

**Ohio Board of Regents**  
**STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS COORDINATING COUNCIL (SASCCO)**  
**June 9, 2006 Meeting Minutes**

**Attending:**

Jennifer Blatz, Ohio College Access Network  
Katie Bontrager, Sallie Mae Ohio  
Sidney Childs, Bowling Green State University  
Frank Deaner, Ohio Newspaper Association  
Brenda Haas, Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education  
Martino Harmon, University of Toledo  
Eddie Harrell, Columbus Urban League  
Tally Hart, Ohio State University  
Leonard Hubert, Governor's Office/Commission on African-American Males  
Tom Humphries, Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Gary Johnson, Think College Now  
Todd Jones, Association for Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio  
Tina Milano, National Collage Access Network (SASCCO Co-Chair)  
Geraldine Nelson, TRIO and Kent State University  
Victor Ruiz, Cleveland Scholarships Programs, Inc. (representing Maria Boss)  
Wendell Schick, Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administration/University of Northwest Ohio  
LaToya Sykes, Great Lakes Higher Education  
Jackie Williams, Ohio Tuition Trust Authority  
Reginald Wilkinson, Business Alliance for Higher Education and the Economy  
Matt Williams, Knowledge Works Foundation (representing Chad Wick)  
Shaun Yoder, Governor's Office

**Regents Staff Attending:**

Kris Frost, Jon Tafel, Charles Shahid, Bret Crow, Jocelyn Frasier, Leslie Sawyer

**Guests:**

Kate Carey, Ohio Learning Network (OLN); David Cournoyer, Lumina Foundation;  
Stacey Dorr, Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Ohio; Nancy Ragias, OLN; Steve Sundre, School Match Institute

**Welcome**

Student Access and Success Coordinating Council of Ohio (SASCCO) Co-Chair Tina Milano opened the meeting introducing new SASCCO members and guests. Jon Tafel reviewed the SASCCO charge noting that there were three areas in which SASCCO was intent on concentrating: facilitating communication among the college access groups in Ohio; developing a strategic marketing plan for higher education, and identifying five or six performance goals to measure success in improving college access and student success in college.

**Lumina Foundation Presentation**

David Cournoyer from the Lumina Foundation summarized the work the Ad Council, the Lumina Foundation, and the American Council on Education (ACE) are doing to develop a social marketing campaign impacting college access.

The early hypothesis was that low-income students did not think college was for them and that states must work to remedy the purported issues regarding aspiration among America's youth.

Mr. Cournoyer explained that the campaign will utilize various media to communicate to its target audience of first-generation college students in the eighth, ninth, and tenth grades. The media campaign will utilize TV, radio, print, internet, billboards, bus stops, malls, video games, and other media as the platform. A second component of the campaign involves a grassroots piece that utilizes local organizations to ably connect with young people.

Lumina's research showed that of 400 low-income teens polled in January 2006, 91% said they wanted to go to college, a finding that contradicted Lumina's initial hypothesis. Parent attitudes were interesting as only 20% of low-income parents had pushed their child to apply to college and almost 60% said that the child must make the decision regarding college.

Despite the finding that students aspire to attend college, there are major gaps in preparation. Lumina also found that for young people, college and all its advantages were on their radar screen but how to get there was not. The understanding among the students interviewed was that students who stayed out of trouble and earned good grades would get into college automatically. Lumina's goal, then, was to disrupt that notion and to give students the tools to turn their dream of attending college into actionable goals.

The campaign's slogan will be: **"Let everyone know you want to go! College: get it, got it, go."** Lumina hopes to launch the campaign in the fall. Mr. Cournoyer stated that no specific states had been selected for the campaign at that time, but a tremendous opportunity existed to work intensely in Ohio. He also indicated that radio was the most effective method of communicating information to the eighth to tenth grade demographic because disc jockeys were very influential among communities and families.

Victor Ruiz suggested that websites with high-traffic among young people be targeted for advertising campaigns, sites that Cournoyer affirmed had a good relationship with the Ad Council.

### **Ohio Learning Network Presentation**

Kate Carey of the Ohio Learning Network (OLN) explained that a marketing effort was underway to draw adults into OLN's E 4 ME Ohio program. OLN is offering the online E 4 ME course for free to students to take at their own pace. The goal of the course is to develop the skills necessary to be successful in college online courses as a means of bringing adults into higher education.

The primary service is the OLN catalog with more than 3,000 courses and 160 complete degree and certificate programs. E 4 ME exists to help acclimate adults to online working while simultaneously providing the foundation of higher education. Radio has served as the primary advertising tool for the program, though the website has been beneficial as well, along with help from campuses and an annual presence at the Ohio State Fair over the past five years.

Over last six years, the University of Cincinnati's polling institute has surveyed adults about college for OLN. Consistently, the adults surveyed have expressed their belief that obtaining a college degree is important for career advancement and personal satisfaction. Hurdles the adult respondents encounter in going to college are financial aid and family situations. These are problems that online learning could help remedy.

Thirty-eight percent (38%) of respondents were somewhat interested in distance learning. Thirty-three percent (33%) were very interested but the vast majority would need financial aid to get a bachelor's degree. The vast majority also said it was likely to some degree that they would want help with math, while a smaller majority said they would want help with writing. Many respondents were at least somewhat interested in a new degree concept called a "Regents' Degree", which does not yet exist.

Carey asserted that there were advertising opportunities at gas stations, grocery stores, etc. and that ways had to be sought to use those spaces for the encouragement of higher education. In response to a question from Eddie Harrell about penetration into minority communities, Carey said that two of the organizations OLN is aligned with were aimed at addressing this issue. However, it had been hard to get efforts underway, and OLN would be open to help.

In response to a question from Jon Tafel regarding the details of radio advertising, Carey explained that about \$400,000 was spent annually. Urban radio advertising has been sought. OLN is just starting to move into that market so figures are not yet available. Adult radio is also targeted. OLN's goal is to consistently hit the same markets and tailor messages in order to get some amount of penetration, but the dollars OLN has are abysmally short especially compared to the dollars that a corporation provides for marketing or even compared to what a higher education institution allocates for NCAA spots or recruiting a single student.

### **Triad Research Group Presentation**

Bob Dykes from Triad presented the final results of three pieces of research:

- 1) Seven focus groups were conducted last fall with adults who did not participate in postsecondary education after high school and did not have a college degree.
- 2) A telephone survey was conducted with 800 adults ages 19-44 who did not have a high school diploma or GED and had no degree as of December 2005.
- 3) Two focus groups were conducted in May 2006 with Ohio adults who currently are in college and working toward a certificate or a degree or recently graduated (did return groups).

As to why they had not earned a degree, respondents indicated that they:

- 1) Had families to raise, not enough time to work, raise a family, and go to school
- 2) Can't afford to reduce hours or risk losing jobs
- 3) Need financial help for tuition, books and household support
- 4) Don't want to take courses that "really mean nothing to me"
- 5) "Still not sure what I want to do"

These groups understand the value of higher education, and they know what it means they have better job opportunities, more opportunities, more job security, more respect, and more money. But if you want people to go back to school, Dykes said, telling them that college is important is not going to change much.

*Phone survey:*

Purpose: To identify the barriers to getting a college degree and learn how to overcome those barriers.

Triad also did some message testing. In terms of who should speak to adults, the respondents stated they want to hear from people like themselves who took the risk, made the effort, were successful, and achieved what they want to achieve.

A multivariate analysis of the results was conducted to see if these reasons clustered together in terms of any patterns and they did.

Cluster 1: Can't Afford - people who want to re-enter workforce because they're not there now. They are homemakers, working part-time, don't have any jobs, tend to be mostly female, mostly minority, job re-entry cluster saying I don't have the money.

Cluster 2: Couldn't afford it either, but also strongest on the lack of time. They tended to be the most heavily white of the groups, and they made a little more money, had jobs but not necessarily good jobs.

Cluster 3: No strong reasons. Cluster differentiated by youth and lack of familial ties.

Cluster 4: A million reasons why, and every reason was a good reason for not going back. Dykes said it would be very difficult to get this group to go back to college.

Cluster 5: No guarantee/no help, most likely to have better income, most male of the groups. They said they already had a good job and asked what good is higher education?

Dykes said that if we focus on the first three clusters, 57% of them, in total, would be likely to go back to college.

*Reasons to go back:*

- Show kids college is important
- More job opportunities
- Make more money

The recommended approach for adult learners was to encourage them to go back to school, preferably prior to the age of 40. After that age, adults seem to have decreasing flexibility with regard to their life responsibilities and schedules.

*"Did Return" Focus Groups:*

Purpose: To gauge whether or not there were differences between those that returned to school and those that did not. And indeed, there were many similarities noted.

Both groups regret not having gone to college after high school or not taking college seriously; both tended to say that high school education did not prepare them for college or the world of work. Both did not consider college after high school because they needed to work, wanted to make money, wanted to be independent, went into the military or were afraid they would fail. But the return group grew tired of their jobs because of insufficient pay, job vulnerability, etc.

The difference between the group of individuals that did return to school and those that did not was that those who did return had talked with their friends about their professional future and those who did not return had not talked with their friends about their professional future. Further, among members of the “*did return*” group, going back to college had crossed their mind, which contrasted with those who did not return and had never considered it. Those who did return believed that colleges wanted students like them, the opposite view of those who did not return. And finally, those who returned believed an individual could opt to attend college, while those that did not return did not think colleges wanted them in the first place.

The members of the “*did return*” group had a precipitating event in their lives that spurred them toward college. Usually, something having to do with their children, but this also included job dissatisfaction, wanting to “do something with their life,” and the feeling that they were “finally ready” to go to college. The “*did not return*” group also talked about wanting the best for their children and job dissatisfaction, but neither have been sufficient to motivate them to go back to school.

“*Did return*” group motivators:

- had specific motivation to get degree
- found financial aid
- believed they could do it
- gained better time management strategies
- became familiar with college and what was expected helped reduce fears

Key targets:

- Females, minorities, those with incomes under \$50,000
- Adults under age 35, but particularly 19 to 29 year olds

*Support that will be helpful:*

- Financial aid, more one-year career programs, mentoring, free review classes
- Appeal to potential adult learners: Tell them they can do it; reinforce it
- Use combination of media outlets and mediums

Jon Tafel noted that research also emphasizes that the returning workforce is not buying what we are offering. We are offering degrees, Tafel said, and they want toolkits of skills to lead to something. We have to redefine for a large part how we offer education to a whole other set of citizens who need it. In response, Dykes said that the educational paradigm as it existed for the last 400 years was, “Here is the institution and you fit into the institution. So Triad is calling for a consumer-focused education system, rather than administrator-focused.”

### **Success Measures Presentation**

Jocelyn Frasier reported that in mid-April of this year, a group of seven SASCCO members met to hammer out six measures to propose to SASCCO. Each measure would be aggregated by race, income, and gender. The six success measures were:

- 1) increased graduation rates from high school
- 2) increased number of students taking the SAT or ACT
- 3) increased number of students completing the FASFA
- 4) increased postsecondary participation rates
- 5) reduced remediation rates
- 6) increased college graduation rate

For the returning workforce, the group came up with two measures which also would be aggregated by race, income, and gender: 1) increased postsecondary participation rate and 2) increased college graduation rate.

Jon Tafel asserted that one measure is not sufficient for anything, but putting the six measures together creates a meaningful idea. Shaun Yoder asked why a more rigorous curriculum had not been included among the six measures, to which Tafel responded that it had been discussed but ultimately left out because simplicity was sought, and remediation was seen as the umbrella for all sub-questions. Discussion followed regarding the validity of course rigor, and other methods of gauging student success via testing (SAT, ACT, etc.). Tafel then said that many of the variables being discussed could be indicators, but that SASCCO wanted to get the handful that was the most powerful and not identify a list of measures that was too large. Simplicity should be key in identifying the measures.

Shaun Yoder then suggested that a statement be developed that ties curriculum to remediation rate, which Tina Milano supported because it would establish positive correlations between a core curriculum and remediation. Tafel responded by saying that rigorous courses at one school may not be rigorous at another. We are looking at pure outcomes, not the methods to get there, hence the reason remediation measures were utilized.

### **Moving Forward with Marketing**

Jon Tafel noted that marketing efforts would be piloted at the eight GEAR UP lighthouse sites because they provided a mixture of urban and rural communities. Marketing materials would be rolled out in late summer to these sites. These GEAR UP lighthouse sites also would be used to pilot a web portal that contains information not only about going to college and financial aid but also on the importance of a core curriculum for college success. The portal eventually will have pre-collegiate tutorials to increase college readiness, for mathematics and writing. Tafel said that students will have access to the web portal and tutorials for free at any time.

Jennifer Blatz added that an OGAN magazine, a 64-page magazine, issued twice a year in September and January, will highlight Ohio's colleges and universities.

It currently is geared toward traditional students. However, the magazine will be distributed first in September to about a third of Ohio's seniors as a test-run. Tafel explained that these magazines are not just marketing but will provide information to facilitate structural and motivational changes that can make a big dent in increasing college matriculation and graduation rates.

Jocelyn Frasier spoke about trying to better engage the media and draw them to what GEAR UP Ohio is doing in lighthouse media markets using GEAR UP advisors and coordinators. The Regents' communications team is working with GEAR UP Ohio coordinators to assist them in their marketing and media efforts. There also is an emphasis on encouraging local business leaders to partner with college access programs to support GEAR UP and other college access efforts and make every community more competitive in the knowledge economy. Jon Tafel noted that fundraising would be conducted in these communities as well.

### **Ohio College Access & Success Conference**

Jennifer Blatz and Katie Bontrager spoke at length about the College Access and Success Conference, for which \$20,000 in sponsorships already had been secured. They noted that the dates for the Conference announced at the last SASCCO meeting were incorrect. The date has since been changed to October 23 – 25, 2006 at the Marriott North Hotel in Columbus.

### **Adjournment**

Wendell Schick proposed that at the next meeting SASCCO should discuss increased student loans and the ramifications.

Tina Milano adjourned the meeting.