

BACKGROUND AND REQUEST

University of Rio Grande
Institutional Reauthorization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

University of Rio Grande meets minimum Ohio Board of Regents' standards for continued institutional authorization. There were concerns raised in the review resulting in a recommendation for authorization through 2011 with progress reports due July 1, 2008 and each year thereafter. A follow-up review will be performed by June 30, 2011 to determine continued authorization.

Profile and Mission: University of Rio Grande (previously called Rio Grande College) was established in 1974 as an institution dedicated to liberal arts, sciences, fine and performing arts, and preparation in the professional fields of business, teacher education, nursing and technology. The University, in collaboration with Rio Grande Community College (established in 1974), offers programs at the associate, baccalaureate and graduate degree levels to serve the needs of southeastern Ohio. During its history, the institution has been a denominational college, a two-year college, a self-help student work college, and a four-year liberal arts college. Today, the university offers associate, baccalaureate, and masters degrees in traditional and distance education formats through the main campus and off-site locations. University of Rio Grande is a private, non-profit institution. Rio Grande Community College's status is public.

Accreditation/Authorization: University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College has been continuously accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools since 1969, and continuously authorized by the Ohio Board of Regents since 1970. The University is a participant in HLC's Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP) and is scheduled for its next system appraisal in 2010-2011 and systems portfolio review in 2014.

Consultant Determination: The Regents' review team completed a site visit in July 2007. At that time, the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College were engaged in contract negotiations for academic and support services. In addition, the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College were engaged in developing a strategic plan for 2008-2013. Over the subsequent months, the University of Rio Grande responded to the suggestions and recommendations outlined in the report of the Review Team. Following considerable analysis of the University's institutional response, the review panel noted some progress in the development and implementation of various aspects of the strategic plan. The team also noted that substantive issues were still unresolved, i.e. the negotiations with the community college for services, data collection, final development of a viable strategic plan, identification of programs for closures. The team recommended reauthorization, contingent on the on-going work of the University to resolve these issues. The team also recommended that the University of Rio Grande submit progress reports to the Ohio Board of Regents on a regular basis.

Recommendation to the Chancellor: University of Rio Grande meets minimum Ohio Board of Regents' standards for continued institutional authorization. There were concerns raised in the review resulting in a recommendation for authorization through 2011 with a progress report due July 1, 2008, and each year thereafter. A follow-up review will be performed by June 30, 2011 to determine continued authorization. Progress reports and follow-up review should focus on those issues outlined in the report of the Review Team as well as other items pertinent to the contractual relationship between the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College.