

Vision Ohio Five Year Implementation Plan
Open Forum
November 1, 2007

Comment: Graduate Student Senate is presenting to Chair/Dean Chuck McWeeny, 155 signed letters of support for the resolution passed by Graduate Senate in favor of improving our financial and health care conditions at Ohio University. These include decreasing the cost of the General Fee; subsidize health care costs; increase size and number of stipends and named fellowships; and increase the GSS grant fund.

Question to Graduate Student Senate: What would be the top graduate priority (from list being submitted)?

Reply: Decreasing the cost of the general fee and/or subsidizing health care. Graduate Assistantships as well. If the university increases the enrollment for graduate students, that would spread what support is currently available even thinner. There should be more support dollars available with the current enrollment and then build on this funding should enrollment be increased.

Question: Where is the \$37 million dollars coming from to invest in this plan? The academic departments have already been reduced to the bare bones in their current budget from prior cuts in the past few years.

Reply: This has not been fully decided. Part will come from the re-allocation of the past budget cuts, part of the plan is to generate additional income, and then President McDavis having further discussions with the Provost/VP's/Deans to find the remainder needed.

Question: Regarding the enhancement of support for graduate and professional students. How did they arrive at the dollar amount listed (\$1.535M)? This is only 1/33rd cut out of the overall budget being requested. This seems like a really small amount when looked at in these terms.

Response: The answer will be better addressed at the Graduate Student Senate meeting next Monday night. The Provost and Vice Presidents have already stated they will be in attendance to answer these questions.

Question: Were promises made during the Vision Ohio process for graduate students but are not being implemented in this document? Interested in learning what commitment OU is placing on their graduate students as it seems it is not really interested when you look at what funding is actually being invested in graduate education.

Response: The reality of the budget is a matter of proportion. It's not whether we value education as it is what funding do we have to invest.

Question: This pertains to graduate fees. OU promised during the Vison Ohio discussions to help lower these fees but does not deliver in this document.

Response: The current budget is the most transparent than it ever has been before. The State of Ohio budget has us scrambling to reassign the funding decisions made earlier. This has been a consistent problem in that the State's budget isn't decided until after our budget is in "place", which causes the university to then scramble and do reassignments to make our budget balance. There are decisions that need to be made by the President and his committee as to how the entire budget is to be spent.

Question: If things are not addressed in this 5 year plan, does that mean they will not be discussed in the next 5 years?

Response: No. Budget and circumstances are constantly a flux. There will always be discussions taking place. Priorities change, budgets/funding changes, etc. We always have to look to our values and plan accordingly as best we can.

Question: What IS the process to get a larger piece of the pie (budget)?

Response: This is part of it, voicing concerns at these forums. The Senates (Graduate, Faculty, Classified, Administrative) are all having meetings and will submit their input to the committee. The committee's report will be inclusive of everyone's needs. So everyone should attend their respective Senate meetings as well to make sure their concerns are communicated.

Question: Where do the classified people fit in this plan? There have already been prior job eliminations. Will there be layoffs to pay for this plan?

Response: This will be part of the discussions that need to take place. The weakness of this plan is that it doesn't tell where the funding will be coming from.

Question/Concern: How do the strategies link to the outcomes? There needs to be a measurement put in place that is specific. Actual costs need to be listed, being specific/detailed as to what each aspect costs. This would add to understanding the processed measures. We can all disagree as to the priorities, but there needs to be specific measurements in place for each priority listed.

Question: How do we expand our budget from the State? It seems OSU gets a lot more funding from the state than what anybody else does for the same type of programs/enrollment. Shouldn't we have someone go to Columbus and lobby them to get a larger piece of the pie?

Response: This is already happening. Terry Geiger and President McDavis are constantly working on this in Columbus.

Question: What are we doing to re-position ourselves? There needs to be a much more better job of communication happening at OU, to let everyone know what is going on in Columbus and how OU is working to resolve the issues. In not hearing what is happening, we assume nothing is being done by OU because we haven't read or heard anything. So more communication is necessary if we are to be better informed of what OU is doing at the State level and not rushing to judgment. Which leads back to my question.

Response: It is hard to strategize when we don't know what the State is doing from one year to the next. Both President McDavis and Provost Krendl sit at the table on very important State committees and work very hard on our behalf. But when the State budget is affected for whatever reason, it will impact our budget as well.

Question: What is the Board of Regents time frame for this?

Response: The committee will need to present the summary of these discussions to the Provost by November 15. The Provost has to have her report to the President by November 30. The President has the month of December to have continued discussions and to re-write this plan as necessary by the end of January so he can deliver the final version to the Trustees at their February meeting.

Question: Why don't we have a major initiative for fundraising?

Response: There has been a large transition of staff in the Development Office due to a change in the leadership. Even through all the staffing shortages, they were still able to bring in large sums of monetary donations. The Development Office is always working on this but they do need more help.

Concern: This document completely lacks vision. This report was not hatched by educators but by administrators. This is a very bad plan that betrays a lack of vision. Example: Pg 3, Goal IV, Objective 1, Strategy a, there is only \$35 thousand budgeted for this over a period of five years which equals to just \$7 thousand a year for the entire campus to pull from. This is too small funding and is clearly looked at as having no value. Under civic responsibility, which is THE most important thing in strengthening retention, no money is associated with it. There is ~~appalling~~ bad judgment in this document. There is no vision in this plan.

Concern: Increasing diversity of Faculty & Staff at no cost is not a realistic statement. We are always trying to fill positions with people who are/have diverse backgrounds. More funding would be needed, on a regular basis, to afford the opportunity to actually reach such a goal. The no cost association attached to this plan is not realistic at all.