



OHIO
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Regional Campuses

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January 14, 2010

Dr. Pam Benoit
Executive Vice President and Provost Benoit
Ohio University
Cutler Hall, 306
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Dear Dr. Benoit:

Earlier in Fall Quarter, you met with the Regional Deans and me to discuss the restructuring *White Paper* proposal that called for the realignment of the five Regional Campuses, University College and University Outreach into a new academic college. While you acknowledged the merits of integrating the Regional Campuses into an academic home in Athens, you also raised a number of questions and expressed concerns about moving forward. You asked that I personally visit each campus to continue to gather input and to further explore the concept with the respective faculty and staffs and to make a final recommendation to you at the end of the quarter.

During the month of November, I visited each of the campuses at least once, and we had lively and engaging discussions about perceived advantages and disadvantages of the restructuring proposal. I concluded my visits with a request that while I wanted each campus to facilitate and encourage further discussions, these must be done over a very short timeline. I asked the faculty senators to coordinate the individual campus responses with a written *Position Statement* by the end of the month.

At our Regional Campus Faculty Conference on December 3-4, 2009, we dedicated an open session to discuss individual campus positions and to formulate a collective recommendation from Regional Higher Education. That recommendation is not to pursue, at this time, the creation of a new college that would combine Regional Campuses with University College and University Outreach.

A variety of views were expressed during the conference about the formation of a new college, but on the whole there was strong support for continuing to work within the present administrative structure with the Campus Deans reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost through an Executive Dean. The sentiment was expressed often that some of the goals of the proposed restructuring, including the need to broaden and advance the One University concept, could be best achieved at this juncture by strengthening existing internal collaborations and forming new ones. This approach has the advantage of allowing each of the campuses to maintain the autonomy necessary to serve the needs of each of their unique communities.

On a related matter, there is widespread interest in and support for returning to an administrative structure that rejoins University Outreach with the Regional Campuses under a single organizational unit reporting to the Executive Dean. With similar outreach and access missions, the combined units should minimize duplication and competition across campuses while expanding opportunities for regional faculty to engage a broader audience market utilizing new and emerging technologies.

Both the *Task Force on the Future of Regional Campuses* (April 2008) and the *Undergraduate and Regional Education Study Team* (June 2009) identified a variety of challenges and issues facing the Regional Campuses under five broad categories: (1) administrative and reporting structure, (2) academic program development, (3) faculty relationships with departments in Athens, (4) budget and finance, and (5) auxiliary and student services. The Regional Campuses believe that the initial steps necessary to deal with these challenges and issues may be appropriately addressed in the specific recommendations that have been identified in the reports.

As a next step, Regional Higher Education recommends that an inclusive and open process be initiated by the EVPP which identifies priorities, develops potential strategies for addressing specific issues and sets timelines for implementation. The process should be coordinated by a “continuous improvement team” with broad representation across the University.

In the spirit of One University, the “continuous improvement team” could further explore how the Regional Campuses and University Outreach might work more closely and collaboratively with other key units in Athens to benefit the University as a whole. While not presuming to limit possibilities, chief among these are The Voinovich School, University College and the Academic Colleges.

With this in mind, we are anxious for an opportunity to continue discussions about these next steps with you personally and invite you to attend the next meeting of the Regional Campus Academic Leadership, scheduled for February 19, 2010. Clearly, the Regional Campuses have an important and growing role to play in the future of Ohio University, and we look forward to working more closely with your office in the months and years ahead.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dan L. Evans".

Dan Evans
Executive Dean for Regional Campuses

CC: Regional Deans