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Across Ohio University's campuses there is a general recognition that the changing political and economic environment of higher education has created significant challenges for Ohio's regional campuses. This recognition is not new, but the increasing number and intensity of the changes have added urgency to efforts to position our regional campuses for the continuing benefit of the university as well as the students and communities of Southeastern Ohio. Previous examinations of regional campus operations have led to a number of reforms that have increased efficiency and improved processes, but major challenges remain because fundamental re-positioning has not been accomplished.

The 2007-08 "Report of the Task Force on the Future of Regional Campuses" calls for exploration of a college structure that would *"unite the five regional campuses (perhaps with Outreach) into a unified "college" within the Ohio University system, thereby creating greater efficiencies of scale, addressing many coordination issues, providing broader degree program flexibility, and establishing an enhanced role for regional education within the existing Athens governance system (p. 10).* During the university restructuring initiative of 2009, this recommendation was taken up by the Undergraduate and Regional Education College Study Team (UREST). In the Charge to the Committee, then-Provost Krendl wrote, "It is my expectation that the establishment of an academic home for regional campuses is the first and necessary step to address concerns regarding the lack of coordination and collaboration across the campuses, as well as to provide an accessible entry point to the institution for both part-time and full-time students throughout the region." Although the study team reported that a vision emerged of a "gateway college . . . that will serve as an effective entry point and nexus of program integration for students, faculty, and staff," joining three units (Outreach, RHE, and University College) with disparate missions into one entity proved to be too difficult to achieve. **(These reports are available at [regional campuses](#). Click on *About Regional Higher Education* then *RHE College Study Committee*.)**

Given the changes in demographics, state support, and university processes that have occurred since the last study, and the concerns about the future of regional campuses that have been shared with the Board of Trustees, we believe it is time to reexamine the concept of a regional college. To that end, we will be appointing a study committee and charging it with developing a

recommendation to EVPP Descutner in order to inform his recommendations to the Board. The process will fully engage faculty at each campus in a number of ways. On or about November 3, 2017, we will be initiating a survey of all regional campus faculty members to test the strength of support for the concept of a regional college. The survey, which will be conducted by Institutional Research in order to guarantee the reliability of the results, will explore initial thoughts regarding some of the substantive issues raised in the UREST report, such as what the administrative structure should be and how promotion and tenure would work within that structure. The survey will begin by asking if there is support for the general concept, and then survey attitudes regarding the advantages and disadvantages of different structures.

Once the survey results have been tabulated and published on the RHE website (target date is December 1, 2017), faculty members will have the opportunity both to meet with the campus representatives to the committee and to share their thoughts broadly on an RHE webpage provided for that purpose. Once that conversation has matured, the committee will develop a draft recommendation for publication on the RHE website. Along with campus representatives we will meet face to face with the faculty at each campus in February to explore more fully the issues raised by the draft recommendation, after which the committee will have time to reconvene and develop final recommendations.

Committee membership is published on the RHE website.

We know that there will be disagreement on some of the substantive issues, but our hope is that the disagreements will be expressed in collegial ways that will enable us collectively to reach consensus.

Finally, we are sincere in our belief that the current structure of the regional campuses is not sustainable. We are asking for your best thinking regarding whether the regional college concept will work, and if so, how it will best work.

Thank you for your participation in this process.



David Descutner
Interim Executive Vice President and Provost



William R. Willan
Executive Dean