

Quality and Value Discussion – Cuyahoga Community College Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2013

A group of more than 30 college and university presidents, faculty, staff and student government representatives from northeast Ohio joined Chancellor John Carey and Dr. Gordon Gee for the first in a series of statewide meetings to discuss the new Quality and Value initiative.

Dr. Gee kicked off the meeting saying we are on “a kind of journey for higher education, and we’re also in the most challenging times that we’ve faced, with a trillion dollars in student debt.” But he added that we are “blessed to be in Ohio” and said “we have an opportunity with this Governor to set the standard.” He said the question to consider is “how do we increase quality while containing cost?” He then told the group that there is no single answer, and that he and Chancellor Carey “are here to listen and get ideas. We are really seeking ideas and cooperation and new ways to think about this.”

Chancellor Carey told the group there “are a lot of good things happening in higher ed,” wanted to do what could be done more effectively to reflect quality and value. “What are we missing? What are you doing at your institution that we can emulate statewide? That’s why we invited students today to comment. We’re really focused on you.”

Chancellor Carey and Dr. Gee then opened the floor to attendees to share their comments during the 90-minute discussion. Some of the comments shared by the group are as follows:

“I have tuition remission, but I know a lot of students do not. That has made it more affordable for me. I’m also in a finance class now, and I’ve learned how competition - who has best rec center, etc. - increases costs. Don’t make it about who has the shiniest thing, but who has the best quality of education.”

“You should consider the transferability of credits from community colleges to private institutions.”

“I would like to see some opportunities for more internships prior to graduation, as well as more in-class information about the job search process. Some students are not aware of how to do a resume or type a basic letter, or address an envelope. I would like to see more of that in the classroom. Also, textbooks are expensive. Students need to invest in their future, so those books are something they will need. But I looked in our library for textbooks, and there weren’t many. One of the issues that would lower textbook costs is to have access to books in the library. Students need to know there is ownership in education, but there has to be more push in the classroom.”

Ann Womer Benjamin, from the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education, responded to this comment by sharing information about the Ohio Means Internships website, adding that “The state and the Board of Regents have stepped up to the plate and recognized the importance of experiential learning.”

“Maybe you could consider building in some kind of process so young people are aware of where the jobs are. There is nothing wrong with beginning one's career in a skilled field and building education on top of that. The approach we take could be helpful in ensuring quality.”

“Let's include K-12; we don't want to have a leaky pipeline. From middle school to high school and high school to college, we need content knowledge and pedagogical experiences.”

“Come to us with college credit as part of the high school experience; look at transfer agreements between two-year and four-year schools to find cost containment.”

“We've got to continue to invest in a dual enrollment program.”

“We also have to recognize the different populations of students. The population that is least understood is the transfer student population. They probably receive the least attention in terms of career guidance – there needs to be a transition point between Tri-C and Cleveland State, etc. A lot of those students slip through the cracks, and as a result extend their time to a degree.”

“At the institutional level, Ohio has a marvelous example of cooperation, and that's OhioLINK. We should try to determine what could be done that would mimic OhioLINK to increase quality and draw down costs.”

Chancellor Carey and Dr. Gee concluded the meeting by thanking everyone who attended. Chancellor Carey said “we heard a lot of novel ideas and things to help reaffirm the direction we're going.”