Center for Higher Education

2007–08 Academic Year End Report

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

2008
Submitted by: Valerie Martin Conley, Director
Reengineering...and Growth

The theme for the most recent Center for Higher Education Self-Study was reengineering and growth.\textsuperscript{1} One of the recommendations of the Review Committee was for the Center Director to meet with the Dean of the College of Education to discuss the role of the Center in the vision of the future of the College.\textsuperscript{2}

In September 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by the Director of the Center for Higher Education, Chair of the Department of Counseling and Higher Education, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies, and Dean of the College of Education.\textsuperscript{3} The agreement outlined understandings arrived at through discussions regarding general principles, support needs, and performance outcomes for the Center for the next two years, with 2007–08 serving as a pilot year. The purpose of this report is to document progress toward the accomplishment of goals outlined in the MOU after one academic year, highlight significant Center activities and projects underway, and articulate next steps.

Activities during academic year 2007–08 have focused primarily on reengineering—hiring and training personnel, commissioning and developing processes for reviewing inaugural papers for a working paper series, establishing and populating an electronic announcement distribution listserv, developing processes for practicum student recruitment, building relationships— and on other infrastructure issues critical to the Center’s success.

Progress

During academic year 2007–08, the Center for Higher Education has made progress toward the accomplishment of the goals outlined in the MOU. Accomplishments include successfully completing a search for a highly qualified full-time researcher. Dr. Dmitry Suspitsin is scheduled to begin work with the Center on September 8, 2008. Dr. Suspitsin holds a double major Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education Administration and Comparative and International Education with a minor in Business Administration and a Certificate in Institutional

\textsuperscript{1} See http://www.coe.ohiou.edu/centers-partnerships/centers/center-higher-ed.htm for a copy of the report.
\textsuperscript{2} See http://www.coe.ohiou.edu/centers-partnerships/centers/center-higher-ed.htm for a copy of the review committee’s report.
\textsuperscript{3} A copy of the MOU is available upon request.
Research from the Pennsylvania State University.

Inaugural papers for a working paper series were commissioned from three authors. Four papers have been received and externally reviewed. Authors are currently making revisions to their papers based on reviewer comments. A template for the Series was developed by Emily Marcus, COE Instructional Designer. A prototype Web page for posting the papers was developed by Jon Wittlieff, Graduate Research Assistant. Finally, an electronic listserv—C4HE—was created to distribute announcements, such as the launch of the working paper series, and to showcase student and Center work.

Concept Briefs on *International Service Learning* and *Establishing a Collaborative on the Scholarship of Assessment* have been developed by two Center faculty members. Dr. Peter C. Mather’s concept brief on *International Service Learning* was shared with a private foundation.

Two Ohio University Division of Student Affairs staff members serve as Collaterals with the Center for Higher Education—Collins Annin and Jen Flowers Maskiell. Collaterals are designed to offer Student Affairs staff opportunities for professional development related to assessment by working in the Center during the summer and throughout the academic year. Mr. Annin began his collateral relationship with the Center this summer. He has been working on an assessment plan for the Robe Leadership program in the College of Engineering in collaboration with Center affiliated faculty member Dr. Gary Moden. Ms. Maskiell was the first Division of Student Affairs staff member to establish a collateral relationship with the Center. Her work with the Center began in June 2007. She now has leadership responsibilities for the Division’s Assessment sub-committee focused on establishing a “Question of the Quarter” program in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research.

Three practicum students were recruited to work on projects related to the Center’s mission: Amanda Remnant participated in the development of the high school student questionnaire for the Access and Success Project—Appalachian Ohio: A Study of College Access, Retention, Postsecondary Pathways, and Completion. Katelin Getz developed an assessment plan for the Lasagna Project and gathered preliminary data from participants. Jon Wittlieff provided support to the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Director of Residence Life.

The Center for Higher Education co-sponsored two events. Center Director, Dr. Valerie Martin Conley, conducted a workshop on accessing and using national datasets for individuals from the 29 Appalachian counties in Ohio and staff members of the George Voinovich School. In collaboration with the Allen Student Help Center, the Center for Higher Education also co-sponsored a two–part webinar professional development
opportunity for Ohio University students, faculty, and staff: Proactively Identifying At-Risk Students Using Predictive Analytics.

Several presentations were made at regional and state–wide conferences. For the fifth year in a row, Center affiliated faculty member Dr. Robert B. Young presented the closing keynote address to the annual combined conference of the Ohio Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the Ohio College Personnel Association (OASPA/OCPA). Center affiliated faculty member Dr. Peter C. Mather presented *Service Learning in Honduras: Stories of Personal and Professional Development* at OASPA/OCPA with 4 students: Lauren Bolland, Erin Genide, Megan Karbley, and Dean Pidcock. Center Director, Dr. Valerie Martin Conley presented on *The College Navigator* at the 14th Annual Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE) Conference co-hosted by Belmont Technical College and Ohio University Eastern Campus in St. Clairsville, Ohio. Executive Director of OACHE, Dr. Brenda Haas, invited the Center to participate again in this year’s conference. We have coordinated with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) to invite Charles McGrew, Council on Postsecondary Education in Kentucky, to join us for this year’s OACHE conference. This will provide an opportunity to begin discussions regarding projects related to postsecondary education in rural and Appalachian Ohio and Kentucky.

The Center for Higher Education was a partner on two grant proposals: (1) an *Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT)* proposal for an interdisciplinary Nanoscience Program and (2) a proposal to The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation’s *Digital Media and Learning Competition*. Dr. David Richard Moore, Associate Professor of Instructional Technology was the Principal Investigator on the latter proposal, which sought funding to support the further development and deployment of a digital learning/assessment environment called the Spatial Probability Measure (SPM). A third grant proposal was submitted by Center Director, Dr. Valerie Martin Conley, to TIAA–CREF Institute. In addition, preliminary discussions and meetings were held with representatives across campus to assess interest in submitting National Science Foundation ADVANCE and BRIDGES grants.

There is considerable interest in pursuing these activities. A space was created on the COE Intranet to post documents and share information related to the development of an ADVANCE–OHIO grant submission. A decision was made to put this activity on–hold until the Center’s postdoctoral research associate search was completed and the new Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning for Ohio University was on–board. Activities related to this project are on–going. Center for Higher Education work related to the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) will strengthen Ohio University’s ability to compete in this area.

COACHE is a collaborative of colleges and universities nationwide dedicated to improving the recruitment and retention of tenure–track faculty. Center for Higher Education researchers are among a small number across the country who have been given access to
Center director, Dr. Valerie Martin Conley is working on research using these data for publication. Dr. Conley is collaborating with Dr. Cathy Trower, Director of the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) and Dr. Luis Ponjuan from the University of Florida on a project analyzing career stage differences in perceptions of campus climate by faculty on the tenure-track. Preliminary results from this study were presented at the AIR Annual Forum in Seattle, Washington May 2008.

**2007 – 08 Academic Year in Review**

Table 1 summarizes progress on each of the goals.

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<th>Performance Outcomes</th>
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<td>(2) Collaborative on the Scholarship of Assessment</td>
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<td><strong>Working Papers</strong></td>
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<td>(2) Center’s Role in Appalachia II- Young</td>
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<td>(3) Role of IR in Student Access and Success-Williford</td>
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<td>(5) Perceptions of Appalachian Students about Postsecondary Education-Powell</td>
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<td>(6) College Affordability Index-Adams</td>
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<td><strong>Collaterals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Practicum Students</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Events</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Presentations at regional or state-wide conferences</strong></td>
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<td>(2) OASPA/OCPA-Mather, et. al.</td>
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<td>(3) OASPA/OCPA-Young</td>
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<td><strong>Grant Proposals (total value of $50,000)</strong></td>
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<td>(2) The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation</td>
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**Center Activities**

Center activities have continued to focus on those areas of opportunity identified as part of the Center’s review process.

*Opportunities include development and support of: 1) Ohio University’s strategic priorities such as faculty development, the first-year experience, assessment of...*
and accountability for student learning, and the Academic Quality Improvement Program for regional accreditation; 2) cooperative work with two- and four-year institutions in the state, as well as work with the University’s Regional Higher Education programs, and 3) joint teaching and research appointments with other departments and administrative units.

In particular, the Center has targeted projects to align with these opportunities. Specific activities underway include:

**Faculty Development**

- **New Faculty Orientation:** Continuing to play a role with New Faculty Orientation—Center Director is presenting a round-table with Dr. Laurie Hatch, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning on Research on Teaching and Learning and the Scholarship of Assessment September 3, 2008.

- **COACHE:** COACHE is a collaborative of colleges and universities nationwide dedicated to improving the recruitment and retention of tenure-track faculty. Center for Higher Education researchers are among a small number across the country who have been given access to these data.

- **TIAA–CREF:** TIAA-CREF Institute uses research and education to facilitate the exchange of ideas and expertise among leaders in education, institutional decision-makers, and financial advisors. Many initiatives focus on faculty development. The Center Director is a TIAA-CREF Institute Research Fellow.

- **Collaborative on the Scholarship of Assessment:** Center Director, affiliated faculty, and collateral research associates are working toward the establishment of the collaborative. A draft Concept Brief on this initiative has been developed. This project serves as a bridge between the Center’s focus on faculty development and assessment and accountability of student learning.

**Assessment of and Accountability of Student Learning**

- Established a partnership with the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Recreation to collaborate on Assessment related activities and the use of Student Voice. Using standard, off-the-shelf handheld devices (PDAs) that quickly send data to a secure website, Student Voice puts on-site, in-context, timely student feedback and innovative mobile assessment and satisfaction data into decision-makers hands quickly and easily. **Upcoming Event:** Division of Student Affairs Assessment Day, September 25, 2008

**Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)**

- **Service:** Center Director is a member of the Vision Ohio Steering Committee and the Advisory Council for AQIP.
Cooperative work with two- and four-year institutions in the state

- **Funded:** Access and Success - Appalachian Ohio: College Access, Retention, Postsecondary Pathways, and Completion funded by the Ohio College Access Network. For more information see [http://www.voinovichschool.ohio.edu/projects/68.aspx](http://www.voinovichschool.ohio.edu/projects/68.aspx).

- **Targeted:** In discussion with OACHE about establishing a rural postsecondary education consortium for data sharing and decision support.

- **Targeted:** Out-sourced institutional research support for institutions in the state.

- **Service:** Center Director is a member of the AIR Board of Directors, Chair of the Higher Education Data Policy Committee, and an IPEDS Trainer. These activities help position the Center to be competitive for extramural funding related to data and decision support and enhance the credibility of the Center in establishing cooperative work with other institutions in the state.

Other Opportunities

- **Athens County Business Education Partnership (ACBEP)**

- Service Learning: **Honduras**

- Krista McCallum-Beatty, **Fulbright Scholar** to Germany, will be hosted this upcoming year by a University known as a leader in higher education research in Europe, with a Center that specializes in higher education research: The International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER-Kassle).

Looking Ahead
Center for Higher Education activities for next year will focus on developing **Concept Briefs** and submitting **Grant Proposals**. Additional staff will enable the Center to make these activities a priority. In addition to the postdoctoral research associate, The Department of Counseling and Higher Education has allocated a doctoral level graduate assistant to the Center. This student has been selected. James Archibald, a first-year doctoral student in Higher Education will serve as the Center’s Graduate Research Associate for the upcoming year.

Next Steps
Academic year 2007–08 has been focused primarily on re-engineering. The theme for the upcoming year will be growth. Next steps for the Center for Higher Education will include identifying specific strategies for adhering to the general principles outlined in the MOU, a Web site redesign and establishing operating budget guidelines.
The general principles outlined in the MOU specified that 2007–08 would serve as a “pilot test” and noted that several “process” issues could facilitate or constrain the Center’s efforts to achieve the performance expectations specified. These process issues included:

a. Recruitment and selection of a full-time researcher
b. Recruitment and selection of a graduate assistant, and
c. Establishment of partnership with the Division of Student Affairs in order to set up Collaterals.

Recruitment and selection of a full-time researcher was completed during the year, but the availability of the researcher during the year constrained the Center’s ability to focus efforts on submitting grant proposals. Staff turnover in the graduate assistant position in the College of Education and the availability of a full-time doctoral level graduate assistant in Higher Education with the skills and abilities needed to support the work of the Center also constrained the Center’s ability to meet performance expectations. A partnership with the Division of Student Affairs to establish Collaterals was successful, although the availability of the Center Director over the summer to work with these staff members was limited. We continue to look for ways to involve more College of Education faculty in the work of the Center and will focus attention on developing specific strategies to enhance participation in the coming months.

The Center is committed to continuing to make progress on all of the stated goals in the MOU, supporting the mission of the College of Education and leveraging opportunities identified in the Center’s Program Review.