



October 17, 2014

Dr. Roderick J. McDavis
President
Ohio University
Cutler Hall
Athens, OH 45701

Dear President McDavis:

This letter is accompanied by a copy of the Multi-Location Visit Report completed following Dr. Joseph Rives' visit to Ohio University. The pattern of operations at the locations visited appears to be adequate and no further review or monitoring is necessary.

Within the Multi-Location Visit Report, you will find brief comments on instructional oversight, academic services, adequacy of assessment of student performance, student services, facilities, and marketing and recruitment information. I encourage you to consider these comments as advice and suggestions for continued improvement of the additional locations.

Thank you again for your flexibility and hospitality in arranging the Multi-Location Visit, which fulfill federal regulations related to multiple off campus locations. The completed report will be included in your institution's permanent file.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the Multi-Location Visit or its report, please feel free to contact Pat Newton-Curran (pnewton@hlcommission.org).

Sincerely,
Higher Learning Commission

Enclosure

Multi-Location Visit Report

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Institution: | Ohio University |
| Ad. Location #1: | Ohio University Pickerington Center, 12933 Stonecreek Dr, Pickerington, OH 43147 |
| Ad. Location #2: | Ohio University Cambridge, 7077 Glenn Hwy, Cambridge, OH 43725 |
| Ad. Location #3: | Ohio University Proctorville Center, 111 Private Drive 516, Proctorville, Ohio 45669 |
| Date Reviewed: | Pickerington: October 6, 2014; Cambridge: October 7, 2014; Proctorville: October 9, 2014. |
| Evaluator Name, Institution, & Title: | Dr. Joseph Rives, Western Illinois University, Vice President, Quad Cities and Planning. |

Overview Statement. Provide information about current additional locations and the institution’s general approach to off-campus instruction. Describe the growth pattern at the institution since the last review of off-campus instruction. Provide information about the involvement of external organizations or other higher education institutions.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. The University provided information regarding its general approach to off-campus instruction, enrollment data, and information on external partnerships.

Ohio University’s main campus is located in Athens, Ohio. The University supports five branch (regional) campuses at Ohio University- Chillicothe, Eastern, Lancaster, Southern, and Zanesville. Each of the branch campuses further supports an off-campus location (center) in Cambridge, Dublin, Pickerington, Proctorville, or Warrensville Heights, Ohio. Faculty members teaching at a location are from the supporting (affiliated) branch campus. Faculty from the main and branch campuses also deliver instruction through the Ohio University (distance) Learning Network. There are location-based staff members, and staff members who split assigned time between a branch campus and location.

Findings of this report are based on the University’s *Multi-Location Report Template for Institutions*, institutional websites, materials, and requested data. Additional information was gathered during a one-hour meeting with the Executive Dean for Regional Higher Education and Associate Provost for Institutional Accreditation in Athens, followed by separate three hour and forty minute on-site interviews with the Site Director, students, faculty, staff, Deans and Associate Deans, and facilities tours at each of the locations.

With over 60 years of experience in providing branch campus and off-campus location instruction, Ohio University has a rich history in providing academic excellence and educational opportunities to place bound students and working professionals in Southeastern Ohio. Students are served with options ranging from associates degrees to graduate executive cohorts in public administration. Location provision is consistent with the University’s *Mission* to provide access to “the nation’s best transformative learning community” for students throughout southeastern Ohio and beyond.

With regard to the current academic portfolio of the three locations visited:

- Cambridge offers the Bachelor of Science in Applied Management and transferrable courses for degree completion at Ohio University or elsewhere.
- Pickerington offers four associates degree programs and four baccalaureate programs.
- Proctorville supports three associates degree programs; coursework supporting nursing (BSN, LPN to RN, and RN to BSN); and social work; and a baccalaureate degree in Technical and Applied Studies.
- Pickerington and Proctorville also support student cohorts for the Executive Master of Public Administration.

The University reported that locations provide placebound students with access to educational opportunities at a specific site and to the resources of other campuses. Unduplicated headcount enrollment was analyzed to evaluate the former. These students complete all their courses at a location. Duplicated headcount enrollment was used to evaluate the latter. These students demonstrate mobility in completing courses at a host location and other Ohio University campuses.

Results for unduplicated headcount enrollment were mixed. Between fall 2009 and preliminary fall 2014, enrollment increased at Pickerington from 256 to 296, decreased at Proctorville from 160 to 93, and was nine for Cambridge during the term the location opened. Duplicated headcount enrollment showed similar results. Between 2011 and 2014, enrollment increased from 522 to 561 at Pickerington, decreased at Proctorville from 374 to 281, and was 39 on Cambridge¹.

The Executive Dean for Regional Campuses, deans, faculty, and other staff are discussing scheduling, growing the Ohio University (distance) Learning Network, and expanding the program mix to increase location enrollments. Forty-four of the 63 student enrollment decline in Proctorville (70%) was in areas where students had not declared a degree. The site director indicated there was a large decline due to the University not providing concurrent enrollment with high school students.

The University is well positioned to use partnerships to increase location enrollment. It has a base of established relationships with local high schools, regional colleges and universities, and chambers of commerce.

- Ohio University is participating in the state's new initiative fiscally supporting high-achieving secondary students to participate in dual enrollment programs. The locations reviewed have served 95 high school students in the last two years.
- The University supports 18 community college articulation agreements with institutions in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia.
- Proctorville's partnership with Mountwest Community and Technical College supports articulation into the *Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies* and *Applied Management* degree programs.
- Site directors partner with local chamber of commerce and others in their host communities to identify regional academic needs.

Strengths of Ohio University's locations include a rich history of providing educational access and opportunity, strongly committed faculty and staff, use of empirically based planning, awareness of

¹ Requested data for 2009 and 2010 were not available. Data for Cambridge is for fall 2014 only, the term that the location opened.

environmental opportunities and challenges (including the dangers of market saturation and the need for educational innovation), and local and regional partnerships.

Opportunities for the University's locations include expanded use of the Ohio University Learning Network, continued market responsiveness, and further utilization of proximal population centers. For example, Pickerington is located in suburban Columbus. This metropolitan area has the 15th largest urban population in the United States (822,533) according to Wikipedia, and is larger than the populations of Cleveland and Cincinnati combined. Likewise, there are over 300,000 residents in the tri-state area and the Huntington/Charleston, West Virginia, region near Proctorville.

Institutional Planning. What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively plans for growth and maintenance of additional locations? Identify whether the institution has adequate controls in place to ensure that information presented to students is adequate. Describe whether the financial planning and budgeting process has proven effective at additional locations.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. The University provided data showing that it effectively plans for the growth and maintenance of locations, has controls in place to show that information presented to students is accurate, and engages in effective location planning and budgeting.

The University completed a *University Environmental Scan* in 2010. This *Scan* resulted in the creation of the University's *Strategic Enrollment Management Plan* that includes priority to expand baccalaureate degree options in regional campuses and centers.

To achieve its goals, the University conducts feasibility and need studies for off-campus degree programs and locations, analyzing external factors including population demographics, demand, matriculation rates, and existing programs at other institutions. If program(s) and location(s) demonstrate initial viability, temporary locations with appropriate furnishings (e.g., laboratory equipment) are utilized. After long-term sustainability was demonstrated, the University established permanent off-campus locations (degree centers) in Pickerington, Proctorville, and Cambridge during 2000, 2007, and 2014, respectively.

The University uses a web template to ensure information is consistently presented to prospective and current students at its campuses and locations. Information about all of the University's learning locations is also presented in other institutional documents including *Undergraduate Catalogs*, Regional Higher Education website, and at highly trafficked areas within educational centers. Cambridge, for example, had the current and next semester course offerings posted in the main lobby.

The Regional Higher Education division manages and directs fiscal resources to its locations. Additional locations are only established if instructional capacity is available and resources are sufficient for sustaining newly established programs. *Year to Date Income Statements* for 2010-2014 show that Pickerington and Proctorville (for four of the last five years) operated in positive cash flow. As a new Center, Cambridge is expected to operate in a positive cash flow within five years.

Strengths of this section include the location planning processes, the distribution of accurate information to students, and conservative fiscal management. Opportunities include expanding outreach initiatives while remaining responsive to the needs of its rural host communities and continuing to support educational innovation (e.g., night courses, weekend courses, compressed semesters) to attract increased enrollment that will generate additional revenue.

Facilities. What evidence demonstrates that the facilities at the additional locations meet the needs of the students and the curriculum? Consider, in particular, classrooms and laboratories (size, maintenance, temperature, etc.); faculty and administrative offices (site, visibility, privacy for meetings, etc.); parking or access to public transit; bookstore or text purchasing services; security; handicapped access; and other (food or snack services, study and meeting areas, etc.)

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. The University's locations (facilities) meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff.

Each location visited demonstrated state-of-the-art classrooms and technologies. The Cambridge Site Director provided a status report on the deployment of new technologies that will give students remote and mobile device access to classroom materials. No students, faculty, or staff members interviewed at any of the locations expressed concern over institutional facilities or technologies.

Each location featured controlled facility access, lighted and sufficient parking, vending, quiet study areas, defibrillators, postings of no firearms (in Pickerington and Cambridge), and ADA access. Students have branch campus and electronic bookstore access with home delivery options. The only recommendation given by students was at Cambridge for television(s) to promote student gathering at the new location. The only recommendation given by faculty members was at Pickerington for space to conduct office hours and/or private meetings with students.

The strength of locational facilities and technologies are demonstrated in meeting expressed needs of students, faculty, and staff. A second strength was community support, as demonstrated by the donation of land and funds to build and help furnish the Proctorville location. There is opportunity to enhance quality facilities by establishing private meeting areas in Pickerington and installing televisions in Cambridge.

Instructional Oversight. What evidence demonstrates that the institution effectively oversees instruction at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements, faculty qualifications, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. The University effectively oversees instruction at its locations.

Ohio University has a single curriculum. Learning objectives, academic policies and procedures, and degree requirements are consistent across locations and campuses. The University's Curriculum Council and academic departments oversee instruction at all locations. Information reviewed in *University Catalogs* and websites demonstrate curricular and academic policy consistency at the University's campuses and locations.

The only difference in institutional operations is that the University allows open admissions at the branch campuses and locations (per state statute), where there are published freshmen admissions criteria for the main campus. The branch campuses and locations provide 19 associates degree programs that have open enrollment at other colleges and universities nationally. However, the 15 baccalaureate degree programs

and Executive Masters in Public Administration offered at the branch campuses and locations follow published university admissions requirements.

Interviews with students, faculty, and staff at each of the three centers did not express concern regarding the availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements. All three site directors and their support staff members were very strongly committed to working with the academic community to deliver “responsive, student-centered schedules.” All associates deans and deans interviewed were also very supportive in offering requested courses.

Location students have access to highly qualified and extremely dedicated faculty members. Using those teaching in the Bachelor of Science in Applied Management as an example, nine faculty members have doctoral degrees, 16 have master’s degrees, and the median teaching experience in the discipline is 13 years, ranging from 3 to 45 years of instructional experience.

The ten full-time faculty members in this (and all other programs) choose to drive from their branch campus to the location in fulfillment of their instructional duties. Many interviewed remarked on the importance of “coming early and staying late to address student needs.” Many also remarked on “the importance of our regional mission,” and “being from the region and being proud of the University’s center(s).”

Faculty and center staff members are attentive to student concerns. The Office of the Ombudsperson indicated there were no formal student complaints at Cambridge, Pickerington, or Proctorville, for the last two years.

Strengths of instructional oversight include consistency of curricular expectations and policies, availability of courses needed for program and graduation requirements, faculty qualifications, performance of instructional duties, availability of faculty to students, orientation of faculty/professional development, and attention to student concerns.

An opportunity for instructional oversight is to ensure that each site director maintains dated compliant logs with concerns, remediation, and resolution, and that these logs are reviewed routinely to further ensure continuous process improvement of the quality services provided by location faculty and staff.

Institutional Staffing and Faculty Support. What evidence demonstrates that the institution has appropriately qualified and sufficient staff and faculty in place for the location, and that the institution supports and evaluates personnel at off-campus locations? Consider the processes in place for selecting, training, and orienting faculty at the location.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. The University has appropriately qualified and sufficient faculty and staff at each location, and it supports and evaluates personnel at these locations.

All faculty and staff meet minimum position qualifications documented in position descriptions and maintained in personnel files. The University adds employees to its centers as enrollment and need dictate. The University also maintains consistent selection and evaluation processes across all locations.

Full-time faculty develops the curriculum. New faculty orientations, instructional support, and professional development are available. Adjunct faculty at locations are selected, trained, and receive orientation as they would on the main campus. Students evaluate all university class sections, and their

academic departments evaluate instructors in accordance with standard operating procedure for appointment, promotion, and tenure.

Strengths of institutional staffing and faculty support include appropriately qualified and sufficient numbers of faculty and staff at each location and consistent processes for selecting, training, and orienting faculty at all locations. No opportunities for improvement were noted, although the University may want to consider presence of discipline-specific academic advisors as discussed below.

Student Support. What evidence demonstrates that the institution delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at the additional locations? Consider, in particular, the level of student access (in person, by computer, by phone, etc.) to academic advising/placement, remedial/tutorial services, and library materials/services. Also, consider the level of access to admissions, registration/student records, financial aid, and job placement services, as well as attention to student concerns.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. The University delivers, supports, and manages necessary student services at each location.

Location staff members provide student services, manage center activities, and offer professional academic advising. All seven students in Pickerington were “exceptionally pleased” with the Advisor and Site Director. Likewise, students in Cambridge talked about how the Site Director is very responsive to their needs, “down to our preferences in the vending machines.” Students in Proctorville continually referred to the “personal attention we receive from our teachers and staff on campus.”

Staff members have immediate access to information to help students navigate and understand institutional structures and processes, from application through graduation². Specifically, they have access to student records in order to assist students with questions related to admissions, registration, academic standing, portal navigation, etc.

Students requiring counseling, financial aid, scholarship, library, and technology assistance are served by staff at their respective location, the affiliated branch campus, and the main campus. In addition, there is a vast array of electronic student services for academic advising, academic support, Career and Leadership Development Center, financial aid and scholarships, technology, and testing center to name just a few. Links are available on the locations, centers, and university websites. The University’s web template includes phone numbers for each of the programs and services.

Students have the same opportunities to express concerns as students who attend any other Ohio University center or campus.

- Administrative concerns begin with the center administrator and if not successfully resolved continue to the affiliated campus associate dean and dean.
- Academic concerns are first addressed with the course instructor, then to the appropriate division coordinator at the affiliated campus, and culminating if not resolved (and only observed in exceptional cases involving situations with multiple campuses and/or locations) with Executive Dean for Regional Higher Education who serves as the Provost’s designee. Usually in academic matters, resolutions occur through Ohio University processes requiring a faculty committee

² Students’ academic records are maintained in the student information system in the same manner as all other Ohio University students, under the direction of the Office of the University Registrar

appointed by the campus dean. The appointed committee makes the final determination on a disputed grade, with the dean instructing the registrar to enter the proper grade.

- Concerns raised in course and instructor evaluations receive the same attention given to all Ohio University students. Student appeal processes are described in the *Student Handbook*.
- For concerns with services originating from the main campus, students are assisted in contacting the appropriate office and/or individual, and processes follow codified institutional protocol.

Strengths of student support services include in-person and electronic access to services and institutional consistency in addressing student concerns. An opportunity for enhancement is the availability of discipline-specific advisors at locations. Students and faculty expressed desire for this service on at least scheduled basis in Pickerington and Cambridge.

Evaluation and Assessment. What evidence demonstrates that the institution measures, documents, and analyzes student academic performance sufficiently to maintain academic quality at the additional locations? How are measures and techniques employed at a location equivalent to those for assessment and evaluation on the main campus? Consider, in particular, the setting of measurable learning objectives, the actual measurement of performance, and the analysis and use of assessment data to maintain/improve quality.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. Faculty measure, document, and analyze student academic performance sufficiently to maintain academic quality at additional locations, and these measures are equivalent to those used for assessment and evaluation on the main campus.

Ohio University has a single curriculum. Academic experiences are designed to be consistent across campuses, locations, and modalities. School and departmental faculty members define student-learning outcomes, engage in assessment of student learning, and use data to maintain and enhance quality.

Faculty members established student learning objectives for all courses as the University transitioned from quarters to semesters; added assessment of student learning objectives to academic program reviews; and continue to evaluate progress on establishing new assessments under AQIP, incorporating outcome-based objectives through internships and capstone experiences, and measuring student performance on licensure and certification examinations.

Strengths of evaluation and assessment processes are faculty members engagement in setting measurable learning objectives, measuring students performance, and using assessment data to maintain and enhance quality. No opportunities for improvement were noted.

Continuous Improvement. What evidence demonstrates that the institution encourages and ensures continuous quality improvement at its additional locations? Consider in particular the institution's planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement of additional locations and ensure alignment of additional locations with the mission and goals of the institution as a whole.

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. The University engages in processes to encourage and ensure continuous quality improvement at all of its locations.

The University maintains institutional accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission and 35 discipline-specific agencies, ranging from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology to the University and College Intensive English Programs. Achieving and maintaining these accreditations helps to assure and advance the quality of instruction.

Ohio University has been in the AQIP pathway since 2002. The University has implemented and improved its assessment of student learning across all locations and campuses.

All academic programs are minimally reviewed on a seven-year rotation to ensure program quality and viability. The Academic Program Review Committee of the University Curriculum Council reviews programs, and provides executive summaries to the Academics Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees approved offering the Bachelor of Science in Sport and Lifestyle Studies and the Associate of Technical Study at Ohio University regional campuses in June 2014. Providing academic programs at locations is consistent with the University's *Strategic Enrollment Plan* and *Ohio University's Guiding Principles* that include the "Commitment to the region [that] is expressed through stewardship of shared resources, access to programs and services, and contribution to economic development."

Strengths of the University's continuous improvement processes include institutional planning and evaluation processes that ensure regular review and improvement at locations and a mission-centered commitment to off-campus instruction. No opportunities for improvement were noted.

Marketing and Recruiting Information. What evidence confirms that the information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications is accurate?

Judgment of reviewer. Check appropriate box: adequate attention needed

Comments: Yes. Information presented to students in advertising, brochures, and other communications is accurate.

University Communication and Marketing provides news, publications, video production, and satellite operations for the University. The unit also collaborates with the Office of Information Technology in developing University websites.

There is also coordinated assistance at local levels. For example, there is a staff member that works on marketing and public relations in Proctorville. Each of the regional branch campuses use various forms of social media (see <http://www.ohio.edu/regional/socialmedia.cfm>) to keep students and the university informed of university initiatives.

Changes in academic content to University information require academic approvals. For example, changes in a degree program offered at a location or branch campus would require approval from the campus curriculum committee, Regional Higher Education Curriculum Committee, and University Curriculum Council before changes are made and approved in the University's *Catalogs*.

A review of the *Undergraduate Catalog*, program descriptions of degrees offered at branch campuses and centers, departmental websites, and the Bursar's website demonstrate content consistency in program information, location display, and tuition and fee rates.

Strengths of marketing and recruitment information include utilization of processes and structures that provide accurate information, and the ability for locations to “tell their story” and specifically work with their media markets. No opportunities for improvement were noted.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

- X Overall, the pattern of this institution's operations at its additional locations appears to be adequate, and no further review or monitoring by the Higher Learning Commission is necessary.

Ohio University has a rich, six-decade history and tradition of providing mission-driven off-campus instruction at campuses and locations in Southeastern Ohio. The future for the University's off-campus program is viable and sustainable.

Through strong institutional leadership, faculty, and staff, the University engages in environmental scanning, planning, instructional oversight, staffing, faculty support, student support, evaluation, assessment, continuous improvement, marketing and recruitment processes at the highest standards of quality.

Each section of this review concluded with strengths to justify the conclusions made above, and opportunities for improvement. These opportunities are not mentioned as concerns to the quality of the University's off-campus program. Rather they are meant as contributions to a first-rate, state-of-the-art program clearly dedicated to continuous process improvement for the students, host communities and regions that it proudly serves.

Notification for Additional Locations Approval Form
(MACRO Web Application Approval)

- X Yes No The institution has been accredited by the Commission, prior to seeking access to the streamlined process, for at least 10 consecutive years with no record of any action during that period for sanction, show-cause, or monitoring of issues related to the quality of instruction or to the oversight of existing additional locations or campuses.
- X Yes No The institution has demonstrated success in overseeing more than three locations.
- X Yes No The institution has no other Commission or other legal restrictions on additional locations and/or programs offered off campus,
- X Yes No The institution has appropriate systems at the institution to ensure quality control of locations that include clearly identified academic controls; regular evaluation by the institution of its locations; a pattern of adequate faculty, facilities, resources, and academic/support systems; financial stability; and long-range planning for future expansion.