Ohio University
Comprehensive Quality Review Highlights Report - September 2015

Special Circumstances—Activities Related to Changes in HLC and AQIP

Ohio University originally was scheduled to host an AQIP team for its seven-year Quality Checkup Visit in 2014-15 with the reaffirmation review to be done in 2015-16. We had devoted significant planning and publicity to that schedule. In April 2014 Eric Martin officially informed us of the AQIP changes and the resulting move of the Comprehensive Quality Review to 2015-16. This change was received with mixed reactions. We had reorganized and revitalized our AQIP Task Force to complete the 2013 Systems Portfolio in a more inclusive and efficacious model. This work was anticipated to take the University toward a 2014-15 site visit, and the delay resulted in a somewhat reduced momentum, following our intense involvement in the preparation of the Systems Portfolio and the expectation of a visit immediately following. On the other hand, the University leadership recognized an opportunity to work to sustain interest in AQIP in the long term. This delay also provided an extra year to continue to communicate about AQIP to the entire University community and focus additional attention on assessment of learning objectives. We would not have been able to accomplish as much were the visit to occur earlier. Furthermore, the University more thoroughly understands the ongoing nature of institutional accreditation through AQIP. Whereas previous attention had been somewhat episodic, the University community is much more supportive of a continuous and sustained approach. Since 2002, Ohio University has been proud to be a part of AQIP. In the years 2012-2015, however, Ohio University has approached AQIP with renewed energy and interest. The president, provost, and members of the Academic Leadership Council all have worked to inform and involve 5,000 faculty and staff about the AQIP Categories, the HLC Criteria for Accreditation, the AQIP Action Projects, Systems Portfolio, and Systems Appraisal, the results of the 2015 Strategy Forum, and preparations for the Comprehensive Quality Review in fall 2015. Regular AQIP updates have been given at Board of Trustees meetings.

In April 2015 the University sent a team to the scheduled Strategy Forum. At that forum, we had four existing Action Projects (sustainability, universal design, curricular themes, and assessment). We diligently have managed our Action Projects on a consistent schedule (January through December) since 2002. Given the University’s size and complexity, all our Action Projects extended over multiple years, with AQIP reviewers’ support and commendations. While we were expecting changes from AQIP in the approach to Action Projects in the long term, at the April 2015 Strategy Forum we were presented with the expectation that we make changes immediately. We were given instructions to change our thinking about the size and scope of Action Projects, limiting them to six to nine months, and stagger their schedules among fall, spring, and summer. These changes resulted in the completion of the sustainability project and adjustments to the scope, timing, and reporting of the other projects. All four of our Action Projects were last reviewed in April 2015, and the Project Web site calls for responses within 60 days. Please note that, based on advice from AQIP representatives at the Strategy Forum, we are delaying reporting of the remaining two projects until their scheduled implementation in the new schedule. Although the reports will not appear until well beyond the 60 days of their previous
review, significant planning and work are occurring to frame the Action Project activities into the new AQIP Action Project scope and schedule.

Ohio University is pleased to have had five other touchpoints with HLC in recent years. First, we applied for and were approved to open two new additional locations: Dublin, OH and Cleveland, OH. Second, we hosted an additional location visit to three of our locations that are tied directly to our regional campuses: Cambridge (Eastern and Zanesville campuses); Pickerington (Lancaster Campus); and Proctorville (Southern Campus). Third, we were invited to apply for and were approved for HLC’s Notification Program for additional locations. Fourth, we applied for and were given full approval for offering distance and correspondence courses and programs. Fifth, we submitted screening materials for review of contractual and consortial relationships. HLC reviewers concluded that our relationships did not extend to academic programming, and no further review was needed.

**Actions Capitalizing on Systems Appraisal Feedback**

The following observations and recommendations were gleaned from Ohio University’s AQIP Systems Appraisal report received in February 2014. The AQIP Task Force reviewed and analyzed this 50 page document with over 150 observations and continuous quality improvement recommendations. The AQIP Task Force condensed and prioritized the recommendations listed below as the most important and relevant actions that Ohio University should take. The numbers in parentheses refer to the sections in the Systems Portfolio and Appraisal documents (SC refers to the “Strategic Challenges” section of the Systems Appraisal).

**Teaching, Learning, and Assessment**

Observation: University-wide teaching and learning expectations need to be better documented and communicated across the institution (1).

Recommendations and Actions: The AQIP Task Force recommended that the Executive Vice President and Provost (EVPP) create a University Advisory Committee on Teaching, Learning, and Assessment to oversee this effort to create and communicate general University-wide teaching and learning expectations based on the mission, vision, and the 4 x 4 strategic plan. In addition, greater University-wide coordination and support of teaching, learning, and assessment were needed. Support for teaching, learning, and assessment is to be continued and adequately supported by academic units (1), academic support units (6), including students and other stakeholders (3). Increased central support of teaching and learning also is recommended. This recommendation already is being partially addressed by the creation of the position, Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovations, and the resulting reorganization of the Center for Teaching and Learning, eLearning, and Academic Technologies. The University is further developing programs’ student learning objectives, which is in progress and is the responsibility of the college and campus deans.

Observation: While the support for teaching and learning described in the Systems Appraisal was complimentary about the services that Ohio University provides to faculty and students, they are not adequate to meet Ohio University’s growing enrollments of diverse populations of students with different learning needs.
Recommendations and Actions: Ohio University is redoubling its efforts in the activities and plans described in the AQIP Systems Portfolio Category 1, Helping Students Learn, and in its Action Projects related to HLC Criterion 3, Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support (1). Setting University-wide expectations for effective teaching and learning (above), identifying and addressing the increasing learning support needs of students and faculty, and identifying and addressing differences in students’ learning styles and experiences. The creation of the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee is helping Ohio University be more intentional in support of its academic mission and vision.

Observation: “The University has an opportunity to create a systematic, institutional-level program of assessment that will define its vision for student learning across the university in order to inform institutional strategic decision-making, allocation of resources, and identification of best practices” (1P18/Core Component 4B). “Comprehensive analysis of performance results can then inform future strategic planning priorities and processes” (1).

Recommendations and actions: Ohio University is increasing its efforts in the activities and plans described in the AQIP Systems Portfolio Category 1, Helping Students Learn, and in its Action Projects related to HLC Criterion 4, Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement (1, 7). The University’s academic units are implementing the new academic program review and assessment of student learning objectives, and they are developing strategies to sustain these activities. The Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee was created to oversee and support assessment plan development, implementation, and follow-through to help Ohio University demonstrate systematically the quality of its academic programs and sustain these plans over time. The Action Project on assessment, now in its second version, is helping the University respond to this recommendation; it is extremely important that the University continues to make progress in carrying out its plans for academic program review and assessment of student learning objectives. The HLC Systems Appraisal states quite clearly the University’s plan in this area:

“Ohio University is developing a new student learning assessment based upon a student success model in order to institute continuous improvement processes. Learning objectives for each academic program are developed by faculty and posted online. All programs are engaged in updating programmatic learning objectives and assessment plans in order to generate documentation of praxis” (1). Furthermore, “The University may want to directly address how it supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future” (8).

Leading, Communicating, and Planning

Observation: The 4 x 4 strategic plan needs to continue to move forward, to further define, iterate, and operationalize the strategic priorities and the four fundamentals into achievable, measurable objectives with realistic targets (5, 8).

Recommendations and Actions: The EVPP is continuing to develop and operationalize the University’s strategic plan (5, 8). Operational goals and annual targets will be included in the University’s dashboards. Further incorporating the plan’s stated and shared mission, vision, and values into all operational areas and locations of the University and communicate them regularly to the University community, especially students. AQIP principles, working through the AQIP Task Force, are expected to help the University with its change management strategies in this area.
Observation: Ohio University needs to better integrate and formalize all operational areas, including Regional Higher Education (RHE)/eLearning/nontraditional students, in its planning activities and collaborative relationships (SC).

Recommendation and Action: The next generation of enrollment planning and strategic planning activities will ensure a stronger presence of regional higher education and eLearning as the University strives to serve greater numbers of nontraditional students. University-wide guidelines are needed in the following areas (SC, 5): external relationships, define guidelines for developing & measure effectiveness (9); and better align services provided to/by Athens and other venues (8, 9). Our Systems Portfolio was not able to capture the extent to which Regional Higher Education and eLearning are integrated into the entire University.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)
Observation: The University needs to develop stronger and more directly relevant CQI processes and measures and make them more comprehensive and universally applicable to all units as it further develops Academic Support Improvement Committee (ASIC) for the Responsibility Centered Management (RCM) implementation (7).

Recommendations and Actions: Repeating the environmental scans, which need to be regularly scheduled, will help identify stakeholders’ changing needs (3), and develop responsive action plans accordingly. ASIC is assisting with the needed improvement in linking units’ identified processes and performance (2, 6, 7) in academic support areas. We are measuring comparative performance wherever possible (SC, 2, 6, 7, 9). We are developing a system for acting on stakeholder satisfaction/dissatisfaction (3), which began with the spring 2014 administration of the Modern Think (employee) Survey (4, 6). Also, the Service Alignment Initiative was mentioned in the Systems Appraisal as a continuous improvement model; it will be supported and assessed to demonstrate its efficacy and then communicated more broadly to the University community (8).

Observation: Program reviews, evaluations, and assessments are increasingly important to achieve and demonstrate quality programs and operations. Ohio University received positive feedback for the work it is planning with ASIC, academic program review, and academic assessment (1, 7).

Recommendations and Actions: In order to further develop existing program review processes (1, 2, 6, 7), the ASIC developed formal guidelines for a process to prioritize & plan for department needs (2). In the University Curriculum Council 7-year review academic program reviews, the EVPP provided administrative support to assist in the review process (1). In both processes, units under review will strive to share more broadly results from their reviews and the actions taken to make the continuous quality improvement efforts stronger and better known (5, 6).

Actions Capitalizing on Strategy Forum Participation

In April 2015, a team of eight Ohio University representatives participated in the Strategy Forum. Present were the University’s president, executive vice president and provost, Chair of Faculty Senate, academic deans of the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Fine Arts, University College, the Executive Dean of Regional Higher Education, and the Associate Provost for Institutional Accreditation. The membership of this team represented a level of renewed support
by the University’s executive administration. The 2015 Strategy Forum was the first attended by Ohio University’s president and provost since the University joined AQIP in 2002. The members of this particular team previously had not had opportunities to work together in such a close, collaborative format. Prior to the Forum event, the team selected academic assessment as the designated action project. We came to the Forum with an existing assessment action project that was very broad in scope. It included three individually large components: developing and enhancing learning objectives and assessment plans for all academic programs; assessing eLearning quality of service; and implementing a newly revised academic program review process. Each of these components was expected to take years to mature.

Participation in the Strategy Forum enabled the team members to understand that the previous action project was unnecessarily ambiguous, ambitious, and difficult to manage. Furthermore, the team realized that in its previous project, it would likely lead to disappointing results. As a result of discussions among team members during the Forum’s exercises, and because of the new, smaller, quicker AQIP Action Project paradigm being introduced, the team developed a new Action Project with very specific components and tasks that realistically could be completed in the 2015-16 academic year. Work began on planning to implement this action project immediately after the team returned to campus. While Ohio University had previously dutifully completed its Action Projects within each annual cycle, this new project from the 2015 Strategy Forum was initiated with more energy and enthusiasm than before. In addition, the team, in consultation with the AQIP Task Force, decided to complete a successful but long-standing project (sustainability) and re-focus two other projects (universal design and curricular themes) to fit the new Action Project schedule and protocol. Furthermore, Ohio University’s AQIP Task Force will take lessons learned at the 2015 Strategy Forum and apply them in a more effective approach to identifying and carrying out future Action Projects.

Describe How Action Projects Have Advanced the University’s CQI Efforts

Ohio University’s three current Action Projects are now much more evidence-driven than before. The new reporting format is more clear and evidence-based. Our newly revised Action Project on assessment culture revises our previous Action Project on Academic Assessment. During our Strategy Forum in April 2015, AQIP leaders encouraged us to focus our Action Project to include activities that could be completed within nine months. Ohio University has a long history with academic assessment, beginning in the 1980's. With encouragement from the most recent Systems Appraisal, the University leadership recognized the need to revitalize its academic assessment efforts. The overall vision of the project is to recognize, develop, support, and share existing, proven practices among Ohio University faculty for improving student learning and expanding opportunities for student success. The driving force behind this vision is the need to demonstrate, externally and internally, the continuous improvement process for ensuring that our academic programs are current and of high quality. All academic departments/schools, colleges, and regional campuses are increasingly involved in academic assessment activities.

Even with the new Action Project protocol and schedule, we anticipate that this new Action Project will take up to three years for all components to mature. As a result, we are dividing it into phases. The first phase is expected to occur and be completed during the 2015-16
academic year. As this project matures and evolves, additional activities will be identified and added to expand Ohio University's capacity for an institution-wide culture of assessment.

**Update on Assessment of Student Learning & Recent Successes**

During preparation of the AQIP Systems Portfolio which was submitted in November 2013, numerous discussions occurred and inventories taken of the ways Ohio University's academic colleges support teaching, learning, and assessment. Due to its decentralized academic structure, responsibility for implementing and revitalizing academic assessment was delegated to the academic college and campus deans. Ohio University is a large research university of nearly 40,000 students on six campuses, ten academic colleges, and over 60 diverse academic departments comprised of 1,900 faculty.

Following our submission of the Systems Portfolio, each college and campus began a process of working with their academic programs to develop or update their learning objectives and develop more formal assessment methods and action plans. All of Ohio University's academic programs have been working on revitalizing their assessment plans. Each program's faculty are expected to participate in the development of their assessment plans. Ohio University is attempting to redirect resources and attention to make significant, sustainable progress with academic assessment that yields meaningful evidence for academic planning. Consultants were brought to the University to work with academic programs’ faculty in developing appropriate and assessable learning objectives. Colleges have begun to post programs' learning objectives on their own Web sites. A leading example of this work is from the College of Arts and Sciences: [https://www.ohio.edu/cas/about/assessment/learning/index.cfm#](https://www.ohio.edu/cas/about/assessment/learning/index.cfm#)

In October 2014, at the recommendation of the AQIP Task Force, the provost convened the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Advisory Committee to help Ohio University be more intentional in its mission to support the intellectual and personal development of its students and its vision to be the nation’s best transformative learning community. The purpose of this committee is to provide a vehicle for Ohio University to coordinate and support teaching, learning, and assessment for its diverse academic programs and levels. It is intended to provide a venue for academic leaders and innovators from the faculty to discuss and plan how Ohio University should best support teaching, learning, and assessment as a long-term, sustainable venture. In part, the charge to this committee is based on these specific 2014 AQIP Systems Appraisal recommendations:

- . . . directly address how [Ohio University] supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.
- . . . develop a new student learning assessment based upon a student success model in order to institute continuous improvement processes.
- . . . create a systematic, institutional-level program of assessment that will define its vision for student learning across the university in order to inform institutional strategic decision-making, allocation of resources, and identification of best practices.
The committee was charged with identifying University-wide teaching and learning expectations based on Ohio University’s mission, vision, and the 4 x 4 strategic plan; bringing together existing ideas, best practices, and innovations on teaching, learning, and assessment from Ohio University’s academic units and share them across the University; recommending ways in which Ohio University can coordinate the increasing learning support needs of students and faculty, including ways to address differences in students’ learning styles and experiences, use of technology, and support of instructional innovations; and monitoring academic program assessment.

In September 2014 and again in February 2015, Dr. Doug Eder was invited to campus to lead discussions, conduct workshops, and meet with faculty on assessing learning objectives. Dr. Eder met with representatives from all academic program representatives and continued consulting with many of them throughout the year. These programs included departments in the College of Arts and Sciences and schools in the Colleges of Fine Arts and Health Sciences & Professions. Dr. Eder recognized the differences among Ohio University’s academic units in their approaches to assessment. Among his recommendations were the need to commit visible resources and promotion from central leadership to emphasize the importance of improving teaching and learning though assessment. The University took this feedback, along with recommendations from the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee and the AQIP Task Force. Formal communication to the faculty from the president and the provost about assessment occurred in spring 2015. The president and the provost issued a joint letter to the faculty. Among other things, it asked for “support in capturing assessment evidence that truly reveal each program’s commitment to academic quality and in making such evidence explicit . . . that information collected about student learning objectives informs your programs’ academic programming and review.” Also in spring 2015, similar communication from the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee reiterated that:

- establishing program learning objectives, assuring student learning, and improving programs are responsibilities of the faculty. Criterion 4 requires demonstrations of program effectiveness and educational quality through processes that (1) assess student achievement of learning outcomes and (2) use assessment information to improve student learning. Because faculty are the drivers of OHIO’s curriculum, teaching, and student learning, faculty are responsible for demonstrating continuous improvement to teaching and learning through student achievement of learning outcomes.

In addition, to help communicate the importance of accreditation and the assessment of student learning to the university community, the TLA Committee created a flyer “Accreditation and Assessment: Summary for Faculty and Instructors,” summarizing what Ohio faculty and instructors should know and do with regard to student learning assessment and continuous improvement. This flyer was distributed via email to all Ohio University faculty and staff in spring, 2015 and again in fall, 2015.

Using learning objectives as its foundation, the University Curriculum Council revised the criteria for and process of its seven-year academic program review. A phased, three-year implementation began two years ago, giving programs under review time to collect the necessary student outcome data. Full implementation is expected in 2016-17. The provost appointed a new
Faculty Fellow from the University's senior faculty, to assist in administering the program reviews and ensure their success. In fall 2014, 35 faculty reviewers were recruited and charged with catching up in the schedule of reviews that was delayed while the criteria were revised. Academic administrators from the Executive Vice President and Provost's Office, and members of Faculty Senate and the University Curriculum Council are working to implement the revised review guidelines. Significant progress has been made in conducting the reviews in 2014-15 and ensuring they are expedited through the review process.

The renewal of learning objectives and the development of actionable assessment plans by the academic units caused many faculty to realize the need for the University to be more intentional and coordinated in its support of teaching, learning, and assessment. In February 2015, the provost created a new position, Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovations. Academic Technologies, eLearning, and the Center for Teaching and Learning were reorganized under this new position. All of these staff are working within the TLA Committee, which is seeking ways to institutionalize a uniformly supportive approach to assessment of learning objectives.

The Office of Institutional Research is in the process of creating a centralized office of assessment, which is to be called the Assessment Clearinghouse. Existing Institutional Research staff with assessment expertise is being reorganized into this new unit. The purpose of this unit is to support our academic programs’ efforts to assess teaching and learning. Among its immediate plans are to create Web-based resources, such as a permanent, centralized repository for assessment plans and reports; serve as an informational resource for academic units conducting assessments; and to serve as a liaison between Institutional Research and the academic departments/schools. Institutional Research continues to do student outcome assessments in the form of retention and graduation rate studies, two different follow-up surveys of graduates, and by meeting the assessment requirements of the Voluntary System of Accountability (NSSE, standardized testing of general education skills using ACT’s CAAP test, and other assessments as required).

Beginning in spring 2015, the TLA Committee undertook a comprehensive inventory, through an online survey, of all academic programs’ learning objectives and assessment plans. This survey is a starting point for the Institutional Research Assessment Clearinghouse. With a 90% response rate, preliminary results indicate that 94% of undergraduate programs have student learning outcomes, 80% have identified a set of current measures or methods to evaluate student learning outcomes, 66% have collected data based on current assessment measures or methods, and 71% are using current student learning outcomes measures to make improvements. Whereas, at the graduate preliminary results show that 68% of undergraduate programs have student learning outcomes, 58% have identified a set of current measures or methods to evaluate student learning outcomes, 45% have collected data based on current assessment measures or methods, and 44% are using current student learning outcomes measures to make improvements. The next step in the process of building the Institutional Research Assessment Clearinghouse is to work with departments /schools to create executive summaries of their assessment plans to be listed on the Assessment Clearinghouse website. Development of the website and collection of the executive summaries are being done simultaneously.
In collaboration with representatives from each academic college and Institutional Research, the Career & Leadership Development Center created and implemented a customized first destination survey, following National Association of Colleges and Employers standards that included college-specific questions from three colleges. This survey is a university-wide effort to uniformly collect critical outcome data during the first six months post-graduation, which complements the one-year and five-year surveys done by Institutional Research. We expect to obtain usable data from at least 65% of graduates. Beginning January 2016, results will be shared with each college, Institutional Research, and other assessment professionals on campus to use for the purpose of improving planning, services and programs across the University.

Ohio University’s Libraries provide strong support for teaching, learning, and assessment. Over the past two years, the Libraries installed an experimental, active learning classroom for the use of librarians and archivists working with courses that have information literacy-related assignments. This technology-enriched classroom includes flexible, adaptable furniture that easily allows students to move, work, and share alone or in small or large groups. It was designed to align learning spaces and with pedagogy that encourages direct student interaction with library digital resources. The room was designed by a team of teaching librarians who reviewed the literature on active learning classrooms and performed a local needs assessment with all of the Ohio University librarians who teach. In 2014, a group of librarians completed a mixed-methods research project to study the information needs of graduate students at Ohio University. The results are being used to develop workshops and other resources to help graduate students cultivate their research skills and include partnerships in development with the Graduate Research and Writing Center, the Graduate College, and others on campus. In 2015, a group of librarians received a grant from the University’s 1804 Fund for an undergraduate learning project that incentivizes faculty to work with a librarian to revise assignments and syllabi based on knowledge of student research habits from national assessments like Project Information Literacy.

**Highlights of Institutional Priorities**

**Instructional Innovation**

With input from the AQIP Task Force, representatives of academic leadership, faculty, and staff, in February 2015 the provost created the position of Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovation. Reorganization and repurposing of existing academic support units were done. This new position’s portfolio now includes eLearning, Academic Technologies, and the Center for Teaching and Learning. Several new academic technology staff positions were created in 2014-15, each of which was designated to serve an academic college, to support faculty use of innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

**Innovation Strategy**

Over the past two years Ohio University has taken steps to develop a strategy (i.e., the Innovation Strategy) to ensure that we continue to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Working with an outside consultant, the Innovation Strategy Interim Report was released in September 2014 and identified four broad portfolios of major challenges, each encompassing a suite of niches for possible University investment. The niches represent
significant societal problems, linked to areas in which Ohio University has existing assets or expertise, and offering the potential for investment with high-level interdisciplinary impact. In May 2015, an RFP was issued to the University community, and 49 pre-proposals were received as of August 17. A two-stage review process for the pre-proposals is planned, and final decisions should be announced in fall 2015. Resources up to $5 million have been allocated for these efforts.

The Innovation Strategy encompasses the full spectrum of the university’s activities – including teaching and learning, research and scholarship, creative activity, and the operational functions of the university. It also aims to incentivize and leverage interdisciplinary and multi-college collaboration. In recognition of these efforts, in spring 2015, APLU recognized Ohio University as an “Innovation and Economic Prosperity University.”

General Education Task Force

General Education at Ohio University is offered through a variety of different academic programs. Since the inception of the current three-tier general education curriculum in 1986, its efficacy and currency have been studied by a series of committees, with modifications implemented every few years. In recent years, more comprehensive reviews have occurred, and in 2013-14 the General Education Task Force synthesized the work of previous groups, met with academic deans, Faculty Senate, and more than 500 faculty members to create “Common Goals for Baccalaureate Programs at Ohio University.” Work continued into 2014-15 to shape common goals in three areas: quantitative reasoning; oral and written communication skills; and breadth of knowledge. Subcommittees were formed around these three areas to develop learning objectives and how the curriculum might help student achieve these learning objectives, along with an appropriate assessment plan.

Tuition Guarantee

Over the last few years, Ohio University has recognized the need for controlling rising tuition costs and has responded by developing a guaranteed tuition program. With significant background planning, working with the Ohio Board of Regents and the Ohio Legislature, beginning in fall 2015, The Ohio Guarantee was launched. The Ohio Guarantee is an innovative approach to tuition among Ohio public universities. It is a cohort based, level-rate comprehensive fee model that assures students and their families a set of fixed rates for the pursuit of an undergraduate degree at Ohio University. Tuition, housing, dining, and fee rates established at matriculation remain unchanged for 12 consecutive semesters.

ModernThink Survey

A clear recommendation from the 2013 Systems Appraisal was that Ohio University conduct an employee satisfaction survey. A comprehensive survey of employees had not been done in over 10 years, but one already was in the planning stages by the time of the 2013 Systems Appraisal recommendation. According to the letter from the president and the provost, “in order for Ohio University to be the nation’s best transformative learning community . . . we must foster a work environment that supports the productivity and success of all employees.” Leaders of the faculty, classified, and administrative senates collaborated to conduct the ModernThink Climate Survey in 2014. This effort is an example of the University’s collaborative and inclusive approach to continuous improvement. The letter stated that “the
survey results may reveal some areas of concern, and we are committed to approaching the results with a spirit of collaboration and commitment to the betterment of our campuses.” A Campus Climate Task Force was created with broad institutional representation. Results have been shared freely with the University community on a Web site, and the Task Force is developing recommendations. The continuous improvement of workplace climate is an ongoing initiative.

Capital Campaign Goal Exceeded

As evidence of support from alumni and friends, in 2015 Ohio University announced that it exceeded the goal of its “Promise Lives” campaign. In its most significant fundraising campaign, the original goal was $450 million. In spring 2015 President McDavis announced that the campaign had reached a level of $500 million.

Tobacco-Free Policy

In August 2015, Ohio University implemented a tobacco-free policy on all of its campuses and locations. Ohio University supports a smoke- and tobacco-free campus as a wellness initiative to protect the health of students, faculty, staff and guests in keeping with the recommendation of the Ohio Board of Regents in July 2012. Becoming a tobacco-free campus encourages respect for others and respect for the environment. Compliance is voluntary. Understanding the realities of nicotine/tobacco addiction and the concern about personal rights, there is strong empathy for university community members who smoke or use tobacco products. Smoking-cessation resources are provided for students and employees, such as on-campus courses, information, and referrals.

Highlights Related to Distance Education

In 2014-15, as a result of applying to HLC to increase its distance education offerings and HLC’s subsequent policy change, Ohio University’s stipulation regarding distance and correspondence courses and programs was upgraded to “Approved for distance education courses and programs. Approved for correspondence education courses and programs.”

In January 2015, because of distance learning’s growing strategic importance to Ohio University, eLearning engaged a consultant to perform a voluntary program review of its distance education operation. Following is a summary of that assessment, paraphrased from the consultant’s report: Coordination of Ohio University’s distance learning degree programs is decentralized among the academic colleges and regional campuses. eLearning Ohio provides or arranges for student support services, ensures compliance with state and federal requirements, and markets programs. It may also partner with academic programs in coordinating distance program development. Distance learning continues to grow at Ohio University, and the report identified a number of opportunities for the University to continue to be successful in this area:
- Distance learning strategic plan
- Data collection and evaluation of effectiveness/assessment
- Selection/approval process for program development
- Faculty/instructional support
- Policies/procedures guiding distance education
Building on work that had begun the previous year, in February 2015 eLearning, Academic Technologies, and the Center for Teaching and Learning were reorganized under a new Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovation (SVPII). With input from the consultant’s report and academic leaders familiar with distance learning at Ohio University, the SVPII created a discussion document to address these and other opportunities to enhance distance education at the University. Three fundamental principles were identified to guide this work:

1. Distance learning should be thought of as a modality, like a classroom option, that is available at the course and program level. Fundamentally, we believe distance learning is not a distinct thing wholly or even largely removed from traditional educational models. It is a delivery option, a learning environment that is on a continuum with the variety of modalities already in play on our campuses—office hours, seminar rooms, lecture halls, active learning classrooms, labs, internships and so on.

2. Distance learning should be treated, to the greatest degree possible, in the same way traditional academic operations are treated. Distance learning should be managed operationally by having like needs integrated into operations that are already in place to support traditional learning modalities where possible. For instance, student recruitment, marketing and enrollment management for distance programs should be the responsibility of the same unit that manages this for campus-based programs. There, are, however, unique needs that arise in the context of fully distance learning (e.g., instructional design, web development, remote proctoring) that need to be acknowledged and made available to support instructors.

3. Students enrolled in distance programs should experience a high quality of care and made to feel a part of the Ohio University community. The University’s distinctive ability to cultivate an attachment to place and community is one of its most powerful and unique advantages. This culture should be extended to our distance education community.

Given the above discussion document principles, the following identified services and functions are assigned to responsible units in a way that is built upon a reconceptualization of eLearning as a service unit. This next generation eLearning unit will be primarily responsible for leadership, project management, administrative support, student support, and coordination across many units which need to be engaged for successful distance learning operations. The vision is for an eLearning unit that supports both a turnkey operation from the perspective of academic units and a seamless high touch enrolled student experience (i.e., many units involved, but coordinated by project management and service center within eLearning).

A more mature distance learning operation will require investment across administrative units (Enrollment Management, eLearning, Information Technology, and many others) that will increase as distance learning grows. Academic units may pursue and require support for distance learning operations more or less aggressively than other units. Therefore, it is recommended that the budgeting model for eLearning be reclassified as a service center (horizontal) in the RCM model. This will require the development of a satisfactory model, or weighting factor in RCM, to account for a fair and adequate allocation and service management.
Additional Locations

The purpose of Ohio University's additional locations is to provide students throughout Ohio and primarily Southeastern Ohio with access to the same quality of educational experience they would receive at the Athens and regional campuses. Five campuses and five additional locations help meet that objective. At the undergraduate locations affiliated with our regional campuses, traditional and non-traditional students are served. Many students are working full- or part-time, some are single parents, some have limited economic means, others want to improve their job opportunities. Some students simply want to live at home while earning a college degree. Ohio University’s regional campus and additional location students experience a vibrant, student-centered learning environment characterized by small class sizes, highly qualified professors, and appropriate uses of instructional technologies. Because Ohio University has a single curriculum for all campuses and locations, the educational experience students receive is expected to be equivalent and established learning outcomes are expected to be met, wherever the course is delivered and whatever mode of instruction is pursued.

Ohio University's Regional Higher Education division manages and directs fiscal resources for three of the additional locations. Additional locations are established only if instructional capacity is available and resources are sufficient for sustaining newly established programs. Ohio University has a long history of providing quality off-campus academic offerings. Regional Higher Education has over 50 years of experience in managing additional locations. It has been a model of efficiency and effectiveness within the state of Ohio. It has been innovative in the use of instructional technology, delivering instruction through traditional and electronic means via satellite and compressed video.

Ohio University complies with all state and federal laws regarding accessibility and safety at all its locations. The University treats its additional locations as part of its comprehensive physical plant. Facilities Management provides custodial and maintenance support. RHE and the academic departments work together to ensure that educational facilities at additional locations are comparable to those of the main campus. Should specialized training spaces such as laboratories be needed, the University partners with local high schools or businesses until the need is met or until appropriate training spaces can be added permanently.

In 2012, Ohio University was granted HLC approval for opening two additional locations: Cleveland and Dublin, Ohio. In fall 2014, Ohio University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine welcomed its first class of medical students at the Dublin location, with 50 students matriculating. In fall 2015, the College welcomed its first class of medical students at the Cleveland location, with an additional 50 students matriculating. The three osteopathic medical school locations now enroll 240 first-year students. The Dublin location is also managed by the College of Health Sciences and Professions.

In fall 2014, Ohio University hosted an additional locations visit to three of our locations that are tied directly to our regional campuses: Cambridge (Eastern and Zanesville campuses); Pickerington (Lancaster Campus); and Proctorville (Southern Campus). Ohio University was invited to apply for and was received into the “Notification Program for Additional Locations.”
Dual Enrollment: Assuring Academic Quality

In 2014-15, the Ohio Board of Regents implemented the “College Credit Plus” program. This program expanded the scope of Ohio’s existing dual enrollment program to encourage even more high school students to enroll for college credits. Given the expansion of such enrollments and the need for increased oversight, quality assurance, and coordination, Ohio University created two staff positions, one for the Athens campus and one for the regional campuses. In their first year, these coordinators worked to ensure that Ohio University’s college courses offered at secondary school locations carry the same rigor, quality of instruction and learning outcomes as courses offered on a campus.

Oversight of dual enrollment is facilitated through an Advisory Board who helps advise and inform the Director of Dual Enrollment about issues and changes, assist in decision-making, facilitates involvement by academic programs, and advocates quality with other state entities. Admission to dual enrollment at any of Ohio University’s campuses is modeled on the same review process in place for degree-seeking freshman enrollment. In determining admissibility, all available data may be considered, such as strength and rigor of the student’s curriculum, student performance (grades, class rank, GPA, ACT/SAT/Compass/AP scores, prior postsecondary work, writing assessment, secondary educator recommendations, disciplinary records, and other academic data as applicable or available.

High school instructors who wish to teach an Ohio University course must meet the same requirements for faculty employed by the University, as required by HLC and the Ohio Board of Regents. It is expected that secondary school teachers will hold a master’s degree or a Ph.D. in the content area of the course in which they are teaching or a master’s degree and at least 18 credit hours completed at the graduate level in the content area in which they are teaching. Some Ohio University departments/programs may require additional credentials. In order to be considered as a dual enrollment instructor for Ohio University, high school teachers must complete and submit all of the following materials: dual enrollment teacher application; cover letter or personal statement; current resume or CV; undergraduate and graduate transcripts; and professional letter(s) of recommendation from their current curriculum chair or principal. Some academic departments/programs may have additional requirements.

For each course that a high school teacher is approved to instruct, an Ohio University faculty mentor is assigned by either the regional campus or Athens campus based academic department. The faculty mentor is responsible for instructional oversight and on-site course observation and will act as a mentor for the high school teacher. This mentor is vital to ensuring that the dual enrollment course is equivalent in rigor and quality to courses taught on a campus. As required by the College Credit Plus legislation, Ohio University will provide all secondary school teachers who are teaching at least one college course with at least one three-hour professional development session per academic year. We are working with the campus communities to organize professional development opportunities across all academic disciplines beyond just the faculty mentor-delivered orientation. An example is a collaboration that has been formed with the Appalachian Writing Program (AWP). All of Ohio University’s dual enrollment English teachers will be invited to their annual AWP College Readiness Forum, and the registration fees will be waived.
Handbooks and Catalogs

Faculty Handbook:  

Classified Senate By-Laws:  
https://www.ohio.edu/csen/upload/Bylaws.pdf

Administrative Senate Constitution and By-Laws:  
https://www.ohio.edu/adminsenate/bylaws/constitution.cfm

Ohio University Policy and Procedure Manual:  
https://www.ohio.edu/policy/

Student Handbook:  
https://www.ohio.edu/students/handbook/index.cfm

Undergraduate Catalog (Choose Undergraduate Catalog 2015-15 from drop-down menu):  
http://www.catalogs.ohio.edu/

Graduate Catalog (Choose Graduate Catalog 2013-15 from drop-down menu):  
http://www.catalogs.ohio.edu/