Center for Higher Education

2008—09 Academic Year End Report
Executive Summary
This report provides a summary of activities and accomplishments for the Center for Higher Education that relate directly to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in September 2007.¹

- *Concept Briefs/Project Outlines* were developed to solicit interest or support for projects that have the potential for external funding in two areas: International Service Learning and Assessment

- *A Listserv Announcement Distribution* was created: [C4HE@listserv.ohio.edu](mailto:C4HE@listserv.ohio.edu)

- *A Working Paper Series* was established to showcase student and Center work. The first paper has been posted to the Center Web site: [http://www.coe.ohiou.edu/centers-partnerships/centers/center-higher-ed.htm](http://www.coe.ohiou.edu/centers-partnerships/centers/center-higher-ed.htm)

- Two *Collaterals*, 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, were established.

- Five *Practicum Students* were recruited to work on projects related to the Center’s mission.

- The Center sponsored or co-sponsored four *events*, two of which were in the form of a workshop geared toward dissemination of information and professional development related to using data to inform decision-making (i.e., using national datasets).

- Center faculty and staff made more than six *presentations* at regional or state-wide conferences related to issues in Higher Education.

- Center faculty and staff collaborated on the submission of *grant proposals* with combined budgets of more than $1.5 million.

¹ A copy of the MOU is available upon request.
Progress... and Promise

Center for Higher Education faculty and staff made many prominent contributions toward the accomplishment of Center goals during academic year 2008—09. These accomplishments provide evidence of the progress and promise of the Center to fulfill its mission and vision to be THE premier program for cultivating scholar-practitioners in all areas of administration in colleges and universities, with a special focus on community colleges within a rural context (i.e., Appalachian region).

This year marks the end of the second year of the agreement between the Center for Higher Education, Department of Counseling and Higher Education, and the College of Education outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in September 2007. The agreement outlined understandings arrived at through discussions regarding general principles, support needs, and performance outcomes for the Center for two years, with 2007–08 serving as a pilot year. The purpose of this report is to document progress, highlight significant Center activities and projects underway, and articulate next steps.

Efforts during academic year 2008–09 focused primarily on making significant progress toward the accomplishment of outlined goals: writing and submitting grant proposals, orienting and training personnel, readying inaugural papers for a working paper series, establishing and populating an electronic announcement listserv, developing processes for practicum student recruitment, building relationships—and on other infrastructure issues critical to the Center’s success.

Highlights

Major accomplishments for the year included submitting or partnering on the submission of three National Science Foundation (NSF) grant proposals, launching a working paper series, and collaborating with the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs on Access and Success – Appalachian Ohio. Figure 1 highlights results from just one of several reports and issue briefs that have been produced using the data collected from the Access and Success study so far. For more information on Access and Success – Appalachian Ohio see:

http://www.coe.ohiou.edu/centers-partnerships/centers/projectsandcollaboratives.htm

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2 A copy of the MOU is available upon request.
Center faculty and staff collaborated on the submission of three National Science Foundation (NSF) grant proposals during 2008-09 with combined budgets of more than $1.5 million:

- **Pulling up roots: A mixed-methods approach to the migration of mathematically rural talented youth and their participation in STEM careers**
- **Academic career success in science and engineering–related fields for female faculty at public two-year institutions**
- **Pathways to academic success in science and engineering for female students at public two-year institutions.**

This year marks the launch of the Center for Higher Education Working Paper Series. The purpose of the Series is to contribute to research on higher education and to stimulate conversation among educators, policy makers, practitioners, and the public. The first paper was written by Dr. A. Michael Williford, Associate Provost for Institutional Research and Assessment at Ohio University and affiliated faculty member with the Center: *Institutional Research in Support of Student and Institutional Success*. The paper is available on the Center Web site:

http://www.coe.ohiou.edu/centers-partnerships/centers/center-higher-ed.htm

Other papers are at various stages of completion:

- **Exploring the Cultural Identity of Community Colleges in Appalachia** by Robert B. Young (Edit Pending)
- **Ohio Dual Enrollment Strategies and Impacts on Students from Appalachian Ohio** by Tom Duncan (Edit Pending).
- **The role of institutional researchers in illuminating the academic behaviors and performance of community student athletes (working title)** by David Horton, Jr. (In Progress)
- **2007–08 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:08): Student Financial Aid Estimates for Students Attending Rural Institutions** by Jen Maskiell and Erica Knuckles (Tables Completed, Draft in Progress)
- **Faculty Leadership Survey: Descriptive Results** by James Archibald and Valerie Martin Conley (Data Collection Complete, Draft in Progress)

**Staffing and Human Resources**

Interdisciplinary research teams collaborated on the development of proposals. Teams included faculty and staff from the Colleges of Education, Arts & Sciences, and Engineering. Two faculty members who worked on proposals joined the Center as affiliated faculty members in 2008–09: Dr. Cynthia Anderson, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Sociology and
Anthropology; and Dr. David Koonce, Associate Professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering.

There is substantial promise in the synergy and expertise that exists in these teams. The Center gratefully acknowledges their contributions to the proposals. The Center also acknowledges Jean Marie Cackowski-Campbell, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs and Dr. Dmitry Suspitsin, Postdoctoral Research Associate, for their role in the development of the proposals. Dr. Suspitsin identified and reviewed relevant literature and wrote drafts of sections of the proposals. Ms. Cackowski-Campbell reviewed and edited all three proposals.

On July 1, 2009 the Higher Education Program and Center for Higher Education welcomed a new faculty member, Dr. David Horton Jr. Dr. Horton received his Ph.D. from the University of Florida. His research on community college athletics has been featured in Inside Higher Ed: http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/05/12/jucos.

Dr. Horton recently received the 2009 Outstanding Paper/Dissertation award of the Southeastern Association for Community College Research (SACCR). He was the featured luncheon speaker at the SACCR annual conference August 2-5 in Lexington, Kentucky.

Two Ohio University Division of Student Affairs staff members serve as Collaterals with the Center for Higher Education—Collins Annin and Jen 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 last summer. He has been working on an assessment plan for the Robe Leadership program in the College of Engineering in collaboration with Center faculty member Dr. Gary Moden.

Ms. Maskiell has served as a collateral for two years. She was the first Division of Student Affairs staff member to establish a collateral relationship with the Center. 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. She is currently co-authoring a paper with practicum student Erika Knuckles for the Center’s working paper series on How Rural Students Finance Postsecondary Education. Data are from the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS).

Events and Presentations at State or Regional Conferences
The Center for Higher Education hosted or co-sponsored two events during the preceding year. The first event was an Assessment Day for student affairs staff and graduate students, which the Center co-sponsored with the Ohio University Division of Student Affairs and Office of Institutional Research. Center faculty and staff contributed to the planning for the event and presented in several of the sessions.

The second event was a virtual meeting and webinar for staff of the Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE) and the Tennessee Appalachian Center for Higher Education (TnACHE) on accessing and using national datasets. Center Director, Dr. Valerie Martin Conley, conducted the webinar.

As part of an ongoing effort to establish a rural postsecondary education consortium for data sharing and decision support, Dr. Brenda Haas, OACHE’s Executive Director, invited the Center to participate in the annual OACHE conference. The Center contributed to planning the event by coordinating with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) to invite an IPEDS\(^3\) trainer to present at the conference. The presentation included information on College Navigator, a free consumer information tool designed to help students, parents, high school counselors and others get information about colleges and universities in the U.S.

Center faculty and staff participated in the Athens County Business Education Partnership (ACBEP), a regional “P–16” council for Athens and Meigs counties throughout the year. Regional P–16 councils are part of an

> “...education reform effort designed to create a seamless education and workforce system [for the state of Ohio] and produce the talent base needed for the 21st century economy. Established in statute and chaired by the Governor, the Partnership for Continued Learning is comprised of leaders from education, business and industry, economic development, government and local communities. The Partnership is charged in statute to make policy recommendations for improving P-16 alignment and to support regional P-16 efforts. By creating a framework that enables all Ohio students to succeed at school, on the job, and in their lives, the Partnership establishes a new level of collaboration that will help Ohio succeed as a state ([http://www.pcl.ohio.gov/index.php](http://www.pcl.ohio.gov/index.php), para 3).

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\(^3\) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is the core postsecondary education data collection program of the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). All institutions of higher education that receive federal student financial assistance authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended are required to report data to IPEDS.
Also, the Center Director is a member of the National Education Data Model P20 Steering Committee. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) contracts with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to update and maintain a National Education Data Model. The National Education Data Model is a conceptual model that provides a generic map of the interrelated education data used by teachers, researchers, and administrators. The P20 Steering Committee is being set up to assist CCSSO and ED by providing guidance on the NEDM and assist with developing ways the existing K-12 data model and existing electronic standards within higher education data can work together to enable expansion into higher education, share data more efficiently, and to design information systems that fully support the varied ways in which education information can be used.

All full-time Center faculty members were active in statewide and regional conferences. For the sixth year in a row, Center 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). Dr. Peter C. Mather presented *Creating Meaningful Work* at the annual conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), Region IV-E. Dr. Valerie Martin Conley presented a *Higher Education Data Policy Committee (HEDPC) update on the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)* at the Southern Association for Institutional Research (SAIR) meeting in Nashville, Tennessee; and co-presented at the Midwest Educational Research Association (MWERA) in Columbus, Ohio with doctoral student Greg Goodhart. Voinovich School Undergraduate Research Scholar, Mark Stovell, presented *An exploratory analysis of postsecondary education financing in Appalachia* at SAIR. Stovell, a senior in Political Science, was an intern/practicum student in the Center during 2008-09.

**Center Activities: University Review**

Centers and Institutes are periodically reviewed for continuation according to University Policy and Procedure No. 01.015. Center activities have continued to focus on those areas of opportunity identified as part of the Center’s last review.

*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.*

Center faculty and staff were actively engaged in service to the institution in areas directly aligned with these opportunities through membership on committees.
related to strategic planning, assessment, and accreditation. For example, the Center Director is a member of the Vision Ohio\textsuperscript{4} Steering Committee, which coordinates Ohio University’s institutional accreditation activities through the Academic Quality Improvement Program or AQIP. AQIP provides an alternative process for well-established institutions to maintain their accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), a regional accrediting agency within the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

In addition, the Center has targeted projects to align with these opportunities. A summary of some of these activities include:

**Access and Success**

- **FUNDED RESEARCH**: 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).
- **PARTNERSHIP**: Athens County Business Education Partnership (ACBEP). Center staff have participated in regular meetings with ACBEP and reviewed a Resource Manual containing documents and information concerning business and education in Appalachia, the state of Ohio, and the counties of Athens and Meigs located in Southeast Ohio. Content areas have been divided into four main subgroups including (a) economics, (b) primary and secondary education, (c) higher education, and (d) adult learning. A preliminary draft of a report summarizing the information, paying particular attention to understanding the academic pipeline is under development.

**Human Development**

- **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 that have been given access to these data. Career stage differences in perceptions of campus climate by faculty on the tenure-track, co-authored by Luis Ponjuan, Assistant Professor of Higher Education, University of Florida; Valerie Martin Conley, Ohio University; and Cathy Trower, Research Director and Co-Principal Investigator COACHE, Harvard is currently under review for publication.

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\textsuperscript{4} Vision Ohio is the academic plan for Ohio University: [http://www.ohio.edu/vision/](http://www.ohio.edu/vision/)
• **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. Center Director, Valerie Martin Conley, is a TIAA-CREF Institute Research Fellow. On April 24, 2009, Dr. Conley was asked to present at a symposium on *Managing Risk in a Market Meltdown*. Specifically, she presented information on the development of retirement incentive programs in higher education. See [http://www.tiaa-crefinstitute.org/articles/ti_managingrisk0609.html](http://www.tiaa-crefinstitute.org/articles/ti_managingrisk0609.html)

• **FACULTY LEADERSHIP SURVEY**: Center staff collaborated with the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to develop a survey of faculty senate/assembly chairs. The purpose of this Web-based survey on faculty leadership is to collect information from faculty leaders at U.S. higher education institutions in order to give a voice to issues of concern to faculty who work in these institutions across the country. The first wave of data collection from doctoral granting and master’s degree level institutions has been completed and a descriptive report is under development.

• **STUDENT PRESENTATION**: James Archibald, Graduate Research Associate, presented *Are institutions retiree friendly?* at the Association for Institutional Research Annual Forum in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Assessment of and Accountability of Student Learning**

• **PARTNERSHIP**: Center Director, affiliated faculty, and collateral research associates continued to contribute to the Division of Student Affairs Assessment Committee. A *Concept Brief* on this initiative was developed last year. Work on refining the brief is ongoing. This project serves as a bridge between the Center’s focus on faculty development and assessment 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. **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**

• **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. Center Director met with leadership of nearby institutions to discuss this opportunity.
• **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.

**International**

• **HONDURAS STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM:** Service learning program under the Direction of Center faculty member, Dr. Peter Mather. For more information see: [http://www.ohio.edu/educationabroad/programs/LatinAmerica/honduras.](http://www.ohio.edu/educationabroad/programs/LatinAmerica/honduras.)

• **FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR:** Krista McCallum-Beatty was hosted this year by a German 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 continue to focus on developing **Concept Briefs** and submitting **Grant Proposals**, as well as on conducting high-quality research and looking for innovative ways to engage more students, faculty and staff in Center projects. Staffing needs have not been met, so we are continuing discussions about how best to do so. We bid farewell to Postdoctoral Research Associate, Dmitry Suspitsin. Plans are underway to hire a new research associate. In addition to the research associate, the Department of Counseling and Higher Education has allocated a doctoral level graduate assistant to the Center. James Archibald, a second–year doctoral student in Higher Education Administration will continue to serve as the Center’s Senior Graduate Research Associate for the upcoming year. We are grateful to the Department and the Dean’s Office for their continued support.

**Next Steps**

Academic year 2008–09 has been focused primarily on growth—making progress toward securing external funding to allow the Center to become self-sustaining. The theme for the upcoming year will be creating synergy to fulfill our promise. 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 2007-08. While the position was filled during 2008-09, staff turnover in this position has constrained our ability to make progress on growth and infrastructure as planned. The availability of full-time doctoral level graduate assistants in Higher Education with the skills and abilities needed to support the work of the Center also constrained our ability to meet performance expectations. The partnership with the Division of Student Affairs to establish *Collaterals* has been successful, although the availability of the Center Director and other faculty over the summer to work with these staff members has been limited. We continue to look for ways to involve more College of Education and other Ohio University 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.