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White Paper:  
Strategic, Mission Centered Initiatives for  
Miami University's Regional Campuses: Adult Access to Miami

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# Strategic Initiatives for Miami University's Regional Campuses

## Introduction

Miami's regional campuses are at critical juncture. State and locally supported community colleges, as well as private, propriety colleges are presenting new competitive challenges, enrollments on both campuses are declining, and the expectations of the communities they serve for degree programs and assistance in their economic development is increasing. Concomitantly, the University has experienced considerable change in senior leadership in the past few years. With a University-wide task force review of the regional campuses completed in the 2004 – 2005 academic year, a Provost and Executive Vice President with one year experience at MU, a Dean of the Hamilton campus with three years at MU, a search underway for the Dean of the Middletown Campus, and a new President to assume the helm on July 1, 2006, the time is right to outline the most needed academic initiatives for the regional campuses for the next five years.

Specifically, the following four initiatives are proposed:

- I. That, in addition to their current scheduling, the regional campuses strategically schedule programs and courses at times that will attract adult learners
- II. That the University strategically increase its use of online instruction
- III. That a greater number of degrees, particularly at the bachelor's degree level, be offered at Miami's regional campuses
- IV. That the existing structure and organization of the regional campuses be changed to facilitate greater unity between the two regional campuses and to provide the autonomy needed to better serve their mission

This paper will address numbers I and II only. It will later be expanded to address initiatives III and IV. Because mission is central to these proposals, the discussion begins there.

## Mission

Pursuant to the Ohio Board of Regents, the mission of University regional campuses is to provide pre-baccalaureate education, adult continuing education, career/technical education, community service, workforce skills enhancement,

and developmental education. Through the years the mission has evolved, in varying degrees at each campus in the State, to include limited baccalaureate and graduate education.

The diversity of the regional campus mission is reflected in the diversity of Miami's regional campuses students. They are diverse in college intentions, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic, marital, and employment status.

As to their degree intentions, there are five distinct populations of students at Miami's regional campuses. The first population comes to Miami's regional campuses intending to complete a bachelor's degree at Miami. Some of these individuals intend to complete their degrees in nursing and engineering technology, which are offered exclusively on the regional campuses. Others intend to relocate to MUO to complete their degrees. For students who relocate to MUO, the process is generally well coordinated and supportive.<sup>1</sup> The use of the term *relocate*, as opposed to transfer, is illustrative of Miami's integrative philosophy. The long standing twenty hour relocation rule is another example of Miami's commitment to access for residents of the service area. Although efforts are underway to make relocation smoother, overall, it has been, and continues to be, a successful system.<sup>2</sup>

The second group of students who enroll at Miami's regional campuses are seeking to earn an associate's degree. Miami Oxford students are the third population served by Miami's regional campuses. This group typically enrolls in courses at the regional campuses for convenience reasons or because they are native regional campus students who continue to be attracted to the campuses.

The fourth population served are students who are not degree seeking. Representing about 6% of the total population, these students enroll in classes for personal enrichment and other reasons.<sup>3</sup> The final group of regional campus students intend to transfer to another institution to complete their degrees after completing one to three years of undergraduate work.

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<sup>1</sup> Although this whitepaper is focused on better serving the region's adult population, the regional campuses are also currently collaborating with the MUO Office of Admission to improve the recruitment of MUO applicants who were not admitted but who may be interested in having the opportunity prove their academic ability by beginning their studies at a regional campus.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. John Skillings is currently chairing a committee that is examining relocation. The committee was formed pursuant to a recommendation of the Regional Campus Task Force (2005).

<sup>3</sup> The regional campuses also serve a couple thousand non-degree seeking individuals each year through their continuing education and business and industry centers.

Within this context, the discussion will now turn to our proposal to better serve the local adult population.

### Current Service to Adults

While MUO serves a small adult undergraduate population, it remains largely a traditional, residential, direct from high school campus. To Miami University’s regional campuses, the education of “nontraditional” learners is core mission and adult students have historically been an integral part of the educational and social fabric of the campuses.<sup>4</sup> But our service to, and enrollment of, nontraditional students is at its lowest levels in the history of both campuses.

For the Hamilton Campus, the decline in the percentage of nontraditional students has been steady and dramatic. Nontraditional students represented 60% of the Campus’ student body in 1967. Today, only 26% of the population is nontraditional. The decline for the Middletown Campus has also been significant. The Campus’ adult population peaked in 1978 at 50% and is now at its lowest level, with adults comprising about one-third of the total population. See Table 1. The campuses have experienced a concomitant decline in the number of sections, as a percentage of the whole, offered in the evenings.<sup>5</sup> See Table 2.

Table 1 Adults Served By Regional Campuses (as % of total population)

Year	Middletown			Hamilton		
	Total	25 and over	as % of Total	Total	25 and over	as % of Total
1967	1,925	685	35.6%	517	307	59.4%
1969	2,226	929	41.7%	1,486	735	49.5%
1970	2,370	929	39.2%	1,633	731	44.8%
1972	1,876	818	43.6%	1,515	565	37.3%
1974	1,820	878	48.2%	1,544	713	46.2%
1976	1,530	721	47.1%	1,495	753	50.4%
1978	1,597	796	49.8%	1,440	766	53.2%
1980	1,542	721	46.8%	1,631	826	50.6%
1982	1,527	720	47.2%	1,560	783	50.2%
1984	1,490	645	43.3%	1,532	826	53.9%

<sup>4</sup> Nontraditional class scheduling, service to adult learners, and community service are assumed responsibility of the campuses. See, for example, the 2006 University presidential search document entitled *An Invitation to Apply for the Position of President, Miami University*. Also, the mission statements of both campuses express a commitment to service and to nontraditional students.

<sup>5</sup> An evening class is one beginning at 6 p.m. or later.

1986	1,521	668	43.9%	1,681	903	53.7%
1988	1,698	615	36.2%	1,855	906	48.8%
1990	1,876	721	38.4%	1,904	896	47.1%
1992	2,056	835	40.6%	1,836	798	43.5%
1994	1,956	916	46.8%	1,862	826	44.4%
1996	2,267	931	41.1%	2,182	899	41.2%
1998	3,473	1,677	48.3%	2,663	963	36.2%
2000	3,075	1,166	37.9%	3,104	975	31.4%
2001	3,037	1,125	37.0%	3,014	836	27.7%
2002	3,093	1,133	36.6%	3,312	833	25.2%
2003	2,812	924	32.9%	3,427	896	26.1%
2004	2,665	903	33.9%	3,411	886	26.0%

This decline can not be attributed to a decline in the regional nontraditional population. The number of nontraditional students (age 25+) in the United States grew from 4 million in 1980 to over 6 million in 2000. (Choi & Good 2004) The National Center for Education Statistics reports that the adult population in the U.S. grew 72% between 1970 and 1999. This group also reported that the traditional student (direct from high school full-time undergraduate who is financially dependent and works part-time or less) is the exception, not the rule, in contemporary United States. In 1999 – 2000, for example, only 27% of undergraduate students in the U.S. were defined as traditional. (NCES 2002). Today, adults represent the largest growing population of higher education students in the United States. As found in an issue paper written by The U.S. Secretary of Education’s Commission on the Future of Higher Education, “For many of us, the word ‘college’ is synonymous with young students, ivy covered buildings, dormitory life, and the ‘final four.’ Yet this stereotype of the ‘traditional’ 18 – 22 year-old full-time undergraduate student residing on campus represents little more than 16 percent of the higher education population in the United States . . . .” (Stokes Commission Report 2006).

Table Two Evening Sections Offered at MUH

Year	Total Sections	Evening Sections	% of Total
1969	158	60	38%
1979	284	139	49%
1989	361	110	30%
1999	436	85	19%
2000	432	87	20%
2005	581	133	23%

As is common around the nation, the population in Miami's three county (and wider) service area is aging. A comparison of the age cohorts in the service region to those who are enrolled at the regional campuses reveals that nontraditional learners are disproportionately under represented in the regional campus student population.

This phenomenon is not explained by high educational attainment rates of adults in the region. In Butler County, for example, 35% of individuals between the ages of 25 and 34 have earned an associate's or bachelor's degree. That number remains the same for individuals between 35 and 44, and falls to 30% for individuals between 45 and 64. The greatest need for higher education in the service area is in Preble County where only 19% of people in the 25 to 34 age bracket have earned an associate's or bachelor's degree, 19% in the 35 to 44 age bracket, and 15% in the 45 to 64 age bracket.

The best evidence of the need and market for nontraditional programming is the rapid emergence of other institutions of higher education in Miami's service area that have targeted the adult market. The 2005 Regional Campus Task Force Report (see Appendix for the Executive Summary of this report), commissioned by the First in 2009 Coordinating Council, reported that one of the most serious issues facing the regional campuses is competition. Indeed, the number of direct competitors to Miami's regional campuses has increased dramatically over the past three years.<sup>6</sup>

The institutions that have moved into Miami's service area are market sensitive, strategic, and nimble. They researched the region, identified needs and opportunities, and rapidly built programs that meet local workforce needs. Indiana Wesleyan, for example, offers associate's degrees in accounting, business, & computer information technology. It also offers bachelor's degrees in accounting, business administration, management, marketing, business information systems, RN to BSN, and master's degrees in business and education. Indiana Wesleyan's commitment to adult learners can be gleaned from the following statement on its website:

The growing popularity of our program reflects its design to meet the specific educational needs of adult audiences. Indiana Wesleyan

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<sup>6</sup> Not included in this discussion is the availability of online alternatives from institutions out of Miami's service area.

University understands the special requirements of adults who are interested in receiving an associate, bachelor or master degree while continuing to keep their professional and personal commitments. The programs in the college are designed for those working adults by combining theory with practical experience and offering that material in a convenient format.

The delivery format and curriculum structure are specifically designed for working adults. Undergraduate and graduate degree programs are conveniently offered through evening, Saturday, and online (via the Internet) classes. Site-based classes are held at 11 education and conference centers: Indianapolis (2), Fort Wayne, Shelbyville, Kokomo, and Columbus, Ind.; Louisville and Lexington, Ky.; and Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dayton, Ohio. Classes are also held at more than 80 off-campus locations in Indiana. . .

[The college of adult and professional studies] programs are accredited by the North Central Association-Higher Learning Commission, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Similarly, University of Phoenix offers bachelor's degrees in business and information technology and the M.B.A. with several specializations. Other institutions in the region are offering associate's and certificate programs in health care, service, and business fields. Also significant is University of Cincinnati's and Sinclair Community College's apparent interest in offering classes in Warren County and possibly, Butler County.

To test the need for nontraditional scheduling among our current students, Miami Hamilton's Office of Advising administered an email survey during the week of April 3, 2006. The response to the survey has been overwhelming when compared to prior surveys. In the past, when the advising office conducted a survey, it offered incentives to increase student response. Even when this has been done, the response has been low. Within 30 minutes of the distribution of this survey, the advising office received over 50 emails. Within 24 hours, 125 were received. The number of responses now stands at about 200. The students were eager to share their stories. Their message came through loud and clear:

- Our students are proud of Miami and the Hamilton Campus, and they will make major sacrifices to get a Miami degree. But there are limits to what they and their families can endure.
- They are desperate for expanded options including additional days, times, and bachelor degrees at the regional campuses.
- It was also clear that the respondents maximize their time at Miami's regional campuses and ultimately transfer to other institutions to complete their college education.

Examples of such expressions include:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire. I truly believe that giving students the opportunity to complete a degree in the evening would be a huge asset. Classes are available without problem until getting close to completion. I have seen co-workers have to take off during the day only to be looked down upon and causing a hindrance for the rest of the staff. In addition, I have seen co-workers leave their positions due to having to take daily classes or yet even transfer to another college. I am not yet there, but I see that it will be a problem. Weekends are also a good option. I already take advantage of Saturday morning classes. I hope this helps, thank you again for the opportunity to add my input. - Cathy Schuck

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion. I definitely feel there is a need for Miami University to offer degrees that can be completed on weekends and/or evenings. I think there is a need for Miami to offer not just associate degrees but also bachelor degrees which can be completed in evenings and/or weekends. Accelerated classes are great, if there are enough choices to fill a semester. My personal opinion is that it is easier to focus on one accelerated class than 2+ regularly scheduled classes. Also, I am a part time student pursuing a bachelors. I have a full time job that does not allow for flexibility in my schedule, forcing me to take evening and weekend classes. Due to family obligations, I can not leave my job. If Miami does not begin to offer a broader class selection in higher level classes for evening and weekends, I may have to transfer; however, I am hoping to earn my degree at Miami. Just on a final note, I have met many students in similar situations such as myself. I think for Miami to continue to grow as a diversified university, the non-traditional student should be given the same

opportunities. Thank you for your time. – Amy Sander

The results of this survey are particularly compelling, given that the surveyed population was our existing student body, which is under representative of the adult population in our service area. Extrapolating the results to the population the campuses are not currently serving, it is reasonable to conclude that the need for nontraditional programming at the regional campuses is significant.

### Opportunity

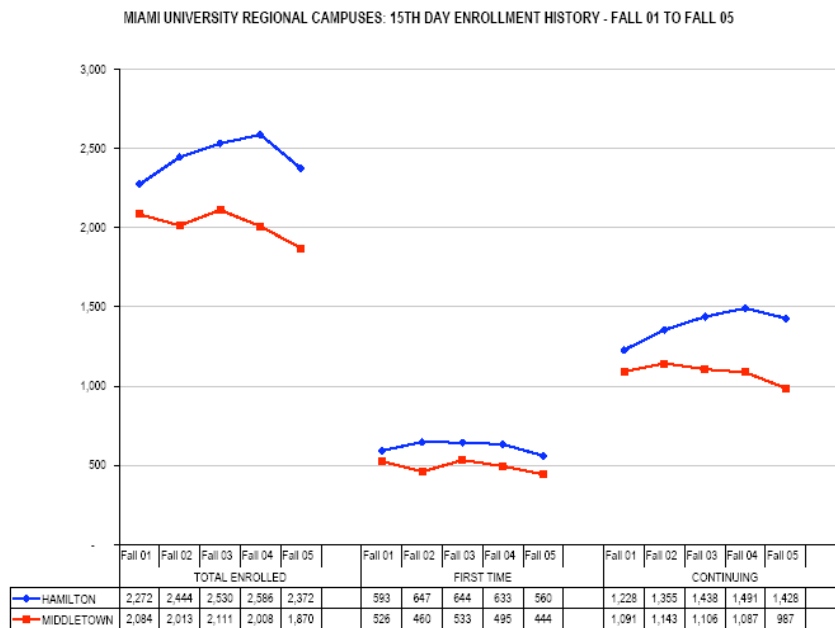
Fortunately, serving nontraditional students presents an opportunity for Miami's regional campuses to better serve their mission and to counter their declining enrollment.

Although the regional campuses have long served nontraditional students, there is a need in our community to increase our service to this population. Two deficits in our current offerings exist. First, we are not offering the degree programs, particularly at the bachelor's and master's levels, that are desired. Second, we are not offering adequate evening and weekend courses. As to the latter, which is the subject of this paper, until last year the campuses only offered one degree program, engineering technology, that was purposely scheduled be completed in a nontraditional format, in a reasonable time. Accordingly, students who are limited to nontraditional scheduling, due to work or family obligations, were forced to either select another institution or to dabble with evening courses with the hope that after many years all the courses required for a degree would be offered. The issue of not scheduling entire programs to be completed in a fixed time is a common concern expressed by both current students and members of the public.

The good news is that the individuals in the nontraditional population in the region who have not completed a degree have demonstrated an interest in higher education. For example, Twenty-one percent of Butler County individuals in both the 35 to 44 and 45 to 64 age brackets have completed college level work and 19 % of individuals between the ages of 25 and 34, 19% of those between 35 and 44, and 19% of those between 45 and 64 in Preble County have completed college coursework. Quite possibly their lack of access to complete degrees is contributing to the low rate of degree completion.

As mentioned, increasing programming for nontraditional students could also bolster enrollment at the campuses. Miami Middletown’s enrollment declined in 2002, 2004, and 2005. Miami Hamilton’s enrollment was flat in 2005. Subsequently, in Spring 2006, both campuses experienced a large decline in enrollment. See Chart 1.

Chart One Regional Campuses Enrollment



The Dean of the Hamilton Campus established an ad hoc group to study the enrollment decline on the Hamilton Campus in the Spring semester 2006. This group concluded that many factors are likely at work, including declining enrollments in feeder high schools, an improvement in the local economy, a decline in our adult learners, a decline in MUO students enrolling in classes at the regional campuses, and the availability of alternative higher education providers. It has also been suggested that the campuses began to exceed the price elasticity of demand when tuition crossed the \$4,000 mark for full-time students in 2005 – 2006. Given the projected decline in graduates of feeder high schools to the regional campuses, the problem could worsen. Intervention

strategies are needed to retain existing students and to recruit new students, traditional and nontraditional.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to indicating that the campuses are not fully satisfying their mission, this enrollment decline has serious financial implications for the campuses. The Hamilton Campus, for example, lost more than \$600,000 in state share of instruction and tuition revenues in the 2005 – 2006 academic year. If the enrollment were to continue to decline at 6% per year, the rate of decline in 2005, the Hamilton Campus will have a budget deficit beginning in the 2008 – 2009 academic year. If the rate of decline were only 3%, one-half of 2005 – 2006, a budget deficit will begin in the 2010 – 2011 academic year.<sup>8</sup> These calculations consider operations expenses only. When one considers the aging facility's need for capital improvement beyond the State of Ohio's capital allocation, the need to maintain cash reserves, and the need for funds to support special projects, new hiring, and program development, the financial situation is more serious.

### Literature on Adult College Choice

So what needs to be done to attract nontraditional students to Miami's regional campuses? The literature on college choice is helpful.

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on the factors that influence prospective student college choices. Not surprisingly, the research indicates that traditional students, that is, students entering residential universities directly from high school, differ significantly from nontraditional and commuter students in what they need and want from colleges.

In 1968 Terkla and Wright reported that traditional admittees to Tufts University were primarily concerned about location, prestige, and academic quality when making their college choice. For these students, cost and the successes of a program's graduates in securing employment after graduation were less significant factors. Conversely, they discovered that cost was more significant to the admittees who chose to attend another institution, public and private, over Tufts. Other researchers have also found that institutional academic reputation,

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to this proposal to better attract nontraditional students, the campuses have also devised strategies to improve retention and to recruit from newly identified markets of potential traditionally aged students.

<sup>8</sup> Model assumptions: 6% tuition increase each year, no change in SSI formulas, no changes in operations budgets, 3% increase in salaries, and \$50,000 annual increases in utility expenses.

the availability and quality of a desired program, and location to be more important to traditional students than both cost and convenience of class scheduling. Wanat and Bowles (1992), for example, found that traditional, academically talented students were influenced most by an institution's reputation for quality, as well as a specific program's reputation for quality, size of the institution, and the level of personalized attention. Secondary influences were distance from home (respondents varied in whether they were seeking to maximize or minimize distance) and cost.

Interestingly, while cost does not fall into the highest tier of factors for traditional students, the availability of financial aid and scholarships is important. Wanat and Bowles (1992), citing other research, posited that for academically talented and high income traditional students, an award of scholarship monies is important, not only to reduce the expense of attending college, but because of the emotional impact of receiving the award. They also found that universities that did not offer financial assistance were perceived as being indifferent to student needs. Petr and Wendel (1998) also found academic quality and the availability of a degree program that interested them to be important factors, specifically to out-of-state students. Like Wanat and Bowles, they found cost to be influential, although less than quality, with the availability of scholarships to be particularly important.

Researchers have also discovered that the college choice priorities of nontraditional students differ from their traditional student colleagues. Broekemier (2002) found that the top five criteria in the adult student college choice were availability of the desired program of study, convenience of class scheduling, location of the classes, cost, and faculty reputation for quality teaching. The academic reputation of the institution was ranked eighth of the thirty identified criteria. The presence of athletic programs, housing, and social life were the least important factors to nontraditional students.

Levine and Cureton (1998) found that convenience of location, convenience of course schedules, convenience of parking, quality of service and instruction, and cost are the most important factors for nontraditional students. Note that while location is important to both traditional and nontraditional students, the definition of location differs between the two groups. For traditional students, location has a national, and sometimes, international definition. Locating near distant friends, family, or in a preferable climate are common traditional student interests. Nontraditional students, on the other hand, are seeking programs that are within a reasonable driving distance of home or work. Hall, Ventura, &

Lambert found that working criminal justice professionals are not likely to enroll in classes that require more than a twenty minute drive to attend. They also found that scheduling of classes in the evenings and weekends to be critical to the success of programs designed for this group.

In addition to convenience of course scheduling, location, and cost, Harris and Brooks (1998) found that availability of campus childcare, academic support services, and spousal support are important to adult learners. The differences between traditional and nontraditional students are not surprising, given the different family and employment contexts of the two groups. They are also consistent with the motivations for attending college reported by nontraditional students. Career objectives topped the list of priorities for adult learners attending both community colleges (Baker 1998) and four-year institutions (Broekemier 2002).

Although most of the college choice research has focused on undergraduates, there is a growing body of literature examining graduate college choice. Atherton (2001) found location to be the most important factor in the decision by master's degree students in business. Reputation and convenient scheduling of classes were also important to the subjects in Atherton's study. Webb (1993) researched the factors influencing graduate business student choice at seven institutions in Ohio. She found that academic reputation, accreditation status, class location, the availability of desired programs, and marketability of degree to be important factors. As was found by Atherton, convenient scheduling (e.g. weekend scheduling) was also important to the respondents. Campus attractiveness, facilities, and computer access were not important to the respondents. Other factors, such as cost, the quality of the library, and convenient parking, were of moderate importance. These findings are consistent with those of Coccari and Javalgi (1995).

In a study of the factors influencing the decision of what graduate program in adult and continuing education to attend, Fleming (1999) discovered that location, academic reputation, personal recommendation, and personal experience with an institution were the most significant factors in the college choice decision.

As posited by Broekemier (2002), nontraditional undergraduate students and graduate students are more similar in choice rationale than either group is to traditional students. In conclusion, the first tier of criteria for nontraditional students and for graduate students in making the college choice decision includes convenience of location, convenience of class availability, and cost.

Quality of teaching and the academic reputation of the institution fall into a second tier of criteria. For traditional students, the two tiers are reversed. As Terkla and Wright (1986) discovered, however, location for traditional students does not mean proximity to home or work. Traditional students may relocate across the United States to be in warm weather, near friends or family, near a preferred city, or near recreation.

Researchers have also examined the influence race has on the college choice decision. Coccari and Javalgi (1995) found that quality of faculty was more important to white students than minority students. They further found that minority students are more concerned with degree program, schedule of classes, and costs than are white students. Accordingly, evening and weekend scheduling could improve the recruitment of minority students to the regional campuses and thereby enrich the University's diversity efforts.

Just as we are aggressive and strategic in our recruitment of potential students from across the nation to MUO, we need to be equally aggressive and strategic in our recruitment of students to the regional campuses. Historically, the campuses have capitalized on our low tuition, the twenty hour relocation rule, and our high quality education for the relocating segment of our population. We have historically not targeted nontraditional students with the same energy as the traditional population. As we more purposefully recruit this population, we need to emphasize our low tuition and the availability of evening and weekend coursework, the availability of evening and weekend services, and our high quality education.

As established above, scheduling is critical to attracting nontraditional learners. The proposal, which follows, incorporates both online education and nontraditional scheduling. The need for additional degree programs is addressed later in this paper.

#### Examples of Aspirational and Neighbor Institution Programs

Adult scheduling and web-based education are commonplace today, not only at proprietary schools, but at large and small state universities and at private elite colleges. Several Ohio regional campuses also offer evening and weekend programs, including *inter alia* campuses in the Kent State University system, both University of Cincinnati's regional campuses. To illustrate what others are

doing, the programs of a highly selective private University, Harvard University, and a high quality local private University, Xavier University, are described below.

### Harvard University

Harvard University offers, through its extension school, an associate of arts, bachelor of liberal arts, master of liberal arts in nineteen fields, several certificates, and many other credit and noncredit classes. The extension school is open enrollment and specifically designed for adults. Students may work and attend full-time or part-time. The conferred degree is fully a Harvard degree and many of the courses are taught by full-time Harvard college faculty. Extension school graduates attend Harvard's graduation. The program delivers its instruction in evening, weekend, and online courses. Block scheduling is utilized, with two to four hour long evening courses and blocks as long as six hour blocks, with an hour for lunch, scheduled on Saturdays. Online courses are a feature of many programs. Two certificate programs and one master's degree may be earned entirely online.

Local colleges and universities also offer nontraditional scheduling. The University of Phoenix, Indiana Wesleyan University, Miami-Jacobs, Sinclair Community College, Cincinnati State Community & Technical College, The University of Cincinnati, Thomas More, College of Mount St. Joseph, and Xavier. Antioch University has a large adult degree completion program offering many degrees. Some of the degrees can be completed in the evening, some on Saturdays and Sundays (possible 8 – 5 scheduling), and some permit a mix of evening and weekend scheduling. The College of Mount St. Joseph offers both associate's and bachelor's degrees in a similar format. Because Xavier is a high quality Jesuit institution, the structure and success of its program will be elaborated.

### Xavier University

Xavier University's (XU) Weekend College is modeled after Duquesne University's program, which was later adopted by Marquette University, which helped XU start its program in 1995. Students take two classes each Saturday, the first from 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and the second from 12:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.. The first Sunday of each session the students also attend a Sunday afternoon for their pre-assignments (12 - 2 p.m. and then 2 - 4 p.m. to fit their Church

obligations). The Department of Education mandates 18 clock hours in the classroom for a 3 credit hour course and with this model they are actually in the classroom for 30 hrs. In comparison, a typical non-accelerated course at XU runs for 45-48 clock hours. To assist with the load XU places a GA in each class to assist with grading loads and tutoring. With this program architecture, students can complete a bachelor's degree in 4 years. They offer two Bachelors degrees, one in Liberal Arts/General Studies (with various minors and concentrations attached) and another in Business Management. Additionally, they offer Saturday minors in Organizational Leadership and Professional Communication (Strategic Communications/Public Relations). Student may also take an evening course or a day course if desired.

The academic success of the students in the program is high. Over 50% of the students make the Dean's List each semester (3.5 or higher, 6 hrs).

The program has been successful in attracting new students. The enrollment tripled during their first three years of the program, far exceeding XU's goals for the program. The program was launched in 1995 with a goal of reaching 100 students by 2005. The program reach 100 by 1996 and today has nearly 300 students.<sup>9</sup> See Table 3.

Table Three XU Weekend College Enrollment/Financial Outcomes

Fall Enrollments	Credits generated by this population that term
2000 334	3,043
2001 327	2,973
2002 309	2,825
2003 335	2,929

<sup>9</sup> When asked why enrollment declined in 2005, XU officials reported that their students have told them that a reduction/loss in employer tuition reimbursements is the largest factor.

2004 328	2,842
2005 280	2,468
* \$425 per credit	*generated over 1 million this term (even with lower numbers)

Source: Xavier University

## The Proposal

The objective of the proposed program is to make Miami's high quality undergraduate education available to learners who can not attend classes during the day. Miami Middletown began offering the Business Technology Management and Associate of Arts, Social Science through its evening degree completion program, *Degree Power Schedule*, in the Fall, 2005 and Engineering Technology has offered its associate's and bachelor's degrees in the evenings for many years to students of both campuses. Miami Hamilton intends to offer three degree completion programs in the evening (6 p.m. and later) beginning in Fall, 2006. The two campuses will be careful to complement, not compete, each other's offerings. Both campuses propose to begin a similarly coordinated Saturday degree program in the 2006 – 2007 academic year, with Miami Hamilton launching the program in the Fall Semester and Miami Middletown following in the Spring Semester.

For the Saturday program, the two campuses would like to offer an associate in arts degree, with concentrations to be determined, but likely to come from humanities, fine arts, or social sciences. The program will be structured to allow students to complete the degree requirements in two or two and one-half years. The courses will be scheduled so that students may enter the program during any semester. The Associate of Arts degree was selected because of its transferability to other institutions, its flexibility, and because it draws on the campuses existing faculty expertise. Formal articulation agreements may be sought with institutions that offer bachelor's degree completion programs.

Each course would be scheduled for eight Saturdays, 8:30-12:00, plus one Sunday, 12-2, OR 12:45-4:15 pm on Saturday plus one Sunday, 2:15-4:15. Because this is only 1,800 minutes or 75% of the 2,250 minutes of expected in-class time, a hybrid delivery method will be employed. For four-hour courses, an instructor will be given the option of choosing to add 30 minutes to each class meeting, thereby increasing the total in-class time to 2,040 minutes. Hybrid courses allow students to continue to meet and work outside of the structured

classroom environment. Many hybrid courses exploit technology as a tool for teaching and learning.

Rather than compartmentalizing the out-of-class instructional time (25% for a three hour course), a fully integrated hybrid format will be developed, except in those courses where an existing alternative format (e.g. wholly online) exists.

### Quality & Assessment

To maintain Miami's high quality, the following measures will be undertaken.

#### *Quality Courses*

The regional campuses are working with the MU Division of Information Technology Services/Academic Technology Services and the MU Center of Online Learning to develop high quality hybrid courses. As indicated earlier, the "non-seat" time will not be a marginalized segment of the course. Rather, a model that fully integrates in-class and web-based learning will be developed with the intention of *improving learning over traditional courses*. Research exists to support the conclusion that courses redesigned to include an online component may improve both content and higher order learning (Twigg 2004). Of course, the same rigor (content, assessment, writing, etc.) will be expected of hybrid courses that is expected of traditional courses.

Assessment of both the course format and of student learning will occur. Beginning with the former, the Center for Academic Transformation at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which had been a recipient of a Pew Grant to redesign courses, suggests employing baseline and/or parallel assessment. Both involve comparing a traditional course with the redesigned course. The former involves comparing a traditional course that was offered before the redesigned course and the latter involves comparing simultaneously involved courses. Comparison of common exams, common exam questions, pre- and post-tests, student work using common rubrics, and course grades will be considered as course appropriate.

In addition to these special assessment measures, Miami's standard student evaluation will be administered in every class and divisional coordinators will make periodic classroom/virtual visits.

#### *Student Suitability*

Just as enrolling in 20 or more hours is not the appropriate choice for every student, the proposed program will not be right for every learner. Accordingly, the campuses will create a separate admissions process for the Saturday program. A separate admission application has been developed that includes an admonition that the program is rigorous.

All applications for admission will be reviewed by both the admission staff and advising staff of the appropriate campus. Family, work, and other commitments will be considered and students will be appropriately counseled. Applicants who are overextended or who do not appear to be adequately motivated will not be admitted. Also, the advising offices will use the MU Center of Online Learning's suitability tool as a guide when counseling potential students.

Additionally, the COMPASS test will be administered to all new students. Students who test into developmental work will not be eligible for the Saturday Select Program until related developmental work is successfully completed.

#### *Performance & Retention*

Students will be expected to maintain a 2.0 g.p.a. to remain in the program. The established Academic Recovery Program will be used as an intervention strategy and withdrawal from the program or other remedies will be employed for underachieving students.

#### *Faculty Development & Incentives*

Carolyn Gard, Senior Director of Academic Technology Services, has agreed to support the development of the needed courses for the 2006 – 2007 year. Her staff will collaborate with faculty and the MU Center for Online Learning to design high quality learning experiences in both hybrid and online formats. Instructional design, course management system support, learning object development, and faculty training will be provided by Advanced Learning Technologies team members.

Both regional campuses will set aside \$15,000 to compensate faculty for course development during the summer 2006. Specifically, the appropriate campus will pay a faculty member \$3,000 for developing a fully online course or for developing a hybrid course. In addition, training will be required of all faculty members who participate in the program. The training will provide faculty with

the tools necessary to redesign a traditionally taught course into an eight week hybrid or online course.

To encourage faculty to participate in the Saturday program, the campuses will provide, to both regional and MUO campus faculty, a subvention of salary (expense account) of \$200 per hour of instruction. Travel reimbursement will also be provided to MUO faculty. Lunch will also be provided for all faculty and staff (as well as the students) who participate in the Saturday program.

### *Support Services*

Miami's regional campus advising offices, admission & financial aid offices, bookstores, and libraries already have Saturday and evening hours. The Staff of other offices and programs will make themselves available as needed.

### *Marketing and Student Recruitment*

The marketing campaign will focus on quality, access, and convenience. For at least the first year of the program, "stopped out" students will be target marketed via U.S. mail. Admission and marketing staff have begun discussions about how to best reach the adult audience who have not attended Miami. Billboard and print advertising are likely, as are targeted business and civic association marketing. Television advertising may occur in the future, if needed. Regional campus advisors and learning assistance faculty have extensive experience with adult learners and they are fully prepared to assist this population.

To seed the Saturday Select program, scholarship monies have been set aside for the most needy and qualified students.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the Campus is waiving the admission application fee for the first year of the program.

### *Timeline*

For Miami Hamilton, marketing for the program will occur during the summer 2006, as will faculty development and the redesign of the first set of courses. Because we will target market "stop-out" students and a new adult population, the impact of the late marketing start will be minimal.

The first set of four courses will be offered in Fall 2006. Then, at least four courses will be offered in each of the following semesters. Two courses will be

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<sup>10</sup> According to Stokes (2006), financial aid qualification requirements, which often require full-time status, are a barrier to adult access to higher education.

offered in the summer terms. Miami Middletown will begin the process in the Spring Semester, 2007. Enrollment during the first year is expected to be modest and the campuses will commit to offering courses with low enrollment. If enrollment in the program has not reached thirty students on either campus within three years, the program will be reconsidered.

### Online Education

As recommended by the Regional Campus Task Force, the campuses need to increase, where academically appropriate, the use of technology to increase their delivery of instruction. The Saturday Select Program proposal above is an example of the strategic use of online education. Fully online courses in many fields, as well as entire online degrees should be considered in select technical fields.<sup>11</sup>

### Conclusion

The reasons students choose other institutions over MU, and the reasons our native regional campus students choose to transfer, rather than relocate, vary. Anecdotally, campus advisors report that some students are not interested in completing their degree at MUO, often because they find the Oxford experience unappealing or inconvenient. This is particularly true of students with jobs, family, and other commitments.

Others are unable to complete their degree at MUO because of departmental or divisional admission standards, which are becoming increasingly selective.<sup>12</sup> As admission to the University and its programs becomes increasingly selective, the ability of MUO to serve the region and the State of Ohio becomes more difficult. Miami's regional campuses present an opportunity to serve this mission while

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<sup>11</sup> According to Stokes (2006), 1.2 million, or 7% of individuals in higher education, were enrolled in fully online programs. This number is projected to grow to 1.8 million by 2007. Twice as many students in higher education have completed an online course. Adults are particularly interested in online education, with 77% indicating an interest in enrolling in online courses. Stokes further posits that "for some within the academy these arguments [asserting that online instruction is low quality] are merely excuses for maintaining the status quo and avoiding change at virtually any cost."

<sup>12</sup> The following departments/majors have some form of restricted admission: Accountancy, Economics, Decision Sciences, Finance, Management, Management Information Systems, Marketing, Supply Chain Management, Early Childhood Education, Middle Childhood Education, Adolescent Education, Physical Education, Health and Sports Studies, Journalism, Fine Arts, Architecture, Interior Design, Speech Communication, Strategic Communication, Mass Communication, Political Science, Public Administration, Art, Music, Theater.

not detracting from MUO's ascendancy as a selective, national campus. To this end, it is imperative that the University move beyond the "One University" concept, which often translates to "one Oxford like model," to "One University, Three Campuses, Two Missions." A full appreciation for the differing missions requires an understanding that the regional campuses are serving, in part, a very different population than MUO, that we have a greater emphasis on service and community than MUO, and that different, contemporary models of instruction, scheduling, and pedagogy must be used to supplement traditional models. It does not, however, mean that Miami's tradition of high quality instruction will be jeopardized.

Miami's regional campuses are likely losing some students to local community because of cost<sup>13</sup> and because they offer a richer array of degree programs, often in the evenings and weekends. The private colleges in the region are more expensive than Miami's regional campuses and many of them are focusing on baccalaureate and graduate education. As such, they are not likely drawing as many students from the regional campuses. However, their presence is evidence of a need for nontraditional higher education. These institutions are more expensive than Miami's regional campuses and they don't have the same reputation for quality. Nor do they have the rich academic support resources of Miami's regional campuses. But they offer the product that is needed, at times that make sense for nontraditional students. The product is baccalaureate and graduate education. The times are evenings and weekends. The learning format is diverse, including traditional, online, and hybrid courses. If Miami's regional campuses were to offer its education in the format proposed herein, they would easily capture a segment of the adult population and they will greatly improve our service to the region.

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<sup>13</sup> Miami's regional campus tuition in 2006 for a full-time student is \$4,446 per semester for lower division work and \$6,684 for upper division work. Sinclair Community College's tuition is \$1910 for in-district full-time students and \$3121 for out-of-district full-time students. Cincinnati State Community and Technical College's full-time tuition in 2006 is \$3,867. Note that Miami's regional campuses have the lowest tuition of all University regional campuses in Ohio.

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## Appendix

### **Creating Synergy Among Miami's Three Domestic Campuses**

#### **Executive Summary**

**April 11, 2004**

#### Charge

Review the Ohio Board of Regents and other appropriate State of Ohio Documents regarding goals and priorities for higher education, and review the respective *First in 2009* goals. Then, take the following steps: identify the most important issues facing the regional campuses that need attention, prioritize them, and develop recommendations for action; consider the most appropriate relationships among the three campuses; and determine the strategic and programmatic directions for the regional campuses, including the appropriate mix of degree programs and the appropriate degree of outreach and public service

#### Major Findings

For the first time in their history, the regional campuses are faced with serious and rapidly developing competition. Recently, a state community college announced its intention to move into both Warren and Butler counties. Additionally, three bachelor's degree institutions have opened in Butler County in the past eighteen months. These developments seriously threaten the regional campuses. There is a significant need and desire for additional degree programming at all levels, but particularly at the bachelor's degree level. The regional campuses need greater flexibility and autonomy, and they need to act with greater unity, in order to be best positioned to respond to community needs and to effectively compete. Overall, the relationships between the campuses are good. However, there is a need for greater consultation with, and consideration of, the regional campuses in decision-making and policy development.

#### Major Recommendations

A statement by the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees outlining a vision for the regional campuses is needed. This statement needs to be followed by the development of a strategic plan for the regional campuses. Because time is of the essence, the Task Force recommends that the strategic planning process occur in

the Fall Term, 2005. The plan should include, if endorsed by senior administration and the BOT, the addition of new certificate, associate's, bachelor's, master's, and workforce training programs.

A new model of administrative structure that provides the regional campuses with greater flexibility, autonomy, and unity needs to be considered. Regular interaction between the Board of Trustees and the regional campuses should be considered and an accelerated curricular review process for programs offered solely on the regional campuses needs to be developed.

Clarify expectations of department chairs pertaining to responsibilities related to regional campus faculty members. Make sure deans and department chairs are aware of the overall mission of regional campuses, as well as service/community expectations of regional campus faculty members.

The Voice of America initiative needs to be funded. Miami also needs to develop a plan for providing educational services to Warren County and the West Chester area.

Scholarships, better parking, and improved relocation services and advisement need to be developed for students relocating to the Oxford campus.