

Report of the Regional Campus Committee

The Charge

In October 2008, Provost Herbst wrote to the committee as follows:

Miami's regional campuses in Hamilton and Middletown face unprecedented challenges and opportunities that will require a strategic rethinking of their relationships with Oxford. The mission of the regional campuses is changing as they have been encouraged by the Chancellor in the new strategic plan for the University System of Ohio to migrate toward offering baccalaureate degrees and away from their traditional associate degrees. At the same time, competitive pressure from community colleges and for-profit schools may also make associate degrees less viable for MUH and MUM.

Thus, in ten years, the regional campuses are likely to be offering a variety of baccalaureate and baccalaureate completion degrees, a substantial challenge to implement. In addition, the opening of the Voice of America Learning Center (VOALC) provides us with an important new opportunity to develop a regional perspective on how to serve all of Southwest Ohio.

This fundamental change in mission requires a careful and comprehensive review of the relationship between the regional campuses and the Oxford Campus. Many of our policies and procedures governing faculty appointments, staff, curriculum and budget have been developed for Oxford and often create problems for the regional campuses, especially as they need the flexibility to respond to the needs of their communities and to develop new course offerings. Conversely, it is important that offering new baccalaureate degrees at the regional campus does not cause "brand confusion" for Miami degrees.

We therefore ask the committee to consider the following issues and any others you believe are relevant to the strategic relationship between the campuses. We ask you to think boldly. Nothing is "off the table" except that MU Hamilton and MU Middletown will remain part of Miami University. There is no prospect of them being spun off as separate entities.

The committee was charged with recommending answers to the following questions, those recommendations to be presented as a report to the Provost, the President, and finally the Board of Trustees:

- 1. How should the degrees offered by the regional campuses be made more distinct from Oxford?*
- 2. Should faculty appointment systems be changed in order to allow the regional campuses maximum flexibility and if so, how?*
- 3. Currently the VOA and multiple regional campus units report to both regional campus deans, and then to the Provost. Could there be a better arrangement and what would it be?*
- 4. Where should human resource responsibilities, especially in regard to staff, reside for the two campuses?*
- 5. What changes in curriculum approval processes should be made in order to ensure that the regional campuses fulfill their mission?*
- 6. What other systems (e.g., budget, admissions, registrar) need to be changed so that we can develop a regional perspective on the populations we serve?*

Provost Herbst added that

These are difficult questions and investigation of each will undoubtedly uncover complexities. However, to date, problems confronting the regional campuses have been dealt with in an incremental and largely ad hoc manner. It is now time, before the degree mix at MUH and MUM changes radically, to develop a holistic perspective on these issues that will serve the interests of everyone.

Statement of Vision

The Miami University regional campuses were created to support the University's longtime commitment to serve the educational needs of the region. In the years since their creation, they have accomplished much. At the same time, as the University moves ahead, it must reflect upon the status and potential of these campuses. It is the committee's view that, for too long, the regional campuses have been linked to the larger University in ways that are, at best, pragmatic. This report recommends steps that might be taken toward a better, future relationship among the constituent regional entities of the Hamilton, Middletown, and Voice of America Learning Center campuses. It also offers guidance to help the university community think about the future relationship between the regional campuses and the Oxford campus. While the report makes specific recommendations, it also identifies questions that occupied the committee and a range of perspectives that greeted a preliminary draft of its recommendations as the draft was discussed among various constituencies of the University. The committee hopes that the information presented here will help the President and the Board of Trustees make informed decisions about the future of the regional campuses and the University.

Early in its deliberations, the committee members agreed wholeheartedly that all proposals made in its final recommendations would serve the entire University, not just parts of it. This requires rethinking a number of issues, practices, and traditional assumptions on the Oxford campus as well as acknowledging the kind of partnership that the re-envisioned Regional Campus and the Oxford campus should pursue together. These new relationships are necessary to expand Miami's service commitment to the people of the region. Rather than viewing the regional campuses as satellites in orbit whose main purpose is to feed students to the Oxford campus, the committee envisions the regional campuses in a new administrative and academic configuration with a much more dynamic relationship to the Oxford campus as well as to the region.

The committee's vision has been informed in part by the determination of Chancellor Eric Fingerhut and the Ohio Board of Regents (OBOR) to distinguish the mission of the regional campuses throughout the University System of Ohio (USO) and to build them into institutional entities that more purposefully serve the people of the state of Ohio, specifically the Ohioans who live near the regional campuses and have the most direct access to them. Additionally, the regional campuses have been positioned in the Chancellor's plan for higher education to reinforce the economy of Ohio as well as to reach out to under-served populations in their immediate surroundings.

While these are important considerations, other considerations also exist, including the need to meet competition presented by nearby institutions. The University must also recognize and serve the aspirations of faculty for teaching, scholarship, and service.

The committee's recommendations point to two important goals:

- (1) establishing stronger connections between and among the regional campuses as well as with the Oxford campus, where those connections are viable and mutually enhancing, including allowing for increased movement of faculty between and among campuses; and
- (2) at the same time building organizational structures that afford the regional campuses greater independence and self-sufficiency where this will allow them to pursue initiatives that are not local to the Oxford campus, especially those initiatives that serve non-traditional students.

The committee has developed its final report after nearly a year's research (including study of regional campus systems in Ohio and other states) and debate. The committee has met with faculty, students, staff, administrators and citizen advisors throughout the entire University and had numerous e-mail exchanges and personal conversations before and after hosting public forums on all campuses to discuss its draft recommendations. We believe that the report offers a larger vision of all campuses and a re-envisioned, forward-looking mission for Miami University.

Recommendations

(Italicized Arabic numerals in parentheses indicate which of the Provost's charges are addressed by each recommendation.)

[1] (3) The committee recommends that Miami University-Hamilton (MUH), Miami University-Middletown (MUM), and the Voice of America Learning Center (VOALC) be re-envisioned and viewed as one administrative unit, headed by a Regional Campus Administrator. The Regional Campus Administrator should report to the Provost and be assisted in the management of the three Regional Campus sites by associate deans.

In its preliminary draft recommendations, the committee recommended that the Regional Campus Administrator be at the Dean level. There was considerable dialogue about this recommendation when the Committee held open forums on the regional campuses. While there appeared to be widespread agreement that a unified vision would serve the regional campuses well, there were differences expressed about the titles and responsibilities of the administrator(s) charged with oversight of the regional campuses or--as the committee came to call it in recommending a unified vision--the Regional Campus. Regional Campus faculty argued that the new position the committee identified as Regional Campus Dean should be at the Vice-Presidential level. They suggested that the loss of a voice at the Dean level in COAD and University P&T (since now there are two regional deans) should be offset by the elevation of the regional administrator to a higher administrative position. Following the forums on the Regional Campus there is no consensus in the committee about the proper title or rank for the single "floating" administrator charged with oversight of the Regional Campus. The committee agrees with Regional Campus faculty that the need for a unified vision for the Regional Campus must not mean that the University loses sight of the need for campus-specific day-to-day administrative leadership and local community engagement.

[2] (3, 4, 6) The committee recommends that procedures currently in place in service offices at MUH, MUM, and the VOALC be reviewed toward the development of a common interpretation of policies in compliance with University guidelines. As the Regional Campus continues to grow, MUH, MUM, and VOALC need to function as an integrated system. By concentrating on a regional approach within the Miami University system, the campuses will provide students, faculty, staff and the community with united and consistent messages, policies, and services. University offices should be evaluated and reorganized toward the goal of consolidated leadership, united departmental direction, and consistent reporting structures among the Regional Campus sites. Office consolidations, where appropriate, should improve service standardization, efficiency, flexibility and economy.

[3] (6) The committee recommends that the budgets for the three regional campuses be combined in one administrative accounting fund that allows the revenue and expenses attributed to each location to be identified as such. The combined fund should be administered by a Regional Campus Senior Budget Director who reports to the Regional Campus Administrator. (This recommendation should be approved by the Ohio Board of Regents with respect to the state investment in instruction [SII] support calculation. At the time of our recommendation, the State is currently reworking the SII formula, and the recommendation might need additional modification by the implementation team to fit the new formula.)

The committee also recommends that the University

- (a) develop a methodology to create a revenue redistribution entry that recognizes revenue for the Regional Campus site providing the instruction.
- (b) develop clear procedures to monitor and account for specific faculty, staff, and other exchanges between Oxford and the Regional Campus within the central accounting system rather than by using separate shadow systems. For example, faculty exchanges are currently tracked in an Excel spreadsheet outside the central financial system.
- (c) allow the Regional Campus administration to establish budgetary decisions and allocations separately from the Oxford campus if the use of university-wide recommendations are not consistent with regional campus resources.
- (d) develop a more robust library of management-level reports to support financial decisions.

In one conversation on the Regional Campus, it was pointed out that Recommendation 2c might be expanded to include personnel, in order to allow the Regional Campus more autonomy in appointing staff. Frustrations were expressed about delays resulting from the need for Oxford's approval of Regional Campus staff positions. To understand the force of Recommendation 2a, it helps to know that approximately 1500 students currently circulate among campuses. The committee recognizes that state subsidy formulas are among the considerations that must figure in calculations for revenue redistribution.

[4] (1) The committee recommends that the University re-envision the Regional Campus as the location of baccalaureate degrees and baccalaureate completion degrees designed to assist the economic and cultural development of the region. Degrees offered on the Regional Campus should be distinct in name and requirements from those on the Oxford campus. They should include degrees that serve a broader, place-bound population and address state initiatives from the Chancellor and the Ohio Board of Regents. The University should develop centers of excellence on each regional campus site to forward the mission of the Miami Regional Campus.

Specific recommendations pertaining to Miami University degree programs include the following:

- (a) The University minimum for the percentage of Miami credit hours earned toward a site-specific degree should mirror current practice and be at least 25% of coursework, e.g. 32 credit hours earned at the Regional Campus for the BIS Degree. This supports OBOR's policy of equal treatment of transfer and native students, and Miami's policy of 16 of 64 or 32 of 128 Miami hours needed to earn a Miami baccalaureate degree. A critical rationale for this 25% minimum is to ensure that students are exposed to a variety of faculty within a particular discipline.
- (b) Additional articulation agreements with community colleges should be developed to bring students to the Miami Regional Campus for the completion of baccalaureate degrees unique to the Regional Campus.
- (c) The University should develop agreements with other institutions to allow these institutions to provide remedial coursework on the regional campuses.
- (d) The University should improve the infrastructure of the Regional Campus and aggressively investigate new technologies in distance and online education.
- (e) The Regional Campus administration should develop strategic academic emphases on each of the three Regional Campus sites.
- (f) As new degree programs are developed on the Regional Campus, the University should institute Regional Campus extensions of existing co-majors and minors on the Oxford campus, such as Interactive Media Studies (IMS). Other disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs might come from such areas as Environmental Science, Entrepreneurship, or Urban and Regional Planning.
- (g) Master's level graduate programs should be established on the Regional Campus as soon as possible, in addition to the already existing Professional MBA and master's degrees in Education to be housed at the VOALC. Professional science master's degrees should be studied for eventual inclusion. A Master of Science in Nursing should be considered a strategic goal driven by market demand. Other career-oriented master's degrees might include a Master's in Social Work or a Master's in Public Health. The University should also investigate master's programs that can be jointly offered with other institutions. In addition to graduate degrees, graduate

certificate programs should be considered as part of the strategic plan for the Regional Campus and as a way to avoid the more complicated approval processes required for master's degrees.

It might be argued that the Chancellor's initiatives for Ohio regional campuses, insofar as they involve expanding access to higher education and specifically to baccalaureate degrees, suggest the need to consider a limited number of duplicate degrees where those degrees might serve the region. But it is difficult to imagine how Miami could offer the same degrees in multiple locations given the proximity of its campuses. While this report does not make specific recommendations concerning tuition at the University, which currently includes two rates at the Regional Campus and a third at Oxford, the committee hopes that the University will consider ways to use access initiative scholarship support for students with financial need who want to and ought to be taking courses in Oxford. Currently, Regional Campus students can take a limited number of credit hours in Oxford each semester while continuing to pay the regional campus rate. Administrators in Oxford have argued that these students should use those hours in Oxford in their third and fourth years and for courses in the major. The committee sees the logic of this argument as it also recommends that future policy be guided by the Chancellor's goal of expanding access to all degree programs, not only on the Regional Campus but also in Oxford.

In its preliminary draft report, the committee recommended that the location of courses taken be identified on transcripts as RC (Regional Campus) with a modifier for specific site: RCH for Hamilton, RCM for Middletown, and RCV for Voice of America Learning Center; OXF for Oxford, LUX for Luxembourg, and SA (study abroad); or using some similar system of notation. Minority opinion in the committee recommended that the diploma and/or transcript also include a notation such as "This degree was completed at..." in order to identify the location of the degree. These recommendations were intended to allow the University to maintain a more accurate record of the coursework taken by all Miami students, particularly given the circulation of students among campuses. Until recently the location of courses was identified on transcripts, although in an inconsistent manner, and the location of courses is still named on the Degree Audit Report. The committee also hoped that identifying the campus of courses (and/or degrees) would in the future help to identify and promote centers of excellence. However, current Regional Campus faculty and students universally think that identifying the campus of course or degree will have the effect of stigmatizing the Regional Campus. Since the committee's concern is to promote the competitiveness of coursework and degrees on all of its campuses, we are obliged to record this perception, and we withdraw our earlier recommendation. In its research, the committee learned that there is currently no standard practice for identifying regional campus degrees on transcripts and diplomas. Some universities name the regional campus on the diploma; some do not.

The committee acknowledges that the language above concerning degrees "different in name and requirements" is open for implementation committees to interpret. Would a regional campus biology degree, for instance, be sufficiently different in requirements from Oxford degrees in the natural sciences to be worth supporting if the University had the faculty and other resources in place to support it? The governing bodies of the University can address questions like this as they emerge.

[5] (5, 2) In the development of a new Regional Campus mission, new courses, majors, degree programs and departments may eventually come into existence without the sponsorship of one of the existing five divisions of the University. The Committee therefore recommends a review of various course and curricular design strategies.

For example, the role of the Regional Campus Curriculum Committee (currently called the Regional Campus Curriculum Coordinating Council) might be enhanced to allow for review and approval of courses and requirements for majors and degrees specific to the Regional Campus [such as the recently OBOR approved Bachelor of Integrative Studies (BIS)] that are not affiliated with divisions, departments, or programs on the Oxford campus. This committee might function in such cases with the equivalent of divisional status, forwarding its decisions to the University Curriculum Committee and/or the Graduate Council, which should include significant representation from Regional Campus faculty. With the equivalent of divisional status for this purpose, the Regional Campus would be able to respond to regional market needs in a timely fashion.

An alternative strategy would allow new courses and majors to be temporarily housed in an existing department and/or division of the University, until such time as independent departmental status could be granted on the Regional Campus. This approach would require the inclusion of significant representation from Regional Campus faculty on divisional committees.

Regardless of the approach, the issue of how and when to approve 300 and 400 level courses for the Regional Campus needs to be addressed. The addition of more baccalaureate degrees will require this conversation.

The committee recommends that the current procedures for approving Miami Plan coursework offered on the Regional Campus remain in place.

It should be clearly noted that the departments of Nursing, Engineering Technology, Computer and Information Technology, and Business Technology, which are currently associated with a division on the Oxford campus, would continue to maintain that relationship with respect to hiring, promotion and tenure, and course and curriculum approval, among other responsibilities. However, if the Regional Campus does at some future date assume the status of a division, then we recommend that these departments be granted the opportunity, in the future, to join a new Regional Campus division.

The idea of granting the Regional Campus some of the traditional functions of the academic division encountered opposition in open forums hosted by the committee, particularly from science faculty based on all campuses. Their concerns involved promotion and tenure and curriculum. Several faculty expressed the view that existing divisions are appropriate units for the approval of curriculum and suggested that it is difficult to imagine a degree program on the Regional Campus that would not fit in an academic division on the Oxford campus. "The campus is a place, not an academic unit," one person wrote in a note to the committee. Still others feared that faculty without a home department or program on the Oxford campus would be at some risk without the support structure that a program or department offers. The committee acknowledges that there are a number of difficult issues that will arise if the University seeks to implement its recommendation to allow the Regional Campus some of the roles

*traditionally belonging to an academic division. Divisions currently “cut through” the regional campuses; the Regional Campus is not now an academic unit. The committee does not think that the Regional Campus necessarily must become an academic division. The committee does believe, however, that as the University tries to fulfill its several missions, problems that have already emerged in efforts to meet the University’s goals might be addressed by offering the Regional Campus a quasi-divisional (perhaps transitional) status **for specific purposes**. For example, for some years one regional campus has tried to build a criminal justice degree. None of the divisions in Oxford have wanted to host or sponsor this degree, which has put it in limbo. There were related difficulties in designing and approving the BIS degree. The committee thinks these problems will persist as other regional-specific degrees are proposed. Administrators and faculty in Oxford are reluctant to oversee and administer degree programs that they have no interest in (and are not qualified to oversee) and which will bring no income to the Oxford campus. Already the University confronts the problem of how to identify the divisional status of BIS degree recipients at graduation. These and other problems argue that the Regional Campus be allowed quasi-divisional status for specific functions. The committee fears that requiring all new degree programs to have a home in an existing academic division will significantly impede the creation of new, especially innovative Regional Campus degree programs.*

[6] (2) The committee recommends that Regional Campus faculty with divisions, departments, and programs housed in Oxford **be evaluated as they are currently**; both departmental and divisional promotion and tenure committees should include faculty from the Regional Campus. The committee recommends creation of a Regional Campus Promotion and Tenure Committee for the evaluation of faculty who are not (currently, or as they are evaluated) members of divisions, departments, and programs housed on the Oxford campus. The committee recommends that all faculty be tenured to the University.

There are a number of admonitions the committee offers future implementation committees concerning this recommendation.

The composition of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee should be adjusted to guarantee that at least one Regional Campus faculty member is included in its membership in light of the reduction of Regional Campus representation by the consolidation of Regional Campus leadership under one administrator.

Some notes on the process that the committee has imagined might help guide an implementation committee. If the faculty member seeking promotion and tenure is associated with a Regional Campus department, then the departmental P&T committee would forward its evaluation to the Chair of the department. The Chair of the department would then forward his/her evaluation along with the departmental P&T committee evaluation to the Regional Campus Administrator. The Regional Campus P&T Committee would then review the candidates’ dossier; their review would be advisory to the Regional Campus Administrator. The Regional Campus Administrator would forward his/her evaluation to the University P&T Committee and the Provost. If a faculty member is not associated with a department either on Oxford campus or the Regional Campus, then the appropriate area coordinator would perform annual reviews of tenure-track faculty and forward these evaluations to the Regional Campus

Administrator. The Regional Campus P&T Committee would then review the candidates' dossier; the review of that committee would be advisory to the Regional Campus Administrator. The Regional Campus Administrator would forward his/her evaluation to the University P&T Committee and the Provost.

The committee recommends that there be no change in current policies that allow Regional Campus faculty the option of ordering criteria for tenure in two ways, with either research or service second in their order of criteria.

[7] (2) The committee recommends that the hiring of regional campus faculty with no ties to divisions, departments, and programs on the Oxford campus be the responsibility of the Regional Campus Administrator or designated associate deans. Responsibility for hiring regional campus tenure-line faculty with ties to an Oxford-based department or program should remain jointly shared by the divisional dean and the Regional Campus Administrator.

In the interest of maintaining the academic standards of the University and enhancing the academic reputation of the Regional Campus, the committee recommends that hiring practices for tenure-track faculty on the Regional Campus be standardized across all departments. In the course of gathering information, the committee found a wide disparity in the rigor of searches and the involvement of a dean's office in Oxford.

In the implementation of committee recommendations accepted by the President and the Board of Trustees, we suggest that a written policy be formulated to guide all tenure-track searches regardless of whether or not the candidate will have a home department in Oxford. Active participation from the office of an appropriate dean is essential, and whenever possible the search committee should have at least one representative that is based primarily on the Oxford campus. This will not only maintain the high standards of the University but also help build and maintain strong connections between the regional campus and the Oxford campus.

[8] (2) The committee believes that the University's rule of 5% for the percentage of Lecturers among tenure-line faculty (see MUPIM 7.11.C) may not serve the Regional Campus well and recommends that the Regional Campus be granted more flexibility in balancing faculty composition in its departments and programs than the 5% rule permits.

[9] The committee recommends that the University develop the means and appropriate incentives to encourage maximum circulation of faculty between and among the Regional Campus sites, and between the Oxford campus and the Regional Campus. Members of the Miami faculty based on the Regional Campus have served the Oxford campus on many of its committees, by designing and teaching courses, and occasionally in temporary full-time appointments. These practices should be continued, while Oxford faculty should be strongly encouraged to serve the Regional Campus in similar ways.

In making this recommendation, the committee's first thought was that Oxford faculty might serve the Regional Campus in new ways and expand their commitment to the Regional Campus. In a meeting on the Regional Campus, the committee heard about problems in the past with faculty teaching at both Miami Hamilton and Miami Middletown; faculty moving between campus sites do not always feel like they "belong"

to a campus or community. This is an issue for implementation committees to consider, but the committee does not think that bad history should necessarily determine future policy.

[10] The committee recommends that the Regional Campus be authorized to hire a high-end marketing firm to attract students as well as public attention to the Regional Campus as it offers unique opportunities and “the Miami brand” within the marketplace for higher education in Southwest Ohio, Southeast Indiana, and Northern Kentucky.

Due to increasing competition from higher education institutions, Miami’s Regional Campuses need a unified marketing campaign. Regional Campus programs such as Saturday Select have been successfully launched by internal marketing campaigns. Every attempt should be made to replicate their success in an evolving market.

All current Hamilton, Middletown and Voice of America marketing efforts should be evaluated by at least one independent marketing firm in order to allow for balanced critique. This should include radio, TV, print, and web materials. The independent marketing firm should analyze what has and has not been successful while working with marketing personnel to shape future Regional Campus messages.

The ongoing University web redesign project is an opportunity to rework Miami University websites. Regional Campus web design personnel should coordinate efforts with efforts to identify and promote a Miami brand for the Regional Campus.

Respectfully submitted,

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