

Quality and Value Discussion – Owens Community College Monday, Dec. 9, 2013

A group of more than 25 college and university presidents, faculty and staff from northwest Ohio joined Chancellor John Carey, Dr. Gordon Gee and Sen. Randy Gardner for the second in a series of statewide meetings to discuss the new Quality and Value initiative.

Chancellor Carey and Dr. Gee welcomed the group and thanked everyone for attending and taking part in the discussion. Dr. Gee said the issue of Quality and Value in higher education is vital to Ohio, as “we can no longer expect to have our colleagues in the legislature shovel money toward us.” He then asked “How does one increase quality and decrease cost? We know that, together, we can figure out ways to reinvent higher education, and that's what we're about. None of us has the answer. We are on this journey together - we have been given a remarkable opportunity at a remarkable time.”

After welcoming remarks, Chancellor Carey and Dr. Gee opened the floor to attendees to share comments and ideas during the 90-minute discussion. Some of the comments shared by those in attendance are as follows:

“We have students and families coming to us who have saved but not efficiently, and they need a level of mentoring through the financial aid process. Very dedicated families can set aside enough for the first year, but not years two through four. Anything we can do to give an incentive for savings and have a statewide push on educating families on saving and how financial aid works would be helpful.”

“An early college program at (the University of Toledo) allows students to earn college credit while in high school, and has built a financial algorithm that changes the incentive formula and increases enrollment. It gives an opportunity to lower the cost for students and gets more kids in the program.”

“We are concerned about credentialed high school teachers. We would not agree to a dual enrollment class being taught in high school unless the teacher had the same credentials as our adjuncts.”

“It's important that the higher education system look at things we can do in terms of shared services.”

Dr. Gee responded to the comment regarding shared services, saying “We have to address the notion of, how do we really think about a higher education system in which we are sharing resources and partnering? We have to think about that with public education. We've built a higher ed system in this country that is very vertical. The notion of creating a systemic approach in which we are an organic system will be an enormously important part of this conversation.”

Some examples of shared services were provided by representatives from the University of Toledo, who said “We first helped Owens with its pharmaceutical program, which saved the school

between \$500,000 and \$1.5 million per year. There is a whole host of things we are working on to save cost and get the word out ... if we do things like this there is \$1 billion a year that can be saved."

Chancellor Carey said doing things more efficiently "doesn't mean we'll invest less, but we'll take what we have and make it go further."

"We need to consider Quality and Value in our core business. We've been working on the ancillaries, but our core business has largely been untouched, and the inadvertent consequence is we haven't looked at how we teach, what we teach, when we teach and how to maximize the value of that. The question is, how can we be leaner in our core business of instructing students? We need to tackle our core business and the way we do it in order to deal with this problem."

"We are facing a shift in the paradigm of education calling on all of us to do things in a different way. We've talked about seeing if one faculty member in a subject area could be the 'guru' teaching a course on several campuses. We never look at how to take advantage of the talent that exists. We have to think outside of the box."

"Performance needs to be the constant and time the variable. We need to focus on competence rather than seat time, and let students use whatever medium is best suited for them. The ways in which we deliver their options are limited, and this is a fabulous opportunity to change that paradigm."

"The use of high technology may be the way to bridge the gap from flat online learning. Use technology to advance competency-based education. At the end of the day it's not a terribly expensive thing to do."

"We often think about how we can partner with governmental agencies (public safety, maintenance, etc.). We are pleased to partner with everyone in the room on a variety of articulation agreements."

Dr. Gee said he and Chancellor Carey recognize that each institution represented "is unique," adding that "an approach in which we all salute the flag in the same way is best. There are so many ways for us to deal with the quality and value issue. We've made some real progress in dealing with the state, but we need to do a better job of educating our own boards of trustees."

"What I have seen on the technology side is a movement toward the flipped classroom model. The traditional tiered lecture hall is becoming a thing of the past."

"We need to create a lecture system where the content is taken online and the classroom is used to apply the knowledge and do the homework."

"The more interaction we have with faculty, the more retention we will have."

"We have a workforce development program, and what (we are hearing) is a lot of the potential employees they are getting don't have the writing skills and basic quantitative skills that they should be having. There are 80,000 people in Lucas County that read at 7th grade level."

“A total of 20-25 percent of students in the region we serve have no plans beyond high school. How do we bring in a career class to get those students to think beyond high school? The poverty is so inbred into this third generation, and it’s a group we cannot afford to forget.”

Dr. Gee cited a point that he said should be kept “top of mind when it comes to jobs, creating opportunity and having a fabulous workforce. In all of those areas, the competition internationally means an educated citizenry is essential, no matter where they end up. Our biggest issue is we can't find educated people, and that is a job killer for us. This is incredibly important as we bring these issues forward.”

“As a businessperson, we cannot find the trained people we need to execute our business in the manner we want to. Is (the definition of) ‘success’ graduation, or is it really getting a job and being prepared to get that job?”

Chancellor Carey addressed some concerns of student preparedness for the workforce. “Bowling Green is going to provide an internship opportunity to every student; that is one way to address the issue. Higher ed and pre K-12 are working more closely than ever, and that is just beginning. Having people ready for work when they graduate is not the only measurement, but we want people to be successful in their careers.”

“I am struck by the number of students who are challenged by how to find their way through the system. Is there a need for Ohio to have more clarity of what it means if you start, say at Owens - what are your options at that stage? The state system in New York has done this - How do we educate those sophomores, juniors, seniors who need more clarity around their options?”

“We’ve partnered with school districts in our service area. We split the salary and place college access advisers to meet with students to talk about going to any college. How do we keep that discussion going when students aren't sure about their future? We have to have an impact on how we change the discussion. We don't often talk about a path that is not directly ‘four-year college bound.’ How do we impact the discussion to talk about the skilled trades that exist? All of these pathways provide value to our state and economy.”

Chancellor Carey and Dr. Gee concluded the meeting by assuring attendees that the discussion will continue, and encouraged everyone to provide additional ideas as they have them.

“This is the beginning of a journey ... where we can affect a generation,” Dr. Gee said. “Through the work of everyone in this room, higher ed is in a favored position at the moment, and we need to earn that right.”