

A Report on the 5 Year Academic Action Plan by the Ohio University Student Senate

During the last month the Ohio University Student Senate has undertaken the review and analysis of the Vision Ohio Five Year Academic Action Plan. To carefully evaluate the aforementioned document, the Senate carefully divided the sections amongst the appropriate commissions in our general body and scrutinized the parts with a set of given criteria. The most important of these guidelines being the potential impact on the student body from budgetary, social and academic standpoints. To better grasp the possible outcomes, the Student Senate specifically looked at three key areas of assessment: Strengthen Undergraduate Education, Enrich Environment and the financial implications of the plan. The following is a breakdown of those key area portions.

Strengthen Undergraduate Education:

- The overall outcome of the Five Year Academic Action Plan should not result in a net increase in funding for “support” areas. In other words, reallocations to these portions should not exceed the dollar amount taken from them. All adjustments should remain internal; for example, money should not be reallocated from the College of Business to fund the proposed \$775,000 increase in Athletics.
- The “strategies” and “outcomes” sections of this segment should be made to reflect the Five Year Plans of the individual academic departments and colleges.
- Senators seemed to echo the position of Faculty Senate in regards to creating a “quality learning environment” for all students, not just student athletes.
- There needs to be more clarity in what it means to “improve academic advising”. Senate expressed a great deal of interest into how advising will be improved on campus, and the document provides little guidance for the implementation of this strategy.
- It would behoove this particular section to add a parameter expanding UC115 classes to improve Peer Advising within each class. This could perhaps fall under the purview of Objective number 1.

Enrich Environment:

- Most Senators supported the idea of establishing programs like “Bobcat Passport” to eventually increase student engagement throughout the university. However, sentiment also reflected issues with such initiatives, such as there being a lack of promotion by the Ohio University administration and a lack of understanding the programs on the part of students. It was suggested that increasing the awareness and purpose of these programs is a necessity to their success.
 - Along these same lines, appropriate funding must be forthcoming to student activities included in “Bobcat Passport” to provide adequate resources for such initiatives. Therefore, a line item strategy for increased Student Activities Commission funding is a must.¹

¹ See Senate Resolution 07/08-18

- The Senate encouraged funding for out of class initiatives such as the Lasagna Project, to better foster Student/Faculty relations.
- The document must specify whether or not its recommendations for the “Improvement of Health and Safety of Students” will be modified after the final Keeling and Associates recommendation are released. This report will directly influence changes within the health and safety departments on campus and the way they affect students.
 - It is important to stress that increased participation within research based alcohol interventions (such as Prime for Life) be voluntary.
- This document acts as a perfect opportunity to address the issue concerning the funding of Arts for Ohio. The Senate agreed that there should be inclusion of said program within the 5 year Academic Plan in this particular segment.
 - It was stressed by our body that “Arts for Ohio” is an essential element to “enriching the environment” and to obtaining a true liberal arts education at Ohio University.
- The Student Senate favored an increase to funding for the Leadershape Institute and believed a second annual session would positively impact our constituency.
- The Senate also supported the notion of increased resident assistant compensation.
- Greater clarification is needed to explain how the Athletics Department will achieve their outcomes and why this funding is necessary.
 - For example, under the objective “Lift Our Athletic Programs to New Heights of Excellence”, the phrase “Dreams and Aspirations” is incredibly vague when describing potential strategies.
- Although goal three specifically addresses diversity to an extent, there needs to be clarification on what the University means when they use the word “diversity.” To the administration, is diversity qualified by race, out-of-state residence, etc.?
- Most Senators would like to see inclusion of a parameter focused on an increase in scholarship funds. This would not only enrich the student environment at Ohio University, but also would add to the competitive educational atmosphere and significantly aid our recruiting efforts.

Financial Concerns:

- The most troublesome issue with this document stems from its lack of accountability when handling its 37 million dollar budget. The Student Senate felt strongly that the estimated investments for each strategy seemed unbelievably arbitrary. Given that there are distinct and substantial strategies and outcomes stemming from each objective, there needs to be a more defined breakdown of monies allotted to each objective.
 - The Senate feared that future, unjustified cuts in other departments and programs may result in attempts to provide for the given reallocations; the current evaluation process of the 5 Year Academic Action Plan must not act as insulation for potential decisions.
- There needs to be a monetary consideration for increasing scholarship funds. This does not necessarily have to come from an increase in the original 37 million, but could be pulled from other sources.

To reiterate, Senate feels as if the 5 Year Academic Plan is focusing our university on the correct overall goals. Issues such as retention rates, the out of class experience and student leadership are admirable and serve a need for this institution. But, these goals and what is precipitated from them, are also broad, undefined and opaque. In addition, the Senate strongly voiced its concern with the apparent arbitrariness of the fiscal component of the plan. Therefore, the Ohio University Student Senate implores the 5 Year Academic Action Plan committee to breakdown this document for further explanation. Although the haste of the plan's current time table is understood, for the sake of definition and the eventual direction of Ohio University, the committee must delay this process to better clarify the not only the source of these reallocations but also their destinations and then synthesize the constituent feedback given in a reasonable amount of time.

Of all the things I've lost, I miss my mind the most. ~ Mark Twain

A RESOLUTION ON THE PROPOSED 5-YEAR ACADEMIC ACTION PLAN

1. *Whereas:* The 5-Year Academic Action Plan has been open for review and comment by the constituent
2. groups of Ohio University, and
3. *Whereas:* This plan seeks to reallocate over \$30 million in order to achieve certain goals and objectives
4. highlighted in VISION Ohio and needed to position Ohio University within the University
5. System of Ohio, and
6. *Whereas:* No document enumerating precisely how this money is to be reallocated currently exists, and
7. *Whereas:* The 5-Year Academic Action Plan has been created in haste, with little time budgeted for
8. review and incorporation of constituent feedback by the Committee, therefore be it
9. *Resolved:* That the Ohio University Student Senate submits the feedback outlined in Appendix A to the
10. 5-Year Academic Action Plan Committee, and further be it
11. *Resolved:* That Student Senate strongly urges Executive Vice President and Provost Krendl to consider
12. delaying the progress of this document until more detailed information has been released
13. regarding the reallocation of these funds and sufficient time has been allowed for the 5 Year
14. Academic Action Plan Committee to properly synthesize constituent feedback, and further be it
15. *Resolved:* That copies of the resolution be sent to, but not limited to: Dr. Roderick McDavis, President of
16. Ohio University; Dr. Kathy Krendl, Executive Vice President and Provost of Ohio University;
17. Dr. Kent Smith, Vice President for Student Affairs; Mr. William Decatur, Vice President for
18. Finance and Administration; Dr. Sergio Lopez-Permouth, Chair of Faculty Senate; Ms. Brenda
19. Noftz, Chair of Administrative Senate; Mr. Dominic Barbato, Chair of Graduate Student Senate;
20. Mr. George Cheripko, Chair of Classified Senate; Dr. Charles McWeeny, Dean of the College
21. of Fine Arts and Chair of the 5 Year Academic Action Plan Committee; all other member of the
22. 5 Year Academic Action Plan Committee; Mr. C. Daniel DeLawder, Chairman of the Board of
23. Trustees;

Sponsors: Mr. Chris Diehl
Commissioner for Academic Affairs

A RESOLUTION FOR THE INCLUSION OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES COMMISSION IN THE FIVE YEAR
ACADEMIC ACTION PLAN

24. *Whereas:* Student organizations funded by the Student Activities Commission coordinate and implement
25. student programs that enrich the educational, cultural and social environment on campus, and
26. *Whereas:* numerous organizations also conduct “late-night programming” in order to offer an educational,
27. cultural or social alternative to high-risk behavior on weekend nights, and
28. *Whereas:* three student programming boards, Black Student Cultural Programming Board, International
29. Student Union and University Program Council, are university organizations built into the
30. mission of various departments housed under Student Affairs, the Office of the Provost and the
31. Office of Diversity, and
32. *Whereas:* the Student Activities Commission (SAC), a branch of the Ohio University Student Senate, is
33. charged with the allocation of funds to student organizations and student programming boards,
34. and
35. *Whereas:* The Student Activities Commission will allocate \$441,269 to student organizations and
36. programming boards for the 2007-2008 school year, and
37. *Whereas:* The Student Activities Commission allocates money to programs that enrich the educational,
38. cultural and social environment on campus, and
39. *Whereas:* the “Five-year Academic Action Plan” seeks to address academic support areas including
40. residence life and NCAA athletics, and
41. *Whereas:* the document stands currently, the “Five-year Academic Action Plan” does not have a mention
42. of Ohio University’s 340-plus student organizations and programming boards, and
43. *Whereas:* the document lacks a mention of Student Activities Commission’s role as the primary funding
44. source for programs conducted by organizations and programming boards, therefore be it
45. *Resolved:* that the Ohio University Student Senate believes that student organizations and student
46. programming boards are an intricate part of an Ohio University’s all-around educational
47. mission, and further be it
48. *Resolved:* that the Senate advocates for the inclusion of Student Activities Commission, student
49. programming boards and student organizations in the “Five-year Academic Action Plan” as
50. these groups serve as academic support to students, and further be it
51. *Resolved:* that the Senate strongly encourages the authors of the “Five-year Academic Action Plan” to add
52. another strategy under goal IV objective 1 that says, “increase the wherewithal of the Student
53. Activities Commission to enhance student programming across campus.”, and further be it
54. *Resolved:* That copies of this resolution be sent, to but not limited to: Dr. Roderick McDavis, President of
55. Ohio University; Dr. Kathy Krendl, Executive Vice President and Provost of Ohio University;
56. Dr. Kent Smith, Vice President for Student Affairs; Mr. William Decatur, Vice President for
57. Finance and Administration; Dr. Sergio Lopez-Permouth, Chair of Faculty Senate; Ms. Brenda
58. Noftz, Chair of Administrative Senate; Mr. Dominic Barbato, Chair of Graduate Student Senate;
59. Mr. George Cheripko, Chair of Classified Senate; Dr. Charles McWeeny, Dean of the College
60. of Fine Arts and Chair of the 5 Year Academic Action Plan Committee; all other member of the
61. 5 Year Academic Action Plan Committee; Mr. C. Daniel DeLawder, Chairman of the Board of
62. Trustees; members of the Student Activities Commission

Sponsors: Mr. Will Wemer
Treasurer

Mr. Sean Morris
Commissioner for the Student Activities Commission

Mr. Chauncey Jackson
Senator for the South Green
Vice Commissioner for the Student Activities Commission

