

The Forum

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE NEWS AND INFORMATION

FROM THE DESK OF OACC PRESIDENT DR. RON ABRAMS



Dr. Ron Abrams
OACC President

Community colleges are getting their due.

President Obama has talked about community colleges as being the lynchpin to help train the

workers of tomorrow.

And, Gov. John R. Kasich has very publicly talked about working with community colleges on job training and about all of higher education working together to truly create a University System of Ohio.

The president has proposed an \$8 billion Community College To Career Fund that would help two-year colleges work with businesses to train 2 million people across the country for good-paying jobs in high-demand industries, including health care, transportation and advanced manufacturing.

Likewise, Gov. Kasich has met with the presidents of our institutions and shared his desire to work with our colleges to enhance workforce development in the Buckeye State.

It was the governor's stated opinion that because of the work that our colleges do that community colleges are uniquely positioned to lead the way in training the workers of tomorrow.

We couldn't agree more. Our community colleges have had a long history of providing quality training for employers and for those looking to transition careers at a very affordable price.

We look forward to working with the governor and state lawmakers on these very important issues as Ohio continues to emerge from the recession.

In April, Gov. Kasich signed into law HB 482, the \$1.7 billion FY 13-FY 14 Capital Bill. This bill funds the brick-and-mortar, capital needs for state facilities including state colleges and universities.

This capital bill required the leaders of state higher education institutions to work together to recommend higher education projects rather than rely on a formula to distribute the dollars; higher education leaders rose to the occasion.

A group including myself on behalf of the OACC as well as Dr. Morris Beverage, the president of Lakeland Community College, and Dr. Paul Brown, the president of Zane State College, worked with our counterparts from the four-year schools to craft recommendations for the capital bill that we believe make smart and strategic investments in public higher education infrastructure.

The recommendations of our panel were incorporated into the bill that ultimately passed the Ohio General Assembly.

What were the results? Community colleges received \$81.6 million in capital dollars or 23 percent of the \$350 million earmarked for higher education facilities. This represents a shift of five percent in funding for community colleges compared to the four-year schools for projects, many of which we believe will have a very real impact on Ohio's economic recovery in job-training for high-demand skills of the future.

We continue to monitor other pressing matters before state government including the Mid-Biennium Budget Review legislation and efforts to reform public pensions and we will keep our members informed on these very important issues.

And, in the spirit of keeping members informed, get ready for the Spring Conference on May 24 and May 25 here in Columbus. We will have a great program for our Presidents and Trustees including the annual Excellence Awards dinner. Please check the events section at www.ohiocommunitycolleges.org for more details.

See you in Columbus!

Sincerely,

Ron

COLLEGE PRESIDENTS MEET WITH SENS. BROWN AND PORTMAN

WASHINGTON – Ohio's community college presidents and trustees met with U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman and hear firsthand their issues and concerns.



Community college presidents and trustees were able to hear about both senators' plans regarding workforce development, federal student aid programs and a host of other issues during their visit to the nation's capital Feb. 13 through Feb. 16 as part of the American Association of Community

College Trustees National Legislative Summit.



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COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT: CUYAHOGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Cuyahoga Community College GPS for First Year Students

By Judy La Riccia-Grant, Student Success Specialist,
Cuyahoga Community College Western Campus

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C®) is helping first year students navigate the ins and outs of their first year experience with its GPS system: **Guidance through Peer Support**. All students attending New Student Orientation will be guided through a four-hour orientation by a peer mentor who will then assist them in navigating their first semesters at Tri-C.

Peer mentors are hired through the Student Ambassador program, which is designed to provide qualified students with opportunities to develop extensive

leadership skills and gain valuable lifelong work skills while assisting with college relations, retention, and outreach efforts. Student ambassadors serve a critical role in assisting with New Student Orientations, providing support to students during peak registration periods, assisting/training students to use Tri-C's student portal, *my Tri-C space*, and participating in various mentoring and leadership programs. Student ambassadors selected as peer mentors are given additional training to support the needs of first year students.

Cuyahoga Community College hosts over 60 New Student Orientations every year on three of the Tri-C campuses. Orientations are scheduled in small groups to provide a more personalized program and an opportunity for each student to have a 45-minute individual appointment with an academic

counselor. Peer mentors who staff orientations are responsible for guiding subgroups of new students on a campus tour, navigating them through *my Tri-C space*, escorting them to their

counseling appointments, and finally, assisting them with registering for classes. Embedded in all of the activities is the opportunity for the peer mentor to create, not only a rapport with each student, but also to establish themselves as leaders who are knowledgeable about the college systems and capable of assisting new students to successfully navigate their first semesters. This connection creates invaluable relationships resulting in better academic performance and improved retention on the part of both the new students as well as the student ambassadors. It's a win-win situation.

Peer mentors are assigned a cohort of approximately 80 new students from orientations scheduled throughout the season. Outreach begins after orientation, continues through the end of new students' first semesters and concludes near the start of their second terms. Early in the program, new students receive communication of important reminders with office hours for additional assistance, if needed. Peer mentors are housed at the campus information desks where they assist other students when not working directly with their mentees.

During the first week of the semester, mentees are encouraged to stop and pick up their welcome packets that contain the mentoring schedule for the semester, as well as some first week survival tips and a gift from the college. The remainder of the semester is filled with raffles, success tips, and weekly emails with reminders and encouragement to continue to see their peer mentors. New students who do not stop during the first several weeks of the semester receive phone calls to check in and make sure that all is well. Mid-term progress calls are also made to students who receive unsatisfactory academic progress grades with a reiteration of campus services and resources, as well as steps that should be taken to be more successful in their classes.

Early reports from a campus pilot show a marked increase in the retention of students who attended New Student Orientation and were paired with a peer mentor during their first semesters. Enhancing the orientation experience with peer mentor support appears to be a winning combination upon which Tri-C will expand to include all four campuses.



ONE VOICE LEGISLATIVE LUNCHEON

Representatives of Ohio's community colleges talked about the issues with state legislators on March 14 during the 2012 OACC "One Voice" Legislative Luncheon in downtown Columbus.

Community college officials got to advocate with their representation on issues ranging from the \$1.7 billion, two-year capital bill to local issues.

Lawmakers and attendees also got to hear directly from students from community colleges about their experiences and about what community colleges have meant to them and their academic success. Student speakers included Bryan Dell of Cincinnati State Technical & Community College; Bobby Hamlet of Stark State College; Penny Burnette of Rio Grande Community College and Lauren Misel of Central Ohio Technical College.



Assistant Senate Democratic Leader Joe Schiavoni of Niles talks with students from Eastern Gateway Community College.

State Rep. Michael Stinziano, D-Columbus (center, facing) and state Rep. Bob Hackett (R-London) talk to officials from Columbus State Community College.



Lorain County Community College President Roy Church (at left) talks with students, staff and state Sen. Gayle Manning of Lorain County (seated at right).

Claire Rosacco, VP of Government Relations for Cuyahoga Community College, discuss the issues with state Rep. Nickie Antonio, D-Lakewood.



STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

The Ohio Association of Community Colleges is pleased to announce the establishment of a "Student Success Center" to be housed at the OACC to do the important work of helping more community college students achieve credentials and obtain meaningful employment.

Funded by a generous grant from the Kresge Foundation, the OACC has formulated a strong strategy to support our state's 23 community colleges in their efforts to help more students attain the degrees and credentials needed to be successful in today's fast-changing economy.

The Student Success Center will focus on:

1. Aligning the multiple state and national initiatives focused on student success to assure and improve return on investment for the millions of dollars already spent in Ohio;
2. Offering faculty and staff development to ensure student success at the college level;
3. Coordinating with the state data systems' personnel to provide appropriate data to the colleges while avoiding duplication;
4. Developing Ohio's long-term data capacity, equipping colleges with their own data and showing them how to use data for continuous improvement;
5. Driving necessary state and local policy change to support the Student Success Agenda;

6. Raising the level of attention to community college student success as an urgent and important investment;
7. Scaling the many campus-based strategies that are working and model the proven methodology from Achieving the Dream (AtD), Developmental Education (DEI) and other initiatives across all of Ohio's community colleges;
8. Engaging in ongoing research, capturing, and disseminating learning and 'promising practices' from student success initiatives in Ohio and other state community college systems; and
9. Facilitating a change in culture, from access to access **AND** success.

The Student Success Center, which we anticipate will be operational in July, will be centered on data as the driver of activity. We will identify promising practices both outside and within Ohio's community colleges, verify their effectiveness, disseminate those deemed most effective, and support replication. In addition, we will facilitate removal of barriers to student success.



CAPITAL INSIDER

A Perspective on Ohio Politics from the Viewpoint of Key State Leaders

Each quarter, The Forum invites state leaders to share their views and opinions on policies and issues that have a direct impact on Ohio's community colleges.

Neil Clark, managing partner of Grant Street Consultants, offers his insight on the coming November elections in this issue's "Capital Insider" column.



*Neil Clark,
Grant Street
Consultants*

After months of what may have seemed like a time of ridiculous and confused statements on national policies, Republicans finally have a presumptive candidate for President of the United States. And now the table is set for this November's general election which include: a contentious

U.S. Senate race, safe lines resulting in somewhat boring Ohio Congressional campaigns, some vigorous Ohio House contests and a few interesting Ohio Senate campaigns.

Some 15 years ago, I delivered a speech on campaigns and elections. In doing so, I wrote on a card what I considered to be the seven most important variables that determine whether or not a candidate can win. This little card proved to be invaluable over the years and I tuck it into a little hiding place and unearth it during each election season.

I cut my teeth in campaigns working alongside seasoned pros like Tom Van Meter, Jim Tilling and former Senate President Stanley Aronoff. It was Senator Aronoff who lectured me on the importance of money, issues and the candidate. That was the critical "Big Three."

When a candidate has a large balance of money in the bank, they have what I refer to as a "Big Balance Attitude" – it empowers them and enables their campaign committee to effectively build their positive messaging. This in turn will build that candidate's positive attributes while building their name identification among voters. Election guys like me love the power of positive

messaging because it inoculates the candidate against the negative campaign that is inevitably launched by the opposition's camp.

Another value in having bagfuls of money is the protection it provides a candidate from unanswered negative attacks raised by their opponent's ads.

I always refer to that magic card that started and has since evolved through the years. Without revealing too many secrets, here are the highlights:

At the top of my card are these categories:

Lines	50 percent
Money	15 percent
Issues	10 percent
Candidate	10 percent
Organization	5 percent

Lines:

Today, the vast majority of the seats in the Ohio General Assembly are classified as safe seats. From my point of view, that is a district with an index that supports a political party 55% or better – meaning about 84 percent of the members in the Ohio House are from districts that have strong leanings toward their political party. Another 5 percent live in districts that range from 53.1 to 55 percent. Combining the two classifications equals 89 percent.

Conversely, the number of districts considered "in play" or contested, are districts that have an index of 53 percent or less. There are only 10 seats or 11 percent that are contested at this point.

In the Ohio Senate, 26, or 79 percent of the 33 seats are considered safe. Only two incumbents currently hold seats that could flip based on the indexes – but that won't be decided until the 2014 election. That means 5 seats fall into that 53 percent or less index.

As I have illustrated, the lines generally determine winner. But there are exceptions; an impressive one being Sen. Scott Oelslager's career. The Senator, now the "Dean of The Senate," was first appointed in 1985 and hasn't lost an election since, despite having districts with Republican indexes as low 47 percent to a high of 52 percent for the last three decades.

Money:

If you have any doubts about the

importance of money in the elections process, I'm sure open to hearing your point of view. To illustrate my point, I literally receive 20 to 30 requests a week for political contributions. It certainly doesn't stop after the election. I get more calls for money than for substantive political or policy purposes. And it's not the caucuses raising funds for individual and future leadership races but for TV, Radio, Polling, and Direct Mail needs. Why? Because, sadly, money can cure most election problems – enough said.

Issues:

When the lines are right, and a caucus has money in the bank, the legislative issues or the Governor's agenda will draw a candidate into a campaign. You only need to remember the so-called Celeste 90 percent income tax increase, or the 2006 "Culture of Corruption" sentiment that lead to the Democrats' landslide and to the Republicans' recapturing the Ohio House in 2010 based on strong voter disapproval of President Obama. What I have found over my career is that you don't need a ton of issues to win a race... just three.

Candidate:

Political consultants get giddy when the perfect candidate comes their way. Perhaps they're a seasoned veteran of politics or even a political unknown. I see value in both types. When I was working in the Ohio Senate we had a candidate from a marginal district, running against a very popular Ohio House member. Our initial baseline poll showed our candidate with a 4 percent name identification. I remember saying that 50 percent of the polled respondents were lying. In the end this supposed unknown won 60-40.

Organization:

I continue to be a believer in the importance of a strong organization. My success has been with the backroom, strategic aspects of a campaign – the polling, message development, TV spot production and crisis management. But I truly envy those who work the day-to-day aspects of a campaign. The individuals who work in this capacity are truly the campaign's backbone, they're the ones producing a targeted door-to-door list, selecting prime yard sign locations,

CAPITAL INSIDER CONTINUED

keeping the phone banks manned and getting bodies to attend those media critical, political rallies.

In 1984, the Ohio Senate Republicans had an awesome organization. In 2006, the Democratic Party had an envious grassroots organization. And in 2010, the Ohio House Republicans created an organization that everyone wanted for Christmas! When a strong, versatile campaign committee is nimble and experienced, it can deploy resources in the critical time required to result in victory.

Governor's Popularity	3 percent
Generic Ballot	3 percent
Presidential Popularity	4 percent

Every morning while I'm having my coffee, I click on www.RealClearPolitics.com to get the most recent polling information on the President's popularity and the Generic Ballot. Oct. 15, 2008, Rasmussen polled the Generic Ballot question, "Are you going to vote this upcoming election R or D?" At +12

Democrat. A few weeks later, the D's won the Ohio House.

Then on Oct. 15, 2010, the Generic ballot was +12 R – and sure enough, two weeks later the House R's took the majority. By Oct. 15, 2011 the Generic Ballot had dropped to 3+ R and today it's only 1.4+ R. When a district falls into high-risk competitive category, 53 percent index or less, the variables in the second category are extremely critical. A candidate rarely bucks the trend, so it's important to pay attention to the numbers.

So what do I think about November?

President Obama has a slight advantage. Quinnipiac University shows the Democrat ahead 44 percent to 42 percent in the nation's leading presidential bellwether. In the survey of swing states, Obama is up just 44 percent to 43 percent in Florida – making the Sunshine State also too

close to call – and 47 percent to 39 percent in Pennsylvania. If the economy continues to grow he will be hard to beat. But expect it to be close.

As for the U.S. Senate race, Senator Sherrod Brown's incumbency advantage is getting chipped away by the use of independent expenditures...you know the unknown special interests. Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel could win this race. If the presidential spread is large for President Obama then Brown will likely win however if the spread is small Mandel goes to Washington.

The recently drawn Congressional lines will dictate who wins. It's that simple. The Rs have their seats and the D's have theirs.

The Republicans will still control the Ohio House with a comfortable margin probably 56+ and the Ohio Senate will more than likely never lose its majority in my lifetime and will hold a 23+ seat margin.

KASICH ADMINISTRATION TAKES AIM AT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Gov. John R. Kasich's administration has taken a keen interest in workforce development and the role that community colleges can play in this very important issue.

Rich Frederick, the governor's point person on this issue, has been meeting monthly with workforce development officers from our member colleges in an effort to learn more about their work to link community college students and graduates with job opportunities including those offered through the Web site www.OhioMeansJobs.com.

In previous meetings, community college representatives have updated the governor and his staff on their efforts and described the powerful work being done by community colleges to link students and graduates to high-demand positions.

The monthly dialogue on the matter will continue for the foreseeable future as we all work to position Ohio as a workforce development leader.

The OACC will stay on top of this issue and bring you the latest details as they develop.

2012 OHIO ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES STATEWIDE SYMPOSIUM

More than 120 community college faculty members and administrators gathered in Columbus on March 1 and March 2 to hear the latest research and more at the 2012 OACC Statewide Symposium: Accelerating Student Success.

Attendees were able to hear presentations discussing the latest research on the topic including presentations from noted academics Katie Hern & Myra Snell of the California Acceleration Project.

Those attending were also able to discuss issues among themselves and network with colleagues from around the state.



Karla Krodel of Youngstown State University presents to attendees.



Katie Hern and Myra Snell discuss their research at the March Symposium.



Kathleen Cleary of Sinclair Community College makes a point during a discussion.

2012 OHIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP PH.D PROGRAM

Community colleges need to begin thinking of grooming the next generation of community college leaders.

The University of Toledo and the Ohio Association of Community Colleges want to help.

This fall, UT and the OACC are debuting the Ohio Community College Leadership Program. A group of students, nominated by community college presidents, will be in this inaugural class that is designed to educate the next generation of community college leaders and is geared towards professionals already working in the field of higher education.

According to UT, the doctoral cohort model has created a fast-paced vehicle through which students traverse the curriculum, which includes:

- Three years of coursework (plus a major examination and dissertation)

- An intensive eight week course-format for courses in the fall and spring semesters.
- Use of WebEx for teaching part of the courses and for dissertation advising.
- A required two week summer leadership academy in DC and Columbus.
- A required two-week summer leadership academy in one or more countries abroad.
- A required summer internship experience under the supervision of a community college president.

Information about this cohort can be found on the UT Higher Education Program at http://www.utoledo.edu/eduhshs/depts/efl/programs/higher_education/Doctoral.html

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dates are subject to change. For more information, or to use the OACC Conference Room for your next meeting, contact Leah Dickinson at ldickinson@ohioacc.org or (614) 221-6222. Additional information is also available at www.ohiocommunitycolleges.org.

May

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| 24 | Excellence Awards Dinner (Held during the Annual Spring Conference)
Columbus, Ohio |
| 24-25 | OACC Annual Spring Conference: The Collaboration Imperative
The Westin Columbus, Columbus, Ohio |

OACC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Clark State Community College • Columbus State Community College • Cuyahoga Community College • Eastern Gateway Community College

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