

Access and Communications Committee
Ohio Board of Regents
Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, September 22, 2005

The meeting of the Access and Communications Committee of the Ohio Board of Regents was held at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. In attendance were the following:

Ohio Board of Regents Members:

Donna M. Alvarado, Committee Chair
Edmund J. Adams
Bruce R. Beeghly
Jeanette G. Brown
Anthony D. Houston
Gerald M. Miller
J. Gilbert Reese
Jerome F. Tatar
James M. Tuschman

Ohio Board of Regents staff:

Jamie Abel, Assistant Director, Communications
Bret Crow, Assistant Director, Communications
Roderick Chu, Chancellor
Kristina Frost, Vice Chancellor for Operations
Jane Fullerton, Associate Vice Chancellor, Educational Linkages & Access
Deborah Gavlik, Associate Vice Chancellor for Finance & Governmental Relations
Darrell Glenn, Director, Performance Reporting
Rich Petrick, Vice Chancellor for Finance
Ryan Scribner, Legislative Liaison, Finance & Government Relations
Jon Tafel, Vice Chancellor, Educational Linkages and Access
William Wagner, Research Analyst

Guests:

Tony Barnes, University of Akron
Robert P. Burke, AICUO
Linda Carr, University of Toledo
Larry Christman, AICUO
Laurie Day, Cleveland State University
Tracy Drake, Columbiana County Port Authority
Jennifer Fehnrich, Owens Community College
Rich Healy, Inter-University Council of Ohio
Cindy McQuade, Inter-University Council of Ohio
Gena Miller, AICUO
Pat Myers, Kent State University
Brian Perera, Ohio Senate
David Scheffler, Ohio Chamber of Commerce
William Shriver, Ohio Educator Standards Board
Terry Thomas, Ohio Association of Community Colleges
Linda Woggon, Ohio Chamber of Commerce

The meeting was called to order by Regent Alvarado.

President Georgia Nugent joined the Committee briefly to speak about Kenyon College. She noted that on student satisfaction surveys, Kenyon students rate the College very high in terms of what is expected of them, particularly with respect to reading, writing, and class preparation. At the same time, faculty members consider the high quality of students as a major factor in their own job satisfaction. Kenyon College is best known for literature, as evidenced by the *Kenyon Review*. President Nugent mentioned that initiatives currently taking place at Kenyon include the merging of library services and information technology as well as an initiative called “Food for Thought” designed to increase awareness of farm and food issues in Knox County.

Why Isn't Higher Education Higher on the Public Policy Agenda?

The Committee engaged in a roundtable discussion with guests David Scheffler, immediate past Chair of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Partner with Plante & Moran; Brian Perera, Finance Director, Ohio Senate; and Deborah Gavlik, Ohio Board of Regents.

Deborah Gavlik gave a brief synopsis of the American Council on Education's “Solutions Initiative.” To justify public support for an issue, there must be a clear need for all of society, a sense of personal relevance, and public accountability. Unfortunately, there is skepticism about higher education on each of these dimensions. The public views higher education as being less pressing than other issues and of benefit only to those who attend college. In order to connect to the public, the conversation about higher education needs to shift to an emphasis on higher education as a public investment that benefits all of society. Deborah noted that using “crisis” language is seen as a turn-off.

David Sheffler gave a presentation on “Benchmarking Ohio's Economic Competitiveness.” He noted that while strong in terms of infrastructure and innovation resources, Ohio needs to overcome average scores in many other key areas. In terms of Human Resources, Ohio is geared towards serving traditional manufacturing. Higher education attainment is low and there is a net out-migration of freshman students. To revitalize Ohio's economic competitiveness, the following policy thrusts are recommended: 1) identifying and nurturing innovation-based production activities, 2) developing “Anchors of Excellence”, and 3) expanding support for entrepreneurship and innovation.

Brian Perera noted that higher education's portion of Ohio's budget has been shrinking due to increases in spending priorities such as Medicaid, K-12, and Corrections that are seen as non-discretionary. Brian noted that the tax expenditure limitation initiative on the November 2006 ballot could have serious implications for higher education. He also noted that perceptions about higher education among legislators are generally not positive. He cited the following issues as negatively impacting their view of higher education:

- administrative salary and benefit issues, i.e. when an administrator's spouse gets a lucrative position
- prevalence of new construction

- duplication of instructional programs
- private aircraft use by campuses
- institution's increasing tuition up to the cap each year
- campuses providing domestic partner benefits despite legislative intent against such provisions

Mr. Perera noted that Arkansas has an "ABC" method of funding that prioritizes state investments. He was not sure where higher education ranked on the ABC scale. He suggested that the higher education community in Ohio be more aggressive in combating negative news when it comes out, while also focusing on local constituencies. He pointed to the change in capital funding that occurred in the 1990's as a positive example of higher education's accountability. Regent Brown suggested that two ways to combat misperceptions about higher education would be to provide information and to eliminate the issues causing the misperceptions. She asked Mr. Perera if he would agree to speak to the IUC members.

Mr. Sheffler stated that higher education was now higher on the Ohio Chamber of Commerce's agenda. Regent Alvarado asked whether the Chamber would consider adopting a policy position on the level of educational attainment Ohio would need to achieve in order to increase its economic competitiveness. Regent Miller stressed the need to partner with local communities.

Update on the Educator Standards Board and the Development of Teaching Standards

Bill Shriver, Chair of the Educator Standards Board, and a teacher in the Mount Vernon City School District updated the Committee on the development of teaching standards in collaboration with the Ohio Board of Regents. The broad standards include three levels of performance: proficient, accomplished, and distinguished. The Board of Regents will collaborate with the Educator Standards Board on an ongoing basis to revise and implement the standards. Regent Tatar asked whether the scope of the new standards would include community (charter) schools. Teachers in community schools must hold an educator's license or certificate issued by the State Board of Education and therefore are subject to the new standards.

Additional Items

The Committee recommended for Board approval consideration of a resolution to acknowledge the addition of Warren County to the territory of the Montgomery County Community College District.

The meeting was adjourned by Regent Alvarado.