

Creating Synergy Among Miami's Domestic Campuses

Report to the First in 2009 Coordinating Council

March 9, 2005

Charge to the Task Force

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
- ❖ 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

Task Force Membership

- ❖ Judith Delzell, Miami University Oxford, Interim Associate Provost, co-chair
- ❖ Michael Governanti, Miami University Middletown, Executive Director, co-chair
- ❖ Daniel Hall, Miami University Hamilton, Executive Director, co-chair
- ❖ Marilyn Anderson, Miami University Middletown, Nursing
- ❖ Donald Byrkett, Miami University Oxford, Computer Science & Systems Analysis
- ❖ David Hergert, Miami University Hamilton, Engineering Technology
- ❖ Rebecca Hickam, master's student in College Student Personnel, graduate assistant at Miami University Middletown
- ❖ Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, Miami University Oxford, English
- ❖ Diana Royer, Miami University Hamilton, English
- ❖ Rob Schorman, Miami University Middletown, History

Work of the Task Force

The task force met on the following dates: November 3, 2004; November 9, 2004; December 16, 2004; January 14, 2005; February 4, 2005; February 11, 2005; and February 18, 2005.

The task force advertised and held six open forums on the three campuses, as follows: Miami University Hamilton on January 24, Miami University Middletown on January 20, and Miami

University Oxford on February 4. The total attendance was 149 (excluding task force members), and included faculty, staff, students on regional campuses, relocated students enrolled on the Oxford campus, and community members (see Appendix A for minutes from these forums).

Reports and Data Reviewed

We reviewed a number of reports, including Governor Taft's recent CHEE report (*Building on Knowledge, Investing in People*). We also looked at benchmarking data from similar institutions, as well as internal data from the Hamilton and Middletown campuses.

Increasing access to and success in higher education has been and continues to be a major goal for the Ohio Board of Regents and the State of Ohio. (See <http://www.regents.state.oh.us/mainpages/planning.html> for the higher education planning reports published during the last decade.) Miami's regional campuses have been dedicated to these overarching goals since their inception in the 1960s. Indeed, their mission and vision statements are congruent with the Ohio Board of Regents Operating Manual for Two-Year Campuses and the related University Regional Campus and University Residence Credit Center definitions therein. (See <http://www.regents.state.oh.us/progs/2yrmanual.pdf>)

More recently, Governor Taft's "Knowledge Economy" initiative for strengthening Ohio's economy and ability to thrive in the 21st century, *Ohio Knowledge Economy Awareness*, and the recent report of the Governor's Commission on Higher Education and the Economy, *Building on Knowledge, Investing in People*, emphasize the crucial importance of increasing access to and success in higher education in associate degree programs and particularly in baccalaureate degree programs. (See http://www.regents.state.oh.us/kea/kea-template.cfm?doc_id=22 and <http://www.chee.ohio.gov/index.asp?p=0&text=0>)

In addition to reviewing the above reports, the task force reviewed benchmarking data about degrees and program offerings at other regional campuses and found that many university regional campuses in Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania offer a much greater number and variety of bachelor's degrees and master's degrees than Miami's regional campuses. For example, OSU-Lima (Ohio), IU-East (Richmond, Indiana), and Penn State Harrisburg, serving regional communities similar in socioeconomic background to Hamilton and Middletown, offer 11, 16, and 26 bachelor's degrees and 3, 4, and 20 master's degrees, respectively.

Key Findings of the Task Force

The large and quickly developing competition in both the two-year and four-year markets seriously threatens the future of Hamilton and Middletown. There are a number of institutions aggressively seeking students in our region, including University of Phoenix, Indiana Wesleyan, Mt. Vernon Nazarene, Wilmington College, and UC in Warren County. Of particular concern is that Sinclair Community College has recently announced a plan to aggressively push into Warren County, including an intention to build a \$20 million facility in Middletown. All of

these institutions have identified the I-75 corridor as an area of focus, given its population growth. (Middletown is, of course, immediately adjacent to I-75).

After a decade of continuing increases in enrollments, Fall 2004 showed a flat enrollment at Hamilton and a 2-3% decline at Middletown. Though one year does not mean that a pattern is necessarily developing, these enrollment figures are still disturbing at a time when the population in the service area is rapidly increasing and thus should be resulting in continued enrollment growth. The concern, of course, is that competing institutions are taking a greater market share.

If Hamilton and Middletown are to reverse this trend, they will need to address the market's interest and needs. The demographics of Butler and Warren counties are shifting from blue-collar workers to professionals, with the latter population having less interest in associate degrees and more in the other types of degree programs. As demonstrated in marketing studies completed in the mid and late 1990s and in the comments received by the Task Force, the community desires additional degree programming at the regional campuses--new associate, baccalaureate, and selected professional graduate degree programming (e.g., part-time or executive MBA, and M.Ed. program), along with professional certificate programs.

The economic, intellectual, and cultural outreach of the regional campuses are clearly valued by members of the community. This outreach occurs not only through academic course offerings, but also through their Offices of Continuing Education, business and industry centers, arts and cultural programming, and service of the faculty and staff.

Though regional campus faculty and staff expressed interest in greater autonomy they did not express any desire to become independent of Miami University. Faculty members feel strongly about their affiliation with Miami University and want to continue their connections with their home departments. Students see the value of a Miami education, and prefer a Miami University diploma rather than one from a neighboring institution.

Forum participants, however, did state that existing administrative structures at Miami University seem to hinder the regional campuses from fully realizing their mission, serving their constituencies, and responding to the increased competition in an effective and expeditious manner. Approval of curricular items (degree programs, new courses, and so forth) is perceived as slow and cumbersome, given the multiple levels of review.

Individuals who attended the forums perceive an increasing divergence between the Oxford campus mission and objectives (to become an elite university with heightened emphasis on research) and the mission and objectives of the regional campuses (to provide an open access, high quality educational experience that meets the needs of the local community). In addition, there does not appear to be a common understanding about how the two divergent missions can co-exist and function in harmony. Given our three campuses in this region, Miami University is in a powerful position geographically to impact this part of Ohio, but to some people we come across as caring more for our national reputation than our potential contributions to Ohio. The regional campuses are especially well positioned to change that sentiment.

Overall, the relationships among the three campuses are productive and positive. However, faculty relationships with their home departments are inconsistent and uneven. There is also a general sense that the two regional campuses would benefit from greater collaboration with one another.

Many people at the regional campuses are concerned about poor, inconsistent, and occasionally nonexistent communication of needed information from units on the Oxford Campus. This includes unwritten departmental policies and procedures that become barriers for students. Similarly, many at the regional campuses indicated that decisions affecting the regional campuses were often made in Oxford without appropriate consultation at the regional campuses. Some regional faculty and staff members are increasingly frustrated by this "oxfordcentricity" and their morale is suffering as a result, not only because they are being overlooked, but because of the hardships created for students.

Many regional campus students are academically able to relocate in Oxford; however, a smaller number than would seem desirable actually relocate. Students who have relocated to Oxford do not have academic problems or concerns, but do have a great deal of difficulty in becoming oriented to the campus, both socially and geographically. There were several related stories about discontinued financial aid and advising problems. Upon relocating to the Oxford campus, many students, particularly nontraditional students, reported feeling stigmatized by their classmates and some instructors. Though most of the students were happy with their decision to relocate to Oxford, several students said they would have preferred to finish their degree on the regional campus if it had been possible.

For financial, social, and practical reasons, many regional campus students defer relocating to Oxford for as long as possible. This results in scheduling problems that sometimes delay graduation. For example, when students arrive in Oxford with everything completed except upper-division major courses, which must be taken over several semesters, the student is only able to create a part-time schedule. Other relocation roadblocks cited by students and faculty include: parking for students who commute daily; loss of merit-based scholarships upon relocating, increased costs, and overall paucity of merit-based aid; experiencing a stigma in classes as a relocated student; and poor communication of deadlines pertaining to program applications.

Overall, forum participants stated there needs to be greater recognition and celebration of the strengths and contributions the regional campuses make to Miami University, such as providing open access, high quality education to citizens of the region; a high quality faculty, especially as compared to competing institutions; and a sense of ownership felt by all constituencies of the regional campuses--faculty, staff, students, and community. Other strengths noted were location and size of the campuses; use of practicing professionals as part-time faculty; involvement of the faculty and staff in the local communities; and diversity of student body (economic, age, race, and so forth).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Most Urgent Recommendations

- A statement from the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees concerning their vision for regional campuses is needed. Specifically, endorsement, revision, or disapproval of the direction set out in this report should be immediately sought. Following such action, it is further recommended that a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) be formed to outline a five-year strategic plan that is consonant with the vision. Depending on the vision articulated, this plan could include:
 - a. the addition of new associate degree programs (e.g., criminal justice and health office management) and high demand baccalaureate degree programs (e.g., business technology or secondary science education) to be offered on the regional campuses.
 - b. possible new relationships with two-year institutions (such as Sinclair and Cincinnati State) for the development of baccalaureate completion programs at the regional campuses.
 - c. the possibility of selective graduate degree programming; for example, offered in conjunction with the School of Business (part-time or executive MBA) or School of Education (M.Ed.).
 - d. certificate programs for professionals and other workforce development programs.

The SPC would work collaboratively with the divisional Academic Deans during this process. The plan should be presented to the Provost by December 2005.

- Consider possible new models of administration structure to give the regional campuses the flexibility and autonomy needed to fully realize their mission, to better serve the community, to act with unity, and to be more competitive. Examples of possible administrative structures include: (a) having a Vice-President for Regional Campuses and Continuing Education, or (b) having Executive Directors report to the President and having chief academic officers on both campuses become academic deans. The creation of a new academic division for academic departments and programs found only at the regional campuses should be considered as well.
- Address Sinclair Community College's encroachment in our service area with the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR). Assure the OBR that we will be more responsive to the needs of the community. (We recognize that if we are not willing or able to offer the programs requested by the community we are not in a position to address encroachment of those who are.)
- Find a source of funding for the Voice of America Learning Center so that Miami University has another site to service the region. Update the educational needs assessment plan and develop a full strategic plan for use of the facility.

- Develop an accelerated process for curricular review for programs only offered on the regional campuses.
- Include appropriate consultation and input from regional campuses on all policies that affect the regional campuses.
- Find a means for regular interaction with the Miami University Board of Trustees to address issues related to the regional campuses.
- Increase merit-based aid for relocated students. In addition, when a regional campus student who holds a merit-based scholarship relocates to Oxford, continue his/her merit-based scholarship (excluding those scholarships only awarded for a single year).

Additional Recommendations

- Foster greater collaboration between Hamilton and Middletown campuses, as well as greater collaboration with Oxford. The regional campuses should work in unison on important broad-based matters, such as public relations, marketing, curriculum, and faculty development.
- Expand curricular offerings at the regional campuses using distance education, both by synchronous (interactive video) and asynchronous (web-based) delivery.
- Increase the size of the Engineering Technology Program using distance education, given the large, unmet statewide need for spaces in our current Engineering Technology baccalaureate degree.
- Do a better job at marketing the educational opportunities on the regional campuses. Pool marketing resources between the two campuses for greater effectiveness.
- Faculty members on all four Miami campuses have expectations for service. However, given the mission of the regional campuses, faculty members on the regional campuses have special responsibilities to provide service to the community and service to the respective regional campus. Department chairs and deans need to be sensitive to this primary service responsibility and bear it in mind when considering overall faculty productivity and contributions.
- Clarify expectations of department chairs pertaining to responsibilities related to regional campus faculty members. Encourage the use of "best practices" across the Oxford campus. Examples include scheduling departmental faculty meetings at a time that allows regional campus faculty to attend (if not for all meetings, at least for some on a regular basis); holding one department meeting a year on a regional campus (this would also acquaint Oxford

faculty with the campuses); and doing faculty exchanges in which a regional campus faculty member teaches on the Oxford campus for one semester or year, while an Oxford faculty member (either visiting faculty or permanent faculty) teaches in their place on the regional campus.

- Give greater consideration in academic policy development to allow variations to best meet the needs of all Miami students. For example, are there types of student petitions that could be acted upon at the regional campus without necessarily going through the full ID Committee? Could prior-but-dated documentation of a learning disability be used by an older student to eliminate the replication and high cost of disability assessment? (Presently, an older student who was assessed for a learning disability while in high school must be reassessed [approximately \$800] to be eligible for disability services.)
- Figure out ways to gain greater student participation in relocation orientation programs, especially for students who relocate in January. Students expressed concern about becoming oriented to Oxford, but many did not participate in the optional orientation programs offered. Improve the quality of the orientations and strive for a more welcoming environment overall.
- Improve the advising given to students on all three campuses. Make sure regional campus students are aware that some Oxford programs have enrollment caps and specific criteria for admission (e.g., business, communication, education, and fine arts). Students need to be advised that simply meeting the criteria for relocation to Oxford does not guarantee admission into their desired major. Encourage Oxford departments to do a better job communicating important matters to majors (declared and prospective) enrolled on the regional campuses.
- Investigate the desirability of a Living Learning Community for relocated students that would be attractive and supportive, especially during their first year of transition.
- Improve the parking situation for students who commute to Oxford on a daily basis. (This recommendation would affect not only relocated students, but also those who complete all their coursework in Oxford.) Could there be a designated parking lot in closer proximity to central campus for those students who commute daily?
- Establish a regular assessment cycle with regional campus students to monitor issues raised by the task force. The assessment should include barriers to relocation, as well as interest in particular academic programs.
- Maintain constant vigilance for "oxfordcentricities" and develop a process, conducted on a regular basis, to assess campus climate relative to this matter.
- Communicate and celebrate the mission, contributions, and successes of the regional campuses on the Oxford campus, as well as throughout the region.

Appendix A

Listing of Reports and Data Reviewed

Miami University Regional Campuses 15th Day Undergraduate Enrollment—Students Taking Regional Campus Courses

Miami University Regional Campuses Associate Degree Departments—Number of Courses, Enrollment, and SCH (2000-01 through 2004-05)

Excerpt from "Relocating to Oxford and Improving the History Program in Middletown." Report of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Miami University Middletown

State of Ohio Regional Campuses Enrollment Data

State of Ohio Regional Campuses Degree Information

Indiana University (regional campus) Degree Information

Penn State University (regional campus) Degree Information

Sinclair Community College, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College Degree Information

Ohio Board of Regents Operating Manual for Two-Year Campus Programs. Two-Year Campus Mission (p. 100.01) and Definitions/Recommendations (pp. 201.03 & 201.04). April 1998.

Functional Mission Statements for the Oxford Campus, Hamilton Campus, and Middletown Campus

The Vision and Major Goals (and mission) of Miami University Middletown

Managing for the Future: Challenges and Opportunities for Higher Education in Ohio. Ohio Board of Regents, July 1992.

Securing the Future of Higher Education in Ohio. Ohio Board of Regents, December 1992.

Service Expectations for Two-Year Colleges and Regional Campuses. Ohio Board of Regents, September 1993.

Performance Measure for Service Expectations for Ohio's Two-Year Colleges and Regional Campuses. Ohio Board of Regents, June 1994.

Tuition and Fees, 2004-05 Annual Tuition and Fees (Ohio regional campuses)

Tuition and Fees (Ohio regional campuses, 1995-96 through 2004-05)

Success Strategies for the Knowledge Economy: Ohio...A Heritage of Leadership. Charts on Percent of Population With a Bachelor's Degree, Educational Attainment—Where Ohio Stands Today, Higher Education Equals Higher Earning, Confirming the Connection—Income and Education. Ohio Board of Regents, September 2004.

Final Report: Voice of America Training /Education Site Feasibility Study. Paragon Opinion Research, Inc., September 1997.

Educational Needs Assessment Final Report, 1997. Robert L. Seufert and Teresa D. Newton. Applied Research Center, Miami University Middletown, 1997.

Appendix B

Comments Received During the Six Open Forums and From Individuals Unable to Attend a Forum

Comments received during the 1st Open Forum of the Regional Campus Task Force

**Miami University Middletown
January 20, 2005
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.**

The forum was attended by 28 people, plus four members of the task force (Judith Delzell, Michael Governanti, David Hergert, Rob Schorman). The following issues were raised:

Baccalaureate programs. The largest portion of audience response was devoted to requests that Middletown offer more baccalaureate programs. Among the comments:

- The Student Government president and vice president attended and spoke in favor of such programs. Another student who had just received her associate's degree said she would come back to Middletown "in a heartbeat" to complete a baccalaureate degree if it were possible. Because she was a non-traditional student, commuting to Oxford was not practical, she said. Another returning student said she is committed to getting her degree in early childhood education and knows this will mean finishing in Oxford, but she would greatly prefer avoiding the 45-minute one-way commute to class and being able to stay in the "comfortable" environment at Middletown.

- Three attendees who advise students spoke of the difficulty of getting students relocated to Oxford either because space in preferred programs is not available or the preferred degree is not offered at all. One said the campus recruiting slogan "Start here, go anywhere" seemed to really mean, "Start here, go anywhere but Oxford." Another suggested the addition of baccalaureate degrees in liberal studies or allied health professions. A third expressed frustration that regional campuses could not tailor advising to suit their students' needs, citing as an example that Middletown could not mandate academic advising because Oxford did not do so.

- A number of speakers expressed the opinion that sometimes it would make sense to duplicate programs offered in Oxford. One pointed out that in recent memory early childhood education degrees had been obtainable on the Middletown campus, fulfilling a need both for students and the profession. Another said that if the regional campuses were expected to stand on their own financially, then they needed the flexibility to offer the programs and classes that would allow them to remain solvent.

Regional identity, role of regional campuses in the university strategic plan. At least three speakers expressed the opinion that the university needed to define more clearly the status and role of the regional campuses, suggesting that either the regional campuses needed more independence or a more explicit and consistent relationship with the Oxford campus. They believed that the current situation seems to have grown without specific thought to the relationship and often seems not to take regional campuses into account at all. One faculty member pointed out that in university policy documents, even words such as "student" or "chair" or "department" did not necessarily mean the same thing in Oxford as on the regional campuses. A staff member summed up the situation this way: "It's like Oxford is having a meal, and we

may or may not be invited. And if we're invited, we won't get to choose what we eat, and we'll have to pay for it."

Cost. The need for financial support for relocating students—and not just non-traditional students—was expressed and supported by several speakers.

Continuing education. At least two speakers commented on the difficulty of linking non-credit continuing education programs with credit or degree programs. One pointed out that Middletown could offer advance training to local businesses through continuing education, but could not follow up by offering those students the opportunity to progress into a degree program. The "interstate campuses" that have opened recently to compete for these students do not have this liability, she pointed out. Another spoke of how difficult it was for the nursing program to initiate new workshop-type classes that could be offered with non-credit and credit options, depending on whether the student wanted to go on to a degree program.

Graduate classes. Speakers cited a need and opportunity for the campus to offer graduate classes at the master's level, particularly in education and business. This would be aimed especially at people already in the workforce, for whom scheduling and location would be crucial. One suggested that even if the regional campus itself did not offer the classes, perhaps Oxford graduate faculty could teach some of them at the Middletown campus. Another suggested that perhaps a similar goal could be accomplished through distance education.

Communications. Complaints about poor communication, particularly between Oxford department and regional faculty and students, were voiced.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob Schorman

Comments received during the 2nd Open Forum of the Regional Campus Task Force

**Miami University Middletown
January 20, 2005
3:30 - 4:30 p.m.**

The forum was attended by 29 people, plus five members of the task force (Judith Delzell, Michael Governanti, Marilyn Anderson, Rob Schorman, Becca Hickam). The following issues were raised:

Faculty Considerations:

- The meeting began with a concern from a faculty member who teaches on both the Middletown and Hamilton campuses about the meeting times for the open forums.
- Several questions were asked by a faculty member asking for clarification of the charge of the committee, including the word synergy, the methods used to review the Board of Regents documents, and the goals of the 1st in 2009 Coordinating Council.
- Faculty members and general attendees were curious about when a report would be published, the nature of recommendations that would be made, and the future of the committee.
- One faculty member brought up the concern that traditional faculty models do not work for regional campus faculty. The concern centered around the feeling that regional campus faculty must do it all, in addition to increased levels of community service, in order to be successful and receive promotion.
- A faculty member offered that curriculum changes are often made in Oxford without consultation with regional campus faculty.
- There is a concern that there is a general lack of awareness among faculty at Oxford regarding the regional campuses, and that there is a need for the deans to receive guidelines about treatment of regional campus faculty.
- Another faculty member suggested (after an exhaustive list of questions to the council) that there be a higher, upper-level administrative position with the responsibility of overseeing campus synergy and community relations. There was a lot of support for this idea among those in attendance—someone to look at the big picture, the needs of the students and faculty, and the openings for possible majors.

Communication between Campuses/Process of Relocation/Policies and Procedures:

- Several faculty and staff members raised concerns about the systems in place not being "user-friendly." Key concerns were timing and schedule issues, costs and financial aid, parking, and commuter student needs.
- A staff member asked that we consider what is holding more students back from relocating by comparing the number of students who are relocating with the number of students who begin at either Middletown or Hamilton wanting to relocate to Oxford.

- Another staff member commented that while some departments have good communication (e.g., Education), many do not (e.g., Fine Arts, Communications) and that there is a low identification of pre-majors on the regional campuses. She also stated that this could be improved if regional campuses had full-time faculty members attending the meetings in Oxford.
- A concern of top-down communication was addressed.
- A student addressed concerns regarding transition issues when relocating campuses. She was targeted as a Middletown student in her Oxford classes, and felt isolated. She mentioned that she would like to see the regional campuses offer more upper-level courses for the students (traditional and non-traditional) who prefer to take classes at the smaller campuses.
- A faculty member voiced concern over the change in the withdraw policy and its effect on regional students with special and extenuating circumstances.
- A staff member gave an example of a student who became homeless and was unable to finish the semester. With existing policy, there was nothing that could be done for this student, who took a 0.0 GPA hit for the semester.
- The same staff member voiced concern that the rigid policy regarding disability documentation is not flexible in accounting for the needs of older students.
- Another staff member with a daughter who had relocated relayed concerns about her daughter getting "lost in the system" and thus delaying her graduation. She said we need to help our students more once they arrive at Oxford.
- A student voiced concern regarding transportation between campuses—there is no bus to Middletown. She was also concerned that no one asks students what they think.

Diversity:

- A faculty member thinks Oxford needs to consider diversity from several different angles, and needs to appreciate the diversity that the regional campuses offer.

Relations with Miami Hamilton:

- One staff member would like to see the relations between Middletown and Hamilton improve and see the campuses use each other as resources.
- A faculty member supported closer ties and mentioned an underlying sense of competition between the regional campuses.

Baccalaureate Degree Programs:

- A staff member expressed concern regarding our lack of baccalaureate degrees and the prevalence of other options in the area.
- One staff member commented that we are "worse off" than we used to be when we did offer more baccalaureate degree programs.
- There was a general concern that the regional campuses are not meeting student needs due to lack of resources, but there are other local institutions who will meet their needs and we are losing students to them.

- Another staff member mentioned we need to give our students marketable skills and we really need to consider: whom are we serving?

General Concerns:

- A staff member expressed concern regarding the age of Middletown facilities and the need to update them, along with the difficulty of recruiting students on campus tours.

Respectfully submitted,

Becca Hickam

Comments received during the 3rd Open Forum of the Regional Campus Task Force

**Miami University Hamilton
January 24, 2005
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

Attendance: Approximately 65 members of the Hamilton campus community (faculty, staff, and students) and members of the task force: Marilyn Anderson, Donald Byrnett, Judith Delzell, Daniel Hall, David Hergert, Cindy Lewiecki-Wilson (recorder), Diana Royer

Structural issues and concerns about the challenges facing regional campuses from competing institutions (Sinclair CC, Cincinnati State):

- Several people argued Miami needs to develop baccalaureate completion programs on the regional campuses; add more offerings and more baccalaureate programs.
- Some suggested that Miami grow regional campus programs and offerings in the summer sessions to compete with other schools. “To survive, we have to grow.”
- Regional campuses need to partner with other programs in area.
- Several people suggested developing an executive MBA like Xavier’s; community members and human resource offices request this all the time. Miami doesn’t recognize life experience for granting credit and needs to.
- People raised the following questions: What is feasible? What changes are practical to talk about? When will change be implemented? Is there truly a commitment to change? Can there be a recommendation to expedite changes? “If we can’t make changes quickly, we’re going to be in serious trouble.”
- Oxford needs to understand the specific challenges posed by the new competition in the area, and that the new competition also pose risks to the Oxford campus. Only after acknowledging/understanding the situation, can the university know how to respond.
- Several people affirmed the different mission of the regional campuses: that they should be valued because they bring diversity to Miami; that regional campuses “can’t be all things to all people”; that they should offer more certificate type programs; more Saturday and evening classes; more on-line classes.
- Importance of the brand name of Miami: “we do have something to sell.”

Relationship with Oxford and communication issues:

- The regional campus mission is at complete odds with Oxford's emphasis on elitism and "leaves us out in the cold." Regional campus mission should be incorporated and valued at the highest level. Should make regional campus mission clearer to students, that they cannot finish degree here.
- Various complaints about miscommunication; the lack of connection between Oxford and the regional campuses leads to frustration: e.g., late announcements and forms used; lack of connection with student government organizations; majors/programs with restrictions that make it difficult for regional campus students to complete degrees at Miami; obstacles in the way of Oxford students taking courses at regional campuses (regional campuses don't get reimbursed?)
- Miami does a poor job of taking advantage of the campuses' geographical closeness (departments should meet at least once a year on a regional campus).
- Oxford should realize regional campuses are unique—e.g., may need to hire a general handyman instead of a specialist in a trade like a "drywaller."

Student concerns:

- Several students complained that there were not enough classes offered on regional campuses to complete a degree and so they have to go to Oxford. However, scheduling courses in Oxford is difficult for non-traditional students who work and have a family; the bus service takes an hour each way.
- Highly loyal students: One student kept repeating that despite these obstacles "I want my degree to say Miami."
- Another student complained that the Hamilton campus "looks more and more like we're a community college, but we're not."
- Students reported feeling "stigmatized" or "marginalized" at Oxford.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Lewiecki-Wilson

**Comments received during the 4th Open Forum of the
Regional Campus Task Force**

**Miami University Hamilton
January 24, 2005
5:00 - 6:00 p.m.**

Attendance:

Members of the Task Force in attendance: Judith, Dave, Don, Marilyn, & Daniel. Seven participants attended, including 2 students, 3 faculty/staff members, and two community members.

Competition:

There was considerable discussion about the increasing competition from both two-year and four-year institutions and the need for the regional campuses to respond, lest they may experience a loss of students.

There was a discussion about why the competition has been increasing; namely, that the market exists and Miami University is not serving it.

Several people expressed concern that Miami University had not completed the VOA project. One person said Miami University is missing an opportunity in West Chester. Another person believes that it is important to act quickly, lest Miami will cede the North/South Interstate corridor to other institutions.

There was a discussion about the need to emphasize the strengths of regional campuses in marketing, etc. Don asked those in attendance to identify the strengths of the Campus. The following were identified as strengths: a sense of ownership by all constituencies, faculty, staff, students, and community; quality of the Hamilton Campus faculty, who devote more time to their students than Oxford Campus faculty; location and size of the campus; the use of “real world” experienced part-time faculty to compliment the full-time faculty; and the growing involvement of the faculty and staff in the community.

Another said that Miami University is not good at adapting to its changing environment.

A faculty/staff member questioned whether the flat enrollment at Hamilton and the slight dip enrollment at Middletown this year is the result of the increasing competition.

Degree Offerings:

A student expressed the need for the Campus to change as the needs of the City of Hamilton change. Manufacturing in Hamilton has declined and there is a need for higher education. Bachelor's degrees are needed business and education.

A staff member said that the call for bachelor's degree has been increasing in recent years from students and community.

A faculty member said that the regional campuses should develop more bachelor's degree programs or in the alternative, make relocation into Oxford programs easier.

A student expressed an interest in the regional campuses offering bachelor's degrees in business technology and health fields.

Intercampus Relationships:

A staff member said that the regional campuses are not on Oxford's radar screen. Oxford administration needs to better understand how the regional campuses benefit the University and fully embrace the need for the regional campuses.

A staff member believes that the University should study models employed by other universities with regional campuses as part of the First in 2009 initiative.

Miscellaneous:

Miami University needs to accommodate nontraditional learners more. Miami University needs to be open to awarding credit for work experience.

Judy asked how important the Hamilton campus is to the community. A community representative said it depends on the group. The campus is important to elected officials, businesses, and students.

One student believes we could be using the regional highway more to bring students from Cincinnati.

A student said that the regional campuses are Miami University's best connection to Butler County. Many Butler County residents wouldn't be attending Miami, but for the regional campuses.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel E. Hall

Comments received during the 5th Open Forum of the Regional Campus Task Force

**Miami University Oxford
February 4, 2005
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.**

The forum, geared to students who had started on a regional campus and relocated to Oxford, was attended by 12 people, plus 6 members of the task force (Judith Delzell, Michael Governanti, David Hergert, Becca Hickam, Diana Royer, Rob Schorman). Several emails were received from students who could not attend the forum; their content is included below. The following issues were raised:

Oxford perceptions of the regional campuses:

- Courses taken on the regional campuses “don’t count” and are looked down upon.
- Oxford students feel that if a course offered on a regional campus is easier, then it’s okay to take that course there; otherwise, no.
- Students never felt stigmatized by faculty, only by Oxford students.
- Commuter students are viewed as “uncool, poor, and friendless.”

Integrating into the Oxford campus community:

- A dorm experience for relocated students would be desirable.
- Orientation to the campus needs to be more specific as to where offices and services are located.
- University website is not user-friendly.
- Joining student organizations is a good way to meet people and learn about the campus.
- Oxford Day is not sufficient orientation to the campus; a more sustained and gradual acclimation would be preferable.
- Relocated students are not always aware of the commuter lounge in the Shriver Center.

Academic issues:

- Relocated students are hesitant to ask questions about programs and advisors because they want to blend in; Oxford students are already “in the know.”

- Students from the regional campuses were blocked out of certain working groups in education classes when Oxford students deliberately excluding membership by relocated students.
- Middletown and Hamilton faculty understand job and family constraints; while holding students to the same standards, they are more flexible regarding such things as scheduling exams than Oxford faculty.
- Adjusting to the larger class sizes in Oxford is challenging.
- A lot of students self-advise due to disappointing experiences with Oxford advisors or because they do not know how to find an advisor.
- Misadvising on the regional campuses causes some students to be behind schedule when they arrive in Oxford.

Other:

- Overall the majority of students present were very pleased with their decision to relocate to Oxford.
- A student who has been receiving a multi-cultural scholarship at a regional campus has to struggle to get that scholarship reinstated in Oxford, whereas incoming Oxford first-year students are guaranteed a four-year scholarship.
- The regional campuses assume Oxford is taking care of things for relocated students, but no one is extending a helping hand in Oxford. Oxford assumes the regional campuses prepare students to relocate, but no real effort is made to help students do so.
- The blue bus line runs late in the afternoons; drivers have been discourteous.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana Royer

Comments received during the 6th Open Forum of the Regional Campus Task Force

**Miami University Oxford
February 4, 2005
3:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

This forum was oriented toward faculty from the Oxford campus. It was attended by eight people, plus eight members of the task force (Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson, Judith Delzell, David Hergert, Becca Hickam, Diana Royer, Rob Schorman, Daniel Hall, Marilyn Anderson, and Don Byrkett). There were Oxford faculty and staff members from Engineering, Geology, Mathematics, Microbiology, Political Science, Sociology, and College of Arts and Science administration.

The following issues were raised by faculty members relative to their departments:

A math faculty member said there were a large number of casual (part-time) faculty on the regional campus. He suggested the regional campuses consider using more full-time faculty and make better use of faculty exchanges between campuses. He also said students were well prepared at the regional campus, and there was no concern about students transferring to higher-level math courses in Oxford. The political science faculty member also noted that students were well prepared when they transferred to Oxford.

When asked about the success of departments in mentoring tenure-track faculty and integrating regional campuses faculty members with their Oxford colleagues, varying degrees of success were mentioned.

A person noted that there are problems with students taking as many courses as possible on the regional campus. This leaves only upper-level core courses left in Oxford, which cannot be completed in a short amount of time.

A suggestion was made that the University of Texas has a plan for transferring from the regional campuses. Miami might want to develop something like this to better help students who transfer.

Students have an expectation that they can finish in Oxford, but can't if they don't meet the admission criteria of selective programs.

The problem of regional campus faculty attending meetings in Oxford was brought up. Regional faculty must drive to Oxford and back, taking a couple of extra hours out of their day besides attending the meeting. Because of this it is often difficult to find a good time for an Oxford department meeting.

A suggestion was made that we should consider using distance learning technology for meetings (interactive video, web cam, etc.). The technology we have now often breaks down and some people have lost confidence in it.

There are big threats to the regional campuses. The University of Phoenix and Indiana Wesleyan are at the Union Centre exit on I-75, and the encroachment of Sinclair into Butler County all threaten enrollments at the regional campuses.

Someone suggested we better define what service to the community means. This is not expected for tenure and promotion in Oxford.

In addition:

A comment was made that, unlike research in Oxford, there is no outside review for service on the regional campuses.

Also since a number of math faculty teach low-level courses such as MTH 101 at the regional campuses, their research opportunities are limited. Another comment was that they tend to get smaller salary increments than their Oxford counterparts.

Regarding advising, a registration hold is placed on students who are relocating until they have met with an advisor.

A comment was made that Oxford makes the transfer from the regional campuses difficult. An example is parking, with commuting students having to park far away from their classes.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Hergert

Comments Received from Individuals Unable to Attend the Open Forums

Compiled by Daniel E. Hall

Staff Comments

The need for residence halls was suggested by several staff members.

Student Comments

Several students indicated that additional bachelor's degree programs are needed at the regional campuses. Nontraditional students indicated that it is unrealistic to expect them to complete their degrees in Oxford.

Students indicated that having a Miami University degree is preferable to having a degree from other four-year institutions in the area.

Night classes at the Oxford Campus and the availability of on-line degree programs were also mentioned as desired.

Community Comments

Issues for Regional Campuses

The need to better serve the region, particularly through greater degree offerings, was the most cited issue for the campuses.

The need to keep tuition and fees affordable to the local population was emphasized. Community members emphasized their appreciation for the campuses' contribution to the intellectual, cultural, and academic life of their communities.

Many people expressed a concern that the campuses do not have the autonomy needed to fulfill their mission, that Oxford Campus officials do not appreciate the needs of the local community, and that the Oxford Campus is not adequately supporting the campuses.

The need for student housing was raised by several individuals.

Attracting and retaining a diverse population was noted by several as important.

Academic Programs

The need to expand the associate's, bachelor's, and master's degree programs was the most common comment, with the greatest comments concerning the need for bachelor's degrees. Specific degrees that were mentioned include business (BS and MBA), education, computer technology, gerontology, horticulture, and hospitality management.

Many indicated that it should be a priority to schedule classes to satisfy the needs of nontraditional students.

Offer more services for business and entrepreneur enterprises, i.e. business plans.

Service

Add more programs specifically designed to help minorities; particularly the emerging Hispanic community.

The campuses need to partner in economic development initiatives. Expanding partnerships with local schools and arts organizations should also be considered.

Several people commented that they appreciate faculty and staff involvement in service clubs and volunteer opportunities as well as the educational, cultural, and intellectual programs offered on the campuses. The performing arts series on both campuses, the Colligan Project at Hamilton, the Racial Legacies Series in Hamilton, and the lectureship series on both campuses were specifically mentioned.