initiatives. She also informed the Council that the report of recommendations from the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy (CHEE) calls for a state-level higher education marketing effort. She recommended the formation of a higher education marketing consultation that could look at successful marketing efforts (conducted by colleges and universities and other higher education/access stakeholders) and give direction to a statewide marketing campaign. She suggested the establishment of a series of consultations on marketing to develop a strategy. Other points made by Vice Chancellor Frost included:

- While there seems to be a growing interest by government to increase outreach about higher education, there is little funding available for these efforts.
- Many organizations have resources available that could be used in a statewide marketing effort.
- In order to create effective messages that appeal to different communities, input must be gathered from community leaders, business leaders, churches, schools and others.
- We should explore the capability that businesses have to communicate with their employees.

Jocelyn Frasier, Assistant Director of Communication at the Board of Regents, presented and discussed a draft conceptual model that identifies strategies, stakeholders and audiences for a statewide marketing effort. The Student Access and Success Coordinating Council plays a leading role in this model. A central goal of a statewide marketing campaign, as recommended by CHEE, is an increase in Ohio's higher education enrollments by 30% over the next decade. Jocelyn also reported on a series of focus group interviews conducted by the Board of Regents to gather information about how students and parents perceive higher education and efforts to promote the value of postsecondary education. Findings from these focus groups included the following:

- Students understand that more education leads to higher lifetime earnings.
- Parents appear to be more concerned about the value of higher education than their children.
- Direct communication ("one-on-one") is as important as media messages.
- Role models should be used to communicate marketing messages.
- Some marketing messages should be specifically designed to appeal to the "millennial generation" (Ohioans born after 1982).
- In order to ensure tangible outcomes, colleges and universities need to be more active partners.
- Energy should be focused more on implementing strategies than on talking about the problem (which is already well understood).
- Marketing strategies should be focused on financially disadvantaged students and students from underrepresented populations.
- A conference should be held with key partners to plan strategy and establish timeframes for marketing efforts.

It was suggested that there is a need to communicate with students from underserved groups who have completed college to find out what factors contributed to their success. Other comments made by Council members on the topic of marketing the need for and benefits of postsecondary education included:

- Organizations and individuals need to share a "common voice."
- We can learn from current programs like Career Pathways, Junior ROTC, OCAN and TRIO.
- Look at successful strategies implemented in other states.
- Colleges and universities do a good job of marketing. What can we learn from them?
- Parents must be in the equation.

III. Student Information Portal

Len Simutis, Director of the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (at the Ohio State University), presented an update on plans to develop a web-based student information portal which will provide tools for academic, career and college planning and supplement statewide marketing efforts. He reported that software available through several organizations has been reviewed. These organizations include: Great Lakes Educational Loan Services, Inc., Sallie Mae Student Loan Funding, XAP Corporation, the Ohio Career Information Center, and others. He also informed the Council that Sallie Mae Student Loan Funding and Great Lakes Educational Loan Services, Inc., have committed support for the construction of the information portal.

Recommendations made by the Portal Advisory Committee to the Board of Regents included:

- Ohio should build its own portal.
- No single vendor should control the portal.
- Development of the portal should be coordinated by the Board of Regents and guided by a committee of institutional representatives to ensure that no special advantage is afforded to any loan provider or guarantor.
- Focus on Ohio-specific information when starting to build the portal.

Next steps in the development of a student portal include selecting the organization that will build the portal, determining the best design and architecture, and conducting further technical discussions with the Advisory Committee. Vice Chancellor Tafel indicated that he would like to begin developing the portal this summer and concentrate first on information that would be most useful to high school juniors and seniors.

Comments from Council members regarding the student information portal included the following:

- When developing information for the portal, we must remember the needs of adult learners.
- We must ensure that low-income and first-generation families have access to information.
- Many of these families do not have access to the Internet.
- We need more discussions about how the portal will be promoted throughout the state.
- The portal should be the centerpiece of a larger marketing strategy.

IV. Proposal for a Student Access Hot Line

Charles Shahid, Director of the State Grants and Scholarships Department at the Board of Regents, reported on the Board of Regents' plans to develop a toll-free information hot line. He advised the Council that the hot line will serve as a resource for students and parents who need information about the availability of financial aid, the financial aid application process, academic and career planning, and information related to the transfer of college and university credits. The hot line would also provide linkages and referrals to other information sources including OCAN, TRIO and GEAR UP. Charles expressed concern about students and parents who may have access to the Internet but who feel most comfortable seeking information through personal contact. He indicated that the hot line could be developed by expanding the existing Ohio Board of Regents' toll-free phone line that provides information about State financial aid programs.

Vice Chancellor Tafel explained that the hot line would not provide answers to specific credit transfer issues for individual students, but instead, would serve to inform students of the resources available to them as well as pertinent policies and practices, and where they can go for additional information.

V. Presentation on Grants for “State Scholars Initiative”

Tom Rudd, Director of Student Financial Access at the Board of Regents, reported on the State Scholars Initiative, a federally funded grant program that provides funding for states to encourage its middle and high school students to complete a rigorous high school curriculum in preparation for postsecondary education. Tom reported that 13 states currently have grants. Additional funding in the FY2005 federal budget will enable the Center for State Scholars, based in Austin, Texas, to consider another round of competitive grants. Tom indicated that these grants are awarded to state partnerships that include business, K-12 education and higher education. Co-Chair Tina Milano requested that the staff investigate this program. She asked the staff to begin discussions with the State Department of Education and the Ohio Business Roundtable as we pursue this funding.

It was suggested that we need to learn more about the Center for State Scholars before we actively collaborate on a grant.

VI. Update on OBR Financial Aid Consultation

Charles Shahid provided an update on the work of the statewide Financial Aid Consultation, an advisory group empanelled by the Board of Regents to provide advice and stimulate research on issues related to state-funded financial aid programs and policy. He reported that several substantive recommendations were developed by a subcommittee on June 3, 2004 and that these recommendations will go to the full Consultation and then to the Funding Commission. These recommendations are: 1) To employ the federal need analysis system to determine need in the Ohio Instructional Grant Program, and 2) to merge the Ohio Instructional Grant and the Part-Time Student Instructional Grant Programs. Charles indicated that a full roll out of these changes would not occur until June of 2007.

It was suggested that OBR develop an “early financial aid estimator” to assist students and families in understanding what financial aid might be available when the student is ready for college and how much the family might have to pay.

VII. OBR High School Transition Report

Darrell Glenn, Director of Performance Reporting at the Ohio Board of Regents, provided a brief summary of the most recent OBR “High School Transition Report” [actual name of the report is “Making the Transition from High School to College in Ohio, 2003.”] The member notebooks included a copy of “The Issue” (June 2004), a Board of Regents publication that presented summary information from the Transition Report. Darrell presented the following highlights from the Report:

- A majority of high school graduates in Ohio go straight to college from high school. In 2002, an estimated 59% of Ohio’s 120,000 high school graduates attended college somewhere in the U.S. in the fall of 2002.
- If current trends continue, many of the estimated 50,000 students who graduated from high school in 2002 and did not go directly to college, will eventually enroll in college. The college participation rate of the Ohio high school graduation class of 2002 could be as high as 80%.

- Approximately 80% of traditional-aged Ohio college freshmen attend 4-year colleges and universities and 20% attend 2-year colleges.
- Of all Ohio's entering college freshmen, approximately 44% are first generation college students, an estimated one-third did not complete the minimum college preparatory curriculum in high school and 39% took at least one remedial course in their first year of college.
- The courses a student completes in high school may be a better measure of "college readiness" than his or her scores on the ACT or the SAT tests.
- Students who have not completed the core high school curriculum have more difficulty with the academic rigor of college. This finding holds true regardless of the student's socioeconomic status.

In responding to this information, Council members made the following comments:

- Ohio needs to do a better job of convincing parents that their children should take rigorous courses in high school.
- The SAT or ACT should be considered as a replacement for the OGT--the high school graduation test.
- When students do not have the benefit of good school systems, good teachers, rigorous curricula, and other resources required for strong academic preparation, we should hold the system accountable rather than blaming the students.
- Out migration from Ohio to colleges and universities in the State of Pennsylvania is relatively high because of the proximity of these programs and the existence of tuition reciprocity and grant portability agreements.

VIII. Discussion on Expanding GEAR UP Best Practices through OCAN

Leslie Sawyer, Director of Access Initiatives and the State GEAR UP Program, and Shane Hollett, Executive Director of the Ohio College Access Network, advised the Council of plans to "roll out" best practices identified at GEAR UP and OCAN sites. These best practices have been selected on the basis of evaluations conducted by the University of Cincinnati, Evaluation Services, or through a competitive process conducted by the Board of Regents. These practices, which include in-school advising and early awareness services, tutoring and after school programs, summer enrichment programs and others, will be packaged as "products" for statewide distribution. The roll out will include preparation of a catalogue of best practices, awarding of grants to local OCAN and GEAR UP Programs, creation of "tool kits," including media demonstrations and instruction manuals, training sessions, site visits planning, assessing progress and providing technical assistance.

IX. Update on Learn & Earn Scholarship Program

Tom Rudd presented an update on the LEARN & EARN Program. This is a program that gives students the opportunity to earn college scholarship points as they move through elementary, middle and high school. This program is designed to promote high educational aspirations, encourage and reward students for strong academic preparation and early college and career planning, and reduce unmet financial need when students enroll in college. Tom reported that LEARN & EARN will:

- Improve academic preparation by rewarding students for success in K-12 education and for taking rigorous courses in high school;
- strengthen college aspirations by encouraging and rewarding students and their families for engaging in college planning and career exploration activities (including exposure to information about the real cost of college and the availability of financial aid);
- improve college affordability by providing financial aid to assist families with the cost of higher education and, consequently, reduce their reliance of on student loans.

X. Update on Articulation and Transfer Activity

Jon Tafel advised the Council that the Ohio Board of Regents and other education stakeholders have been working for 12 years to remove barriers to enable students to move with greater ease from two-year colleges to four-year programs at state universities and be sure that credit already earned could transfer. He reported that “transfer modules” exist for general education courses among all Ohio public two- and four-year colleges and universities and that courses within these modules are guaranteed to transfer.

The Ohio Articulation and Transfer Council has worked for the past 15 months to increase the number of courses eligible to transfer beyond those included in the transfer module into the student’s chosen major. More than 250 faculty from across Ohio have been meeting to develop Transfer Assurance Guides and Technical Transfer Cores that provide a pathway that guarantees transfer and application of credits into the student’s major. Jon talked about the need to “market” Ohio’s articulation and transfer policy and process, starting with high school guidance counselors, teachers, and access programs including GEAR UP, OCAN and TRIO. He noted that the on-line Course Applicability System (CAS) is an important tool in the effort to improve the transfer process.

XI. Next Meeting

While a specific date was not set, the month of October, 2004 was designated.

XII. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned by Co-Chair Bruce Beeghly.