The Economically-Engaged University

#2: EXPANDING VALUES AND ATTRIBUTES FOR ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

DISCUSSION

Based on its adopted definition of economic engagement, the BGSU community will need to elaborate in more specific terms the related values and attributes it seeks to embody in its economic engagement strategies.

Assuming that BGSU adopts a leadership level definition of economic engagement, then the University will want to explore its values in relation to several issues. Are the administration, faculty, and key stakeholders willing to commit themselves to the following?

- Improving the region's economic competitiveness in all its dimensions, including social, cultural, political, environmental, community, and economic development
- Focusing programs externally on problems and issues directly related to economic competitiveness in its broadest sense, rather than focusing programs on evolving academic disciplines without regard to their potential application
- Re-thinking traditional modes of teaching, organization, and outreach in order to improve responsiveness to external problems and issues
- Cultivating selected niches related to external problems and issues at the expense of "democracy" in resource allocation.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

BGSU already has articulated some of these attributes in its current planning documents (although not technically within the statement of values). For example, among President Ribeau's 20 Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities are several that establish a direction consistent with the external focus of an economically engaged university, including:

- Expand K-12 linkages
- Promote campus-community partnerships
- Develop campus-corporate partnerships.

Additional values or attributes for a more concerted external focus easily can build on the five values already articulated.

The question, then, is should BGSU retain the current formal statement of values, as fitting its current vision to be a premier learning community? Or, should BGSU engage in dialogue to expand the current values statement to embrace specific, additional ones that focus its economic engagement vision, blending that vision into the vision for the premier learning community?

**Retain Currently Articulated Values and Attributes**

We are impressed with BGSU’s current statement of values. In five short phrases, this statement articulates core attributes of a premier learning community. These were conceived, however, prior to the question of economic engagement being established for current dialogue. Depending on the degree to which BGSU does/does not want to re-cast mission purposes in terms of economic engagement, one option is to retain the current statement of values intact.

**Adopt Additional Values for Economic Engagement**

Alternatively, BGSU’s planning dialogue could lead to adoption of additional values. The following discussion proposes the consultants’ view of five potential additional values for consideration.

**Proposed Values: Focus on Problem-Solving and Problem Identification**

In adopting an active role in economic development, an institution must shape both its attitudes and its functional responses to help solve problems posed by constituents. More, institutions seeking to play a leadership role in economic development scan the environment of their service areas for opportunities to help identify issues and alternative solutions.

An example from NC State’s recent discussions can illustrate the difference between problem-solving and problem identification. This example emerged in an NC State planning discussion between the industry-oriented colleges (wanting to solve problems for industry) and the liberal arts units (wanting to identify and critique problems)—following presentation of a White Paper similar to this one.

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**An Illustration: NC State University**

NC State has for several years served the needs of farmers in North Carolina who needed to diversify crops (away from tobacco). In direct response to the agricultural community’s expressed needs and identifiable problem, NC State was instrumental in development of an entire new industry of hog farming, which now is large, established, and profitable. As a result of major expansion of hog farming, the State of North Carolina now is experiencing serious problems of hog waste pollution in some of its major rivers, especially the Neuse River. Hypothetically, if NC State had seen its role as a leadership role in problem identification, more than just an active role in problem-solving, it might have led to problem identification in advance. As some NC State faculty were working with farmers to develop the hog industry, other faculty could have been working with them, to plan that growth in ways that would have been environmentally sound. Clearly, in this example, industry is not necessarily the source of identification of the potential problem or need. The client, in this case, would be the public at large. In serving industry’s specific needs, it is still appropriate (and even necessary) for a University to anticipate and address problems, even if it does not have a direct paying client for such work. The conclusion of this conversation was that the College of Arts/Sciences needed to be engaged more directly with its industry-oriented colleagues.

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http://www.bgsu.edu/organizations/research/sdl2.htm

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BGSU’s current value for creative imaginings pairs well with a new value for problem-focused. Internally, BGSU would set up mechanisms for identifying important problems and apply “creative imaginings” to their solution.

**Proposed Value: All Faculty as Agents of Learning and Change**

In traditional higher education, faculty tended to think of their responsibilities as primarily to their students and to their disciplines. They did also think of themselves as agents of change, but in a particular way. Service to society was considered an indirect function of scholarship—with clean hands considered a requirement of objectivity.

Certainly, faculty in disciplines with a natural applied focus, such as technology and social sciences, always found their roles as active change agents more natural. Nowhere is this better established, for example, than in medicine—with its clear molecule-to-man or bench-to-bedside paradigms. The direct engagement model has been more elusive in the arts and humanities than in the sciences and social sciences.

In an economically-engaged university, faculty will consider it their direct responsibility to engage in external client service, in the sense of either applying their existing knowledge or in seeking new knowledge solutions, to meet present or predicted needs. The faculty job and role as an agent of change will be defined more directly, and with more immediacy. Faculty will begin to think of themselves as purveyors of advances or solutions or change, based both on their own expertise in disciplines and on their engagement of expert colleagues in other disciplines. Faculty will become more comfortable with hands-on enactment of change strategies. The constituencies they serve will enlarge explicitly beyond students and fellow scholars, to include business, industry, government, and community. Their professional development patterns increasingly will include so-called real-world experience.

Universities also play a role that is often undervalued but absolutely critical to ensuring that solutions do not create subsequent, more serious problems. That role is the objective critic. Problem-solving teams will be most effective if they include experts who take the long view and understand interactions among economics, social, and cultural dimensions of complex issues. In this role of objective critic and organizer of discipline-integrated solutions, universities with strong liberal arts programs and faculty have an important and as yet underdeveloped role in economic engagement.

For the faculty to begin to see itself in these newer, additional roles, the entire structure for incentives must be reconsidered. This subject is so important that it is addressed below in a separate Strategic Decision Issue.

**Proposed Value: Multidisciplinary and Team Approaches to Student Learning, Problem-Solving, and Outreach**

Challenges facing communities are complex, and lasting solutions to complex problems need the multifaceted, multidisciplinary perspectives that universities can provide. Environmental pollution, for example, will not be solved simply by re-engineering an industrial process. To be adopted, such a process typically needs to be viable financially and valued as a best business practice, and

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employees may need additional education. If jobs, property, or the local economy are affected, then there may be social and political issues that need to be considered before the process can be accepted. In this sense, a viable prevention or solution to the river pollution problem, described above in the NC State example, would have required the multidisciplinary participation of faculty in business, social sciences and sciences.

Organizational alternatives for major enhancement of the multidisciplinary assets of the University are treated in a separate Strategic Decision Issue.

Proposed Value: Emphasis on External Partnerships as a Core Way of Doing Business The scale and complexity of economic and social structures in contemporary life are so great that an enlarged notion of the organization is required. It is likely to become increasingly rare for a single organization, in any sector, to be able to address its own mission and purposes without alliances with others. This already is quite evident in industry, where the strategic competition model of the recent 1980s has given way to the strategic alliances model, virtual organizations, and so forth. Today, the newest jargon refers to super-charged strategic alliances.

An external focus demands continuous interactions and collaborations with the stakeholders served by the university, as well as substantive partnerships with other organizations that are part of the solutions. As issues are addressed, close interactions among university and stakeholders provide purpose and context, and promote collaboration and efficiency. Complex issues require partnerships not only with business and industry, but also with governments and social and cultural agencies. Furthermore, these active partnerships enrich students' perspectives and ground research programs.

The external partnership focus also requires much greater organizational sophistication in structuring joint ventures and in establishing the appropriate business basis for alliances than universities typically currently practice. Just as an example, numerous 1980s-era university research parks are failing because both the universities and their private sector partners had inadequate appreciation of the functional responsibilities and distribution of financial risk that should be adopted and understood by parties to the initiative. In many cases, universities managed, at the same time, to both underplay and overplay their positions on risk, control, and relationship to University resources.

Partnerships are discussed in more detail as a separate, specific Strategic Decision Issue.

Proposed Value: Flexible and Agile Administration Community and constituent needs change, sometimes quickly. In the realm of technology, the speed of change is alarmingly rapid, and accelerating. In the 21st century context, it may not at all be an overstatement to say that only universities that learn how to respond quickly to education and service needs will thrive and grow.

This may require serious alteration of the management culture of the traditional

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university. Rather than adopting strict rules that ensure clean boundaries between institution and external partners, it may become more important to establish broader, fuzzier guidelines that enable entrepreneurial activities and partnerships to flourish. Rather than giving committees six months to consider the merits of an issue from all perspectives, it may become more important to provide efficient service to a constituent within one week. In the value structure, consensus may have to yield to impact.

This issue-agile administration also is treated below as a separate Strategic Decision Issue.

CONCLUSIONS

Interview data indicate that, from their own experience, BGSU administration and faculty understand well what values and attributes characterize a university committed to knowledge-based economic development. The attributes listed above already exist in parts of the institution or in the thought processes of many University personnel. Several are signaled clearly in President Ribel’s Strategic Initiatives/Key Priorities. The challenge then is to have an open, thorough dialogue about these values and attributes, leading to a commonly understood and adopted set that builds on the currently stated values, with this much greater external focus for economic engagement.

Preferred Conclusion We have provided these five potential values/attributes for consideration. They are compatible with existing values statement of BGSU. While this formulation is not necessarily the only one BGSU could develop, we believe it would be beneficial for BGSU to engage in dialogue leading to adoption of additional values something like these-to express its commitment to economic engagement and to evolving as a 21st century learning/knowledge institution.

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#3: SELECTING PROGRAMMATIC DOMAINS AND FUNCTIONS FOR ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENT

DISCUSSION

The first two Strategic Decision Issues above are intended to define terminology and establish enlarged values. Next, BGSU has to address the broad question of functional domains for economic engagement.

Three Functional Inputs for a Successful Knowledge Economy
Northwest Ohio’s regional economy is today still derivative of the region’s successful manufacturing past, particularly relating to the automotive industry. Most acknowledge that diversification and, particularly, the implantation of newer knowledge industries, is an economic development priority.

Based on observations of successful technology growth economies in various regions of the US, Europe, and Asia, Figure 3 proposes that there are three elements—broadly construed—that are key inputs to creation of new knowledge industry clusters with visibility, scale, or critical mass. These clusters, in turn, are today the drivers of knowledge-based economic growth.

The three sets of inputs, with some examples listed for each category, are:

- Knowledge Assets-Examples:
  - Research programs in specific niche advanced sciences/technologies
  - Capacities applied to solve problems in education, social services, public policy, etc.
  - Provision of highly-trained and constantly re-trained knowledge workforce—all levels, entry to executive
- Collaborative Leadership-Examples
  - Aggressive, pervasive partnership with K-12 education
  - Multiple universities consortia-general or specific purposes
  - University-industry institutes or consortia
  - Campus-community-town partnerships for housing, services, cultural amenities, etc.
- Technology Enterprise Support-Examples
  - Technology development and business start-up or incubator programs
  - Organization of angel investors, seed capital funds, and other business financing
  - Technical assistance in product development and business development to new and emerging companies
  - Mentor or technology networks.

Figure 3: Three Main Inputs to Cultivate Industry Clusters for a Knowledge-Based Growth Economy - (not shown)

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A More Detailed Construction of Success Factors/Functions

Within the three broad sets of functional inputs posed in Figure 3, a more detailed way to look at the paradigm for knowledge-based economic development is the set of characteristics found to be operative in high-growth technology economies, such as Silicon Valley, Research Triangle, and Route 128.

Figure 4 is EKA's adaptation of work that has been done to assess, after the fact, what are the features or characteristics that have led to these successful regions. They can be considered a framework or template in which BGSU can select its functions for economic engagement. Figure 4 arrays several characteristics within the framework of the three sets of assets described above in Figure 3, plus a few additional traditional economic development factors:

- Knowledge Assets
- Collaborative Leadership
- Technology Enterprise Support Systems
- Traditional Economic Development Factors

In defining itself as an economically engaged university, BGSU faces many opportunities and alternatives for functional domains, which it should consider within the framework of the three major sets of Knowledge Economy inputs.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Knowledge Assets

For example, under the broad rubric of Knowledge Assets, BGSU has at least two main choices of domain. First, it can build on its historical mission and strengths as a teaching institution, making significant contributions to economic development through learning delivery for the new knowledge workforce. BGSU would do this by bold innovation in curriculum, delivery and competency-based models. It would distinctly begin to prepare people in new ways for the workplace and do so for their entire lifetimes.

Second, BGSU can contribute to economic development through selective research investments and related outreach, building on existing academic and research strengths, to create notable niches of excellence that are nationally and internationally competitive.

Preparing Workforce Participants for the Knowledge-Based Economy

Universities traditionally have made a unique contribution to society in education-ased in the best sense of the word. That education function must survive and indeed be strengthened, if communities are to be successful economically, socially, and in all other dimensions. By providing intellectual perspective, critical skills, mentoring, and socialization, universities teach students to convert raw information into knowledge, to communicate effectively, and to contribute substantively to careers and family/community life. There is nothing in the consultants' comments about economic engagement that suggests diminishment of this sine qua non purpose of the university in our society.

Beginning with the founding of public institutions of higher education in the 19th century and increasingly in the latter half of this century, universities also have provided career-related or professional training, both to traditionally-aged undergraduates and to adults. Increasingly, universities are responding to the need to support workers throughout whole lifetimes in which rapidly changing technology and economic needs will demand continuous re-education and retraining.

A first major question for BGSU is to make a new, overt decision about segments of the knowledge workforce that it will serve. There are at least two alternative strategies for constituency focus, which are discussed in greater detail as Strategic Decision Issue #4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors in Successful Technology Economies and Potential BGSU Functions as an Economically-Engaged University</th>
<th>Possible BGSU Functions as an Economically Engaged University</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. KNOWLEDGE ASSETS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of knowledge industries</td>
<td>Selective investment in discipline/program niches selected strategically, and in partnership with economic development agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration of academic research</td>
<td>Selective, focused investment in research programs of excellence in strategic niches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible, adaptable, trainable workforce</td>
<td>Innovative models for learning-that redefine the education and training paradigms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality schools for employee families</td>
<td>Direct, active, large-scale, transforming initiatives with local or regional schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active networks of industry professionals</td>
<td>Participation in/sponsorship for industry networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative, strategic, and informal alliances</td>
<td>Active solicitation of alliances and partnerships as needed to enact strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordable, hospitable housing</td>
<td>Possible partnerships with local government and private sector to induce appropriate array of housing options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail and commercial support services</td>
<td>Extension of internal campus service amenities; Possible joint development with local government and community of expanded retail and service amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational amenities</td>
<td>Provision of access to University amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. TECHNOLOGY ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SYSTEM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of</td>
<td>Encouragement of private capital, Possible small-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment Capital</th>
<th>Scale Investment of University Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Talent and Know-How</td>
<td>Strong internal focus on entrepreneurship, including “across-the-curriculum” and in external services to support entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to Accommodate New Enterprise Growth</td>
<td>Provision of services and enterprise support infrastructure; Possible incubation space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications Infrastructure</td>
<td>Partnerships with local government and telecommunications providers; State-of-the-art facilities like conference center; Possible extension of telecommunications capacity into the Bowling Green community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER, TRADITIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FACTORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transportation Infrastructure</th>
<th>Not a University function</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to Robust Local Markets</td>
<td>Not a University function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to International Markets</td>
<td>Not a University function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Adapted from Kozmetsky et al., 1990, by Eva Klein & Associates, Ltd., 1998

**Developing New Knowledge**

A knowledge-based economy will be successful or not, depending on the infusion of new knowledge and ideas into business, industry, culture, government, and society in general. Here, universities play a critical, nearly unique function as well. They provide the seed corn of innovation for economic, social, and cultural development.

In the new Knowledge Economy, however, both the factor of instant global access to resources and the factor of the speed of technological change mean that only true excellence and distinction in research will generate economic impact. Just doing research, and, as one BGSU interviewee put it, “adding the next bit of minstrel to a discipline” will not suffice.

Without being a major research university, BGSU can and should focus on selective areas of important research that will have impact on the region’s success. Selective focus is required because it may be the only way to achieve competitive excellence.

Alternative ways of focusing research for economic engagement are discussed in greater detail as Strategic Decision Issue #7.

**Collaborative Leadership**

Or, under the rubric of Collaborative Leadership, BGSU can engage partners in the region in a broad-based, concerned strategies to scale up a particular industry, to substantively address K-12 education, or to undertake community
enhancement initiatives.

Regional Partnership for Knowledge-Based Economic Development
Decades ago, universities were engaged as minor partners in regional strategies for high technology growth. More recently, Austin is an example of a region that enacted a regionally coordinated vision, with the University playing an important role, to develop a knowledge industry cluster of international stature. In today's environment, it is not unimaginable that a university or universities might play an even more proactive or catalytic role in working to develop a long-range vision and supporting implementation of component strategies for specific industry growth.

Local Community Development
Most universities engage in local community development at least at a minimal level, for example, by opening their theaters and galleries to the public, through visitor spending, and through their employees and students who work and pay taxes. By enhancing the local cultural environment, economy, or workforce, universities contribute to the health of their local communities.

In the Knowledge Economy, the ante will be raised. All disciplines can actively contribute to the health of the university's local community. Defined broadly, economic development depends not only on commerce and revenues, but also on a healthy educational system, clean environment, low crime and teen pregnancy rates, high literacy, thriving arts and literature, openness to diversity, and so forth. Open lectures and short courses, service on local service agency boards, activism research on local social problems and best business practices, and students serving as big sisters are all examples of community development initiatives.

Taking a leadership role in community development implies that faculty and administrators will assume some responsibility for bringing leaders together for networking, forums on emerging issues, and other purposes, and facilitate their collaboration. It will mean total elimination of the old town-gown attitudes and full commitment to service.

Aggressive Partnership Roles for K-12 Education
Interviews suggest that, despite many current programs, BGSU is not perceived to engage sufficiently in addressing K-12 problems and needs in the community, region, or state. A more aggressive level of engagement, which could take a number of forms and which could be defined at several levels of constituency, is an opportunity to enact Collaborative Leadership.

Technology Enterprise Support
Or, under the rubric of Technology Enterprise Support, BGSU can create specific technology and business service outreach mechanisms to support growth of the region's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or to promote new start-up companies and incubate them.

This generally is the domain of knowledge-based economic development to which Research Enterprise Park was intended to respond. The following

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discussion addresses the kind of programmatic involvement that would make a physical site much more meaningful.

**Knowledge Application and Extension-Existing Industries**

In addition to transmitting knowledge in the classroom, universities also transmit knowledge through public service and extension. From the second half of the 19th century, land-grant universities refined this mission through the agricultural extension stations, which taught farmers to apply results of work of the agriculture experiment stations. Most other institutions shared their intellectual and cultural resources with their local communities somewhat more passively, as good neighbors. Now, however, more regional institutions play a more active role in local economic development. The land-grants are no longer the sole providers of “extension”-type service.

BGSU interviewees identified as an opportunity, with which we agree, a well-organized program to deliver business/technology support services to companies in the region—particularly those that are small.

**Technology Commercialization, Start-Ups, and Incubation**

For universities, a strategy to focus on technology opportunities, commercialization, promotion of start-up ventures and their incubation is a much more appropriate strategy than leasing research park sites to large, existing companies. Today, many research parks, whether or not they began with this emphasis, have turned their attention to the start-up of young company.

BGSU could devote some energy to identifying and supporting some spin-off companies from its internal activities. Even in major research universities, the number of such opportunities will be limited, although universities can take measures to increase the number. In addition, BGSU would focus externally on finding other potential entrepreneurs and inducing additional new ventures. In a region like NW Ohio that has a number of large manufacturing companies present, there inevitably are technical employees in those companies “with business plans in their pockets.” While it must be done carefully, universities can provide an environment to encourage some of these would-be entrepreneurs.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Economic engagement is possible in all traditional functions of a university—teaching, basic and applied research, and public service. Today, a reformulation of mission language that fits better with the external world’s functional focus would be:

- **Knowledge Creation**
- **Knowledge Transmission**
- **Knowledge Application**

For assessing strategy alternatives in economic engagement, we have recast these traditional mission elements into functional domains of:
• Knowledge Assets
• Collaborative Leadership
• Technology Enterprise Support.

Within each of these, BGSU can focus selectively its choices of how it will direct its energies, and to which defined functions it will apply the concepts and values of economic engagement.

Preferred Conclusion
We believe BGSU can make enormous contributions to its region as an economically engaged university merely by focusing on the knowledge workforce components of Knowledge Assets. This is both the oldest function of the university and the newest form of economic engagement—once the knowledge workforce is defined as all levels of educated and trained persons in the new Knowledge Economy and once universities decide that a fresh approach is needed to make higher education competitive with its newest industry-sponsored competitors.

BGSU also can/should have selective impact through research assets, applied technology, and business enterprise development, even from humanities resources, and certainly from its science and technology assets.

The opportunities for impact in Collaborative Leadership and Technology Enterprise Support also are significant. Our views on these are revealed in greater detail in the next chapters, in which many of the above themes are elaborated.

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#4: DEFINING LEARNER CONSTITUENCIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

DISCUSSION

It is our contention that the first opportunity for economic engagement today is not in the vein of research parks and incubators. It is in the domain of taking a new, more directly responsive stance toward education and training of all levels of the knowledge workforce.

Education versus Training

Although the distinction is rapidly losing all meaning, universities continue to artificially juxtapose basic education and technical training, viewing them as opposites or alternatives and claiming that what they do (education) is different from what corporations or technical colleges do (training). It may be time for economically engaged universities to discard sacred beliefs about this dichotomy. It may be that the distinctions between education and training, however vast they may have seemed, are losing their purpose, if not their very definitions, in the modern context. Certainly, there is no question that training has become a huge market with many new providers competing in delivery. When corporations talk of training, they often mean the very kinds of complex skills development that higher education calls education. Conversely, despite protestations to the contrary, much of what universities do today is training or technical education and much of what they aspire to do in education is not done well enough.

Traditional versus Non-Traditional Students

Another favorite dichotomy in higher education that is losing much of its meaning is the distinction between traditional and nontraditional students. For the last two decades, with the influx of non-traditional learners into higher education, universities have not done a sufficiently good job of treating them with equivalent focus and value to the 18 year old. The very fact that they are called nontraditional students is part of the problem. This may be among the reasons why corporate universities are finding their market so easily.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Perhaps a more useful distinction that would allow a fresh and more useful dialogue would be to try to define more clearly what the actual client groups of learners are—young people prior to their first career entry versus adults with experience in the workforce.

Clearly, development in both broad-based education and technical skills are needed by both entrants and experienced workers. Cooperative education experience has been shown, for example, to enhance even the basic education (including communication skills, judgment, maturity) of traditional undergraduates. With a little experience in the work place, students learn that

communication skills and the ability to work in teams with people of all ages and values, are essential components of career success.

On the other hand, experienced workers encountering more complex problems also benefit from the opportunity to reflect on those problems in a structured educational setting. Adult workers with technical skills need ever-greater sophistication in critical processes, problem-solving, and other skills we consider part of education.

**Target the 18-22 Year-Old Cohort**

BGSU could decide to focus primarily (or almost entirely) on preparing young people at the beginning of their postsecondary education and careers. This option is a respectable choice for an economically-engaged university, as long as students are given the opportunity to gain competence in entry-level knowledge and skills. BGSU could create a dynamic, residential 21st century living-learning community vision centered on the 18 year old first-time entrant into higher education and career. The model could involve development of extremely innovative mixes of liberal arts and professional concentrations, multidisciplinary education, competency-based attainment, major emphasis on experiential learning, and so forth.

**Target All Learners with Equivalent Commitment**

The University could choose to define its student target market as all learners, ranging from 18 year olds to adults. In this option, there is a different opportunity for national leadership in combining and redefining education and training into a new model for the next century. It requires a commitment to partner with identified employers in developing curricula, flexible instructional delivery mechanisms, and support services that accommodate the complex schedules and needs of working adults seeking multiple educational opportunities throughout their careers.

Most of all, what we mean by Alternative #2 is that the so-called non-traditional student no longer would be considered non-traditional and no longer would be treated as secondary or peripheral to the main education mission (traditional undergraduates). All programs and services would be repositioned to overtly treat the adult and continuing learner as a core market focus of the University. These learners and the way we serve them would be just as traditional and just as central in the eyes of the faculty and in the way their services are provided as the 18 year olds.

To us, this really would represent an innovation that few other universities have yet achieved.

**Understand the Corporation as a Client (and Partner) for Learning Services**

Finally, universities are uniformly better at marketing to individual students/learners than to organizations and corporations. BGSU’s opportunities in defining its learner constituencies include a better and more effective focus on companies as customers for learning delivery. The other new view is to consider the corporation also as a partner provider.

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CONCLUSIONS

Both target learner segment options require the right inputs-strong faculty, innovative curricula, use of technology to promote learning, and effective academic and student support services. However, as noted by many faculty, administrators, and guests interviewed, BGSU-like all universities-needs to learn how to grant degrees on the basis of accumulated knowledge and competence rather than accumulated credits. The subject of innovative learning models is addressed separately as Strategic Decision Issue #6.

Preferred Conclusion

BGSU will be an innovator in defining constituencies in the knowledge workforce and serving them in innovative ways. Everything about curriculum content, degree structures, delivery methods, academic calendar, evaluation of competencies, instructional facilities, campus amenities, and uses of technology would be subject to redefinition. BGSU would adopt this concept for premier learning community.

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#5: TARGETING NON-LEARNER CONSTITUENCIES

DISCUSSION

As BGSU develops plans for becoming an economically engaged university, faculty and administration will face the question of whose needs the University seeks to serve (in other than instructional services).

Like the meaning of economic engagement, this is a question without simple answers. When asked about regional strengths and weaknesses, many interviewees defined region as Bowling Green, while others defined BGSU’s service region as the north coast, as Northwest Ohio, or as northern Ohio plus southern Michigan. Still others looked at BGSU’s region as extending into the Cleveland area, as the State of Ohio, the Midwest, the nation, or the world.

All of these are potentially correct. But what the interviews indicate is ample evidence that there is, at present, no commonly-held view of what is meant by region or constituencies for economic engagement. It is nonetheless an application of a basic marketing principle that, to reach and serve a segment, one must be able to identify it.

Geographic, Industry, Profession Definitions of Constituency

For economic engagement, the number of alternative constituencies and constituent needs that BGSU might choose to serve may be as great as the number of its faculty. For example, from a geographic point of view, BGSU’s focus for economic development could be at the local, county, tri-county, regional, statewide, multi-state, national, or international level. As another example, BGSU’s historical strength as Ohio’s leading teacher education university may contribute to a statewide focus in education, while its role as a regional institution may lead many to consider Wood County or Northwest Ohio as a primary focus for Technology Enterprise Support activities.

Alternatively, constituencies can be defined as an industry, a profession, a particular population, or society as a whole. For certain niches, like Photochemical Sciences or Visual Media, the constituency may extend to national industries, but always with the aim of trying to cultivate clusters of those industries in the local region.

Ways to Define Local Area Focus

One alternative is to focus BGSU’s economic development energy on the local area—which still would need to be defined as either the City of Bowling Green, Wood County, the tri-county area, or Northwest Ohio.

The following discussion, based on the tri-county Toledo MSA, is merely a brief illustration of one definition of region or constituency and its needs. Much of the illustration would apply to a different geographic definition, for example Wood County. But for any of these, the specific needs description would also

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differ in some ways.

Illustration: Toledo MSA

According to an assessment prepared for the Toledo-Lucas Port Authority (Iannone & Associates, 1993), the area developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, capitalizing on location and transportation, technology innovations in glass-making and transportation equipment, investments made by entrepreneurs, and strong corporate leadership. However, in the last three decades, much of the area’s success has been diminished by growing social, economic, and political problems. The competitive strength of the traditional manufacturing industries has weakened due to restructuring, corporate mergers and acquisitions, increased global competition, rising cost of doing business, and other factors.

To reinvigorate the region’s economy, Iannone suggests that strengthening the area’s science and technology base and labor market are the two strategies likely to make the greatest difference in long-term competitiveness. He advocates developing a regional economic development strategy focused around clusters of competing, complementary and interdependent firms and institutions that cut across several industries and technologies found in an economic area. He reminds readers that economic development also depends on continued social improvement.

During our interviews, economic, government, and university leaders from the tri-county area echoed and elaborated some of these themes. Like Iannone, interviewees identified location and transportation as area advantages while expressing concerns that the economy was still overly dependent on fading traditional industries, that new technologies were not being developed and applied to industry, and that the workforce is not sufficiently skilled to support a higher level of technology.

Labor/management issues seem to add complexity. Interviewees also noted that the area is an attractive and safe place to raise a family and to escape big city stress. People who move away often return. At the same time, the area appears to suffer from low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority, presumably caused by the shift from prosperity to uncertainty when traditional manufacturing was threatened three decades ago. This negative outlook seems related to what some described as a provincial, almost parochial and close-minded distaste of risk and change. Indeed, compared to the aggressiveness of the Silicon Valley and the Research Triangle, the Toledo MSA has failed to capitalize on many of its strengths. For example, the site where two major interstates intersect remains undeveloped. The area has lost companies who seem to be looking for a larger, more diverse population base with more varied cultural opportunities.

To take fullest advantage of the area’s strengths and to overcome these problems, many interviewees—primarily political and economic leaders—called for a comprehensive regional strategy based on collaboration across business, industry, government, and higher education.

Assuming that a comprehensive regional strategy has not materialized since the time of Iannone’s study, this is still an opportunity for a BGUS to help lead formulation of a vision for the region. If one ignores the largely irrelevant
1950s-era examples like Stanford and Research Triangle and the 1970s-era examples like Route 128 and Princeton-Forrestal, there still are relevant examples of coordinated, systemic, large-scale regional strategies, in which universities are significant partners. In Ohio, Cleveland's turn-around economy and image are an immediate case in point. Elsewhere, Baltimore and Austin represent interesting examples.

**Illustration:** Austin Regional Strategy and the University of Texas Austin

Until about 15 years ago, Austin had no high tech industry. It was a small city, state capital with a public university, some branch offices of large companies, and a rock-bottom 30% commercial real estate vacancy rate.

In 1984, the Greater Austin Chamber launched a project to define a new economic vision for the community and to identify specific steps leaders could take to build a prosperous economy based on the electronics industry. That year, Austin won the national competition for MCC, the first US-funded industry consortium of high tech companies. The State funded a $40MM facility for MCC. In the same year, UT-Austin raised $32MM for 32 endowed chairs, 16 of which were focused in microelectronics, computer science, materials, and manufacturing and also created the IC2 Institute to promote innovation, commercialization and technology investment.

In 1988, Austin won the federal competition for SEMATECH and in 1989 opened the Austin Technology Incubator. In the last many years, UT-Austin has achieved Research 1 status, has greatly increased the caliber of its research in engineering and computer sciences and is educating, with other institutions in the region, 100,000 students in the region.

Today, Austin's greatest problem is a shortage of technologically sophisticated workforce and the area is importing 1,900 people/month. Industry indicates that it still is not able to communicate its needs effectively to the education establishment and UT-Austin is still resisting targeting non-traditional students, although it is active in distance education and in multidisciplinary institutes. The Austin Chamber just published another strategic document that sets forth targeted industry clusters and strategies for the next century.

**STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES**

**BGSU Helps Drive a Scaled-Up Regional Strategy**

To achieve the kind of systemic change that areas like Austin, Baltimore, or Cleveland have achieved requires a broad-based regional leadership, a focused vision, and selective investment strategies.

We cannot tell with any certainty whether any local economic development organizations have developed or are enacting such a large-scale strategy, but there is no immediate evidence that this is the case. Thus, an opportunity for BGSU is to initiate this scale of effort in the region. It could do more and better than UT-Austin. BGSU could take the view that the Toledo MSA, one definition of region or constituency, needs a broadly focused partnership and long-range vision for economic development. It could see itself as promoter and organizer of all the other entities and partners in evolution and enactment of that vision. Specifically, BGSU could:

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Facilitate the dialogue among economic, social, political, and educational leaders to develop a regional vision and strategy
Help identify which businesses and industries can be assembled into effective economic development clusters
Model collaborative relationships
Partner with employers to raise the knowledge-based skill level of entry-level employees and to improve on-the-job training for current employees
Help companies apply new technologies to traditional manufacturing methods
Increase diversity of faculty, staff, and students to build a more diverse population leading to more diverse cultural opportunities
Collaborate with area leadership on creation of education and information programs aimed at improving self-confidence among area residents
Develop new perspectives on promoting positives in the region's labor/management issues (and resolving some)
Research best business practices, for example, if wages cannot be reduced, then can turnover be reduced though improved advancement opportunities
Lead major new funding initiatives for aspects of the newly focused strategy.

Immediate Focus on City of Bowling Green and Wood County
BGSU could determine that its most important focus would be on the immediate community, perhaps defined to include the City of Bowling Green, for purposes of local community quality of life enhancement and Wood County for entrepreneurial and business development support activities.

Physical Development and Quality of Life Factors
Either way, a series of strategies would be articulated to turn the immediate area into a more attractive total environment for economic activity—a competitive community. Some physical aspects of this are discussed elsewhere, as Strategic Decision Issue #16, which poses questions about joint master planning for blending campus and community into a new knowledge community. Areas for potential focus could be joint efforts in housing, services, and extended cultural amenities.

A Telecommunications Capacity Community
Another focus could be on a totally innovative model to provide telecommunications capacity (band-width) and related content programming into all homes in the community, in a collaboration with local government and schools. The concept of telecommunications capacity in homes is one in which the federal government is beginning to be interested and for which there may be funding available for an innovative model.

Multiple Focus for Multiple Constituencies
Alternatively, BGSU can define its economic development constituencies program by program. Each program could focus on its own defined constituency—by geographic region, specific industry, profession, or sub-

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These questions of region or constituency seed not be answered the same way for all functions, all departments, or all faculty members. Knowledge development in some areas might have an international reach (such as Canadian Studies), while workforce and community development might have a Wood County focus and appeal to a certain profession (such as in-service training for mental health professionals). Public policy could address issues at a state-wide level (such as sustainable development in the Ohio River Basin). The destination of knowledge transmission and its applications could focus on a single industry needing specialized expertise (such as photo-imaging techniques or best business practices in a unionized environment).

Figure 5 following provides examples of matching program initiatives with their planned constituencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Assets-Participants in the Knowledge Workforce</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Target Constituencies</th>
<th>BGSU Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Tech Workforce</td>
<td>K-12 Public Education Reforms:</td>
<td>University-Wide Commitment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public school systems-very local</td>
<td>• Play operate model schools in the campus &amp; BG community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public school systems-regional</td>
<td>• Institute regional partnerships/refor programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Public school systems-State of Ohio</td>
<td>• Partner with Ohio's universities for state-wide effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Knowledge Assets-Participants in the Knowledge Workforce | Regional Industry (NW Ohio): | Overall Commitment to Company Needs, e.g.:
| High Tech Workforce | • Adults working in existing regional manufacturing businesses | • Customize on-site programs for employers or industry clusters |
| | • New workers for these companies | • Joint certificate or non-credit programs with community college |
| Regional Industry (NW Ohio/Tri-County Area): | Conference Center May be General Asset: | |
| | • Small/medium- | • On-site, weekend, or |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Assets - Participants in the Knowledge Workforce</th>
<th>Management &amp; Executive Training</th>
<th>Regional Partners:</th>
<th>Partnership Principles &amp; Leadership Energy:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Leadership</td>
<td>size companies: • Companies in production sectors • Companies in knowledge industries</td>
<td>Regional Vision and Strategy for Economic Growth</td>
<td>• Local governments • Business associations • Companies • ED agencies • Other HE institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Enterprise Support</td>
<td>Future and Current Entrepreneurs: • All BGSU students • Region’s potential entrepreneurs • Local entrepreneur base (for/in Bowling Green)</td>
<td>Commitment to Growth of Entrepreneurs:</td>
<td>• Entrepreneurship across curriculum • Special training programs • Incubator, technical and business support services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSIONS

BGSU probably cannot select one definition of geographic region or a single industry, profession, or sub-population as the focus of its all of its economic engagement activities. However, the University should clearly articulate matches of functions with service regions or constituencies, aligning activities very deliberately with externally driven needs. Regions and constituencies can be thought of as concentric rings of influence, as Figure 6 illustrates simplistically.

Figure 6: Bowling Green’s Concentric Spheres of Economic Impact

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Preferred Conclusion
BGSU can undertake a new leadership role, with its many partners, to focus the vision and strategies for Northwest Ohio, or for the Toledo MSA, or for the TriCounty region. At the same time, it can develop specific strategies for enhancement of the City of Bowling Green as a 21st century knowledge community. At the same time, it can focus enterprise support and entrepreneurship programs at the level of Wood County. Finally, at the same time, various research programs and instructional delivery can be very specifically focused on regional or industry or community constituencies consistent with rational factors. The important point is that all major functions should have a defined constituency focus.

Contents – Next
BGSU administrators feel a conference center could be closely tied to the TV station, and contain numerous community-action capabilities. This will allow teaching, training, and curricula for business and industry, combining traditional and non-traditional delivery.

The real estate development community likes the idea of a conference center/hotel tied to BGSU, but believes there is at present minimal potential for it. They agree there is nothing similar to it in the region, even though MCO has a large conference center with an adjacent hotel. They feel market viability will be based principally on what the University does with the faculty, programmatically.

Senior executives tend to agree that the market will be based largely on BGSU's continuing and distance education, as well as corporate use. They feel BGSU should assess carefully the competition, build program demand, and then build the facility. The guess is that BGSU is not ready; that there must be a real draw (again, programmatically) that is not yet in place.

The economic development community believes it is important to distinguish the conference center/hotel from a traditional hotel facility. They believe there is no doubt that there is a need for the conference center as well as hotel rooms, but that people do not want to see it at the current Research Enterprise Park. Some feel the conference center should be located closer to the airport.

**Competitive Factors**

The conference center at MCO must be analyzed in some detail in order to understand the extent to which it currently is serving a conference center need in the marketplace that competes with the need which BGSU perceives. To what extent will one impact the other? If it is solely a BGSU-generated market, how does this market impact and coordinate with Olscamp Hall?

It is interesting to note that prior to the opening of the Penn State Conference Center/Hotel, Penn State's Continuing and Distance Education activities were carried out at Keller Conference Center, an academic building on central campus. Keller now has been renovated and is utilized for other academic purposes including executive management education.

The same strategy might be employed for Olscamp Hall, or it might become the backbone of a new facility. If our future-oriented idea is correct—then this kind of facility may begin to be the general academic facility model—then having Olscamp Hall, in addition to a new facility, can only be a positive. If our scenario is right, then more such space is better.

In any case, many believe that the technology must be improved at Olscamp Hall and adequate parking must be provided, to make it an attractive meeting place for academic as well as corporate meetings.

**STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES**

There is a range of options available that can respond to the needs of the
market, once they are articuluted clearly.

Possible Extension of Existing Conference Facilities
It may be determined that BGSU only requires additional technologically advanced meeting rooms and guest facilities for its current activities. This might involve renovations to Olscamp Hall and the development of a guesthouse consisting of a small number of guest rooms. Such a facility would be more sophisticated than the current guesthouse, but far less formal than a traditional hotel. There may be space sufficient for a hotel wing, adjacent to Olscamp. The need for these types of facilities can be determined by a series of interviews with BGSU faculty and staff.

Develop a New, World-Class Conference Center/Hotel
There does not appear to be a consistent indication of need for a new conference center/hotel, based upon the single question asked in our initial interviews. This does not mean the need is not there, only that at this time it is not apparent. Clearly, there are facilities in the region that provide for meetings needs, and international companies use these facilities for local meetings. However, international companies also look nationally and internationally for sites for their large meetings.

A thorough market analysis would need to be conducted in order to determine the real demand and financial feasibility for this type facility, based on existing patterns of uses. In our experience, given current air service to BGSU, a world-class conference center/hotel will not prove viable unless there is both an extraordinary facility and "content" that is not readily available elsewhere. Therefore, even more important to the question of feasibility are BGSU's answers to many of the other questions in this Paper. If BGSU is willing to undertake some bold innovations in curriculum and in targeting adult and professional constituencies and in alternative delivery formats, it may have the possibility of creating entirely new market demand that a new world-class facility would serve.

Regional Meeting Place
As a compromise, it may be possible to develop a regional meeting place that would provide a facility for existing local business and the University to conduct meetings and conferences, and to provide a place for vendors and other contractors to display products for customers in the region. This could provide the basis for developing a conferencing need in the future. The need for this type facility can be determined through a series of interviews.

CONCLUSIONS

Preferred Conclusion
There are many direct and indirect benefits to providing conference center/hotel facilities as part of BGSU's knowledge-based economic development strategy. Such a facility is not only useful for carrying out knowledge-based economic development activities, but to inducing them at start-up. Therefore, it makes sense to carry out a general market assessment of the current baseline academic, local, and regional needs as well as competition for conferences.

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Then, as BGSU entertains broader programmatic questions for economic engagement, it may develop an entirely new set of program commitments for which it would intentionally need the new conference center. This would represent a second and extremely important layer of demand, beyond the baseline of current uses that exists in the region.

The initial assessments then will indicate what further studies may be necessary to determine the extent and type of facility that might be needed.