

Minutes of the Meeting Held on January 14, 2005

PRESENT: Cuppoletti (Cincinnati), Warfield (Shawnee), Sracic (Youngstown), Current (OSU), Marcus (Central), Muego (Bowling Green), Phillips (MCO), Bloemer (Ohio U), Govea, Konangi (Cleveland) Fenwick, Witt (Akron)

Chair Cuppoletti called the meeting to order at 12:15.

Chancellor Chu criticized the incremental thinking of the State of Ohio regarding higher education and the budget. He pointed to the intrinsic political weakness of higher ed in any state, indicating that the same weakness applies to Ohio.

Given the paucity of funds available to higher ed, Chancellor Chu pointed to the linkage of higher education and the building of human capital in Ohio's economy. He pointed to studies that demonstrate that education affects individual income only if the individual graduates. Therefore, the only way to produce positive economic effects is to increase graduation rates.

Chancellor Chu cited a 17% Return on Investment that higher education virtually guarantees. The problem, as he sees it, is that there is a natural tendency to balk at the opportunity to invest. The problem is compounded by the inability of faculty to commit to the presentation of these economic realities to the general public.

He spoke at great length on the increasingly competitive global economic system. He cited the problem of the eroding position of the U.S. in international education.

He spoke of Governor Taft's search for a way to market Ohio as a place to locate a business. While the governor's assertion is that Ohio is a great place to "live, work and raise a family," the chancellor believes that it should be that Ohio is a great place to "live, work and raise a family in the 21st century."

He spoke of the need for communities to help themselves in pursuit of economic development. He believes that communities, not states, constitute the relevant units for consideration when businesses relocate.

After explaining the "free rider" thesis, he outlined the need for local initiative, after which a collective effort may be fashioned to help higher education.

He raised the possibility of a state-wide university policy in which any student would fail a course upon missing three class sessions. This would, in turn, train students to be on time in the business world.

There was some discussion on the future of the relationship between OFC and the Chancellor. He indicated his willingness to discuss issues with the group but emphasized his concern with results.

Chair Cuppoletti cited the work of faculty statewide and suggested that better communication among universities and between faculty and the chancellor would be desirable.

Professor Current (OSU) pointed to the intangible value of education and suggested that solely economic indicators of educational outcomes miss the total value of the enterprise.

Cuppoletti raised the possibility of an inter-university effort to study the positive effects of higher education on economic development.

It was decided that the February 11th meeting will be canceled.

After some discussion, the group began to frame the future work of the organization, including studies of:

- Effect of education on personal income
- Comparative study of state investment in higher ed and its rate of economic return
- Effect of education on the economy of communities
- The extent to which university practices are improving higher education

Bowling Green has a model for a campaign to "sell" higher education to opinion and business leaders. There was some discussion of ways in which public opinion on higher ed can be improved.

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rodger M. Govea
Secretary

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