

Northeast Ohio  
Universities  
Collaboration &  
Innovation Study  
Commission

*Cleveland State University*  
*Kent State University*  
*Northeastern Ohio Universities*  
*College of Medicine*  
*The University of Akron*  
*Youngstown State University*

**Minutes from April 26, 2007 session of the**  
**Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration & Innovation Study Commission**  
**Held at the Offices of the GAR Foundation, Akron, Ohio**

**Attendees:** Chairman, Ted Boyd; Dorothy Baunach, Bruce Beeghly, Robert Briggs, Phillip Kaufmann, Dr. Lester Lefton, Dr. Lois Nora, John Pogue, Richard Pogue, Dr. Luis Proenza (via teleconference), Dr. Michael Schwartz, Dr. David Sweet; Jane Timken, Jim Trakas, Dr. Garry Walters and Ronald Weinberg, Bradley Whitehead.

**Unable to attend:** James Hambrick.

**Staff:** Dr. Stephen Portch, Monica Turoczy

***Opening Comments of Dr. Stephen R. Portch***

- Dr. Portch described the importance of the Study Commission focusing its overall efforts on mission distinction among the five universities. Co-location of particular campuses in Northeast Ohio renders mission distinction all the more important to the group's deliberations. Working on strengthening and designing collaborations which create "a whole that is greater than the sum of the individual parts," should be a primary focus of the group.
- Structure and governance may well become a part of the discussions regarding innovations and collaboration, but the group was urged to first focus on what the needs of the region are and how those needs can best be met. Governance changes should not be counted as end goal, rather a means to achieving the goals.
- Dr. Portch also cited that while part of his role with the Commission will be to share national best practices in these arenas, the contexts and cultures which exist in Northeast Ohio, may well demand a new, bold innovative approach to higher education collaboration.
- Dr. Portch invited the presidents, at the May 21 session, to offer a conversation about their universities' mission, and their personal vision for their schools.

### *Workgroup design*

- Dr. Portch cited the importance of third-party counsel on the issues at hand in both the academic and administrative collaboration workgroups, and lauded the capacity of the Ohio Board of Regents to provide data and resource.
- He additionally defined as important the role which Commission subcommittees of Chief Academic Officers and Chief Administrative Officers will play in the deliberations of the workgroups
- Phase I for the workgroups will focus on creating a baseline understanding of assets, existing collaborations, and mission statements. This baseline information will then be compared with the region's needs, to form a gap analysis. This gap analysis will provide the roadmap for the sorts of collaborations and innovations which are necessary to best utilize the region's higher education resource and build a more systematic approach to resource management.
- Dr. Proenza posed a question as to whether or not the ways in which the health care industry has addressed similar issues may yield relevant lessons and options for innovation.
- Dr. Portch concurred citing that the labor, technology, structure and governance issues which have faced the health care industry are issues which are shared by higher education.
- Mr. Weinberg commented on the importance of marketing—not necessarily the marketing of particular institutions, but rather an approach to the marketing of the importance of higher education undertaken by the five universities jointly.
- Dr. Portch also noted that the Wisconsin and Georgia higher education systems undertook health care jointly, but through a series of regional plans which better met the needs of constituents. The effort to centralize payroll operations, for instance, did not necessarily yield the sort of cost savings in Georgia and Wisconsin, as may have been hoped for.
- Dr. Schwartz reminded the group of the collective bargaining agreements which are negotiated by the universities, as adding complexity to the sorts of innovations which are being discussed
- Determining who is the very best national expert on supply chain management was suggested as a starting point by Dr. Proenza, and Mr. Weinberg suggested the importance of the same sort of thought-leadership on the academic side needing to occur simultaneously to create some “traction” for the Commission.
- Mr. Boyd reminded members also that what the Commission is doing is being closely regarded as a pilot for the rest of the state of Ohio in terms of the management and savings of higher education resources, and that Commission members, both business and higher education, must not talk past each other, but rather work to a point where one “would be unable to distinguish between a ‘business’ voice and a ‘higher education’ voice on the issues at hand.” Commission members should work to build support for the efforts and eventual recommendations of the Commission, within their spheres of influence is vital.

- Mr. Richard Pogue offered highlights from the Ohio Board of Regents annual Trustees Conference, including the very positive environment which is being created by Governor Strickland, House Speaker Jon Husted and Senate President Bill Harris, all squarely focused on how to best build on and leverage Ohio’s higher education sector as an economic development resource.

***Dr. Paul Gaston—Presentation on the North Shore Graduate Research Alliance***

***NOTE: a copy of Dr. Gatson’s presentation is included herein.***

- Mr. Boyd introduced the presentation by Kent State University Provost Dr. Paul Gaston, by reminding the group of the opportunity to look to the Research Alliance as an early example of the sort of innovations which could flow from Study Commission deliberations.
- Following the presentation, Dr. Portch inquired as to whether the timetable for the “revitalization” of the group could not be fast-tracked, sooner than convening thought leaders on the matter in the fall.
- Ms. Baunach, when asked about her perceptions of challenges facing the Graduate Research Alliance, offered that it needs a director, someone who is held accountable for the “moving of the ball.” That possibly, the schools themselves are not likely to serve as strong a self-convening role as may likely be needed.
- Additional discussion focused on a budget/fund raising update offered by Mr. Richard Pogue; suggested edits to the Study Commission’s Underlying Principles; an extension of the May 21 meeting from two hours to three hours to fully accommodate the discussions of the Presidents and Chancellor Eric Fingerhut.

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