Background

Over the last seventy years Ohio University’s regional campuses have been at the heart of educational and social opportunities for their Southeastern Ohio communities. They have provided access to the excellence that is a hallmark of Ohio University’s academic programs for students who have been unable to come to Athens for various life reasons. They have provided teachers and nurses and technicians to fill vital roles in their communities. They have been good community partners, reliable contributors to vital community initiatives. Within the last five years, however, a number of societal changes have made clear that the regional campuses cannot continue to operate under the assumptions that enabled them to thrive over the first 65 years of operation. Only by recognizing the challenges ahead and preparing to meet them will the regional campuses continue to be drivers of community educational, social, and economic development.

Among the recent changes having the most impact have been diminished subsidy from the State of Ohio, reduced weighting of at-risk factors for subsidy calculations, tuition caps, shrinking high school graduating classes, and an improved economy that has reduced the number of non-traditional students seeking an education. The combination of these factors has significantly reduced revenue streams, and while new programs have brought some additional revenue, they have not offset inflationary pressures, such as the rising cost of health insurance or energy. We can expect those pressures to continue and to increase, as it is clear that high school graduating classes will continue to become smaller, the state’s emphasis on dual enrollment will affect transfer credit patterns, and the recent expansion of community college authority to offer baccalaureate degrees will provide additional choices for prospective students.

In addition to budget pressures the regional campuses have experienced a shift in student demographics and enrollment patterns, as well as course delivery modes. Recent trends have been toward traditional-aged, baccalaureate-seeking students who enroll fulltime, but blend face-to-face and online delivery modes in order to balance educational requirements with job and family responsibilities. Because duplicating online or face-to-face courses that result in small section sizes is inefficient, sharing instruction between campuses is good stewardship of diminishing resources, so the use of OULN and shared online sections between and among campuses has become a standard practice. The result of these scheduling practices is that a high percentage of students appear to be part-time, but only appear to be so because they take courses from multiple campuses. Only by resolving the administrative and logistical issues that these “swirling” students present through a carefully structured approach to student services will the regional campuses continue to be known for their personal attention to student needs.

While the following areas of study received much attention from both the Task Force on the Future of Regional Campuses (2008) and the Undergraduate and Regional Education Study Team (2009), revisiting them in the light of the significant changes mentioned above is essential for charting a new course for the regional campuses and for Regional Higher Education (RHE).
Charge

The committee’s charge is to review and evaluate the regional campus higher education model by benchmarking peers and analyzing internal trend cycles, and to recommend a sustainable academic and resource model for the regional campuses in the context of the whole of Ohio University, and the OHIO for Ohio strategy. This should include how to engage new markets for student recruitment pipelines; improve the interconnectedness and collaboration across the regional campuses and center and between regional campuses, centers, and Athens; develop opportunities for faculty to work seamlessly across the regional campuses and center and between regional campuses, centers, and Athens; and increase opportunities for students to complete coursework and engage in experiential learning opportunities.

This should include a review the current organization and administration of the regional campuses, their program delivery and expansion initiatives, their financial projections, and their student and community services in order to make recommendations for sustainable regional campus operations that will enhance their ability to deliver high quality academic programming in high demand areas while maintaining their exemplary student centered focus and community support. The committee should begin its work in the spring semester to consider each of the areas mentioned above and should present its findings to the Executive Vice President and Provost and President by November 1, 2018.

Organization and Administrative and Reporting Structures

What organizational and administrative structures will best serve our students and our region over the next decade? What structures will best maintain access to high quality educational services while maximizing administrative efficiencies? How should regional campus organizational, administrative, and reporting structures be integrated with those in Athens? Which should remain distinct? Should RHE become a college? If so, how should its administration be structured (including issues of tenure home)?

Academic Program Development and Delivery

What is the appropriate balance between university-wide efficiencies and local campus practices in program delivery? Should campuses differentiate programming in order to develop campus identities based on broad areas such as health care, business, and/or education, or continue to try to meet the local workforce needs through a broad range of programs enabled and supported by system resources? Should there be a unified course schedule? How can technology be used to improve educational offerings? What roles should Athens colleges and departments and regional campuses play in program and course development and delivery across locations and modalities? Should the current model of graduate programming on the regional campuses be reexamined?

Faculty Relationship to Athens

How should faculty be situated with respect to regional campuses, centers, and Athens? What are the current best practices between Athens schools and departments and regional campus faculty within their disciplines? Should there be common expectations with regard to communication and collaboration between Athens schools and departments and regional faculty? What roles should RHE and the colleges play with respect to faculty? What is the appropriate role of the
school or department in the hiring, evaluation, and promotion and tenure of regional campus faculty?

**Financial Sustainability**

Any recommendations should indicate how it provides a sustainable financial future for regional campuses, and address the impact of any recommendations that are system-wide. Additional questions include: What approach should RHE take to balancing individual campus finances with system priorities? Should RHE maintain a reasonable reserve fund in order to respond to regional campus emergencies and/or significant enrollment variances?

**Student Services**

How can we ensure that all regional campus students have access to quality student services, including advising, career development, and experiential learning? In particular, how do we ensure that swirling and online students have appropriate access to services across locations and modalities? How do we leverage our relationships with Athens-based services in order to improve efficiencies without sacrificing quality? What gaps in current services need to be addressed?

**Membership**

**Committee Co-Chairs:**
Nicole Pennington  Dean, Ohio University Southern
Brad Cohen  Senior Vice Provost for Instructional Innovation

**Athens Campus Members:**
John Day  Associate Provost/Associate Dean (Business)
Jason Pina  Vice President for Student Affairs
Randy Leite  Dean, College of Health Sciences and Professions
Deborah Henderson  Director, School of Nursing
Jerry Miller  Associate Director for Undergraduate Studies
Elizabeth Bennett  Institutional Research
Laurie Hatch  Associate Dean for Students, Instruction & Curriculum
Todd Myers  Professor, Chair, Engineering Technology & Management
Lisa Harrison  Associate Professor, Middle Childhood Education

**Regional Campus Members:**
Bill Willan  Executive Dean for Regional Higher Education
Darren Baker  Lecturer of Fine Arts (Chillicothe)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Mahan-Hayes</td>
<td>Associate Prof. of Communication (Eastern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Nevin</td>
<td>Associate Professor of History (Lancaster)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Webster</td>
<td>Dean (Zanesville)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosanna Howard</td>
<td>Director of Operations and Budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>