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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators (NABCA) *Access Journal*, now in its fifth year. We are pleased to be able to provide a place for higher education administrators in a branch campus setting to share their research, experiences, and thoughts. Included in this issue is an examination of how information is communicated in the areas of admissions and financial aid at both flagship institutions and branch campuses. We are also very excited to share with you four case studies from the graduates of the NABCA Branch Campus Leadership Institute's inaugural class. Participants in the BCLI worked on areas of interest at their sites and presented their findings at NABCA's 2019 Annual Conference in Spokane. Finally, we are also thrilled to be able to bring a conference session on testing security and compliance to the *Access Journal* in order to share this valuable information with members who were unable to attend.

Even as we were putting this issue to bed, we are thinking ahead to Volume 5, Issue 2! We will be issuing a call for submissions in August 2019 and encourage you all to submit your research, book reviews, case studies, and/or editorial musings as they relate to our mission.

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing your feedback and receiving your submissions.

Sincerely,

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Common Applications, Uncommon Messaging: How Branch and Flagship Institutions Communicate Admissions and Financial Aid Application

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Common Applications, Uncommon Messaging: How Branch and Flagship Institutions Communicate Admissions and Financial Aid Application Processes

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ABSTRACT

In-state students often apply to multiple branch campuses within the same state system, now evidenced thanks to the rise of state-level postsecondary application systems (e.g., UC Application). However, no research has investigated whether prospective students can read and comprehend admissions and financial aid application instructions published on institutional websites. Moreover, no research has performed cross-system system analyses to explore whether branch campuses align their admissions and financial aid language to streamline and clarify the college exploration process for students considering multiple branch campuses within the same state system (e.g., UC-Davis and UC-Merced). This study analyzes admissions and financial aid application instructions across three of the largest state systems in the United States. Findings reveal branch campuses within the same system often vary their admissions and financial aid application instructions by thousands of words and between two and four grade levels of readability, possibly rendering it difficult and/or confusing for prospective students to receive consistent messaging across multiple branch campuses within the same system. Implications for research and practice are addressed.

Keywords: admissions, financial aid, branch campuses, readability, literacy

Common Applications, Uncommon Messaging: How Branch and Flagship Institutions Communicate Admissions and Financial Aid Application Processes
By Zachary W. Taylor

Authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) receives and processes over 20 million applications each year. This volume renders the FAFSA the largest common postsecondary application system currently in existence, making it possible for the United States (U.S.) federal government to disburse federal student aid funds to millions of different postsecondary students attending more than 6,000 colleges, universities, and career schools across the country (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). However, before applying for federal financial aid, prospective postsecondary students must complete an application for admission. State-level systems and coalitions of postsecondary education all encourage prospective students to complete unique, state-system admissions applications, such as the UC Application for all University of California institutions (Regents of the University of California, 2019), ApplyTexas application for all public and some community colleges and private institutions in Texas (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2019), and the University of Wisconsin System application (Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, 2019). These common application systems allow prospective students to explore multiple branch campuses[1], including the flagship institution, and apply to multiple institutions at once. In fact, the official slogan of ApplyTexas is, "Many schools, one application" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2019, para. 1).

In broad, sweeping efforts to standardize the process and promote interstate access to postsecondary education, several common, national-level admissions application systems have emerged, including the Common Application (Common Application Inc., 2019), Universal College Application (ApplicationsOnline LLC, 2019), and Coalition for College Application (The Coalition for College, 2019). As a result of these national-level application systems, research has asserted that prospective students have applied to a greater number of institutions than in years before national-level application systems (Smith, 2013) and are more likely to leave their home state and study at an out-of-state institution (Kaminer, 2014; McPhate, 2016). One way public institutions have combatted this outmigration of in-state students is to lower or freeze tuition, resulting in modest spikes in application numbers during years after a tuition reduction or freeze (McDuff, 2007). Another method of retaining in-state students has been aligning application, admission, enrollment, and financial aid processes to facilitate more clarity for students and their support networks during the enrollment management process (DesJardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2006).

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[1] Throughout this paper, the term "branch campus" refers to an institution within a structured system (ex: The University of California System, The University of Texas System, The University of Wisconsin System)

However, limited research has examined how institutions themselves communicate the admissions or financial aid process to prospective students on institutional (.edu) websites (Taylor, 2018a; Taylor & Bicak, 2019), as institution websites have been found to be leading sources of information to inform student choice and college decision-making (Burdett, 2013; Daun-Barnett & Das, 2013; Venegas, 2006, 2007). To fill this gap in the literature and inform student communication practices at branch campuses, this study analyzes first-year undergraduate admission and federal financial aid application instructions published on institutional websites of three of the largest state systems of postsecondary education in the United States: The University of California, Texas, and Wisconsin systems. These three systems were selected understanding that each system employs a common application system and also exclusively features Title IV-participating institutions, meaning all institutions encourage their prospective students to complete the FAFSA, another common application system. From these findings, branch campus practitioners—and state-level executive leaders—will learn how common system institutions communicate common application processes in (un)common ways, possibly leading to prospective students feeling confused during the process and preferring to complete a national-level application (e.g., Common Application), which could lead to them leaving the state.

Literature Review

As previously stated, limited research has examined how branch campuses within the same state system communicate admissions and financial aid application instructions to prospective students. However, education researchers have explored the hurdles that students encounter when applying to colleges and universities and completing the FAFSA to afford their postsecondary education.

Of work related to the admissions process, Klasik (2012) explained that, controlling for individual student-level characteristics, students who began the college application exploration and application process earlier were more likely to successfully enroll in a postsecondary institution, with White students outpacing Black and Hispanic students. Klasik (2012) suggested that college counselors should connect with students earlier in the application process to solve any problems and overcome any communication boundaries that may prevent a student from successfully applying to the institution of their choice. Similarly, Carruthers and Fox (2016) suggested college counselors could have the greatest impact on students enrolling in two-year institutions who were previously not considering attending college. However, no work has specifically addressed how college counselors help students navigate the application process among branch campuses in the same state postsecondary system. Moreover, research has not addressed how admissions application materials are written among branch campuses using the same common application system.

Somewhat related to the admissions hurdles facing students exploring branch campuses, Griffith and Rothstein (2009) suggested that students of all income levels were more likely to apply to institutions closer to their homes, and that higher-income students may be better positioned – economically and academically – to apply to more selective institutions, such as flagship institutions.

However, most research related to the difficulty of completing an admissions application has used quantitative methods to analyze student-, family-, and institution-level characteristics to predict whether students enroll, not whether they learn how to complete the application and successfully complete the application (Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016). Furthermore, no research has used quantitative methods to analyze how admissions application instructions are written and whether these instructions vary from institution to institution, even if these institutions encourage the use of a common application system.

More research exists examining the difficulty of the FAFSA and the barriers that students encounter when trying to complete the FAFSA application and finance their postsecondary education. Asher (2007) suggested the federal financial aid process be simplified, starting with cutting nearly three dozen questions from the FAFSA that could have their answers populated by federal processes and not the applicant. In Asher's report, they included several "Terms to Know" including "FAFSA," "EFC or Estimated Family Contribution," and "SAR or Student Aid Report" (2007, pp. 6-7). Many of Asher's (2007) findings were echoed by Dynarski and Scott-Clayton (2008) who suggested many questions on the FAFSA were more complicated than students and their parents thought they were, resulting in the FAFSA process taking too long for students even with help from their parents or support networks. Similarly, Kantrowitz (2011) explained that the FAFSA was too long and complicated for many students and their families to complete in one sitting, leading students to forgo the financial aid

application process and choose to pay for their education in different ways or forgo postsecondary education entirely.

After repeated efforts by the Obama administration to simplify and reduce the number of questions on the FAFSA (The White House, 2015) while incorporating an IRS data retrieval tool into the application to streamline the process (Internal Revenue Service, 2018), thousands of students did not complete the FAFSA in 2018, resulting in $2.6 billion in unclaimed Pell Grant money (Helhoski, 2018). Most recently, Taylor and Bicak (2019) evaluated the federal student aid jargon knowledge held by returning adult learners and found that many adults were unaware of common financial aid jargon terms, such as FAFSA, master promissory note, and entrance counseling. However, no research has addressed how branch campuses communicate federal student aid processes to students. As a result, this study will fill an important gap in the literature and inform branch campuses regarding their communication of admissions and financial aid application processes, potentially working to streamline and simplify the communication between students and their future institutions of higher education.

Methods

The following sections will detail how the sample was identified, how data was collected and analyzed, and how limitations were addressed.

Identifying Sample

To conduct the research in a timely, feasible manner – while also providing a national-level glimpse into admissions and financial aid application instructions

across large state systems – the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) was used to identify the large state systems of higher education evidenced by the overall number of students and the number of undergraduate applications received during the 2017-2018 academic year. Furthermore, each state system needed to employ a common, state-level application system to evaluate how branch campuses communicate these common application systems and the admissions application instructions to complete the application. As a result of this preliminary search, the University of California (nine institutions), Texas (eight institutions), and Wisconsin (13 institutions) systems were identified as sample institutions due to their large student populations and the feasibility of analyzing the admissions and financial aid application instructions across a total of 30 institutions (60 texts total).

Data Collection

After identifying the sample, the IPEDS was again used to locate each institution's .edu domain. Once these domains were located, each institution's embedded search tool was used to locate their applications for first-year undergraduate admissions and federal financial aid. The embedded search tools were used to remove any researcher bias, as general Internet search tools on unique web browsers (e.g., Google, Bing) are subject to personal search histories and website cookies that may have influenced the search results. Using the institutional search tool available on their institutional website, all admissions and financial aid application instructions on all 30 institutional websites were located without issue. Readability Studio – a quantitative linguistics

software tool – was used to extract these instructions from the website and into separate .txt files for data analysis. A database of these texts is available upon request.

Data Analysis

Using Readability Studio, all 30 admissions instructions and 30 financial aid instructions were analyzed, calculating word counts, token-type ratios, and English readability grade levels for each text. Word counts (WC) were calculated, as research has suggested that longer texts written at higher or more difficult levels of reading comprehension may be more difficult to read and comprehend than shorter texts by word count (Mikk, 2008), while longer texts may be more likely to include rarely-used words which may reduce a person's ability to read and comprehend the text (Schmitt, Jiang, & Grabe, 2011). Token-type ratio (TTR) is a measure of the lexical (word) diversity in a text, calculated by dividing the unique number of words in a text by the total number of words in a text. Calculating the TTR of a text results in a percentage out of 100 (i.e., 0.20 or 20% would represent lower lexical diversity than 0.90 or 90%). TTR is one measure of how lexically diverse a text is, with higher TTRs indicating that a text may be more difficult to read and comprehend for readers unfamiliar with the content (Jurafsky & Martin, 2014).

To calculate the grade-level readability of each text, this study followed the measures for readability used in prior studies by Taylor (2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c), who has demonstrated that admission application instructions and other higher-education materials are often difficult for students to read, with

some materials written above the 17th or 18th-grade English readability level (Taylor, 2018c). An outline of each readability measure used in this study can be found in the following sections.

The Automated Readability Index (ARI).

The ARI calculates the grade level of text by examining the average word and sentence length of a given selection of text. ARI is measured thus: $G = (4.71 * (RP/W)) + (0.5 * (W/S)) - 21.43$, where G = grade level, W = number of words, RP = number of strokes (characters and punctuation less sentence terminating punctuation, i.e. periods), and S = number of sentences (Kincaid & Delionbach, 1973).

The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Test (FKGLT).

The FKGLT calculates the grade level of technical documents and nonfiction based on sentence length and syllable count. FK is measured thus: $G = (11.8*(B/W)) + (.39*(W/S)) -15.59$, where G = grade level, W = number of words, B = number of syllables, and S = number of sentences (Kincaid, Fishburne, Rogers, & Chissom, 1975).

The Gunning-Fog Index (GFI)

The GFI) calculates the grade-level readability of a text by numbers of sentences and complex words, defined as words that contain three or more syllables except for proper nouns, words made three syllables by adding the inflections "-ed" and "-es," and compound words composed of simpler words, i.e. horsepower = "horse" + "power." GFI is measured thus: $G = .4*(W/S + ((C/W)*100))$, where G =grade level, W = numberof words, C = number of complex

words, and S = number of sentences (Gunning, 1952).

The simple measure of gobbledygook (SMOG).

The Simple Measure of Gobbledygook Readability Formula (SMOG) the grade level of any document at least 30 sentences in length based on the number of complex words and total sentences, with texts fewer than 30 sentences using a modified formula. A complex word is defined as one with three or more syllables, with complex sentences featuring a semicolon counted as two sentences. SMOG is measured thus: $G = C$ per 30 sentence passage, where G = grade level, and C = number of complex words (three syllables or more) using SMOG's proprietary conversion table (McLaughlin, 1969).

Limitations

This study was limited by the number of institutional texts analyzed, as well as the methodology employed to analyze the texts. Although the 30 institutions in this study's sample comprise three of the largest state postsecondary systems in the United States and in the world, there are over 6,000 institutions of higher education in the United States who participate in Title IV programming and thus encourage their students to complete the FAFSA. Future research could address how other institutions communicate admissions and financial aid processes to prospective students, as well as how students and their support networks (e.g., family members, friends, counselors) interact with admissions and financial aid information and what these stakeholders find especially difficult to understand, hindering the enrollment management process.

The type of institutions examined also represents a limitation of this study. In terms of institution types, the UC System institutions are predominantly research-intensive campuses; the UT System is a blend of research and regional universities; and the UW System includes UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee as research-intensive universities, while all other UW System campuses are not. As a result, depending on the type of institution – and therefore, the type of student these institutions recruit – admissions and financial aid communication may vary. From here, future research could investigate how institutions communicate with and recruit different types of students depending on the mission, vision, and research output of the institution itself.

In addition, this study employs a quantitative linguistics approach to understanding a large amount of domain-specific (admissions and financial aid) text. Future studies could perform survey or qualitative analyses of admissions and/or financial aid information to provide a more in-depth, nuanced understanding of these materials and the hurdles they may place before students seeking higher education in branch campuses. Moreover, branch campus administrators could explore methods of investigating communication protocol across campuses and come together to share best practices to support students, faculty, staff, and the larger campus community. By better understanding the admissions and financial communication that students are interacting with on a daily basis, branch campus administrators can ensure that students are receiving clear, consistent messages, possibly leading to a higher rate of student enrollment, retention, and graduation.

A cross-system comparison of word count, token-type ratio, and readability level of first-time undergraduate admissions instructions published on institutional websites can be found in Table 1.

When comparing branch campuses to the flagship of each state system, data suggest a considerable variance in word counts, token-type ratios, and readability levels among institutions in the same system. Although UT-Austin and the rest of the University of Texas System uses the ApplyTexas application, the branch campus of UT-Arlington explains the admissions application process to students in 935 words and at the 13.9th-grade level, whereas UT-Austin explains the same process in 667 words and at the 11.8th-grade level. The UT-El Paso branch campus only required 464 words to explain the admissions application process, 471 words fewer than UT-Arlington. Similarly, UT-Austin's admissions application instructions scored a 0.36 token-type ratio across 667 words, whereas the branch campus of UT-Permian scored a much higher token-type ratio (0.47) across a similar word count (640 words) to UT-Austin. Grade-level readability also varied from branch campus to campus, as UT-Permian wrote the simplest admissions application instructions at the 10.7th-grade level, whereas the branch campus of UT-Tyler explained the same process at the 15.2nd-grade level.Explaining common application processes with uncommon messaging was a theme throughout all UW System and UC System institutions as well.

Large word count ranges between the branch campus of UW-Green Bay (2,124 words) and the branch

campus of UW-River Falls (243 words) suggest that prospective students exploring these branch campuses likely encounter drastically different admissions application instructions, possibly leading to student confusion or a perception that is it more difficult or complex to apply to UW-Green Bay than UW-River Falls, even though both institutions use the UW System Application.

Token-type ratios and readability levels also varied across branch campuses in the UW and UC Systems, as UC-Los Angeles and UC-Merced published nearly identical admissions application instructions by word count (358 compared to 340), yet their token-type ratios varied considerably at the 0.42 and 0.52 levels. This finding meant that UC-Los Angeles required roughly the same amount of words to communicate the Apply UC application process as did UC-Merced, but UC-Los Angeles did so in a way that used words more frequently or used fewer uncommon words, possibly rendering UC-Los Angeles' text easier to read and comprehend for prospective students.

Similarly, the branch campus of UW-Whitewater's admissions application instructions scored at the 14th-grade level, whereas UW-Green Bay's – despite being the longest by word count – were easiest to read at the 10.5th-grade level. The same phenomenon occurred in the UC System, as the branch campus of UC-Santa Cruz published the most difficult admissions application instructions to read, at the 14.9th-grade level, whereas the branch campuses of UC-Los Angeles and UC-Merced published text to communicate the same process at the 10.7th-grade level. Here, data in this study suggest that across branch campuses in the same system, branch campuses communicate admissions application instructions very differently. Such difference may lead students to experience varied or contradictory messaging when exploring branch campuses and deciding where to apply. Even though all three sets of institutions in this study utilize three common, state-level application systems, all three systems witness their branch campuses communicating this common application process through uncommon, misaligned messaging on their institutional websites. Perhaps more importantly, considering that the average U.S. adult reads and comprehends at the 8th-grade level (Clear Language Group, 2019), this study finds that many admissions application instructions on branch campus websites may not be readable by this important population of prospective students.

A cross-system comparison of word count, token-type ratio, and readability level of federal financial aid application instructions published on institutional websites can be found in Table 2.

Akin to admissions application instructions, every branch campus across all three state systems of postsecondary education communicated a common process – completing the FAFSA – using very different language. Across UT System branch campuses, UT-Tyler communicated the process of completing the FAFSA in 1,073 words at the 12.8th-grade level, whereas UT-Arlington required 233 words at the 13.4th-grade level to articulate the same process. UT-Permian published the simplest FAFSA application instructions at the 10.8th-grade level, whereas UT-Arlington published the most complex FAFSA application instructions at the 13.4th-grade level and a 0.54 token-type ratio. Even though the

branch campuses of UT-Arlington, UT-Dallas, and UT-Tyler are only separated by roughly 150 physical miles, the language they employ to communicate the same process is considerably disparate.

Many of the same UT System findings were also discovered among UW and UC System branch campuses in terms of the language used to communicate the FAFSA application process. In the largest word count range of the study, the branch campus of UW-Oshkosh used 970 words at the 13th-grade level, whereas the branch campus of UW-Milwaukee required only 81 words. Consider the federal financial aid application instructions published on the UW-Milwaukee website (brackets denote hyperlinks embedded in the text):

> FINANCIAL AID PROCESS
> Students should apply for financial aid every year. While there are some exceptions, students who meet the eligibility requirements qualify for some form of financial aid. Review the steps below and then complete the process at www.fafsa.gov. [links] Overview of the Financial Aid Process, Myths about Financial Aid. Apply: Step 1: File a FAFSA, Step 2: Review the Results (SAR), Step 3: Submit Additional Documents. [links] Summer Session, UWinteriM, Study Abroad Tips for Transfer Students, Tips for Adult Students. (UW-Milwaukee, 2019)

Although UW-Milwaukee's federal financial aid application instructions contain possibly difficult or unfamiliar words such as "eligibility requirements," "myths," and "UWinteriM," the conciseness of UW-

Milwaukee's text is notable when compared to branch campuses elsewhere in the UW System. There was also a considerable token-type ratio and readability range across the UW and UC Systems, as UW-Whitewater articulated the federal student aid process at the 9.8th-grade level, compared to UW-River Falls at the 14.9th-grade level. UC-San Diego composed their financial aid application instructions at the 15.1st-grade level, compared to UC-Riverside at the 8.3rd-grade level. As both UC-San Diego and UC-Riverside are located in Southern California, it is conceivable that a prospective undergraduate would consider applying to both UC-San Diego and UC-Riverside. Considering the data in this study, it is also conceivable that the same prospective student would encounter UC-San Diego's FAFSA instructions, compare those instructions to UC-Riverside's, and decide that it is more difficult to complete a FAFSA application for UC-San Diego. Of course, all prospective students seeking federal loans complete the same application: the FAFSA. However, the communication provided by UC-San Diego and UC-Riverside may send confusing messages to prospective students considering how differently these branch campuses communicate the same process.

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Data in this study suggest that both branch campuses and their flagship institution communicate common application procedures in very different ways. Although some researchers have viewed national-level application systems such as the Common Application as movements toward broader access to U.S. higher education, branch campuses and their admissions and financial aid communications teams

may not be delivering a consistent, system-level message to their prospective students. As a result, branch campuses may be limiting student access to higher education through often-difficult and convoluted admissions and financial aid application instructions that are not clear or consistent from institution to institution.

From here, practitioners at the institution and system level should evaluate all student-facing communication to determine whether admissions and financial aid application instructions can be shortened, simplified, and standardized across the entire system. On its face, it is illogical for one branch campus to explain the admissions and financial aid application process in one way while another branch campus explains the same processes using different language. More broadly speaking, institutions of higher education should consider standardizing federal student aid application instructions, as all students with financial need are encouraged to complete the same application. An effort to shorten, simplify, and standardize federal student aid application instructions could make an impact on low-income, first-generation college students who would likely receive Pell Grants to finance their postsecondary education. As low-income and/or first-generation students may not have family support or access to college counseling (Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016), simplifying and standardizing the federal student aid process may increase access to federal funds and thus to the higher education system.

Branch campus administrators and communications practitioners should consider starting the movement toward simplified, standardized communication to increase access not only to the U.S. higher education system but to branch campuses themselves. In an earlier section, data suggested UC-San Diego and UC-Riverside communicated admissions and financial aid application processes much differently even though these branch campuses are in close physical proximity and could both be potential choices for prospective students. If a student encounters simpler, standardized communication on other institutional websites or through other application processes (e.g., the Common Application), these students may be influenced to leave their home state and take their education, tuition dollars, and economic contribution with them.

If branch campus administrators and communications practitioners can align their institutional goals and processes to the point of developing and adopting a common, system-wide application, these same stakeholders should consider simplifying and standardizing other operations. Common applications were developed to increase access and information for prospective students exploring colleges and universities; branch campuses could be leaders in the field by aligning their common applications with common language to avoid sending uncommon (and potentially confusing) messages to their prospective students.

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Table 1

Cross-system comparison of word count, token-type ratio, *and readability level of first-time undergraduate admissions instructions published on institutional websites (n=30)*

Table 1

Cross-system comparison of word count, token-type ratio, and readability level of first-time undergraduate admissions instructions published on institutional websites (n=30)

Institution	WC	TTR	ARI	FK	GFI	SMOG	AVG
UT-Austin	667	0.36	11.8	11.6	11.6	12	11.8
UT-Arlington	935	0.39	13.6	13.8	13.1	15.1	13.9
UT-Dallas	602	0.45	15.7	14.9	12.8	16.2	14.9
UT-El Paso	464	0.44	13.6	12.4	12.8	14	13.2
UT-Permian	640	0.47	10.9	11	8.8	12.2	10.7
UT-Rio Grande Valley	725	0.45	14.4	14.5	11.1	15.3	13.8
UT-San Antonio	637	0.44	11.6	13.2	11.2	14.5	12.6
UT-Tyler	837	0.41	15	15.2	14.2	16.2	15.2
UW-Madison	1514	0.32	12.6	12.8	12.4	14.7	13.1
UW-Eau Claire	483	0.49	13.7	13.5	11.7	14.6	13.4
UW-Green Bay	2124	0.27	9.7	9.5	10.9	11.9	10.5
UW-La Crosse	755	0.43	11	11.7	11.8	13.1	11.9
UW-Milwaukee	888	0.43	11.9	11.2	11.5	13	11.9
UW-Oshkosh	393	0.56	13.1	12.6	11.3	13.8	12.7
UW-Parkside	965	0.40	14.1	13.5	12.9	15	13.9
UW-Platteville	935	0.39	12.9	12.5	12.5	14.3	13.1
UW-River Falls	243	0.56	11.1	10.6	8.5	12.4	10.7
UW-Stevens Point	1220	0.37	10.5	11.6	10.4	12.8	11.3
UW-Stout	686	0.47	13	12.4	11.8	13.2	12.6
UW-Superior	271	0.55	12	12.4	11	13.8	12.3
UW-Whitewater	722	0.46	13.5	13.5	14	14.8	14.0
UC-Berkeley	765	0.45	13.8	13.4	14.7	15.2	14.3
UC-Davis	454	0.50	13.5	14.8	13.5	14.9	14.2
UC-Irvine	1299	0.36	14.3	14.2	13.3	15	14.2
UC-Los Angeles	358	0.42	10	10.8	9.7	12.1	10.7
UC-Merced	340	0.52	9.9	10.2	10.1	12.4	10.7
UC-San Diego	1309	0.33	10.1	10.7	9.9	12.8	10.9
UC-Santa Barbara	846	0.41	11.4	12.1	11.1	13.3	12.0
UC-Santa Cruz	2071	0.29	15.1	15	13.2	16.1	14.9
UC-Riverside	412	0.55	12.2	12.7	10.5	14.1	12.4
Averages	818.6	0.43	12.5	12.6	11.7	13.9	12.7

Notes: WC=word count, TTR=token-type ratio, ARI=Automated Readability Index, FK=Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Test, GFI=Gunning-Fog Index, SMOG=Simple Measure of Gobbledygook, AVG=average grade-level readability across ARI, FK, GFI, and SMOG; flagship institutions in *italics*.

Table 2

Cross-system comparison of word count, token-type ratio, and readability level of federal financial aid application instructions published on institutional websites (n=30)

Institution	WC	TTR	ARI	FK	GFI	SMOG	AVG
UT-Austin	407	0.43	11.0	10.8	9.9	12.9	11.2
UT-Arlington	233	0.54	12.9	12.9	13.9	14.0	13.4
UT-Dallas	621	0.42	10.2	11.5	11.3	13.1	11.5
UT-El Paso	372	0.51	10.9	12.6	10.0	12.6	11.5
UT-Permian	834	0.38	10.2	11.0	9.0	12.8	10.8
UT-Rio Grande Valley	360	0.49	13.3	13.9	11.1	14.7	13.3
UT-San Antonio	449	0.43	12.5	12.7	11.8	13.9	12.7
UT-Tyler	1073	0.31	13.1	12.2	11.9	13.8	12.8
UW-Madison	961	0.39	12.5	13.3	11.8	14.3	13.0
UW-Eau Claire	276	0.49	11.4	12.0	11.5	13.7	12.2
UW-Green Bay	461	0.45	11.7	12.3	13.4	13.9	12.8
UW-La Crosse	456	0.45	10.0	10.4	9.9	11.9	10.6
UW-Milwaukee	81	0.67	15.8	13.6	11.5	13.0	13.5
UW-Oshkosh	970	0.36	12.7	12.7	12.3	14.3	13.0
UW-Parkside	384	0.49	11.5	12.2	10.6	13.3	11.9
UW-Platteville	850	0.35	11.4	12.1	11.0	13.1	11.9
UW-River Falls	903	0.31	15.1	16.7	11.1	16.6	14.9
UW-Stevens Point	342	0.53	10.9	10.9	11.3	13.2	11.6
UW-Stout	405	0.48	12.0	11.8	12.7	13.3	12.5
UW-Superior	559	0.45	10.5	12.6	11.2	13.7	12.0
UW-Whitewater	766	0.40	8.9	9.7	9.0	11.4	9.8
UC-Berkeley	437	0.39	15.5	16.6	13.7	17.1	15.7
UC-Davis	647	0.37	12.2	12.7	11.2	14.1	12.6
UC-Irvine	243	0.54	11.0	12.2	12.3	13.4	12.2
UC-Los Angeles	245	0.46	13.1	14.3	10.3	13.6	12.8
UC-Merced	263	0.51	12.1	14.6	11.4	13.7	13.0
UC-San Diego	144	0.70	14.8	15.2	14.9	15.5	15.1
UC-Santa Barbara	483	0.39	11.4	12.0	11.1	13.7	12.1
UC-Santa Cruz	261	0.56	15.2	17.4	10.3	15.4	14.6
UC-Riverside	133	0.72	7.2	8.1	8.0	9.8	8.3
Averages	487.3	0.47	12.0	12.7	11.3	13.7	12.4

Notes: WC=word count, TTR=token-type ratio, ARI=Automated Readability Index, FK=Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Test, GFI=Gunning-Fog Index, SMOG=Simple Measure of Gobbledygook, AVG=average grade-level readability across ARI, FK, GFI, and SMOG; flagship institutions in *italics*.

Making a College Town: A Case Study for the University of North Georgia – Oconee campus

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Making a College Town: A Case Study for the University of North Georgia – Oconee campus

By Cyndee Perdue Moore, Ed.D.

ABSTRACT

Graduate students from the University of Georgia conducted a study during the 2017-2018 academic year designed to measure sense of belonging on a commuter campus and identify factors that may contribute or retract from developing such. During that study, our students revealed that the most difficult part of attending college at the Oconee campus was being a college student in a college town that is not *their* college town. They indicated that although they had not been made to feel unwelcome in Watkinsville or Oconee County, they wished that the community was more willing to celebrate and support the campus and its students in a way that fostered a sense of belonging and acceptance. What followed was a yearlong effort to make Watkinsville our college town through developing a sense of pride in being a Nighthawk, being a good community member, communicating our needs with the community at large, and telling our story.

Making a College Town:
A Case Study for the University of North Georgia - Oconee campus
By Cyndee Perdue Moore, EdD

Institutional Profile: University of North Georgia

Students (Fall 2018)
- Enrollment: 20,079
- Gender: 57% Female, 43% Male
- Full-Time: 68%
- Pell Grant Recipients: 5,258 (28.0%)
- Race/Ethnicity:
    - -American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0.2%
    - -Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander: 3.7%
    - -Black or African American: 4.5%
    - -Hispanic: 13.2%
    - -Multiracial: 3.8%
    - -White: 68.7%
    - -Unknown: 5.9%
- Undergraduate: 20,079 (96%)
    - -Associate & Certificate: 35%
    - -Baccalaureate: 61%
- Graduate: 3%
- Countries Represented: 97
    - -International Students: 306 (Aliens) / 717 (Country of Citizenship)
- U.S. States & Territories Represented: 51
- Georgia Counties Represented: 137

Carnegie Basic: Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs
Carnegie Elective Classification: Community Engagement (awarded 2010)

1 of 6 senior military institutions in the country

Faculty: Total faculty: 678 (full time), 306 (part time)

In early 2012, the University System of Georgia's Board of Regents recommended the consolidation of North Georgia College & State University, which was founded in 1873 in Dahlonega, Georgia, and Gainesville State College, which was founded in 1964 in Gainesville, Georgia.

The consolidation became official on January 8, 2013, creating the University of North Georgia (UNG), with four campuses across northeast Georgia. In August 2015, UNG opened an additional campus in Blue Ridge, Georgia, to serve students in the northernmost region of the state.

As a regional multi-campus institution and premier senior military college, UNG is unique in the range of educational pathways it offers students. From associate degrees to graduate-level programs, UNG provides, per its mission, an array of opportunities to help develop students into leaders for a diverse and global society. The university carries the distinction of The Military College of Georgia, one of only six federally-designated senior military colleges in the nation, and its nationally-recognized Army ROTC program attracts students from across the state, region and nation. Additionally, UNG is designated by the University System of Georgia as a State Leadership Institution and has earned the Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

North Georgia College and State University

Following the Civil War, the abandoned U. S. Mint property in the City of Dahlonega was given to the State of Georgia for educational purposes, thus giving birth to North Georgia Agricultural College in 1873.

The college was established as a school of agriculture and mechanical arts, particularly mining engineering. As area gold mining resources were depleted and agricultural education was assumed by other state institutions, the mission of North Georgia Agricultural College evolved into one emphasizing arts and sciences and was renamed as North Georgia College in the summer of 1929.

In 1996, due to its much wider scope of academic programs, the University System of Georgia reclassified the college as a state university and renamed it North Georgia College & State University.

Gainesville State College

Founded originally as Gainesville Junior College in March 1964, the college was the result of the efforts of community leaders who sought to fill a need for accessible, quality higher education for Northeast Georgians. While a campus was in development, the college initially held classes at the Gainesville Civic Center and First Baptist Church. In 1966, Gainesville Junior College moved to its permanent campus in Oakwood, Georgia, just a few miles outside of Gainesville.

In 1987, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents authorized the removal of "Junior" or "Community" from the two names of two-year institutions to better reflect the quality of the educational experiences students in those colleges received. Gainesville Junior College became Gainesville College.

In 2001, the college expanded to include an additional campus located in Athens, Georgia (also home to the state's flagship research institution – the University of Georgia) where enrollment grew quickly. In 2003, the Athens campus moved to nearby Watkinsville, located in Oconee County and only eight miles from UGA, taking over space formerly used by Truett McConnell College, a Baptist Convention institution. In 2005, the institution's name changed to Gainesville State College, reflecting the growth of four-year degree programs within the college.

NGCSU + GSU = UNG

In 2013, the University System of Georgia announced the consolidation of Gainesville State College with North Georgia College and State University and a new institution was created – The University of North Georgia. The newly created UNG was comprised of the former NGCSU campus located in Dahlonega and a newly-opened NGCSU satellite site in Cumming, Georgia as well as the two Gainesville State College campuses in Gainesville and Oconee County. Once the consolidation was complete, a fifth site was opened in Blue Ridge, Georgia to serve Appalachian Region of Georgia.

University of North Georgia – Oconee campus

Students (Fall 2018)
- Enrollment: 2,483
- Gender: 48% Female, 52% Male
- Full-Time: 61%
- Pell Grant Recipients: 5,258 (28.0%)
- Race/Ethnicity:
  - -American Indian or Alaskan Native: <1%
  - -Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander: 2.4%
  - -Black or African American: 3.8%
  - -Hispanic: 7.9%
  - -Multiracial: 4.4%
  - -White: 78.2%
  - -Unknown: 2.7%
- Undergraduate: 20,079 (96%)
  - -Associate & Certificate: 35%
  - -Baccalaureate: 61%

The Oconee campus is located in Watkinsville, Georgia (pop. 2,892), the county seat of Oconee County (pop. 32,808 per the 2010 U. S. Census). The UNG – Oconee campus is situated on 14 acres of land quite literally in the middle of a cow pasture. Oconee is one of the wealthiest counties in Georgia with a public school system ranked number 1 in the state on a variety of metrics. The campus' proximity to the University of Georgia, home of SEC football champion Georgia Bulldogs in nearby Athens (only eight short miles from the Oconee) also puts the campus squarely in the middle of "Bulldawg Country." Oconee County prohibits construction of apartment structures, so the vast majority of students resides in Athens alongside UGA students and are bombarded with calls of "Go Dawgs", weekend tailgates, and red and black everywhere.

General Situation

Graduate students from the University of Georgia conducted a study during the 2017 – 2018 academic year designed to measure sense of belonging on a commuter campus and identify factors that may contribute or retract from developing such. During that study, our students revealed that the most difficult part of attending college at the Oconee campus was being college students in a college town that is not THEIR college town. They indicated that although they had not been made to feel unwelcome in Watkinsville or Oconee County, they wished that the community was more willing to celebrate and support our campus and our students in a way that fostered a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Solution

As a new campus leadership team settled into place, we began to examine the situation described in the study. It quickly became clear that we as a campus were not doing a good enough job making and keeping our campus visible within the community. Further, we had made no attempt to develop a sense of pride within our own campus community, as highlighted by members of faculty and staff who proudly wore UGA t-shirts and other gear at work and in the community despite most having no direct connection with the institution. We had allowed a bigger dog to push us out of our own doghouse (pun completely intended). So we started there. We instituted casual Friday for faculty/staff (and elevated the other days to professional dress only) if, and only if, the casual wear was UNG related. In other words, you could wear jeans, but only with a UNG polo or t-shirt. The campus bookstore offered deep discounts to get faculty and staff outfitted in their new favorite attire. The campus leadership team lead the charge by retiring any and all pieces of clothing that were red and replacing them with a wide variety of blue

and gold. The change from red/black to blue/gold was organic and impactful.

Next, we set about giving students and their parents permission to be proud of being UNG Nighthawks. We expanded Orientation to full day and inserted seminars on what it meant to be a UNG Oconee Nighthawk. We added a presentation on the history and traditions of both our university as a whole and the Oconee campus individually. We gave out UNG t-shirts to all new students at Orientation and offered discounts on UNG wear on Orientation days. We explained to parents that embracing the institution, and encouraging their children to do the same, would offer invaluable support as their children worked through the process of becoming college students.

Finally, we had to develop a culture of pride. We started by purchasing (at no small expense) our own Nigel the Nighthawk mascot costume. Previously, the right to have Nigel the Nighthawk mascot on campus was limited to our two larger campuses. We made a case for needing one in order to develop school pride at Oconee and, miraculously, our request (and the $11,000 to pay for it) was granted. We found a student who fit the costume and began parading Nigel out at all events (i.e. Orientation, Weeks of Welcome, Convocation, Tuesdays, etc.). Next, we made up a hand signal that accompanied our cry of "Go Nighthawks," taught it to the students, and made a point of flashing the sign whenever we passed in the halls or Quads. Because Nigel cannot speak, he is able to flash the simple sign to express his enthusiasm for our institution as well! "Go Nighthawks" has become our "Anchor Down" or "Hook 'em Horns." Finally, we installed a bronze statue of Nigel the Nighthawk and encouraged

students to stop and rub his beak for luck. They soon began dressing Nigel up for special occasions with UNG t-shirts or, most recently on Halloween, as a toilet paper mummy.

We gave our students a collective identity so that they could share that identity with the community. Although we still see a fair amount of Georgia gear and colors (especially during football season), we also see blue and gold exponentially more than we did a year ago not just on the campus, but within the community at large. At the recent Oconee Fall Festival, which brings more than 30,000 people to the downtown area, we saw hundreds of UNG, UNG Mom, UNG Dad t-shirts.

Developing a sense of pride in being a Nighthawk and sharing that pride off campus: Check.

Our next step was to be as supportive of the community as we wanted them to be of us. UNG Oconee had made a habit of staying to itself and being happy to live in the shadow of the UGA. Members of the faculty and staff had also made a habit of complaining about living in that shadow. So we stepped out into the sun.

We began by saying yes. We said yes to groups that wanted to use our facility for meetings or forums. We hosted Town Hall meetings for the County Commissioners. We hosted candidate forums during runoff elections. We hosted election return parties to which both parties were invited. We organized a volunteer fair for not-for-profits to share their cause and volunteer needs with students, faculty, and staff and welcomed 27 agencies to our campus! We held a housing fair to help students understand their options

with regards to off-campus housing. We hosted the Chamber of Commerce mini-grant reception for area educators complete with a Hit It out of the Park baseball theme. We welcomed members of the Leadership Oconee class onto our campus to learn more about UNG and the Oconee campus (the first time this had happened). We enlisted the help of our community partners and, with their help, we hosted 400 Oconee County middle school students on campus for a career exploration day and had 60 economically-disadvantaged middle school boys from Athens-Clarke County Mentoring Program out for a tailgate party and tour of the campus.

We said "yes" to sponsoring every event held in our county, from fireworks and the Fall Festival, to Teacher of the Year awards and 5K runs. We purchased UNG swag and contributed to treat bags for the Chamber of Commerce and golf tournaments. We gave out candy to 1,000 children during Downtown Watkinsville Trick-or-Treat alongside our Super UNG (box) fan!

We also contributed our time. Members of the leadership team began to take the lead on community-wide projects. We became the face of Relay for Life in our county. We accepted the challenge to lead the charge for the largest fundraiser at the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation when no one else would. We partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department to do a Tree Inventory and Plan to highlight our designation as a Tree USA campus. We developed a relationship with the Hardigree Wildlife Refuge to allow students to set up real-world labs that would, in turn, provide the Refuge with some much-needed data. We volunteered as facilitators for the Chamber's

Leadership program. If there was a spot on a board, we said yes. If there was a strategic planning session, we were there. If volunteers were needed, we showed up with students in tow. We ran a children's book drive for an area charity and, when we found we had plenty of adult books donated as well, our student Habitat for Humanity Club built three blue and gold Little Free Libraries that were donated to the City of Watkinsville – its first. We entered the Watkinsville Christmas Parade (yes, it's a Christmas parade) for the first time ever and we won a major award: Best Use of Theme. Our picture, with our Nigel mascot on a float acting as a DJ and playing gold records of our core values, made the front page – in full color – across the region. UNG was in the house! As we say in Georgia, you can't throw a rock in Oconee County without hitting someone from UNG.

Be a good neighbor and go for the Miss Congeniality title: Check.

As with all neighbors, there comes a time when you have to ask to borrow a cup of sugar. We learned to do that. We began to reach out to those with whom we had formed relationships and partnerships and let them know when we needed something. For example, we started a Food Pantry (Nigel's Nest) and went on tour to let area churches and civic organizations know about the need. (In that we are located in a very wealthy county, most people assumed that all of our students were "rich and entitled". That is not the case – 24% of our students are Pell eligible and struggle with food insecurities. We took to the "eat, meet, and greet" circuit to tell members of Rotary, Civitan, Pilot Club, PTOs and so forth what we were doing and how they could help.

Within days of establishing Nigel's Nest, we had raised over $1,000 for supplies and our shelves were full of every kind of food imaginable. Now that it's been open several months, all we have to do is wish for something (usually via social media, but more on that later) and it appears in one of our collection boxes.

As we began a new Fall semester, we were struck by all the "Welcome Back Dawgs" signs we saw around Athens, so we decided to start a new tradition. We created some "Welcome Back Nighthawks" signs and took them around to area businesses to ask them to put them up. In a stunning show of support, everyone we asked quickly agreed. Those that had message boards or marquees welcomed back Nighthawks there. Many shared on Facebook. We needed to be welcomed, too, and our community responded!

Tell them what you want ... and what you need: Check.

We now had a story, but if a story is told in an empty room can anyone hear it (or something like that)? No. So we began to concentrate on building our brand and telling our story the way we wanted it to be told. We revitalized our Facebook page and started campus accounts on Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube. We designated a younger staff member to be the social media manager, sent her to training to learn which platforms appeal to which audiences, and set out to conquer the Internet. We bought a camera. Yes, a good quality, old fashioned camera, and we take pictures and video of EVERYTHING. We plan out our posts a week at a time. We post information of interest to parents and

our community partners on Facebook. We reach our students using Instagram and Snapchat. We reach the rest of the world via Twitter. And we attempt to achieve viral status on YouTube. We developed #UNGOconee and we use it consistently, reminding students, friends, and family at each on-campus event to check in. We add other hashtags to highlight special promotions or occasions.

In addition to social media, we began to invite the media onto our campus. We also began to send out press releases that were "ready to roll" to our communications partners who lacked resources to cover every event and milestone we celebrated. These began to show up in each of the three local papers (two weeklies and one daily) as well as online regularly. Photographers and journalists now show up at our events. We've been invited to do a podcast. The hottest radio station in the college town next to us (Bulldog 93.3) sponsored our scholarship fundraiser and did a live remote on campus. We are a player.

Tell your story in living color: Check.

Benefits

The benefits of our multi-faceted solution have been innumerable. Perhaps the most obvious return on our investment has been the increase in our enrollment. We capped enrollment this year at 2,483, up from 2,214 last year. However, it is important to note that we could have enrolled several hundred more were we not limited by space. The greatest benefit, however, cannot be measured or even defined, but you sure know it when you see it. We have, through the conscious efforts outlined here, managed to create

a Nighthawk Nation that is now recognized by Oconee County and the City of Watkinsville.

Current Situation

We have made a great deal of progress, but there is still much to do. We are currently planning for the next wave of initiatives to add to those things we are already doing and we are being publicly recognized for our efforts. The campus has applied for and received a LEAP grant to create a community garden and we are waiting to hear back regarding several other grants that we submitted to help get a summer program for economically-disadvantaged middle-grade students off the ground. We are inviting 800 middle-school students for a career day/[or Career Day] next year (double our previous efforts). The Mayor of Watkinsville has formed a task force to work with UNG Oconee on making Watkinsville UNG's "College Town" – an initiative that he hopes will include discounts for students at all Watkinsville merchants and creation of a safe study space located on Main Street.

We have also begun to expand our reach into the Athens community with a goal of becoming more active in the Athens Chamber of Commerce. We want to become a place where local students who do not want to attend UGA and do not have the means to study elsewhere can find a home. We want our students to feel welcomed and respected in Athens as UNG students, so we must replicate what we have done in Oconee County. We love a challenge.

Services Provided by Other Groups or Companies
We took a group-think approach to our work by

stablishing a Campus CARE Team that was charged with thinking outside the box and imagining solutions and activities in a world where anything was possible. Along the way, we employed the help of many other groups and individuals. Those groups include, but are not limited to:

- UNG Oconee Campus Leadership Committee
- UNG Oconee Community Leadership Council
- UNG Oconee Executive Leadership Team
- UNG Campus Connection
- Oconee County Chamber of Commerce
- Oconee County Board of Commissioners
- Oconee County Travel and Tourism
- Watkinsville Mayor's Office
- City of Watkinsville
- Oconee County Schools
- UNG Oconee Faculty and Staff
- Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation
- Hardigree Wildlife Foundation
- Peach State Federal Credit Union
- Pilot Club of Oconee County
- Pilot Club of Greene County
- Oconee Enterprise
- Athens Banner-Herald
- Athens Leader
- Bulldog 93.3

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Promoting Collaboration and Reducing Competition on Ohio's Co-Located Campuses: A Case Study
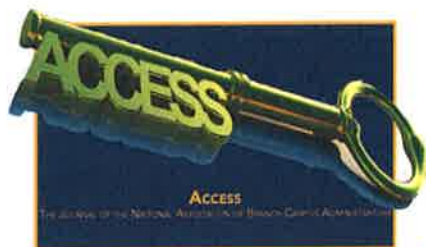
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Promoting Collaboration and Reducing Competition on Ohio's Co-Located Campuses: A Case Study

By Jeremy W. Webster, PhD

ABSTRACT

The State of Ohio has a system of seven co-located campuses, ones in which a community college and a regional branch of a four-year university are located on the same or adjoining campuses. As required by the state, Ohio University Zanesville and Zane State College have adopted a memorandum of understanding concerning a range of shared services and cost sharing, including a bookstore, our library, maintenance, facilities, utilities, security, and counseling services. However, the leadership of these institutions would like to collaborate on a range of new academic initiatives, but the first effort to do so, a co-sponsored visit by John Gardner, had missed results and exposed a degree of hostility between the institutions on the part of faculty and staff. This case study suggests that this hostility can be explained by Realistic Group Conflict Theory, which argues that competition leads to antagonism between groups of people. This theory also suggests that competition and its attendant hostilities can only be overcome when a superordinate goal forces the competing groups to achieve a goal neither can achieve on its own. The study concludes that both campuses will benefit if they work together to achieve such a goal.

Promoting Collaboration and Reducing Competition on Ohio's Co-Located Campuses: A Case Study
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In May 2016, Ohio's General Assembly created the Task Force for Creating Opportunities for Shared Governance on Co-Located Campuses, which was charged with creating a model of shared governance for Ohio's seven co-located campuses, ones in which a community college and a regional branch of a four-year university are located on the same or adjoining campuses. These seven co-located campuses are:

- Belmont College and Ohio University-Eastern
- Central Ohio Technical College and Ohio State University-Newark
- North Central State College and Ohio State University-Mansfield
- Marion Technical College and Ohio State University-Marion
- Rhodes State College and Ohio State University-Lima
- Stark State College and Kent State-Stark
- Zane State College and Ohio University-Zanesville

At the conclusion of its work, the Task Force recommended that co-located institutions explore "shared administration, student services, maintenance, facility usage, and other shared governance to better serve the students" while preserving the individual academic missions of the community college and the university's regional branch (Ohio Department of Education [ODHE], 2016). It also suggested that co-located campuses create formal shared services agreements and shared campus master plans; report annually on how shared

services are saving students and their families money; and appoint overlapping members of their advisory boards and boards of trustees (ODHE, 2016). Responsibility for enacting these recommendations resides jointly with regional branch campus deans and two-year college presidents. The focus of this case study is Ohio University Zanesville (OUZ), where the author is dean, and Zane State College (ZSC), where Dr. Chad Brown serves as president. Prior to the Task Force's recommendations, OUZ and ZSC adopted a shared services agreement concerning a range of campus activities, including a bookstore, the library, maintenance, facilities, utilities, safety, athletics, student clubs and organizations, and counseling services. When viewed from the perspective of the state's requirement to share such services, the two institutions would seem to have a strong culture of cooperation and coexistence.

Yet, these institutions' leaders see that fully realizing the Task Force's recommendations for shared services, campus master planning, and extensive collaboration and shared governance is challenged by the fact that they compete with one another, especially as state resources, graduating high school students, and adult learners interested in returning to college decline across most of Ohio. In order to serve our community more effectively while maintaining financial efficiency, leaders from OUZ and ZSC have begun a conversation about extending their collaboration to include academic programs and, perhaps, even faculty. Such possible collaborations

might include:

1. Creating new, joint degree programs (i.e., 2+2 programs) designed to address the local community's workforce and economic development needs.
2. Partnering with other local institutions to create afterschool and summer programming for at risk P-12 students.
3. Designing pathways for dual enrollment high school students to earn credit towards their high school graduation, an associate degree, and a bachelor's degree simultaneously.

Initial plans to partner in these areas have raised the question of how to achieve collaboration when stakeholders affected by these initiatives—faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, etc.—might have divergent, perhaps even hostile, views of such an expansion in the two institutions' collaboration. Furthermore, the question of whether competing institutions can ever truly collaborate beyond the state's basic mandate is an open one. This case study examines these institutions' first effort to collaborate in the academic sphere, delineates what went wrong with that initial collaboration, and outlines how the institutions are planning to implement a revised planning process during a second, more extensive collaborative venture.

The Zanesville Campus

Ohio University Zanesville and Zane State College share a 179-acre campus, informally called "The Zanesville Campus," approximately 60 miles east of Columbus, OH, but these institutions have different educational missions and serve different purposes within the local community. Founded in 1946, Ohio University Zanesville, one of the first regional campuses established in the state of Ohio, offers 13 bachelors' and five associate degrees as well as the first two years of general studies towards more than 200 Ohio University degrees. OUZ's degree programs provide a liberal arts education for more than 1,850 students who commute to campus or enroll in online courses. More than 90 continuing employees, including 45 full-time and part-time faculty, provide academic support and instruction for these students. In contrast, Zane State College is a two-year public institution that was established in 1969 and now serves more than 2,000 students. ZSC offers 22 associate degrees along with pathways for students to transfer to four-year institutions. ZSC employs more than 100 faculty, staff, and administrators to serve their students, more than half of whom are still in high school. These co-located institutions share a library, cafeteria, Campus Center, and gymnasium. Some other services and expenses, such as facilities, custodial, grounds, and safety are also shared.

The Zanesville campus lies in Muskingum County, which has a mixed economic and educational record. Home to just over 86,000 people, Muskingum County has an unemployment rate of 3.7%, which is lower than that of the state (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services [ODJ&FS], 2019). Ohio's statewide poverty rate is 14.4%, but Muskingum County's poverty rate is slightly higher at 16.6% (Ohio Development Services Agency [ODSA], *Ohio Poverty Report,* 2019). Twenty-five percent of the population holds at least a college degree, which is lower than the state's level of higher educational attainment (35.7%), and more than 87.1% have earned a high school diploma, which is higher than the state's overall percentage of high school

graduates at 69.3% (ODSA, *Ohio County Profiles*, 2019). Thus, a significant number of residents who have graduated high school are not pursuing or completing a college degree, which limits the county's economic growth, since healthcare, retail, manufacturing, hospitality, and education are the top five industries in the county (ODJ&FS, 2017). Healthcare and Social Assistance is the fastest growing industry in Muskingum County's region with a predicted 19.8% increase in jobs in Southeast Ohio by 2024 (ODJ&FS, 2017). Jobs in these fields often require a post-secondary credential. Additionally, the county's out-migration exceeds in-migration by an average of over 500 people a year (Ohio Research Office, 2017), making it increasing more difficult for local employers to attract quality applicants for open positions. Academic collaborations between OUZ and ZSC, particularly in growth industry fields, could potentially lead to lower levels of poverty, higher levels of educational attainment, and greater in-migration for Muskingum County.

An Attempt at Academic Collaboration

As a first step toward greater academic collaboration on the Zanesville campus, the leadership of OUZ and ZSC invited John N. Gardner to discuss his book *The Undergraduate Experience: Focusing Institutions on What Matters Most* in April 2018. About 25 OUZ faculty and staff had read the book as part of a campus book club, and Gardner had visited ZSC previously. A planning committee comprised of the ZSC president and marketing coordinator along with the OUZ dean, associate dean, and two faculty members was formed to organize the event. The committee asked Gardner to deliver two workshops, one at each institution, focused on student retention

and to lecture on how high school/college dual enrollment programs are affecting students' "first-year" experience. This lecture would be a joint event for ZSC, OUZ, and the community, one that leadership hoped would lead to a collaborative conversation about creating a pathway for dual enrollment students to pursue degrees at both ZSC and OUZ. Gardner visited ZSC during the morning and led a workshop at OUZ in the afternoon. Each session was approximately two-hours long. On the same evening, he presented his talk in the campus's shared conference and presentation space. His presentation was accompanied by brief presentations by students in the current dual enrollment program and a panel of educators and parents, all of whom emphasized the educational and financial benefits of the program for students.

Although Gardner fulfilled all of the planning committee's requests and expectations, there were immediate signs that the program had not achieved the goal of initiating deeper collaboration between the faculty and staff of the co-located institutions. One sign personally observed by the author was the response by OUZ faculty and staff to Gardner's afternoon workshop. During this session, Gardner frequently compared OUZ with ZSC in such areas as student recruitment, retention, and post-graduation placements. These comparisons were not welcomed by many OUZ faculty and staff. For example, when asked via an internal online Qualtrics survey how positively or negatively they viewed the session, twenty OUZ faculty respondents (just under half of all OUZ faculty) indicated a mixed response: nine indicated a positive response, four indicated that they had neither a positive nor a negative response, and seven had a negative response. (ZSC did not

distribute a survey to its faculty.) Some faculty comments on the survey suggest that potential antagonism against ZSC might have significantly affected their views of the workshop. These respondents complained that Gardner "kept repeating that Zane State had it better," that "he had a preference for Zane State," and that he was more positive toward Zane State "than I was expecting." Some faculty were offended that Gardner "plac[ed] us in a position lower than Zane State in almost every way," which they found "counterproductive and insulting." As one colleague concludes, "I think [some faculty] would have rather not had a shared experience with ZSC. I think it was a 'big idea' that we were not ready for yet." Another sign that the collaboration had not entirely succeeded was relatively low attendance by both OUZ and ZSC faculty and staff at the shared event that evening.

Like the last respondent quoted above, the ZSC and OUZ leadership concluded that academic collaboration was likely too big an idea for the institutions' faculty and staff to embrace at this point. In particular, the OUZ survey responses suggest that institutional competition between OUZ and ZSC has potentially created a general sense of antagonism, a hostility to collaboration, among members of each institution. This sense of antagonism, while not necessarily felt by all faculty and staff, is nevertheless pervasive enough that it must be overcome before the institutions are ready to collaborate on any future "big ideas." Indeed, one source of antagonism between these institutions is the fact that, contrary to the state's intent, co-location does not eliminate competition between institutions; in fact, it may compound it, since co-located institutions routinely compete for state resources,

graduating high school students, and adult learners interested in returning to college. They also compete for status within their communities as well as for community support in the form of private donations, foundation grants, volunteers, and experiential learning opportunities. As each institution's financial resources have declined over the past decade, the sense of co-located institutions as competitors—at least on the Zanesville campus—stands as a significant barrier to more innovative academic collaboration.

The idea that competition among groups of people leads to mutual antagonism is not new. As early as the late 1940s and early 1950s, Muzafer Sherif and his research team conducted a series of experiments at a boys' summer camp to study intergroup dynamics; the most famous of these studies is known as the Robbers Cave Experiment (Schofield, 2010). The outcome of this research is a body of work known as Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT), which argues that, when groups compete for limited resources, this competition leads to intergroup stereotyping, antagonism, and, in extreme cases, physical conflict (Schofield, 2010). According to this theory, competition creates antagonism between groups since one group's success in obtaining scarce resources prevents the other group from acquiring them. RGCT also suggests that cooperation in pursuit of superordinate goals, i.e., mutually desired outcomes that are unobtainable without such cooperation, has the potential over time to reduce conflictual competition and to create positive relations among members of the now cooperating groups (Schofield, 2010). This theory suggests that OUZ and ZSC might overcome their mutual antagonism if these institutions are forced to

cooperate with one another to solve a problem that neither could solve in its own. The state's current mandate to share services, as contained in the Task Force's recommendations, has not achieved this result. The question is, what could?

Planning a New Collaboration

Although the specific missions of OUZ and ZSC differ, each is also expected to respond to local workforce and economic development needs. Because of these institutions' co-location, they are barred by the state from offering similar degrees, a prohibition that limits ZSC primarily to two-year and technical degrees and OUZ primarily to four-year and liberal arts degrees. Could responding to the local community's record on educational attainment and out-migration combined with generating credentials and degrees related to the area's planned growth industries serve as a superordinate goal that requires the two institutions to collaborate? If so, how could OUZ and ZSC work together more effectively than in planning and executing the ideas of the previous visiting lecturer?

One solution to the obstacles created by competition might be to utilize Collaborative Planning Theory, a planning framework proposed by Patsy Healey in *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. This theory offers a means of dealing with matters of collective concern that arise from the co-existence in shared spaces of cultural communities with very different priorities and perspectives (Healey, 1997). Co-located institutions of higher education certainly share spaces and, despite their close proximity, have their own specific cultures, priorities, and perspectives. According to Healey's theory, collaboration occurs when

stakeholders from such diverse cultural communities use dialog to make relational links across their cultural barriers, organizational divisions, and power differentials to build a new shared collaborative cultural community that re-frames and re-structures ways of proceeding (Healey, 1997). She argues that building this new "collaborative cultural community" requires multiple stakeholder meetings over a significant period of time in order to succeed. Using this theory, one might argue that the initial collaboration described above was less successful than hoped because all stakeholder groups were not invited to participate in the planning process adequately or over a significant enough period of time. Nor was there sufficient exigency in justifying the shared event: campus leadership did not share with their faculty and staff the larger goals of the collaboration. To begin building a new collaborative culture of academic innovation, ZSC and OUZ will need to respond to a clear and existing superordinate goal by implementing a truly collaborative planning process. Indeed, OUZ and ZSC need a larger sense of exigency to help motivate collaboration, something larger than a visiting lecturer, if these institutions are going to foster innovative collaboration beyond the state-mandated sharing of services. Creating a new collaborative culture to help solve the workforce and economic needs of Muskingum County and develop a community strategic plan for how area institutions of higher education can address these needs over the next ten years is not something ZSC or OUZ can do alone.

Using Healey's theoretical framework and identifying this community strategic plan as a collaborative superordinate goal, the leadership of OUZ began convening a series of meetings not only

with ZSC but also with the local chamber of commerce, the Port Authority, municipal, county, and state politicians, area non-profit organizations and state agencies that support workforce development, and the county's private liberal arts college, Muskingum University. This planning effort is on-going, but initial conversations between these entities led to the planning of a series of community-wide meetings that will take place between September 2019 and April 2020. Each of these community summits will be centered around issues raised by the future of work and education in Muskingum County and how local educational institutions can help support economic prosperity in the region, impact the county's problem with out-migration, and generally improve the quality of life for area residents. The first summit will identify a wide range of stakeholders who have a vested interest in the outcomes of these issues. A broad-based planning committee will then draw these stakeholders together to plan and execute subsequent meetings and ultimately create a community-wide strategic plan for Muskingum County.

At the conclusion of this series of community summits, an article detailing the specifics

of how collaborative planning was implemented will be developed in collaboration with the primary partners on the project. This article will also likely assess how effective the collaborative planning framework was in meeting the project's goals of creating a community strategic plan and surmounting the obstacles generated by inter-institutional

competition. In the meantime, there are at least two initial lessons that other branch campus leaders might consider. First, the negative effects of competition between co-located or nearby institutions of higher education cannot be underestimated. Competition breeds antagonism, which prevents faculty and staff from these institutions from collaborating in good faith. This antagonism potentially grows deeper and more pervasive the longer the institutions have been in competition with one another and grows more fierce as resources become more scarce. Second, the institutional leadership of competing institutions cannot will this antagonism away on their own. Reshaping the respective cultures of competing institutions requires time, dialog, and trust among a wide range of stakeholder groups. Even so, a culture of collaboration can only grow and flourish among competitors if the respective leaders of these institutions also work together over time, in honest dialog, and by building trust. While exercising a collaborative approach to academic planning is unlikely to translate immediately into money saved or increased revenue for the Zanesville campus, it will provide a pathway to bring its two co-located institutions together to solve local problems that neither OUZ nor ZSC can solve on its own.

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Case Study: Partnership Enrollment Program (Northwest Mississippi Community College – DeSoto Center and University of Mississippi – DeSoto)

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Case Study: Partnership Enrollment Programs (Northwest Mississippi Community College – DeSoto Center and University of Mississippi – DeSoto)

By Jonathan B. Bostick

ABSTRACT

Northwest Mississippi Community College – DeSoto Center (NWCC) and the University of Mississippi-DeSoto (UM-DeSoto) have shared a location and a close academic partnership in Southaven, MS for over twenty years. Through the current 2+2 program, students can complete an associate's degree followed by a bachelor's degree in 16 programs. However, transfer students are frequently missing courses, unaware of GPA requirements, or do not know other important information needed to transfer from NWSS to UM-DeSoto. Because NWSS students who intend to transfer to UM-DeSoto are never formally admitted into any sort of 2+2 program, neither through dual admission or some alternative less formal process, they often experience problems with advising, recruitment, financial aid, etc. This Case Study explores options for dual admission or comparable solutions for a more cohesive experience for these students, which resulted in the creation of the PATH 4 Partnership Enrollment Program. It explains the institutional benefits, student benefits, application process, advising process, scholarship opportunities, financial aid benefits, student services, and campus activities for students in the PATH 4 program.

Case Study: Partnership Enrollment Program

(Northwest Mississippi Community College

DeSoto Center and University of Mississippi – DeSoto)

By Jonathan B. Bostick

Institution Location Profile

Northwest Mississippi Community College - DeSoto Center (NWCC) and the University of Mississippi-DeSoto (UM-DeSoto) have shared a location and a close academic partnership in Southaven, MS for over twenty years. Through the 2+2 program, students can complete an associate's degree followed by a bachelor's degree in 16 degree programs, including Accountancy, Business (General Business, Management: Human Resources, Managerial Finance, Marketing, and Management Information Systems), Criminal Justice (Corrections, Homeland Security, and Law Enforcement), Elementary Education, General Studies, Integrated Marketing Communications, Liberal Studies, Psychology, Paralegal Studies, and Social Work. Well over 90% of UM-DeSoto students transfer from Northwest Mississippi Community College.

Declining enrollments at both institutions in the past several years has resulted in a strengthening of the 2+2 partnership, as both institutions seek to recruit, retain, and graduate students. Because UM-DeSoto generally offers exclusively junior and senior-level coursework, students in 2+2 degree programs must complete their freshman and sophomore-level courses at NWCC. This arrangement necessitates frequent communication between academic advisors at NWCC and admissions staff at UM-DeSoto to ensure that students take all necessary courses at NWCC for both associate and bachelor's degree requirements prior to transferring. The institutions work together to develop and continually update articulation agreements and corresponding transfer guides to ensure that each 2+2 program meets both schools' academic program requirements. While the transferability of courses is pre-determined and agreed upon by both schools, the 2+2 degree

programs themselves are really more informal arrangements than formal institutional academic partnerships.

General Situation

While NWCC and UM-DeSoto have a close symbiotic relationship, 2+2 transfer students are frequently missing courses, unaware of GPA requirements, or do not know other important information when they get ready to transfer from NWCC to UM-DeSoto. As a former Admissions Counselor at UM-DeSoto, I witnessed these issues frequently create barriers for students. These problems are sometimes a result of misunderstandings or distribution of outdated information on the part of NWCC advisors, which is an unavoidable consequence of a fragmented advising experience, even with the most diligent of academic advisors.

Ideally, NWCC students who intend to transfer to UM-DeSoto would communicate with the UM-DeSoto admissions staff early in their academic career at NWCC, but this is becoming less common. The term "stealth prospect" refers to students who research schools individually online, but do not self-identify themselves to an institution until they apply for admission. According to the Education Advisory Board (EAB), nationally 40% of students were stealth applicants in 2012; that number increased to 70% in 2014. This trend circumvents the traditional "high-touch" recruiting process, which establishes a relationship with a prospective student through many different types of communication over a period of time.

While this trend presents a challenge to admissions staff at any institution, it presents a uniquely difficult

problem for these 2+2 students. A stealth prospect at UM-DeSoto is more likely to have deficiencies on freshman/sophomore courses and/or other requirements since she has not communicated with UM-DeSoto admissions staff and her NWCC advisor may not be updated on the latest relevant information. The frustrated student then, through no fault of her own, may have to pay for additional community college courses and may be significantly delayed in the completion of his or her bachelor's degree.

Current Situation

Because NWCC students who intend to transfer to UM-DeSoto are never formally admitted into any sort of 2+2 program, neither through dual admission nor some alternative less formal process, they often experience problems with advising, recruitment, financial aid, etc. This Case Study seeks to explore options for dual admission or comparable solutions for 2+2 students, including exploring what comparable institutions do and how different solutions could be implemented.

Solution

A 2+2 Committee, consisting of recruitment and academic counseling staff members at both institutions, was formed to explore options to create a more formal 2+2 program for students, formed on a more official institutional academic partnership. Conversations initially focused on a Dual Admission program, but this was ultimately rejected because the majority of 2+2 students do not meet University admission requirements until well into their community college career. Instead, the committee decided to call the proposed program the Partnership Enrollment Program. Over several meetings, the committee examined similar programs at other institutions and assembled a detailed proposal.

The preliminary proposal seeks to create a Partnership Enrollment Program between NWCC and the UM-DeSoto as a cooperative effort to promote the successful undergraduate education of students at both institutions. The proposal seeks to better serve students and to create a partnership of mutual benefit to both institutions.

Benefits

Mutual Institutional Benefits

- Increase associate's degree graduation rate of NWCC students
- Increase number of NWCC graduates who transfer to UM-DeSoto
- Increase bachelor's degree graduation rate of UM-DeSoto students
- Strengthen the existing partnership forged between the two institutions
- Raise the educational attainment rates of the region and state

Student Benefits

- Seamless transition from NWCC to UM-Desoto
- Collaborative academic advising
- Shared academic records
- Fixed degree plan and catalog term
- Shared student services
- Shared campus activities
- Scholarship opportunities

Program Components

Application Process

- Students shall submit an application for the NWCC/UM-DeSoto Partnership Enrollment Program during the first thirty (30) credit hours or first two semesters in residence as a NWCC student.
- As part of the application process, students shall provide consent that personal and academic information, including transcripts, be shared between NWCC and UM-DeSoto to confirm program participation, to aid in communication and advising efforts between the institutions, to ensure transfer admission, and to promote a seamless transition from NWCC to UM-DeSoto.
- Students shall remain in good academic standing in order to maintain program participation status and agree that academic records and information pertaining to violations of conduct code at NWCC be shared with UM-DeSoto.
- It is expected that students in the Partnership Enrollment Program shall complete their

A.A. degree at NWCC within three years and enroll at UM-DeSoto within one academic semester of graduation from NWCC.

Advising

- Academic advising will be the shared responsibility of the two institutions, which will jointly train academic advisors.
- All Partnership Enrollment Program students will have a designated NWCC advisor (or may meet with designated secondary personnel). After meeting each semester with the academic advisor, the advisor will submit the advising plan to a current UM-DeSoto academic advisor (or designated secondary personnel) for approval.
- Upon application for graduation from NWCC, Partnership Enrollment Program students must have a current UM-DeSoto academic advisor (or designated secondary personnel) approve the graduation application.
- All advisors will mandate Partnership Enrollment Program students to complete their associate degree at NWCC prior to full-time enrollment at UM-DeSoto, recognizing it as the most effective and efficient pathway in meeting the general education requirements for the baccalaureate degree.
- Partnership Enrollment Program students requesting enrollment in a UM-DeSoto course are required to have prior approval from their NWCC advisor.
- Problems relating to articulation, class content, chronology of content or course scheduling will be resolved by a designee at each institution.
- Advisors at NWCC and UM-DeSoto will share academic records for Partnership Enrollment Program students, as described in the Partnership Enrollment Program application.
- UM-DeSoto will allow Partnership Enrollment Program students to obtain a degree by completing the curriculum course requirements on the catalog in effect at the time of the initial enrollment in the Partnership Enrollment Program program, provided the work is completed within six years of the publication date of the catalog used. In the case of minor changes to a specified curriculum, a school or college may require substitute courses or activities to meet the spirit of the requirements. However, in the case of substantial changes to the curriculum, the university reserves the right to require currently enrolled students to follow a new curriculum.

Scholarship Opportunities

- Partnership Enrollment Program students will be encouraged to apply for 2+2 Foundation scholarships, both while at NWCC and when they begin UM-DeSoto. Preference for the selected recipients of these scholarships will be given to Partnership Enrollment Program students.
- Partnership Enrollment Program students who dual enroll part-time at UM-DeSoto while completing coursework at NWCC will be eligible for UM-DeSoto's Next Step Scholarship for part-time students. NOTE: These students will not be denied eligibility for full-time transfer scholarships contingent upon subsequent full-time enrollment at UM-DeSoto.

Financial Aid

- A separate Federal Financial Aid Consortium Agreement will allow Partnership Enrollment Program students to combine NWCC and UM-DeSoto credits hours for the purpose of federal financial aid.
- Both NWCC and UM financial aid offices will process aid for Partnership Enrollment Program students.

Student Services and Campus Activities

- Partnership Enrollment Program students, and other NWCC students expressing an interest, will be provided access to various UM-DeSoto student services, including but not limited to campus activities and student organizations.

- Participants must agree to abide by UM-DeSoto's code of conduct when participating in activities and organizations sponsored by UM-DeSoto.

Marketing
- The communications teams at both colleges are developing a branding strategy and marketing plan, and admission staff are developing a supplemental program application for interested students.

Conclusion

With support from the administration at both colleges, the 2+2 Committee agreed on the provisional name for the Partnership Enrollment Program, "Path 4." The name is derived from the "pathway" terminology the community college uses in advising students toward their intended. The Path 4 program will have its soft launch in Fall 2019. Student engagement, satisfaction, and academic progress will be tracked for students in the Path 4 program. The program will be considered successful if there is an increasingly positive change in these areas.

While NWCC and UM-DeSoto have cooperated for decades to offer academic opportunities for students in Northwest Mississippi, the lack of collaborative processes and programs has been an impediment to student success. With the launch of the Path 4 Partnership Enrollment Program, students will have the opportunity to receive a seamless 4-year college experience that reaps the full benefits of both college's resources.

Charting a New Course for Regional Campuses: Case Study

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Charting a New Course for Regional Branch Campuses: A Case Study

By Nicole Pennington, DNP

ABSTRACT

For more than seventy years, Ohio University's Regional Campuses have been providing high quality and affordable education to students throughout southeastern Ohio and beyond. Over the last 10 years, there have been societal changes that have led to the need to examine the future of these regional campuses. This case study will address how Ohio University is working to respond to the challenges so that regional campuses will be prepared to continue to be the drivers of educational, social, and economic development.

Charting a New Course for Regional Campuses: Case Study

By Nicole Pennington, DNP

For more than seventy years, Ohio University's Regional Campuses have been providing high quality and affordable education to students throughout southeastern Ohio and beyond. There are five campuses and two centers that provide access to students who want or need to remain in their communities to obtain a college education. Many of these students choose a regional campus for a variety of reasons. Some are employed in full or part-time jobs, some are raising young children or taking care of aging parents, and there are those who simply do not want to leave home to pursue higher education. Regardless of the reason, the students who attend a regional campus experience a vibrant, student-centered learning environment. The campuses and centers have provided access to the excellence that is a hallmark of Ohio University's academic programs. They also serve as a cultural hub for the community and provide essential workforce development opportunities for their respective regions. They have been excellent partners and dependable contributors to those initiatives that improve their communities. Over the 10 years, there have been societal changes that have led to the need to examine the future of these regional campuses. This case study will address how Ohio University is working to respond to the challenges so that regional campuses will be prepared to continue to be the drivers of educational, social, and economic development.

The major threat to the financial stability of regional campus operations is the multi-year enrollment declines that have led to a revenue reduction. During the recession, regional campuses saw high enrollment numbers as a result of more non-traditional age students returning to school to gain employment. As the economy shifted, this age group entered the workforce instead of higher education. Other challenges having a significant impact on revenue include changes in subsidy, which is now performance based, reduced weighting of at-risk factors for subsidy calculations, tuition caps, dual enrollment, the expansion of community college authority, and shrinking high school graduating classes. In addition to the revenue declines, there is the challenge of inflation with the rising cost of benefits, salaries, supplies, and utilities. These issues will continue to be a challenge. While new programs and other initiatives have resulted in some revenue gains, there continues to be a budget gap. Regional campuses have been aggressively responding to these

challenges over the past several years and overall operating expenses have decreased by more than $5 million. The campuses have come together and operated more as a system by sharing instruction between campuses using a distance learning network and online course offerings. This has resulted in decreased instructional costs. Regional campuses cannot continue to operate under the same assumptions that enabled them to thrive over the last 70+ years. In order to tackle the budget issues, Ohio University must respond in a way that addresses administrative and academic inefficiencies as well as new revenue generating initiatives.

In May 2018, the Regional Higher Education Study Committee was established to review and evaluate the regional campus higher education model. The committee's charge was to ensure a sustainable future for educational access and excellence across the region. This study committee benchmarked the regional higher education system, researched and identified other national models, analyzed internal trend cycles, and developed principles and recommendations for achieving an engaged, inclusive academic and resource model for the whole of the University. The study committee's work underscores the value of regional higher education to southeastern Ohio and the campus communities (Regional Higher Ed Study Committee, 2018). In November 2018, the study committee delivered its final report which reflects substantial research, analysis, and engagement with faculty, students, staff and community leaders affiliated with each of the campuses, including Athens, and University leadership across Ohio University. This report gives thoughtful consideration on pathways to becoming a unified Ohio University, while honoring the diverse assets and interests of our communities and campus locations. (Regional Higher Ed Study, 2019)

The report describes reimagining campuses as vital locations in a dynamic engagement ecosystem by outlining principles and recommendations focused on the following areas of the study committee's charge:

- Organizational and reporting structures
- Academic program development and delivery
- Alignment across academic programs and administrative functions
- Financial sustainability

- Student services

The principles and recommendations put forth unanimously by the study committee provide a pathway for Ohio University to redesign and realign the University system in order to bolster access and increase the ability to deliver a quality education across all locations.

Principles Presented in the Report

1. The need for a renewed focus as a unified university serving an educational access and workforce development mission with distinctive quality, affordability, and student success, helping students move along a lifelong learning path.

Recommendations
    a. Academic and administrative leaders should be given the authority and be held accountable for supporting this mission.
    b. Faculty across the system should be united by discipline within departments that have system-wide reach and responsibility.
    c. Existing programs at the regional campuses should be aligned to Athens campus colleges.
    d. A regional campus leadership structure should be created which funnels and prioritizes opportunity and need from across the system to academic and administrative leadership.

2. The need to embrace innovative new programming structures and curricular approval processes that meet the needs of a workforce increasingly challenged to keep pace with industry and cultural change at unprecedented speed and scale. New standalone and stackable certificates tuned to the demand of the market should be developed alongside of and in many instances as part of our traditional associate, baccalaureate and graduate/professional degrees.

Recommendations
    a. Revise academic and administrative policies and processes to enable and reward pace, responsiveness, and curricular innovation.
    b. Ensure that departmental and college budget models incentivize academic innovation that results in new net revenue streams delivered through the regional campuses without abandoning traditional programs at those locations that have proven value. These might include expanded noncredit programming, micro-credentialing at the competency or multicourse certificate level, and stackable certificates that lead to traditional degrees.
    c. Invest in technology that enables new program structures, including noncredit registration and credentialing, and modified transcripting, as well as increased functional capacity in key areas to enable curricular innovation.
    d. Pursue new business models.

3. The need for the highest degree of efficiency in academic and administrative operations across the system is the goal.

Recommendations
    a. Consolidate and streamline administrative processes.
    b. Consolidate and streamline academic processes.

4. The need for ecosystem investments to flex to emerging opportunities and away from unsustainable investments.

Recommendations:
    a. Develop a new financial/budget model for managing investment and understanding value tied to specific campus/center locations.
    b. Develop a set of principles for managing lifecycle of campuses and centers, and for elimination of excess capital assets.
    c. Develop governance to prioritize use of campus/center locations.

5. The need for this one-university implementation to be undertaken with care to ensure reporting and regulatory requirements can still be met.

Recommendations:
    a. Establish a task force to ensure reporting and accreditation and related requirements are preserved, and that inadvertent negative impact on rankings and other data-driven concerns are avoided.
    b. The recommendations are akin to a merger. Executive leadership should consider whether a consultant engagement would facilitate implementation at pace with project management of all the changes necessary, with special attention to training and professional development as needed,

prioritization of process improvement and efficiencies, and department-level support for ensuring smooth transitions to and broad understanding of the one-university model.

In their totality, the recommendations aim to accomplish three goals: maximize efficiency across the entire Ohio University operation, enable generation of new revenue streams through curricular innovation, and unite the community in extending the full university mission across a dynamic engagement ecosystem. If successful, there will be a profusion of new program structures and credentials tied to unique outcomes tuned to community and workforce needs, a new level of community partnership to the benefit of our communities, and a national benchmark for operational excellence in a multi-campus university.

Financial stability across the regional campuses will require a combination of the strategies. Enrollments will likely see a boost as the economic cycles continue, but diversification, leading to additional revenue streams as part of a new budget model will be required to thwart not only any potential future enrollment downturns, but also to meet emerging workforce needs. Increasing the efficiency of the deployment of permanent faculty resources across the system will be even more critical, as well as looking at the mix between permanent and adjunct teaching capacity. While reducing administrative costs is important and made possible through system-wide service delivery, it plays a much smaller role in the path to sustainability.

The next step, collectively as an institution, is to determine the pathway forward for implementing these bold recommendations and to begin the work to unite – both structurally and culturally – as one University. This is a dramatic, strategic shift for Ohio University. Moving in this direction represents immense change for all campuses. A task force will be assigned to work on an implementation with specific sub-task forces and key defined outcomes to achieve the vision.

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Test Security and Branch Campus Testing Centers

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This article is available in *Access: The Journal of the National Associaiton of Branch Campus Administrators*. Follow this and additional works at: http://www.nabca.net/accesshome.html

Test Security and Branch Campus Testing Centers

By Shireen Lalla

ABSTRACT

A growing number of university students are cheating on exams with the help of high-tech devices such as phones, smart watches, and hidden earpieces. Cheating on exams is not new, but what is new is how students are doing it. Gone are the days when they wrote answers down on their hands. Technology has transformed cheating and it is important for educators and administrators to be aware of these high-tech portable devices. Listed are strategies that Florida Atlantic University's testing centers employ to secure exams.

Test Security and Branch Campus Testing Centers

Shireen Lalla, Ph.D.

Maintaining the exam security and confidentiality of all our testing vendors' programs is critical for maintaining branch campus testing centers' national certification, contracts, and ensuring protection for intellectual property with which we have been entrusted. A branch campus testing center offers a smaller cross-section of testing compared to the main campus, but the same level of testing security and precautions must be adhered to. At the Florida Atlantic University-Davie campus, we are a 24-workstation testing lab that offers mobile testing through our laptops during peak testing times. These laptops are positioned in our paper/pencil testing carrels for online exams. At our branch campus testing center, we offer critical need national and institutional-based testing programs to our constituents (students and community members), including: CLEP/DSST testing, makeup exams, academic competency exams, graduate school admission tests, correspondence testing, and professional certification and licensure exams. We pride ourselves with providing safe and clean equal-opportunity testing opportunities for all of our students and external constituents.

With the advent of high tech devices and non-technological cheating approaches, branch campus testing centers find themselves being increasingly targeted by test takers who seek to commit acts that violate security or confidentiality (Srikanth & Asmatulu (2014). The testing procedures for maintaining the security and confidentiality of all assessments are constantly revised due to these threats. Varble (2014) states that a new testing environment that requires more thought and care needs to be created and reassessed constantly to reduce cheating and uphold academic integrity. Exam control procedures are necessary, such as, limiting all electronic and non-electronic items into the testing lab. It is important to inform candidates about these restrictions and explain that these safeguards are in place to protect them from others who choose to cheat.

Common Violations of Test Security and Confidentiality Reported at Branch Campus Testing Centers

- Talking between candidates in the test room

- Communicating utilizing food (multicolored M&Ms, blue for A, green for B etc)

- Candidates looking at other computer screens in the room

- Any electronic device activated in the testing room (except approved calculators) during the exam or phones not powered off allowing a Bluetooth connection that can transmit an audio or visual signal to a secondary device that allows for external communication during the exam. An example of this would be a paging device earpiece that allows the test taker to

communicate with another individual outside the testing lab.

- Anything written on something other than the official note board or scratch paper during exam

- Candidates attempting to leave the testing room with scratch paper, note boards

- Proxy testing – finding a company to locate an individual or recruiting a person on your own to take the test for you

- Cheating using a "spy"-style digital camera, cell phone camera or standard/manualcamera (embedded in clothing, glasses, pens, watches, etc.). These cameras can store video and then transmit the entire content of exams using the USB plugin

- Test banks are databases of exam questions and answers built by coordinated cheating rings that have test-takers memorize questions to be brain-dumped into a document later. Members of the ring are assigned a particular subset of the

cumulative questions on an exam, e.g. questions 1-10, and the next person 11-20. The document is then uploaded to a test bank for purchase either on a closed social media group or on ebay.

Breach of test security conduct is any action that violates the security and confidentiality of a test that is specifically outlined in the policies and procedures of an exam. It is important for proctors to document all testing incidents that are considered a deviation from testing procedures. These irregularities – even the slightest incident – should be documented, as it may be called into question at a later date. Branch campus test administrators must safeguard all exams, and part of that process is reporting any violation to the testing vendor, faculty member, or in the case of a student exam, to the student compliance department. The Dean of Students and/or testing vendor will need all the facts before deciding what kind of disciplinary action to impart to the candidate. It is important to be as detailed as possible when completing an incident report. Test security incident reports, such as irregularities, security breaches, erratic candidate behavior must be documented and reviewed as it could change the security procedures and modality of how the exam is currently administered.

Examples of High-Tech Cheating Devices Complied by Testing Center Professionals

Two-way Mobile Communication in the Form of a Credit Card

GSM Card Box

"Spy" Clothing

Spy shirt

Shirt with all the exam answers

HIDDEN CAMERA

"Spy" Clothing

Google Jean Jacket

Digitally Connected Smart Shoes

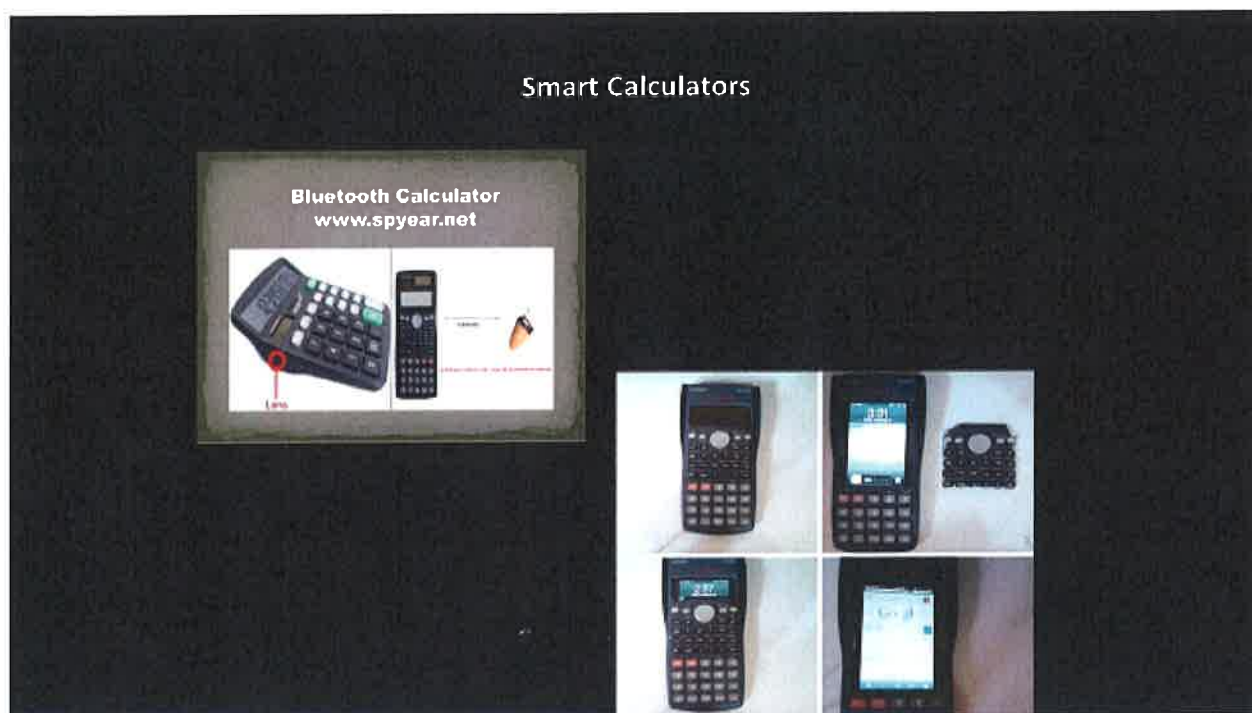
"Spy" Pen

"Spy" Tie

Key Fob Camera
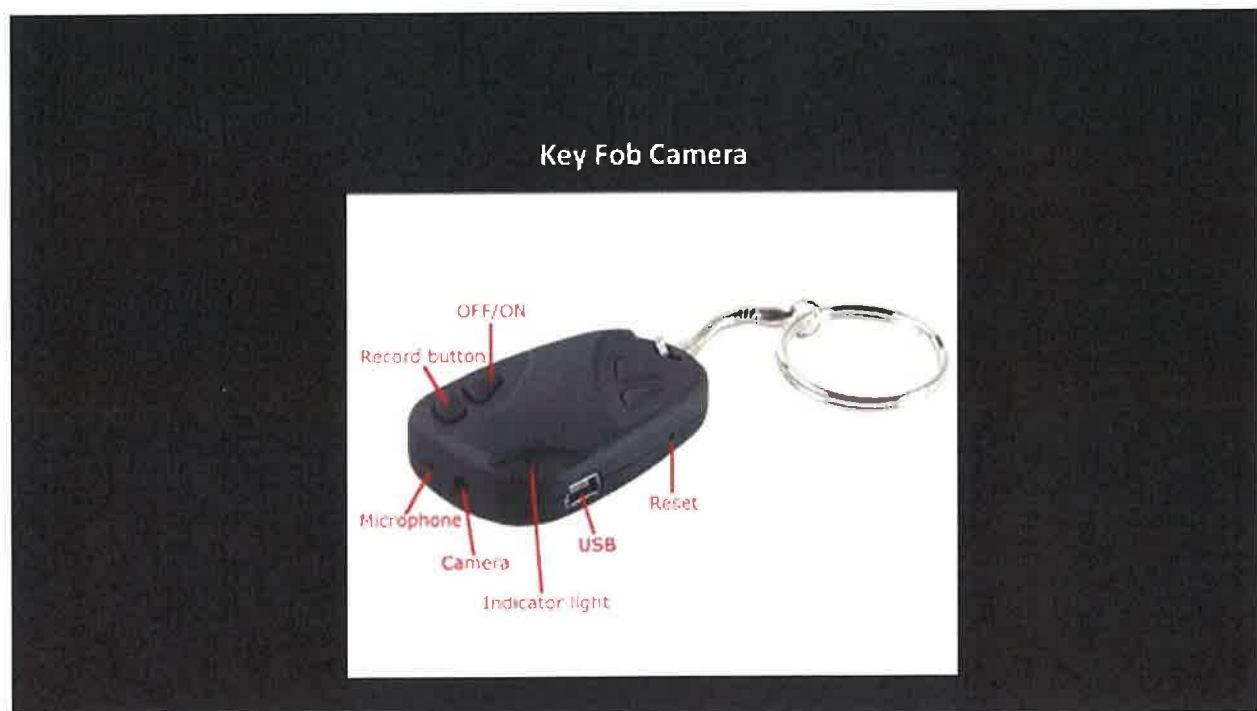
Spy Glasses

Invisible Watch

Best Safeguards Against Test Security Breaches

- Limit items on the candidate's desktop.

- Check restrooms before and after exam session.

- Create different versions of exam.

- Ask students to turn off cell phone before locking them up in a locker as to transmit a Bluetooth signal.

- Remove all watches (analog, digital or smart).

- Adopt a thorough check-in screening system for the candidate.

- Don't ignore suspicious behavior: address it.

- Proctors should do 5-minute walk-throughs around the testing room to have the presence of test security.

Conclusion

All branch testing centers need to adhere to the highest standards of test security and have systems in place for identifying suspected forms of cheating and collusion. The test security process should be evaluated every three months with input from the main campus testing sites. It is important the lines of communication and collaboration remain open between the colleges' and universities' testing centers.. With the constant impact of emerging technologies, branch testing centers must stay abreast of them as they pose a threat to the security and validity of the exams that they administer. Test security breaches must be addressed right away to circumvent any additional security risk. It is very important that all testing centers have disciplinary measures in place depending on the severity of the test security violation.

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