

**AGENDA ITEM: C.2.b.1.**

**AGENDA TOPIC:** Program Improvement Plans

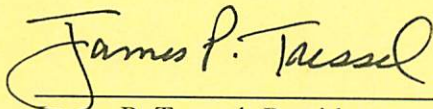
**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Dr. Martin A. Abraham, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Kevin Ball, Associate Provost

**BACKGROUND:** All academic departments were asked to complete Program Improvement Plans (PIPs). The purpose of this exercise was to evaluate Youngstown State University's academic programs, find ways in which information on assessment and other reports can be streamlined, and make the program review process more efficient. Departmental reports were due to the deans on March 6, 2015. Deans were asked to review the departmental reports and complete college reports by the end of March.

**SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The deans were asked to review the departmental reports and to complete a summary report for their college. A summary report, based upon the departmental and college reports, is attached.

**RESOLUTION: N/A – DISCUSSION ITEM ONLY**

**REVIEWED AS TO FORM AND CONTENT:**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Tressel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

James P. Tressel, President

**Summary comments from Program Improvement Plans**  
**Martin Abraham, Interim Provost**  
**May 6, 2015**

Each of the academic programs prepared a program improvement plan, which utilized a SWOT analysis to reflect on current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The programs concluded their analysis with a proposed action plan. Each department chair was then asked to summarize the responses from the programs within the department, which were then passed to the Dean for a college-level summary. The detailed information is available for those interested. The current document will provide a high level summary based on this analysis, along with a brief statement on how the academic division can capitalize on this preliminary analysis.

Strengths:

- Many of our academic programs describe their graduates as being high quality, as measured by job or graduate school placements, success of student organizations, accreditation reviews, recognition from publications and presentations, and similar metrics that can be (but often have not been) benchmarked.
- There is a good connection to our community. In many disciplines, YSU graduates make up the bulk of the regional workforce. Businesses are engaged with our faculty. The Arts community is heavily integrated with our Arts faculty.
- Our experiential education efforts are strong and expanding. STEM and Business have robust co-op and internship efforts supported by a strong staff and well connected with industry locally, regionally, and in some cases nationally. In health professions and education, student placement rates are of high quality and essential to the success of the programs, the students, and the community. CCAC has initiated the Creative Industries Collaborative that provides many opportunities for students to work with area businesses.

Weaknesses:

- While we have great diversity among our programs, we have too few faculty for many of them to remain viable for the long-term. In too many cases, there is a single faculty serving all of the students and acting as program coordinator. The multiplicity of program tracks also causes difficulty for students working to identify a major.
- YSU facilities are old and in generally poor condition. Some areas have not been upgraded in decades. Technology, other than computers, is also frequently outdated.
- YSU has a tendency to think locally. The academic market is regional, national, and international. Benchmarking against programmatic peers (current and aspirational) is required in order to properly assess our quality and our needs.

### Opportunities:

- Increased interdisciplinarity. The greatest opportunities exist at disciplinary intersections. Interdisciplinary programs provide a unique opportunity to stake new academic territory in which YSU can excel by bringing diverse resources together. Examples of current efforts along these lines include the Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Communication, the PhD in Materials Science and Engineering, and individualized curriculum programs in international business, web communications, computer forensics, or other programs specifically designed to meet the needs of the undergraduate student.
- Many of our academic programs have a minimum GPA requirement for entrance into upper division courses. YSU needs to identify ways in which these students can be tracked into majors in which they can succeed, providing increased retention and graduation rates.
- YSU is a Master's comprehensive institution. Better curricular alignment of the Master's programs with undergraduate programs can offer students an opportunity to graduate with an advanced degree in only five years. Better alignment with PhD granting institutions can offer students a first step in a graduate career, based on the expectation that success in a two-year Master's program will guarantee placement into a partnering PhD program.

### Threats:

- Our decision to become more selective requires a new way of recruiting students to YSU. The community college offers some two-year programs that duplicate YSU programs. Without alignment and coordination, an important market will become closed to YSU.
- While we have highly motivated innovative faculty committed to the success of our students, there are too few areas in which multiple faculty provide a critical mass. In many cases, students cannot obtain the high quality education that they were promised when an individual becomes unavailable. In addition, this makes it difficult to expand or develop new programs in response to changing demands.

### Action Plan:

- Complete a full scale program review in the 2015-16 academic year. An appropriate review needs to include proper benchmarking against current and aspirational peer institutions. Use this review to identify those programs in which investment will add quantity and quality. Develop plans by which programs that are no longer viable can be phased out without harm to faculty or students.
- Identify the key features that distinguish a YSU education.
- Work to increase interdisciplinary collaboration. Revisit the Centers of Excellence to determine where there is strength across multiple areas. Identify other barriers to collaboration and work to remove them. Create new incentives to enhance collaboration among the faculty.

**Williamson College of Business Administration**

*“Excellence through Engagement”*

*Betty Jo Licata, Dean*

The mission of the WCBA is to prepare student to be successful business leaders; to conduct research that impacts the knowledge, practice, and teaching of management; and to support the economic development of our region. Our excellence through innovation, impact and engagement is recognized with our AACSB accreditation. As a part of the YSU Program Improvement Process, our Lariccia School of Accounting and Finance, Department of Management, and Department of Marketing conducted thoughtful and thorough reviews of the undergraduate programs. My assessment serves as a means of highlighting the common strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that are shaping the future for the WCBA.

**Strengths:** Strong engagement of students with the business community through internships and class projects. Active Centers (Center of Excellence in International Business, Small Business Development Center, Williamson Center for International Business, Monus Entrepreneurship Center and Nonprofit Leadership Center) that provide academic programming and outreach services; 40% increase in MBA enrollments, pending Masters of Accountancy program, and high quality faculty committed to excellence. Increasing quality of students, WCBA Business Leaders Program, new program development, and unique student opportunities (e.g., Student Investment Fund, CFP track, Beeghly Fellows Program). Active student organizations. New building.

**Weaknesses:** Insufficient faculty resources and professional staff resources (i.e., academic advising, professional practice, career services) to meet the growing demands/needs/expectations of the students, parents, and employers, and to respond to the emerging opportunities in the region. Need for increased instructional design support for the online MBA Program. Wide variability in internship placements across programs.

**Opportunities:** Growth of career opportunities for business graduates continues to support the high ROI of a business degree. Increased visibility of the WCBA is creating new opportunities for student and faculty engagement with businesses. Increased demand for online education. Economic development initiatives in the region are providing new opportunities in a wide variety of areas (e.g., manufacturing and supply chain management, international business, entrepreneurship, accounting, finance, marketing).

**Threats:** Competition among business schools and increased expectations of students, parents and employers require the WCBA to expand programs and services. Recruiting and retaining high quality faculty will depend on our ability to provide competitive salaries and a strong infrastructure of support, recognition and reward.

**Challenges:** There is a significant need to increase the number of tenure-track faculty and our professional staff resources (academic advising, internships and career services).

**Action Steps:** Continue to develop new programs and services to meet the demands of employers, students and parents. Expand faculty resources and professional staff resources to support program expansion. Expand internship and placement opportunities.

**Attachments:** Program Improvement Plans for Lariccia School of Accounting and Finance, Department of Management and Department of Marketing. Extension of Accreditation Letter from AACSB Appendix A). Except from WCBA AACSB Report (Appendix B).

# *College of* CREATIVE ARTS & COMMUNICATION

## Program Improvement Plan Overview Michael R. Crist, Interim Dean

The College of Creative Arts and Communication (CCAC) is an exciting and vital component of the Youngstown State University campus, and the greater metropolitan community. The four departments, consisting of the Department of Art, the Department of Communication, the Dana School of Music and the Department of Theater and Dance, all serve important roles in helping students develop requisite knowledge and skills needed for successful careers in the arts. The College also serves an important role in the region through many events, including art exhibits, concerts, theater productions, radio and television broadcasts, clinics, and workshops offered to tens of thousands of people each year.

All eligible departments in the CCAC offer nationally accredited, comprehensive programs in a variety of fields. The rigorous, innovative and student centered curricula are presented by world-renowned faculty using award-winning, advanced teaching techniques in an ever-improving facility. College alumni have achieved international recognition for their accomplishments, and many give back to the University through philanthropic and in-kind gifts. Smaller class sizes and a well-rounded education at an affordable cost help to draw and retain students.

As the CCAC works to become more competitive, there are many challenges ahead. Recruiting talented students requires scholarship funds, and many top students are lost each year to institutions with greater scholarship resources. Bliss Hall is in need of a facelift, and each department has identified serious infrastructure issues impeding student and curricular growth. The decrease in external funding has limited the College's ability to improve and upgrade technology needed to prepare students for the future. At the same time, the College is required to develop and initiate its own marketing plan.

Increased responsibility combined with a reduction in faculty and staff through non-rehiring of retirement positions has created significant workload issues. Departments are now required to handle personnel and purchasing responsibilities. Qualified maintenance staff for specialized equipment is needed. There are significant challenges in finding qualified part-time faculty due to the low pay, leading to a lack of consistency in faculty positions. Continual budget cuts make planning for the future almost impossible. Faculty and staff in the College continue to work hard developing and implementing student recruitment and retention plans with limited time and resources.

Despite our challenges, the future of the College of Creative Arts and Communication looks bright. Many of the difficulties facing the College can be mitigated by the dedication of people who work for student success on a daily basis. Achievement will be determined in large part by the resources available as we prepared our students to be leaders of tomorrow.

## **Undergraduate Program Improvement Plan Dean's Overview**

### **Common features of programs**

BCOE hosts a variety of teacher preparation programs, all of which are currently housed in two departments (TE and CSESP). The EFRTL department provides service courses for the programs.

The programs share a common structure, which includes:

- common courses
- area-specific teaching methods courses
- an array of field experience prior to senior year
- a preclinical experience, ordinarily scheduled in the first semester of senior year
- student teaching, ordinarily scheduled in the second semester of senior year
- licensure exam requirements
- a performance assessment (edTPA)
- common GPA, competency, and credit-hour requirements for upper-division coursework
- an interview prior to admission to upper division coursework
- various requirements for clinical experiences, including prerequisites, criminal background checks, and minimum GPA's.

For all undergraduate BCOE programs, successful completion leads to a licensure recommendation. Hence the programs require state approval and must be updated frequently to comply with new state regulations. All programs are also accredited at two levels: by a professional accreditation body in the discipline (e.g. the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) and by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, the national body which conducts accreditation of the education unit as a whole.

### **College- and university-level organization to support programs**

The upper-division admissions process is governed by a college-wide committee. Student teaching is coordinated by the BCOE Field Experience Office. College staff members also provide advising, technology support, an electronic assessment system, data collection and dissemination, and a variety of student engagement activities. College-level accreditation committees also drive accreditation-related initiatives, most recently related to increased field experience and statistical analysis of assessment data to determine reliability and validity of assessment instruments. The Professional Education Committee (PEC), an advisory body which includes external stakeholders and faculty and administrators from colleges that provide content-area preparation for teacher candidates, meets twice each semester to address programmatic concerns.

### **Outreach**

The college provides administrative oversight and logistical support for a variety of partnership projects, including cohorts cosponsored by Educational Service Centers, professional development for school districts, graduate workshops based on third-party professional development, graduate assistant internships, grant-funded initiatives, and a bachelor's completion program at Lakeland Community College scheduled to start in Fall 2015. Robust outreach is critical to the vitality of the college, helping faculty keep up to date with the field, strengthening alliances that support clinical placements, and ensuring that the college is focused on the needs of the profession and region.

### **Enhancement of student experience**

The college invests in numerous initiatives to enrich student experience, including training and teaching opportunities such as Freedom Summer School and STEM/Explore summer camp, a variety of co-sponsored volunteer activities, support for student organizations, and student travel and research funding. 20 of 50 grant-supported places in this year's statewide Ohio Student Education Association were claimed by BCOE students, and 6 of our students served in leadership roles in the state organization. Members of

student organizations represent BCOE at university recruiting events such as SOAR, CRASH Day, and Experience Y Day. The energy and enthusiasm of undergraduate students invigorates our programs and helps individual students develop their professional identities while staying connected with peers.

### **Challenges**

Thanks to state regulations and accreditation requirements, teacher education is becoming more costly and demanding at a time when employment benefits are being eroded and accountability requirements weigh heavily on classroom teachers. These pressures exacerbate the downward trend in enrollment experienced by the university as a whole. Overhead costs of administrative and faculty salaries cannot be reduced in proportion to enrollment, and hence teacher preparation is inevitably less efficient. Because other institutions are experiencing the same pressures, competition for remaining students has intensified. Despite these pressures, morale in the college remains high because of the common commitment to the profession and to the schools and clinics we serve.

### **Major initiatives**

The principal initiatives in the area of undergraduate education in BCOE include the following:

- realignment of curriculum to meet new standards and testing requirements
- adoption of national scoring of the edTPA as a requirement for completion in all programs
- more extensive and rigorous field experiences in all programs
- tighter alignment of service courses with the programs in which they are required
- strengthened relationships with clinical partners
- reorganization of departments to strengthen program cohesion

### **Outlook for the near and medium term**

Despite fiscal and enrollment challenges, the BCOE is on track to meet accreditation requirements. Students are responding positively to increased demands. YSU student teachers are respected in the field and our graduates sought after by principals and personnel directors. Graduate survey data shows that BCOE students consistently report higher rates of full-time employment than those of any other college. The College is moving aggressively to attract new students to the profession and to establish partnerships that will enhance future enrollment.



## **College of Health and Human Services Overview**

The Bitonte College of Health and Human Services has been the leader in enrollment at Youngstown State University since 2004. This pattern of stability has been enhanced by new program expansion in the following areas:

### Graduate

Master of Criminal Justice Administration (online)

Master of Respiratory Care (online)

Master of Nursing (Family Nurse Practitioner Option)

Master of Social Work (at both Lorain County and Lakeland Community Colleges)

### Undergraduate

Bachelor of Dental Hygiene with EFDA (Expanded Function Dental Auxiliary Certification)

Bachelor of Respiratory Care (online)

RN to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (online)

The development and implementation of these programs has been facilitated by strong departmental leadership and a talented, hard working faculty and staff. It has required flexibility and a willingness to redefine content areas and delivery in order to address the needs of our students and the community. This is consistent with the entrepreneurial spirit that permeates the College of Health and Human Services.

In addition to being an enrollment leader at Youngstown State University, the College of Health and Human Services has had a major impact on workforce development in our region and beyond. Health and human service organizations throughout our area are heavily populated with our graduates in the areas of nursing, dental hygiene, respiratory care, physical therapy, nutrition, emergency medical services, health and fitness, law enforcement and corrections, and social work. The future of the regional workforce in the health and human services professions is dependent on the strength and competencies of our graduates. Our College's state and nationally accredited programs, teaching excellence, and strong enrollment, assure a strong future reserve.

The future is bright for the College of Health and Human Services. Responsive academic programming continues to be a focus. The speed and rate of growth at which programs are developed and implemented will be in part dependent on access to resources. However, the dominant "can-do" attitude among faculty, staff, and leadership is an essential characteristic that persists and consequently assures continued program expansion and excellence.



## CLASS College Summary

The health of the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences (CLASS) is strong and its future promising. CLASS maintains its position as an integral part of the University and of the education of all YSU students. The following facts represent support for the college's importance:

- CLASS accounts for 27.6% of total student credit hour production at YSU, second only to STEM.
- 17.1% of YSU's students major in programs in CLASS.
- The Bachelor of General Studies degree is housed in CLASS and is consistently one of the top five most popular majors at YSU. The BGS is a primary contributor to YSU's retention & degree completion efforts.
- CLASS contributions to the General Education Curriculum are significant through its composition courses and a large percentage of knowledge domain offerings: Arts & Humanities (66%), Natural Science (8%), Social Sciences (85%) and Social and Personal Awareness (70%).

CLASS faculty and staff are strong contributors to the mission of the college. Departments have seen multiple retirements in the past 5 years from among the many faculty hired in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Newer faculty members bring a fresh dedication to scholarship, innovative teaching and the mentoring of our majors. The reputation of our academic advising staff is one of competence and collegiality. Because of this, CLASS advisors are frequently asked to pilot new procedures and administrative offices often refer students to them, regardless of the students' majors, knowing that students will receive help. The advising staff works hand in hand with department chairs to ensure that students receive the most accurate advice available.

Collaboration is a key component in curricular programming in CLASS with our interdisciplinary programs (Africana, American, Islamic, Judaic & Holocaust, Women's & Gender) involving coursework and from across YSU's undergraduate colleges. Likewise, courses from CLASS departments are required for majors in the other undergraduate colleges, most notably, BCOE, BCHHS and WCB where they are integral to accreditation. CLASS departments maintain close connections with local healthcare, legal, media, non-profit and religious communities as service to these communities and to our students in the form of internships and field placements. More distant partnerships include those with AmeriCorps, Ohio History Corp, ProPublica, the Ohio Humanities Council, University of Cincinnati, and the University of Akron.

The challenges are many. As technological advances "shrink" the world and the imperative for global education grows, CLASS departments stand poised to address related needs. Knowledge of world cultures, landscapes and resources, histories, languages, economies, and political systems is no longer optional for successful 21<sup>st</sup> century professionals and at its core is the understanding of human behavior and the ability to communicate effectively. We encourage CLASS students to engage in study abroad opportunities that are viewed as assets by potential employers and transformative for students' world view.

The college is moving toward greater emphasis on international and public policy and curricula will be adjusted gradually in this direction. This will increase the understanding of the value and employability of our majors that currently is not always evident to incoming students and their parents. We need to invest in communication that makes clear the knowledge and skills gained in our majors and minors, either alone or in combination with other majors and we need to convey this information early in the student's college experience or more appropriately in outreach to high school students.

Submitted March 18, 2015

## STEM Program Improvement Plan Dean's Summary

The College of STEM has a total of 28 programs in 10 departments if some rearrangement suggested by the chairs through the Program Improvement Plan process is implemented. These rearrangements are: (i) consolidation of four math "tracks" and the BS in Mathematics into a single BS in Mathematics program, (ii) the reduction of several programs, originally in the College of Applied Science and Technology, into five degree programs in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, and the combining of the BA in Astronomy and the BA in Physics into one BA in Physics. The variety of student choices suggested by the original multiplicity of these programs can be equally attained through advising and course selection if the suggested reductions are made.

The attached program improvement plans demonstrate through the listed strengths and opportunities that the STEM College has a wealth of strong programs which promote the mission of YSU as an urban research university heavily engaged in service to the community and local industry. The weaknesses and threats listed in these same plans indicate some challenges in the areas of sustainability and student success. The highlights of the College most common to all the programs are the strength of the laboratory or hands-on experiences available to the students, the opportunities for students to become involved in research or work experiences, and the importance of the program as the only one offered in the region of its type or offered with a specific accreditation. The most common challenges in the program improvement plans address the needs for additional resources in terms of faculty, equipment upgrades, and space, and also challenges in student recruitment, retention, and graduation rate.

It is clear in the STEM Program Improvement Plans there is some frustration expressed by the chairs trying to maintain programs that are relatively high cost, for students that must reach a high level of achievement in times of very difficult budget realities. It is also interesting that these frustrations are not uniform across all departments in STEM. In some cases, departments have found ways to manage using the resources available without additional expenditures on the part of the University. Examples of creative budget management are seen in the success of major equipment grants, the inclusion of graduate student stipends in grant proposals, and collaborative program structures. In response to equipment upgrade needs, faculty in several departments have received funding to install electron microscopes and x-ray diffractometers in YSU STEM facilities through the NSF-MRI program. To address the need for more graduate stipends, multiple research grants have been submitted since last fall with the inclusion of funding for graduate student assistantships. Regarding the need for more faculty to support programs, the Environmental Studies Program in the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences relies on the faculty from three departments to satisfy its course needs. This sharing of faculty across departments is the model for the PhD program in Materials Science in the STEM College too. It is with optimism in regard to challenge areas in STEM that I hope to help change the approach from one of first requesting more resources to one of considering how to use existing resources differently to help achieve our goals.

Regardless of the approach, two needs remain that are important to the increased success of the STEM College. These are the improvement of facilities and the recruitment of quality students. Whether or not the capitol campaign study indicates funding for a new STEM building, a building upgrade plan for the 4 buildings used by the STEM College should be developed with the College goals I mind. Even a gradual renewal of these buildings will help in maintaining function and improving student recruitment. Student recruitment designed to attract students prepared to succeed in STEM disciplines is already beginning to occur at the University level, and we hope to see substantial changes in retention and graduation rate with additional College efforts in these areas.