

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 March 15, 2007 session of the  
Northeast Ohio Universities Collaboration & Innovation Study Commission**

**Attendees:** Chairman, Ted Boyd; Dorothy Baunach, Bruce Beeghly, Robert Briggs, Dr. William Demas, Dr. Lester Lofton, Dr. Lois Nora, Richard Pogue, John Pogue, Dr. Luis Proenza, Dr. Michael Schwartz, Dr. David Sweet; Jane Timken, Jim Trakas, Ronald Weinberg, and Bradley Whitehead.

**Unable to attend:** James Hambrick, Phil Kaufmann, and Garry Walters.

**Staff:** Monica Turoczy, Cathy Fishbach

Ted Boyd convened the meeting at 8:10 a.m. thanking Monica Turoczy of NOCHE for offering start-up staff support for the work of the Commission. The Commission will meet as frequently as necessary to achieve results by year-end. NOCHE will serve as central communications until staffing is named and funding streams identified.

The Commission is obligated to operate under Sunshine Laws. Jim Trakas described basic requirements: meetings should follow parliamentary procedures; meeting notes and distributed documents should be of public record; and 48 hours notice should be provided to members of the press.

Ted Boyd observed that process issues will drive the first few sessions and that consultants will likely be identified to do much of the Commission's staffing work. Original funding from the state legislature was requested at \$250,000 but the final approved amount was \$25,000. Eric Fingerhut, the newly appointed Chancellor of the Board of Regents. He is willing to assist in identifying resources. NOCHE has agreed to lend staff for the start-up phase but not indefinitely.

Dr. Proenza offered that academic institutions have staff who work many issues relevant to the Commission and they can assist in the work. He provided copies of communications that will be forwarded to members and captured as part of the meeting's business.

According to Jim Trakas, a report on the Commission's work will be due in December 2007 to comply with the requirements of the spending bill. Assuming resource issues are resolved, the Commission needs to begin quickly to look at the background and issues, possibilities and opportunities in the context of Higher Education in Northeast Ohio. Dick Pogue suggested that

top-flight consultants can be costly. It may be useful to develop recommendations from Rob Briggs and Brad Whitehead. Ideally, we should have several recommendations before the next meeting.

Dick Pogue noted that in 2004 the Governor's Commission on Higher Education & the Economy started with \$500,000 from the legislature then raised an additional \$250,000. That included extensive travel expenses for participants throughout the state; high quality consultant fees; and an extensive report distribution. It was suggested that the Commission would require a \$750,000 budget. Jim Trakas suggested that we should try to secure as much private funding as possible. Pogue noted that the Commission will also need a fiscal agent.

What drove the legislature to support the Commission was the change in culture and institutions that allows us to capitalize on opportunities and how to leverage those opportunities at the state level. The State of Ohio is not competitive nationally in education. We are not catching up or even staying even. Expectations are high that we can improve on efforts of the past.

Pogue cited the three common strategic goals, access, affordability and quality. Dr. Schwartz cited five quality goals: Administrative (back office savings); academic programs at all levels; access and affordability; matters of excellence and competition; and success in increasing the number of graduates. Success is measured by focusing on students, not institutions. Rob Briggs also cited the issue of successfully including minority outreach.

Dr. Lois Nora cited the need to put thought into principles of excellence with students, allowing us a touchstone test of our ultimate efforts. Dick Pogue suggested that we organize our structure by purpose and collaboration, academic and administrative roles. Ron Weinberg suggested we might consider dividing our work chronologically, broad to specific: 1) goals and principles; 2) how to go about implementation; 3) to what extent existing partnerships would be enhanced by more collaboration.

Ted Boyd offered that we might let the process unfold, leave options in play. Ron Weinberg suggested that task forces and small groups could run in parallel. Dr. David Sweet noted that CHEE and the governor have an interest in increasing college going rates and competitiveness – we must look vertically to achieve including looking at community colleges and K-12. We cannot succeed without improving the pipeline. Brad Whitehead raised questions about access and affordability where students need extra levels of development courses to be ready for college.

Dr. Lester Lefton suggested that while K-12, P-16 issues are also important, but the Study Commission cannot address the entire educational issues spectrum. We will need to narrow its scope based on legislative support, resources and staffing. Brad Whitehead suggested that selecting the right leverage point is important: saving \$37 per student is a good thing to do but it is not a leverage point.

Jane Timken suggested focus on the four top-tier issues --students, output, economics and student success. Jim Trakas noted that the concept in the legislature was bubbling with a need to formalize expected outcomes but to be bolder.

We also need to find substantial cost savings through shared resources and people . The directives were left purposely broad to drive up specific goals so that others can be part of the debate. Best practices are important, and there are lots of eyes on this work – and lots of discussion about cost savings, excellence – but it is also under-funded, Can there be agreement that all savings will be rolled back into program? It costs money to “do things” - understanding and doing are not the same things.

Dr. Schwartz noted efforts to combine and collaborate on computing overheads between institutions. However, without an upfront cash outlay, it is impossible. No legislature will fund such an activity at level needed.

Jim Trakas stated that resources really are available, but we need to make sure we have a value add, nothing that is redundant. We must define exactly what we need to focus on.

Ron Weinberg noted that they want to be sold, and they (legislators) have a normal reaction: schools are wasteful. We need to sell them on our ideas and goals, eliminating competitiveness. We need to talk about actionable goals, look at points of leverage or constraint and get maximum output with modest input.

Ted Boyd suggested that it will be important to refocus on the student, the basic issue of higher education. There are not enough college graduates in the state, and program collaboration is an opportunity to address that. Real opportunity centers on how do we get more students into higher education and get them to graduate? We need to work back from that.

Bruce Beeghy discussed the availability of access to community college across the region, the low cost access to higher education. Over 41 percent of state’s population lives in an area without local access. There are 58,000 students in a number of institutions of higher education, yet there are 56,000 in just four community colleges.

Dr. Lefton noted that the average per capita income in the region is one of the lowest in the country; Further, education costs in our region are above average in the nation. Our cost to the individual is too high because of lack of legislative support.

Ted Boyd added that the model we have is not efficient in attracting students to higher education. Driving up interest on the part of families and students is a serious problem.

Jim Trakas indicated that marketing concepts highlighting the need for a college education in order to secure a good, high-paying job.

The question was raised: What was the low-hanging fruit from the CHEE report? Dick Pogue indicated these goals:

- Getting business involved in higher education;
- Collaborating to achieve savings;
- Study how the state budget allocated for higher education, 11<sup>th</sup> on the list, of ten recommendations.

Dick Pogue also cited a study by an individual from Kent State who had made recommendations for radical savings of \$10 - \$50million/year.

Brad Whitehead recalled that education attainment level is the single best predictor of economic vibrancy. Unprepared students are costly to the system.

Ron Weinberg suggested that in hiring discussions, the important thing is not the percentage of college-educated population in the region. If you are hiring 5-10 people, you want excellence and will compete in the market for the caliber needed.

Dick Pogue noted that there are too many degree programs and their distribution are not strategic. Several discussions about losing degree programs are ongoing.

Dr. Lefton suggested there is a need to reinstitute the North Shore Graduate Alliance – it was a very good idea but there was no funding behind it. Dayton has one funded at the \$3.0 million level. This may serve as the first recommendation of the Commission.

Ted Boyd suggested the group's next steps: 1) learn more about the specifics of legislation; 2) don't lose opportunity of larger issues; 3) bring back several topics to focus on. We don't want to narrow things too quickly.

Dick Pogue suggested that each participant submit a list they think is feasible for the Commission to address, and then ask staff to winnow down the list.

Bruce Beeghy also suggested that each of the five schools should provide a list of their graduate programs, so that staff can make a matrix to see where there is duplication and overlay.

Rob Briggs cited the prevalence of a new model of collaboration, reflective of what is going on in region. We should consider doing a comparative budget analysis of key factors, professors, campuses, to see where there are areas for collective action. Examples include the work of NorTech and One Cleveland/OneCommunity. These are organizations we can collaborate with, and he cited Northeast Ohio Sourcing Office, that has a collaborative for purchasing.

Dr. Sweet suggested that we could inventory the collaborative efforts of NEOUCOM as a model.

Dick Pogue suggested that the Commission could consider Stephen Portch as a consultant; from the Governor's Commission on Higher Education & the Economy. However, there is a chance he is working in Wisconsin or Georgia. It's almost April and time is short to engage a topflight professional. It was noted that we could pick consultant while researching the budget/funding questions

Jim Trakas noted that we could inventory back room function, who does it , what it costs. We should regroup rather quickly after distilling this conversation.

Brad Whitehead noted that we need two kinds of help – to turn over back room stones and selecting a consultant such as Portch, which has far more complexity.

Luis Proenza raised the name of Jim Stuckel, president of University of Illinois who might be able to address these questions?

Rob Briggs suggested that we set meeting schedule sent out by Monica Turoczy. Ted Boyd suggested having monthly meetings. Jim Trakas indicated it would be good to meet every two weeks until we get things going and caught up to speed.

Dr. Proenza noted that we need to underscore underlying demographics and economic development as primary focus.

Dick Pogue suggested that the chairman could decide on the organization structure.

Ted Boyd suggested that we centralize communication through Monica Turoczy at NOCHE for now.

Dr. Lefton raised a question about substitute representation. If we cannot attend, can we allow substitutes. Jim Trakas said that one cannot substitute. You could send a representative, but that individual cannot vote. Guests can only observe.

Monica Turoczy indicated that she will send out a schedule, revised contact information, and propose time for inventories to be due. All should add their emails, so information comes to each member's staff members as well. Distillation of today's discussion will be available Tuesday or Wednesday of next week.

Adjourned: 10:00 a.m.