

Strategic Plan: Regional Engagement

Optimizing Collaborative Partnerships and Community Engagement to Help Improve the Quality of Life in our Region

YSU has made the following progress on three of six selected initiatives:

1. *Offer Diverse Arts and Cultural Programming to broaden Audience Demographics*

A primary goal is to ensure connectivity to the Community Diversity Programming Series and the academic colleges, especially the College of Fine and Performing Arts and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. In addition, the Department of Theater and Dance is in the very early stages of a youth theater project titled, "Penguin Playhouse," which may offer programming at the Youngstown Public Library. In addition, our cultural programming at the Jewish Community Center in Youngstown's north side is moving along very successfully. While most of the programming is music, we have had some preliminary discussions about taking an art exhibition into their space.

In addition, the College of Fine and Performing Arts is a part sponsor of the Ohio Association of Gerontology and Education Conference. In addition to providing sponsorship funds, we are curating a photography exhibit on aging, in collaboration with Department of Art faculty. SMARTS has continued to provide extraordinary amounts of programming to underserved youth, and the recent TRAP (The Rhythmic Arts Project) has reached many students with learning disorders, which will offer programming at several sites in Youngstown, including the Rich Center and Potential Development Program for Autism.

The focus this fall and into the Spring 2012 semester is to formalize programming with appropriate areas at YSU and in the community, and to develop goals as it relates to diverse cultural programming.

2. *Increase Coordination / Communication Among Academic units Related to Economic Development and Community Engagement*

The primary goals of this initiative will involve individual as well as coordinated efforts among the various academic units within the University. There are several projects underway to help engage the community and the University in economic development. Others are in different stages of planning. Current projects that are making progress towards the goals of this initiative include the following:

- Within the Williamson College of Business Administration (WCBA), the Monus Entrepreneurship Center is collaborating with the Gerontology Program (Bitonte College of Health and Human Services; HHS) to plan a regional conference that will include a student entrepreneurship competition focusing on new business ideas for the senior market.
- The Small Business Development Center (WCBA) continuously utilizes the skills of faculty members across campus to address business-related needs and planning.

- New graduate courses have been developed by the WCBA. One is an elective course in Entrepreneurship, Technology and Innovation for MBA students, as well as those in the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). This course is being offered through the Small Business Development Center and focuses on emerging business opportunities in the region. A second elective, Nonprofit Leadership, is for graduate students across campus and will focus on building sustainable nonprofit organizations.
- STEM and WCBA have been working together to enhance student opportunities in co-op and internship experiences. STEM has hired a person to support this effort, although the goal is to expand access on behalf of all students and to ensure a smooth flow of information between colleges.
- STEM and the Beeghly College of Education recently collaborated on a K-12 outreach/education proposal to the National Science Foundation. The proposal seeks to develop a collaborative program with Youngstown City Schools to support the transition from high school to college. This proposal is based on a recent successful program with the school district which sought to enhance math preparedness for incoming YSU students.
- STEM and the College of Fine and Performing arts are working jointly on the development of artwork that takes advantage of the technology of STEM and the creativity of art. To this end, a contribution of a \$130,000 was secured from a local company.

3. *Develop a Task Group for Nonviolent Behavior and Community Safety*

A task group chair has been identified to explore issues surrounding “non-violent behavior & community safety,” and we expect the group to be established and addressing relevant issues by spring, 2012. While community safety is an extremely broad and complex topic, it is critical that the University lead by example; therefore, this group may serve as a conduit through which to share the draft Workplace Violence Policy, and propose means of implementation. The draft policy states that the University is “committed to providing an environment that is safe, secure and free from threats, intimidation, and violence. Our goal is an institution to maintain a supportive work environment where violence of any nature is neither tolerated or excused.”

Three additional initiatives chosen among the first to be addressed under the strategic plan have yet to be fully implemented. They require additional input from various constituencies at YSU and elsewhere. These initiatives are listed below, as are the individuals responsible to begin moving the particular issue forward:

- Establish Policies to Reduce Barriers to Partnerships (Holly Jacobs)
- Develop Strong Relationships with regional Economic Development Agencies (Ron Chordas)
- Improve Communication Between Community Outreach Units and Academic Departments (Ron Chordas)