THE ECONOMICALLY-ENGAGED UNIVERSITY:
A STRATEGIC ISSUES WHITE PAPER

OCTOBER 1998

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http://www.bgsu.edu/organizations/research/ 6/24/2004
Dr. Sidney Ribeau  
President  
Bowling Green State University  
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403

Dear Dr. Ribeau:

Eva Klein & Associates (EKA) and Morlok Development Group (MDG) are pleased to transmit this Strategic Issues White Paper entitled The Economically Engaged University. This is the deliverable under our Phase 1 consulting services agreement with Bowling Green State University.

This White Paper is intended as a first step in the University’s development of a Strategic Plan for economic engagement with the region which, in turn, is part of the University’s overall planning efforts for renewal and growth. This document, therefore, is not a report, in the sense that it was not intended to provide answers. Rather, it presents discussion of strategic issues, to map a planning agenda for BGSU. Your next step, after our presentation/discussion of the White Paper tool, is to determine your process for discussing, making and implementing decisions to define the economically engaged BGSU.

EKA’s practice focus is helping universities and their partners define strategies for the global knowledge economy. Thus, we use terms like economic engagement or knowledge-based economic development interchangeably and broadly, to denote emerging views of traditional knowledge missions of higher education. To us, it seems that concepts of knowledge-based economic development are enlarging so rapidly that they are merging with the very definition of the 21st century university. If you agree, then BGSU’s challenge is to determine its specific niches and to define the specific ways in which it will interpret and enact externally-focused roles that rapidly are becoming defining elements in higher education’s future.

We are indebted to all the many University, business community, and governmental representatives whose ideas were captured in intensive interviews and formed much of the basis for this White Paper. To create this discussion document, we have taken their assessments, aspirations, and concrete ideas into direct consideration, and blended them with our experiences at other universities that likewise are seeking to create 21st century models for their proactive engagement with their many diverse constituents. We also extend special thanks to Dr. Doug Neckers who chairs the University’s Research Enterprise Park Committee for providing guidance and direction to the consultant team and to Ms. Karen Williams Lacat, Director of the Research Enterprise Park Initiative, who provided critical coordination and substantive support to this work.

We look forward to having the University’s reactions and comments and we hope that this White Paper will provoke a lively, productive internal dialogue that leads you to decisive actions toward building the University’s future—and that of the region it serves.

Very truly yours,

http://www.bgsu.edu/oraeassizes/research/letter.htm  
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The Economically-Engaged University

INTRODUCTION TO THE WHITE PAPER

BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Established in 1910 as a normal school, Bowling Green State University (BGSU or the University) is now a state-supported, largely undergraduate, regional university serving about 15,000 undergraduates and 2,800 graduate students. Its Firelands College in Huron serves 1,500 associate degree students. In addition to its traditional strength in Education, BGSU’s programs center primarily in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences, with Colleges of Technology and Business Administration.

The University’s new executive team, headed by President Sidney Ribeau and Provost Charles Middleton, is committed to creating a new future for the University and to addressing key strategic issues such as hiring as many as 150-200 new faculty, developing graduate education and research programs in selected areas, and developing Research Enterprise Park (and/or successor initiatives) as resources for the community.

Exhibit 1 is a brief overview of BGSU, provided for the benefit of non-University readers of this White Paper.

UNIVERSITY PLANNING INITIATIVES

With BGSU’s new leadership appointed in 1995, and with the special opportunity presented by the large number of faculty hires to be accomplished, the timing has been opportune for strategic visioning and planning. President Ribeau and his senior staff have seized this opportunityassertively. In February 1998, in the President’s Report to the Community, President Ribeau stated the University’s Vision, Values, and Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities. This formulation followed a year-long Internal Self-Study undertaken by the Task Force on Building Community, an Environmental Scan undertaken by the Environmental Scan Committee, and work of the reinstated, re-staffed Office of Institutional Research.

VISION, VALUES, AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES/KEY PRIORITIES

Vision

The vision, in short form, is stated as follows:

“Bowling Green State University aspires to be the premier learning community in Ohio and one of the best in the nation.”

Values

The formally-stated core values of the University community are:

http://www.hec.org/organizations/research/introduction.htm

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Respect for one another
Cooperation
Intellectual and spiritual growth
Creative imaginings
Pride in a job well done.

Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities
To enact the Vision and Values, the Strategic Initiatives or Key Priorities of the University are stated as follows:

1. Place the Student at the Heart of the BGSU Learning Community: “Students First”
2. Improve the Quality of the Undergraduate Learning Experience
3. Identify Learning Outcomes for BGSU Graduates
4. Enhance Resources for Student Financial Aid
5. Promote a Culture of Leadership at BGSU
6. Manage Enrollment and Improve Student Retention
7. Develop a Campus Technology Plan
8. Expand K-12 Linkages
9. Develop Inter-Campus Collaboration and Resource Sharing
10. Promote Campus-Community Partnerships
11. Promote Campus-Corporate Partnerships
12. Explore Alternate Educational Delivery Systems
13. Provide Professional Development and Training for Faculty and Staff
14. Promote Diversity Initiatives
15. Develop and Implement Accountability Measures
16. Restructure the University Budget
17. Align Reward Structures with University Priorities
18. Develop a University Marketing Plan
19. Enhance Fund-Raising/Development Efforts
20. Communicate the Case for Change

The President’s Report summarizes current initiatives relating to each of these 20 Key Priorities.

THE WHITE PAPER

CONTEXT

BGSU initially contacted Eva Klein & Associates (EKA) to discuss a potential feasibility study for a renewed effort to develop Research Enterprise Park. EKA expressed the view that a real-estate-based feasibility study might not answer the University’s perceived needs. Indeed, in EKA’s view, many universities made mistakes in the 1980s with new research park initiatives, largely because they were treated as real estate initiatives. In a number of cases, the idea of university-relatedness was promoted, but not made reality. We suggested that Research Enterprise Park only might be meaningful as a BGSU initiative, if it is intimately part of a broader, modern formulation of the University’s mission and purposes for knowledge-based economic development, or economic engagement.

http://www.bgsu.edu/organizations/research/introduct.htm

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As a result of those conversations, the focus of the present consulting work was aimed toward strategic positioning of BGSU for enacting a future role in knowledge-based economic development, in which the Research Enterprise Park would be one (but not the only) major component.

OBJECTIVES

Given the above background, in discussions with the consultants, President Ribaud and his management group expressed their wish to establish an irreversible pathway to a "new, economically-involved University" in the next two to three years.

Therefore, this White Paper does not begin with the question of whether BGSU wishes to become an irreversibly economically engaged university. Rather, it begins with the question of how to do so (including, first, how to define the term economically engaged).

The immediate purposes of this Strategic Issues White Paper were to:

- Conduct an assessment of BGSU's opportunities and constraints in knowledge-based economic development
- Provide ideas and alternative strategies for BGSU's future as an economically engaged university
- Form the basis of a University work plan for making decisions on investments, policy, and focus.

Ultimately, as the University makes/adopts key decisions, those could be expanded and refined into a Strategic Business Plan for Knowledge-Based Economic Development, for an Economically Engaged Bowling Green State University.

METHODS

Consultant Team
The core team for this assignment included Eva Klein, President of Eva Klein & Associates, William C. Morlok, President of Morlok Development Group, and Karen Helm, Director of Planning and Analysis at NC State University. Other EKA staff provided analytical support.

Document/Data Review
The University provided numerous documents for review. These included information about the University; the City of Bowling Green; Wood County and the region, and regional higher education. A bibliography of documents reviewed for this White Paper is attached as Exhibit 2.

Stakeholder Interviews
The EKA consultant team conducted individual and group interviews with key stakeholders, both within and external to the University. Interview questions focused on strategic issues and environmental factors in the region, strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and impediments. A copy of the interview

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protocol is enclosed as Exhibit 3. A list of individuals who participated in interviews is provided as Exhibit 4.

**Analysis** The consultant team reviewed the interview findings and documents in context of the team’s many years of experience with emerging knowledge-based economic development initiatives in higher education.

One core work task was a compilation and analysis of the voluminous, verbatim transcript of the interviews. An abbreviated, but nonetheless lengthy, summary of interview comments is provided as Exhibit 5. Exhibit 5 is quite important and we suggest that readers may find it useful to read it prior to reading the body of this White Paper.

The three-member team conducted several team meetings/discussions, to create and refine this articulation of the Strategic Decision Issues. The White Paper was built on the basis of numerous notes and drafts exchanged and worked on by all three team members.

**FORMAT**

This White Paper frames 18 Strategic Decision Issues and presents an analysis of each, including development of initial Strategy Alternatives. Accordingly, the structure of this document differs from that of typical consultant reports, which usually are organized into findings and recommendations. In this structure, for each Strategic Decision Issue, there is:

- **Discussion—an overview of the issue**
- **Strategy Alternatives—elaboration of at least some potential strategy alternatives, sometimes styled as mutually exclusive options and sometimes styled a range of potential initiatives that can be pursued non-exclusively**
- **Conclusions—including discussion of “preferred conclusions.”**

The 18 Strategic Decision Issues are further organized into four broad categories, which constitute the main chapters of this document.

- **Vision and Commitment**
  - Strategic Decision Issues #1, #2, and #3
- **Constituency and Program Strategies**
  - Strategic Decision Issues #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, and #9
- **Organization, Incentives, and Delivery**
  - Strategic Decision Issues #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, and #15
- **Physical Place and Facilities**
  - Strategic Decision Issues #16, #17, and #18.

In a number of cases, specific illustrations of a concept or strategy alternative are provided.

The point of this document structure is to frame a decision support document that will make it easier for the University to organize its planning decisions and to articulate its tasks. This White Paper therefore does not constitute a finished

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strategy or a plan for the University. Our aim is to be provocative to enjoin BGSU in a high-level, new dialogue, leading to new action plans about important aspects of its future.

RELATING TO BGSU’S CURRENT STRATEGIC POSITIONS

We are sensitive to the fact that this White Paper is only one major element of a much larger set of planning initiatives President Ribeau has set in motion. We therefore have considered it important to use the existing 1998 strategic statements as a guide in our analyses.

BGSU’s vision statement asserts the primacy of the teaching/learning mission of this University. Therefore, we have chosen to focus significant attention on aspects of the teaching/learning roles of an economically engaged university—not just on its research and technology development aspects. Indeed, it would be a limited view of economic engagement, in our definition, to think only in terms of research-based impact on the economy. When, in fact, the knowledge workforce is emerging as an even greater economic imperative for the future.

BGSU’s statement of values is used in this analysis as a point of departure for articulation of additional values and attributes that could be adopted, to characterize the economically engaged BGSU.

Finally, this White Paper does not seek to address specifically all 20 of the University’s stated Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities (above), but we have tried deliberately to place our analysis in the stream of the University’s ongoing planning and implementation. In fact, although President Ribeau’s language did not explicitly use the ‘term economic engagement, a great number of the Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities point directly to many of the issues on which this White Paper elaborates. The Paper therefore does address a number of the Strategic Issues/Key Priorities, but this time framed in the context of the economically engaged university. For the reader’s reference, Figure 1 is an approximate crosswalk of our structure for 18 Strategic Decision Issues with the University’s existing structure for 20 Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities. Some of the University’s Key Priorities are listed more than once.

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COMMENTS ON PLANNING IN THE NEW LEARNING INDUSTRY

From nearly two decades of work in strategic planning approaches for higher education, EKA has concluded that complex planning processes and huge strategic plan documents do not necessarily ensure that a university will adopt and enact a corporate strategy, that is, an institution-wide vision. But today, more than ever, entirely new approaches to planning that center on a common vision but which facilitate fast, flexible strategies are required. Some are calling this expedient planning-rapid development of responses and products within the new learning industry that is evolving from a combination of assets from the higher education, telecommunications, and information technology industries. This kind of planning raises equally weighty questions of organizational agility and response capacity for implementation.

In this context, PresidentRibera's concise statements of Vision, Values, and Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities do strike us as sufficient to constitute a strategic plan, in that these statements set forth guiding principles which various programs and individuals can use as yardsticks for continuous planning and management. Yet, from interviews, we note a clear message that many BGSU administrators and faculty feel that BGSU "does not have strategic direction or a strategic plan."

We are left to surmise that either these statements are too new to have truly taken hold, or that there is not a sufficient current focus on continuous discussion of their implications as the yardsticks for ongoing decisions. We are hoping that this White Paper can both reaffirm elements of President Ribera's 1998 statements and provide additional strategic perspectives. In the end, it may be that a continuous internal dialogue and establishment of new processes for change will be more important than another one-time written plan document.

SOME CENTRAL QUESTIONS

In initial discussions of our mandate, we discussed with representatives of the University potential elements of the new economically engaged BGSU that included:

- Much greater programmatic focus
- Greater national and international competitiveness in selected program areas
- A new breed of faculty that is more oriented to entrepreneurship of many forms
- Scaled up research and service activities
- More direct engagement with business and industry in partnerships and alliances to meet mutual needs
- Tangible positive impact on the local and regional economy.
- New, purposeful alliances with other institutions of higher education
- A model for other Ohio universities to emulate, in creating a more economically-engaged university system.

In context, then, central questions for this analysis are:

- Can economic engagement be framed in terms of creating an aggressive new model for premier learning institution that departs from higher education traditions, to respond directly to the ways in which learning will need to occur in the 21st century?
- Can/should BGSU, with its distinguished history as a teaching institution, become one of a few national institutions that create the norm for the future of higher education, and thereby stays ahead of the pack?
- Can the research/technology/business development mission be focused selectively to augment economic engagement in non-instructional functions?
- Can a new physical concept of learning community be conceived that would expand or change the entire character of campus, possibly extending it beyond present boundaries to a new form of integrated knowledge community—one in which industry presence is integrated, not separated?

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#1: DEFINING ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

DISCUSSION

Profound Transition in Human Society and Economy
Global changes in economic structures, in the speed of flows of technology, information, and capital, and in the nature of participants in competition for economic accomplishment and related social well-being are profound. Since invention of the integrated circuit in the mid-20th century, the world has been entering the Global Knowledge Age and undergoing as profound a change as the changes that took human development from the age of the Hunters and Gatherers to the age of Agriculture and Settlement, and then to the age of the Industrial Revolution and the Machine.

Urgency of an Equally Profound University Response
The last time the US conceived and engaged a seminal concept or meta-idea for structuring higher education's role in transferring technology to meet society's needs on a large scale was the mid-19th century invention of the land-grant college and agricultural extension model. The last time the US conceived and engaged in a seminal concept or meta-idea for structuring higher education's role in preparing the workforce was the mid-20th century creation of the community college.

As human society enters the age of the Global Knowledge Economy, in which knowledge is the most important input to wealth creation and the engine that drives knowledge-based economic development, then universities—as developers and transmitters of knowledge—should play a central role in driving economic and social well-being. What universities do, and how well they do it, may determine the health of national regional economies, and the ability of the world to adjust to its new uses of technology.

Potential Scope of Change
Typically, as they are coping with daily demands and crises, universities do not often enough have the luxury to step back to view their role in the broadest of contexts, that is, in the context of the evolving economic basis for human society. Yet, in higher education, not only the literature and dialogue, but also emerging corporate competition on a vast scale, are beginning to reveal that the institution of higher education must be redesigned.

Indeed, interviews for this study revealed significant understanding among BGSU faculty and staff of the huge scope of change that is coming and the breadth of response that this change requires. Given the scope and impact of changes society faces, it seems necessary to ask:

- What will the 21st century university be?
- How will BGSU redefine itself as a 21st century university?
- How does economic engagement with the region figure in BGSU's

http://www.bgsu.edu/organizations/research/sdi1.htm

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edefinition for the next century?

Need for Semantic Basis for the Dialogue

BGSU and other universities, EKA found that one of the first serious impediments to framing strategies for economic engagement is a semantic one. This is simply because so many people use or understand the term economic development differently.

In order to frame and enact strategies for economic engagement, BGSU first must adopt a common working definition of knowledge-based economic development and/or for economic engagement (terms of art we use interchangeably) that will become accepted vocabulary internally among University personnel. This also will allow BGSU to express its purposes clearly to important external partners and constituents.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Figure 2, following, encapsulates the above discussion of economic ages. Using this framework, there are three possible alternative levels of economic engagement, captured in the last three rows of Figure 2 – Passive, Active, and Leadership levels. The following discussion is presented as a point of departure for the University’s articulation of its own internal definition.

Passive Level

At this level, an economically-engaged university is an adjunct to state, county, or municipal governments seeking to lure into the area large corporations that will immediately bring jobs counting in the hundreds or thousands. Governments develop roads and physical infrastructure, provide tax and financial incentives, and support the private sector in preparing sites for investing companies. Public and private sector actors develop downtown redevelopment projects, business or industrial parks, or other commercial or residential projects.

When economically engaged at the passive level, universities host cultural events, supply students and graduates as a ready source of labor, make available faculty as consultants and trainers, and sometimes have real estate that is available for lease. This role is passive and relatively minor, in comparison with the two roles described below. In this model, the proximity of the sponsoring university to planned real estate development is a feature in someone else’s marketing strategy for economic development.

In some regions and in earlier decades, this approach worked, sometimes serendipitously. Just the presence of higher education assets, together with other propitious location factors or strategies, made the university’s role central, or made it seem central, in growth of a high tech region. For example, this absolutely was the model in the early years of the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina and for Stanford Research Park and the early development of Silicon Valley.

An illustration for Research Triangle Park follows Figure 2, below.

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<th>NATURE OF UNIVERSITY ASSETS USED</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hunting and Gathering Economy</td>
<td>Pre-history to 8,000 BC</td>
<td>Definition: None Factors: Climate, location, early tool technology</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural and Craft Economies</td>
<td>@ 8,000 BC to Modernity</td>
<td>Definition: No Real Definition of Economic Development Factors: Empire-Building (especially for Control of Land, Assets, Labor, and Capital); Transport Capacity (Reds and Seafaring)</td>
<td>Virtually No Role</td>
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<td>Agricultural and Industrial Economies</td>
<td>19th through Early 20th Centuries</td>
<td>Definition: Traditional, Land, Capital, and Labor-Based Factors: Infrastructure (especially for Transportation), Real Estate, Financial Incentives, Labor, and Capital</td>
<td>Passive Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition from Agricultural and Industrial to Knowledge Economy</td>
<td>Late 20th Century</td>
<td>Definition: Evolving, Contemporay Paradigm/Professional Practices Factors: Technology Parks, Incubation, Commercialization, Expanded Education Roles</td>
<td>Active Role</td>
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<th>Global Knowledge Economy</th>
<th>21st Century (and on?)</th>
<th>Systems-Based, Future-Oriented, Dynamic, Recognizes Emergence of Natural Economic Regions</th>
<th>All university programs, knowledge assets, and intellectual capacities are applied purposefully, to create a competitive community, state, or region</th>
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<td>Leaderships Role</td>
<td>Factors: Knowledge Institutions &amp; Assets Broadly Applied as Direct Drivers and Most Critical Assets for Growth and Success</td>
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Illustration: Research Triangle Park

In the early 1950s, when then-Governor Luther Hodges and others in North Carolina cast about for an approach to economic growth, they sized on the idea of marketing the human capital resources of the "triangle universities." In the early years, the triangle universities were a marketing feature for, but largely disconnected from, the actual strategy for Research Triangle Park. Later, the universities were involved in creation of the Research Triangle Institute and there are, today, a number of relationships between the universities and companies in the region. However, it would be fair to conclude that the success of Research Triangle Park and the surrounding region (which took several decades to take hold) was due to a then-unique focus on marketing a clean, suburban, campus-like site for high tech headquarters facilities, good climate, cheap labor, etc. A passive market factor for the universities added value to the strategy, but did not require the universities to actually do anything differently.

With Research Triangle and Stanford serving (unfortunately) as after-the-fact best practice models, this relatively passive approach also has been the model that many other universities (and their partner real estate developers) attempted to emulate in the 1980s. Because the industry dynamics were different in the 1980s from the 1950s to the 1970s and because these projects no longer have the advantage of being unique, in many cases they have met with much less success.

In our view, this passive level of economic engagement is approximately what BGSU's level of economic engagement was during the 1980s, when it commenced development of Research Enterprise Park. That real estate initiative preceded any concerted, organized, mission-driven, programmatic focus on industry relationships. Yet, today, that kind of organized programmatic focus is required to achieve the kinds of results that were achieved more passively, beginning in the 1950s, at Stanford and Research Triangle.

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Active Level

Under this definition, the university is an active partner in knowledge-based economic development with government and industry. Increasingly, it is understood that the formation and growth of technology-related businesses is an essential part of an overall economic development strategy. In this view, economic development is led primarily by public sector entities, but there is substantial participation by the private sector and by academia.

Here, an economically engaged university plays a more active role in growing and maintaining the economic health of a community, state, or region. In addition to helping in marketing to attract business, universities at this level help in the formation and retention of business. They also conduct research of interest to local/national business and industry, host incubators, and transfer university-developed technology for commercial development.

In addition, in dialogue with business and industry, universities engaged at this level may begin to shape educational programs to develop a technologically capable workforce, for example, the growth of continuing education, non-credit, and certificate program offerings.

This definition approximates the level of involvement of those universities that, during the last decade, took a relatively more comprehensive view of technology transfer, incubation, intellectual property, and research parks. We believe that, departing from the Research Enterprise Park initiative, this is approximately the level of economic engagement that BGSU currently is envisioning.

Leadership Level and the Externally Focused University

This level is a conceptual one developed by EKA and not yet well-represented in US higher education. Although there are a number of institutions engaging in discussions at this level, we cannot provide a useful illustration. Is this newest paradigm, by virtue of its diverse resources, assets, and capacities, the university elects to be a leading participant in economic development—broadly defined. Full and sophisticated partnerships of the university, government and the private sector develop a comprehensive set of activities to achieve and

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maintain a fully competitive community, region, or state in the Global Knowledge Economy.

While business attraction and development remain an activity, the emphasis is far greater on business formation, growth, and retention. In advanced strategies, the focus is on the scale-up of specific niches into clusters of technology-intensive industries which become the region's stake in those industries that will represent large portions of the future world economy.

This newest Leadership paradigm returns, in a way, full circle to the core purpose of higher education. As knowledge workforce issues increasingly surface as the greatest needs of regions, the learning organization model of the university is purposefully rethought for the modern context.

Here, an economically engaged university does not wait for others to come to it asking for help. It gets in front of issues and provides leadership in engaging others to support growth and economic health of a community, state, or region.

Specific tactics such as business incentives and built facilities are applied, however, it is more broadly understood that overall quality of life factors - including high-performing schools, varied and attractive housing, viable neighborhoods, rich cultural life, attractive recreational amenities, and friendly business/government climate - are essential competitive factors. Furthermore, it is understood that, for long-term viability and for shorter-term profits, policies and practices promoting environmental sustainability are essential.

The Externally-Focused University
At the Leadership Level, a university's definition of knowledge-based economic development does not confine activities to technology transfer and business services, but merges completely with aspects of social, political, cultural, environmental, and community development as well. The economically engaged university is essentially an externally focused knowledge institution.

Pragmatic Problem-Solving Focus
The externally focused university actively contributes to all these features of its community/region. It not only develops pragmatic solutions for expanding the knowledge workforce at all levels and supports business growth and development, but also it helps schools improve performance, analyzes best business practices, advises government on policy, and collaborates with social and cultural agencies to materially enhance community quality of life.

Free Inquiry and Independence of Judgment
At the same time, the university plays another role that cannot (yet) be played by any other organization in today's society. Only universities employ the multiple perspectives representing a wide variety of disciplines that can all be used to find sustainable solutions to complex modern problems. The externally focused university cannot renounce its role in free inquiry and objective criticism of business, government, or social practice. Thus, the Leadership university also shapes economic and social development as a critic. It both

raises questions and answers them for example:

- What is the impact of a new technology or business practice on environmental health?
- Does an economic policy benefit all citizens, or does it create problems for some?

An externally focused university can do more, not less, of this independent thinking simply because it is externally-focused.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, there are three implications for an externally focused university engaged in knowledge-based economic development at the leadership level.

- The university is not a peripheral player, but rather a central player in economic development, broadly construed as developing a wholly competitive community or region.
- All of the university's disciplines, programs, and activities are relevant, not just those that are oriented toward professional education, science, or technology.
- The University responds to specific needs of clients, but also continues to function as an identifier of problems, critic, and independent agent of ideas—even in the absence of specific paying client.

Preferred Conclusion

It is important for BGSU to accept one of the above definitions (refined and reformulated by BGSU) for economic development/economic engagement and to adopt common language, definitions, and commitment levels. If not, all planning and communication will be hampered by differing internal perspectives on the meaning of terms and on how these issues relate to the role and mission of the University.

For us, the logic is compelling. When the base of the economy is agriculture or industry, then the medieval university model, as modified up through this century, provides the initially elite (although increasingly populist) base of education for the top levels of that economy. In that kind of 20th century economy, the economically engaged university, as the knowledge institution, has a narrow role in economic development that is adjunct to its core missions of teaching and basic research.

However, when the base of the economy is knowledge, then the entire model for what a university is and does (and how it does it) needs to be redesigned. The meaning of knowledge-based economic development per se becomes much broader, closer to synonymous with the definition of the university, as society's primary knowledge institution. In the knowledge based economy, the University cannot be relevant as an internally focused ivory tower. It must be externally focused and fully engaged as the basis of that economy and the

foundation of society’s success.

We would urge adoption of the third definition-Leadership as an Externally-Focused, Economically-Engaged University-and actually much of the balance of this White Paper presumes this decision. In reality, the liberal arts and education focus of BGSU makes it better-suited to a global definition of economic engagement than to an Active definition that centers more narrowly on sciences, technology, and business development aspects of economic growth.