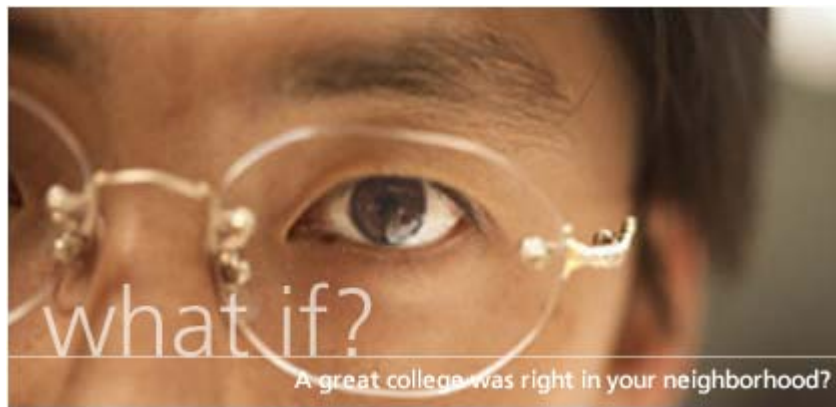


OHIO UNIVERSITY

Lancaster Regional Campus



Student Study Summary Report

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Executive Summary

Application and Enrollment Information

- Almost half (47%) of all survey respondents were transfer students, having attended another institution prior to coming to the Lancaster Regional Campus. Most of these students previously attended one or more of the following schools: Columbus State Community College, Hocking College, or Ohio State University.
- The majority of survey respondents (84%) reported first applying to Lancaster Regional Campus rather than any other Ohio University campus. Focus group participants also primarily applied to Lancaster Regional Campus rather than other campuses in the Ohio University system.
- The largest portion of survey respondents (34%) reported they heard about the campus through a current or past student. Another 18% of survey respondents reported that, as local residents, they had previous knowledge of Lancaster Regional Campus. Finally, approximately 12% of survey respondents reported they heard from a high school guidance counselor or saw campus signage or a billboard. Focus group participants emphasized the role of the Lancaster Regional Campus recruiter in their enrollment decisions.
- Over a quarter (26.2%) of respondents reported that word-of-mouth through current or past students is the best way for potential students to learn about the Lancaster Regional Campus. Other recommended ways were from a high school guidance counselor, TV/radio advertisement, and the OU campus recruiter. Focus group participants echoed these sentiments.

Strengths and Benefits

- Students attending Lancaster Regional Campus are satisfied with their *overall* experience. Approximately 84% of survey respondents who attended classes at the Lancaster Campus and 79% of those who attended classes at Pickerington Center reported they are either satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience at these locations. Traditional students had higher rates of satisfaction

than non-traditional students. Focus group participants also described both locations as “great places” to go to school.

- Survey respondents cited campus location, degrees offered, affordability, ability to complete a degree at the campus, flexible class times, and quality of facilities as the most important factors in their decision to attend Lancaster Regional Campus. In addition to these factors, focus group participants mentioned available financial aid, small class size, and the ability to live at home as positive factors in their decisions to attend Lancaster Regional Campus.
- Satisfaction with the *academic* experience at both Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center is high. Approximately 82% of respondents who have attended class at these campuses reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their overall *academic* experience. Transfer students are more satisfied than students who have never attended another school. Focus group participants mentioned that both the quality of the faculty and small class size positively impacted their academic experience at the two locations.

Transfer Plans

- Most respondents (66%) reported they plan to complete their degree at Lancaster Regional Campus. Another 25% of respondents planed to transfer because they are unable to complete their desired degree at Lancaster Regional Campus. The intent to graduate from Lancaster Regional Campus varies by type of student; with 75% of transfer students and 80% of non-traditional students planning to graduate from Lancaster Regional Campus.

Perceived Areas for Improvement

- While most survey respondents (78%) reported they are pursuing the major that is their first choice, almost all students (95%) had recommendations for majors they would like offered at Lancaster Regional Campus that currently can only be completed by attending classes at Athens campus. The most requested majors were secondary education and psychology. This finding echoes comments of

focus group participants who strongly recommended Lancaster Regional Campus offered more and varied majors to encourage enrollment.

- Virtually all respondents to the survey provided suggestions for additional courses that they would like to have offered at Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center. Recommended courses included general education classes, education classes, and higher level courses that meet degree requirements. Focus group participants held similar views regarding the need for greater variety in course offerings at both locations, and suggested this is one way to increase enrollment at both Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center.
- According to the survey respondents, Monday through Thursday were the preferred days for classes, and preferred hours of the day are between 12:00 pm and 5:00 pm.
- Most respondents (84%) reported they are not currently involved in any campus organizations. Lack of time is the primary reason stated for not participating in campus life. Just under half of all students (44%) expressed an interest in participating in a campus organization with academic clubs and athletics being the top choices for such involvement. Traditional focus group participants expressed strong interest in more opportunities to socialize with other students through athletics and clubs.
- In addition to its current hours, students reported that they would like to see the Lancaster library have later hours on Saturdays.
- In addition to its current hours, students reported they would like to see the Lancaster bookstore open on Fridays and Saturdays, and open late one weekday. Focus group participants also asked for improvements in the Lancaster bookstore.
- Both survey respondents and focus group participants reported they would like to have the Pickerington bookstore hours increased.

- The largest portion of respondents reported “sometimes” using The Zone. More traditional students reported using The Zone than non-traditional students.
- Among respondents who reported their primary location as Pickerington Center, 65% said they were somewhat or highly likely to use a facility similar to The Zone at Lancaster Campus.

Introduction

The goal of this multi-stage project was to identify opportunities for increasing enrollment at the Ohio University Lancaster Regional Campus, which includes Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center.

Phase 1 utilized existing demographic, geographic, application, and enrollment data obtained from OU Institutional Research to construct a profile of students who applied for admission to the Lancaster Regional Campus and students who enrolled in classes. This analysis developed an understanding of the characteristics of the individuals who are likely to attend classes at the Lancaster Regional Campus, where they live, and their academic interests. The report from this phase was complete in December 2005 and delivered to the project sponsors.

The findings from the student profile aided in the development of the **Phase 2** focus group research. Focus groups were held with traditional and non-traditional students at both campuses in February 2006 and the reports on these groups were submitted to the project sponsors. Reports from this focus group are located in Appendix A of this report.

The student profile findings, in combination with focus group results, were used to develop the **Phase 3** web survey, which is the primary focal point of this summary report. The web survey investigated student attitudes and perceptions about the regional campus. Specifically, the survey asked students about their satisfaction with various aspects of the campuses in order to identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of both locations. The survey also asked students a series of marketing questions such as: how they learned about the Lancaster Regional Campus, what key factors influenced their decision to enroll, and what they perceive as ways the administration might market the campus to the community. Finally, the survey queried students' opinions regarding the current curriculum, for example, about what courses and programs of study they would like to see added to the curriculum as well as their course scheduling preferences. In addition to analyzing the data for all students combined, the analysis, where appropriate, examined

the results according to primary student location and type of student (i.e. traditional students [those under age 25] compared to older non-traditional students, and transfer students compared to students who have only attended college at Lancaster Regional Campus). The Executive Summary compares and contrasts survey findings with results of the focus groups.

Survey Report

Methodology

The web survey took place over a five-week period beginning the last week of April, 2006. ILGARD obtained the e-mail addresses for current Ohio University Lancaster and Pickerington students from administrators at the Lancaster Campus. ILGARD sent all students an e-mail describing the purpose of the web survey, how to access the survey, and contact information of a Voinovich Center representative if they had questions before participating. Additionally, the e-mail informed all students that participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. After two weeks, ILGARD sent a reminder e-mail to all Lancaster and Pickerington students to encourage them to participate in the web survey if they had not done so.

Survey Return

The sample included a total of 1,163 students who received an e-mail requesting their participation in the survey. Of those invited, 152 students responded and participated in the survey, which yielded a response rate of 13%. This response rate does not take into account the e-mail messages returned as undeliverable. There were approximately 100 “bad” e-mail addresses.

Survey Sample Analysis

Among the respondents, 126 (83%) indicated that their primary location was the Lancaster Campus while 26 (17%) students identified Pickerington Center as their primary location. The median age of those participating in the survey was 23, with a range of 17 to 56 years old. The 84 respondents aged 25 years or older were coded as non-traditional students in order to compare the responses of the traditional student body and the non-traditional student body. Approximately 47% (72 students) reported that they had attended another institution, and these respondents were coded as transfer students in order to compare their responses to those students.

Survey Findings

Question 1: What is your primary location?

	Frequency	Percent
Lancaster Campus	126	82.9
Pickerington Center	26	17.1
Total	152	100

- Among the respondents, 126 (83%) indicated that their primary location was the Lancaster campus while 26 (17%) students identified Pickerington Center as their primary location.

Overall Satisfaction

Question 2: Overall Satisfaction with Each Location

Overall experience at Lancaster Campus

	Frequency	Percent
Very dissatisfied	4	2.7
Dissatisfied	9	6.2
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	11	7.5
Satisfied	77	52.7
Very satisfied	45	30.8
Total	146	100

Overall experience at Pickerington Center

	Frequency	Percent
Very dissatisfied	1	1.1
Dissatisfied	8	8.4
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	11	11.6
Satisfied	36	37.9
Very satisfied	39	41.1
Total	95	100

- Satisfaction is high for both locations of Lancaster Regional Campus. 84% of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience at Lancaster Campus and 79% respond similarly for Pickerington Center.

Transfer Students

Question 3: Before enrolling at Lancaster Regional Campus did you attend another post-secondary institution?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	72	47.4
No	80	52.6
Total	152	100

- Respondents were asked to indicate if they had ever attended another post-secondary institution, making them transfer students according to the definition used in this study.
- Students who indicated that they had attended another institution were asked to complete a series of questions regarding which schools they had previously attended and whether or not they had completed a degree. Approximately 47% of students from the *entire sample* identified themselves as transfer students.

Question 4: What school(s) did you attend previously? (Select all that apply.)

	N	Percent of Cases
Ohio University - Athens Campus	8	11.10%
Ohio University - other regional campus	5	6.90%
Columbus State Community College	18	25.00%
Hocking College	10	13.90%
Ohio State University	10	13.90%
Ohio Dominican University	1	1.40%
Central Ohio Technical College	4	5.60%
Capital University	1	1.40%
Franklin University	1	1.40%
Other	35	48.60%
Total	93	129.20%
Note: Sum does not equal 100% due to multiple responses.		

Question 5: Please choose the option that best describes your experience at the above school(s):

	Frequency	Percent
I completed an associate's degree	16	22.5
I completed a bachelor's degree	5	7
I am a transfer student	50	70.4
Total	71	100

- All 71 of these individuals are considered to be transfer students.

Application Experience

Question 6: Which Ohio University Campus did you first apply to?

	Frequency	Percent
Lancaster	127	83.6
Athens	18	11.8
Other	7	4.6
Total	152	100

Question 7: How many other schools (besides OU) did you originally apply to?

	Frequency	Percent
1	24	40
2	17	28.3
3	9	15
4	4	6.7
5	2	3.3
6	1	1.7
10	3	5
Total	60	100

- The average respondent reported applying to 2.5 schools in addition to Ohio University.

Question 8: How did you first hear about the Lancaster Regional Campus?

	Frequency	Percent
High school guidance counselor	18	11.8
OU campus recruiter	5	3.3
College fair	7	4.6
Current or past student	51	33.6
Flier in the mail/newspaper	8	5.3
TV/radio advertisement	3	2
Online search for colleges	7	4.6
Signs on campus or billboard in surrounding area	16	10.5
Local resident	27	17.8
Other	9	5.9
Total	151	100

- The largest percentage of respondents (34%) reported that they heard about the campus through a current or past student. 17% knew of the campus due to their status as local residents, 12% of respondents reported being told by a high school guidance counselor, and 11% of respondents had seen billboards or campus signage.

Question 9: What do you believe is the best way for potential students to learn about the Lancaster Regional Campus?

	Frequency	Percent
High school guidance counselor	31	20.8
OU campus recruiter	20	13.4
College fair	14	9.4
Current or past student	39	26.2
Flier in the mail/newspaper	6	4
TV/radio advertisement	25	16.8
Online search for colleges	7	4.7
Signs on campus or billboard in surrounding area	1	0.7
Other	6	4
Total	149	100

- The largest percentage of respondents reported that word of mouth through current or past students was the best way for potential students to learn about the Lancaster Regional Campus. High school guidance school counselor, TV/radio advertisement, and OU campus recruiter were other marketing strategies highlighted by respondents.

Question 10: When selecting a college or university to attend, how important were the following factors in your decision-making process?

	Very Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neutral	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Convenient location	4	6.7	2.7	19.3	67.3
Affordability	7.9	1.3	6	8.6	76.2
Flexible class times	7.3	5.3	6	12.7	68.7
Small class sizes/intimate environment	5.3	10	16.7	34.7	33.3
Reputation of school	2.6	7.9	19.2	33.8	36.4
Quality of facilities	4	6	10.6	44.4	35.1
Extracurricular activities	27.2	21.9	33.8	11.3	6
Scholarship opportunities	8.6	4.6	23.8	29.1	33.8
Application fee waiver	9.9	9.3	41.1	23.2	16.6
Degrees offered	7.4	3.4	2.7	17.4	69.1
Able to easily relocate to Athens Campus	19.3	12.7	32.7	14.7	20.7
Able to complete preferred degree at regional campus	9.3	2.6	5.3	15.2	67.5

- The most important factors in selecting a campus are location, degrees offered, affordability, ability to complete a degree at the campus, flexible class times, and quality of facilities. Location and degrees offered were rated as important or very important by 87% of respondents. Affordability was rated as important or very important by 85% of respondents while 83% similarly rated the ability to complete a degree on campus. Finally, flexible class times and quality of facilities were important or very important to 81% and 80% respectively of the survey respondents
- Smaller proportions of the students rate reputation of school (70%) and small class size (68%) as important or very important. Scholarship opportunities and fee waivers were important or very important to 63% and 40% of survey respondents, respectively. Least important to respondents is the ability to easily relocate to Athens campus (35%) and extracurricular activities (17%).

Academic Campus Experience

The next series of questions asked respondents about their academic experiences at the Lancaster Regional Campus. To begin, respondents were asked to rate their overall academic experience at the regional campus. They were also asked to indicate if they planned to complete their degree at the campus. Next, a series of questions asked respondents to indicate if they were pursuing a major that was their first choice, specific programs they would like to see offered exclusively at the regional campus, and additional courses they would like to see offered at either the Lancaster Campus or Pickerington Center.

Question 11: Rate your *overall academic* experience at each location:

Lancaster Campus

	Frequency	Percent
Very dissatisfied	4	2.8
Dissatisfied	5	3.4
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	15	10.3
Satisfied	73	50.3
Very satisfied	48	33.1
Total	145	100

Pickerington Center

	Frequency	Percent
Very dissatisfied	1	1.1
Dissatisfied	5	5.3
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	11	11.6
Satisfied	32	33.7
Very satisfied	46	48.4
Total	95	100

- 83% of respondents from Lancaster Campus report being satisfied or very satisfied with their overall academic experience.
- 82% of respondents from Pickerington Center report being satisfied or very satisfied with their overall academic experience.

Question 12: Do you plan to complete your degree at Lancaster Regional Campus?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	100	66.7
No	50	33.3
Total	150	100

Question 13: If no, why not?

	Frequency	Percent
I always planned to transfer to another school	9	17.3
I cannot complete my desired degree at Lancaster Regional Campus	38	73.1
I am dissatisfied with the program at Lancaster Regional Campus	2	3.8
Other	3	5.8
Total	52	100

- Most respondents (66%) reported planning to complete their degree at the Lancaster Regional Campus.
- Most of the survey sample (74%) who are not planning to complete their degree at Lancaster Regional Campus report as their reason that their chosen degree can not be completed there.

Question 14: Are you currently pursuing the major that is your first choice?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	119	78.3
No	33	21.7
Total	152	100

- Most respondents (78%) reported pursuing the major that is their first choice.

Question 15: If no, please indicate your desired major:

	Frequency	Percent
BSN - Nursing	1	3
A specific business degree	1	3
Psychology	3	9.1
Secondary Education	1	3
Master's in Communication	2	6.1
Other bachelor's degree	21	63.6
Other master's degree	2	6.1
Other associate's degree	2	6.1
Total	33	100

- There were many different majors requested by the 33 students who reported they were not pursuing their first choice major; those mentioned by at least two students as being their desired major were sociology, psychology, communications, and specific business degrees.

Question 16: What major(s) would you like to see offered exclusively at Lancaster Regional Campus that currently can only be completed by attending classes at the Athens campus? (Check all that apply.)

	N	Percent of cases
A specific business degree	20	13.80%
Psychology	27	18.60%
Secondary Education	31	21.40%
Master's in Communication	24	16.60%
None	23	15.90%
Other bachelor's degree	45	31.00%
Other master's degree	18	12.40%
Other associate's degree	12	8.30%
Total	200	137.90%
Note: Sum does not equal 100% due to multiple responses.		

- Most respondents (95%) had suggestions for additional majors at Lancaster Regional Campus.
- “Other bachelor’s degree” was endorsed the most followed by secondary education, psychology, and a master’s degree in communication.
- Respondents endorsing “other bachelor’s degree” offered nursing, special education, social work, history, and sociology as degrees that could be added to the curriculum at the regional campus.

Question 17: What additional courses would you like to see more of at the Lancaster Campus that are currently unavailable? (Check all that apply.)

	N	Percent of Cases
More general education courses	36	24.20%
More higher-level courses (degree requirements)	75	50.30%
More psychology courses	27	18.10%
More business courses	21	14.10%
More marketing courses	13	8.70%
More education courses	43	28.90%
More IT courses	9	6.00%
None	21	14.10%
Other	28	18.80%
Total	273	183.20%
Note: Sum does not equal 100% due to multiple responses.		

Question 18: What additional courses would you like to see more of at the Pickerington Center that are currently unavailable? (Check all that apply.)

	N	Percent of Cases
More general education courses	29	22.00%
More higher-level courses (degree requirements)	42	31.80%
More psychology courses	14	10.60%
More business courses	11	8.30%
More marketing courses	8	6.10%
More education courses	26	19.70%
More IT courses	4	3.00%
None	50	37.90%
Other	13	9.80%
Total	197	149.20%
Note: Sum does not equal 100% due to multiple responses.		

- The additional courses most in demand at both Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center are higher level courses meeting degree requirements, education, and general education courses.
- While over one third of all survey respondents see no need for additional courses at Pickerington Center, only one of these respondents reported their primary class location as Pickerington Center. Therefore, responses to this item should be interpreted with caution.

**Question 19: Please indicate what times you would prefer to attend classes
(Check all that apply.):**

	Monday - Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00 - 12:00	53.9	30.3	28.3
12:00 - 5:00	58.6	20.4	11.8
5:00 - 10:00	50.7	25	7.9

- Most respondents reported that they prefer courses to be offered Monday-Thursday, 8:00 am through 10:00 pm. Additionally, most reported that 12:00 pm through 5:00 pm is the best time to offer courses.

General Campus Experience

The last series of questions asked respondents about general aspects of their Lancaster Regional Campus experience. Specifically, respondents were asked to identify if they were involved in any on-campus organizations as well as indicate the types of organizations in which they would like to participate. They were also asked questions about the convenience of library services, bookstore services, and The Zone.

**Question 20: What on-campus organizations are you currently involved in?
(Check all that apply.)**

	N	Percent of Cases
Sports	9	6.10%
Service clubs/organizations	5	3.40%
Social clubs/organizations	1	0.70%
Academic clubs/organizations	11	7.50%
Student government	3	2.00%
Special population organizations (clubs for women, for non-traditional students, LGBT persons, etc.)	2	1.40%
None	123	83.70%
Other	3	2.00%
Total	157	106.80%
Note: Sum does not equal 100% due to multiple responses.		

Question 21: Please indicate what organizations you would like to become involved in but currently are not (Check all that apply.):

	N	Percent of Cases
Sports	20	14.40%
Service clubs/organizations	13	9.40%
Social clubs/organizations	16	11.50%
Academic clubs/organizations	25	18.00%
Student government	11	7.90%
Special population organizations (clubs for women, for non-traditional students, LGBT persons, etc.)	19	13.70%
None	78	56.10%
Other	7	5.00%
Total	189	136.00%
Note: Sum does not equal 100% due to multiple responses.		

- Currently, 81% of respondents reported not being involved in any campus organization.
- The largest percentage of respondents reporting involvement in campus activities report that they are currently involved in academic clubs/organizations and sports.
- Respondents report that they would most like to be involved in academic clubs/organizations, sports, special population organizations, and social clubs/organizations.

Question 22: Please indicate the main reason why you are not currently involved in the organization(s):

	Frequency	Percent
Too busy	39	52.7
Meeting times are inconvenient/don't fit my schedule	11	14.9
Don't know how to join	9	12.2
Doesn't exist at the regional campus I attend	10	13.5
Other	5	6.8
Total	74	100

- Over half (52.7%) of respondents reported that they are currently too busy to be involved in a campus organization.

Question 23: Does the Lancaster library hours of operation currently meet your needs?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	128	85.3
No	22	14.7
Total	150	100

- Most respondents reported that the hours of operation for the Lancaster Campus library meet their needs. Other times that students requested for it to open included later hours on Friday and Saturday.

Question 24: Does the Lancaster bookstore hours of operation currently meet your needs?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	88	58.7
No	62	41.3
Total	150	100

Question 25: Does the Pickerington Center bookstore hours of operation currently meet your needs?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	100	75.8
No	32	24.2
Total	132	100

- Over half of all respondents (59%) reported the Lancaster bookstore's hours meet their needs.
- Over three quarters of respondents (76%) reported the Pickerington bookstore's hours meet their needs.
- The survey respondents suggested that the Lancaster and Pickerington bookstores be open on weekends or later during the day.

Question 26: How often do you use The Zone at the Lancaster Regional Campus?

	Frequency	Percent
Never	32	21.1
Rarely	31	20.4
Sometimes	52	34.2
Often	27	17.8
Very Often	10	6.6
Total	152	100

- Almost a quarter of respondents reported using The Zone often or very often, and another 34% of respondents reported using it sometimes.

Question 27: How important is having The Zone to your overall college experience?

	Frequency	Percent
Very Unimportant	20	13.2
Unimportant	15	9.9
Neutral	57	37.5
Important	40	26.3
Very Important	20	13.2
Total	152	100

- Most respondents were neutral when it came to how important The Zone was to their college experience.

Question 28: If the Pickerington Center had a student lounge area similar to The Zone at Lancaster Campus, how likely do you think it is that you would use such a facility?

	Frequency	Percent
Highly Unlikely	20	14.7
Somewhat Unlikely	11	8.1
Unsure	38	27.9
Somewhat Likely	44	32.4
Highly Likely	23	16.9
Total	136	100

- Almost half of all respondents (49%) reported that it was somewhat or highly likely they would use a student lounge area at Pickerington Center.
- Among respondents who reported their primary location as Pickerington Center, 65% said they were somewhat or highly likely to use such a facility.

Traditional Vs. Non-Traditional Students

The 84 respondents aged 25 years or older were coded as non-traditional students in order to compare the responses of the traditional student body and the non-traditional student body.

Question 2: Please rate your overall experience at each location.

- Satisfaction rates were higher among traditional students than non-traditional students for both the Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center.
- Traditional students reported satisfaction rates of approximately 87% for both campuses.
- Non-traditional students had satisfaction rates of 72% Lancaster Campus and 77% Pickerington Center.

Question 6: Which Ohio University Campus did you first apply to?

- With respect to traditional students, 81% first applied to the Lancaster Regional Campus while 17% first applied to the Athens Campus.
- 87% of non-traditional students first applied to the Lancaster Regional Campus, 6% first applied to the Athens campus, and 7% first applied to another regional campus.

Question 8: How did you first hear about the Lancaster Regional Campus?

- The most popular response for one third of non-traditional students and transfer students was word of mouth through past or current students.
- The next most popular source was signs on campus or billboards in surrounding areas with 15% of non-traditional students reported they first heard about the Lancaster Regional Campus through campus signage and billboards.

Question 12: Do you plan to complete your degree at Lancaster Regional Campus?

- More non-traditional students (80%) plan to complete their degree at the regional campus than traditional students (55%).

Question 14: Are you currently pursuing the major that is your first choice?

- Most respondents (78%) reported pursuing the major that is their first choice. These rates are higher among non-traditional students (85%).

Question 26: How often do you use The Zone at the Lancaster Regional Campus?

- Compared to non-traditional students, traditional students are more likely to use The Zone at least sometimes.

Question 27: How important is having The Zone to your overall college experience?

- Traditional students reported The Zone as more important than non-traditional students, with 47% reporting that it is important or very important compared to 31% of non-traditional students.

Transfer Students

Responding students were asked to identify if they had attended another post-secondary institution before enrolling at the Lancaster Regional Campus. Approximately 47% (72 students) reported that they had attended another institution, and these respondents were coded as transfer students in order to compare their responses to those students

Question 2: Please rate your overall experience at each location.

- Satisfaction rates were approximately the same for transfer and non-transfer students.

Question 4: What school(s) did you attend previously? (Select all that apply.)

- Most transfer students in the study previously attended one or more of the following schools: Columbus State Community College, Hocking College, or Ohio State University.

Question 5: Please choose the option that best describes your experience at the above school(s):

- Approximately 80% of students who had attended Columbus State Community College and Ohio State University identified themselves as traditional transfer students with the balance reporting that they completed an associate's or bachelor's degree.
- Half of students who had attended Hocking College identified themselves as traditional transfer students with the other half reporting that they had completed an associate's degree.

Question 6: Which Ohio University Campus did you first apply to?

- Approximately 78% of transfer students first applied to the Lancaster Regional Campus and 15% first applied to the Athens Campus. Conversely, 89% of non-transfer students first applied to the Lancaster Regional Campus and 9% applied to the Athens Campus.

Question 8: How did you first hear about the Lancaster Regional Campus?

- The most popular response for one third of non-traditional students and transfer students was word of mouth through past or current students.
- 18% of transfer students reported they first heard about the Lancaster Regional Campus through campus signage and billboards.

Question 11: Rate your *overall academic* experience at each location: Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center.

- Transfer students have somewhat higher satisfaction with Lancaster Campus (87% reporting very satisfied or satisfied) compared to Pickerington Center (82% reporting very satisfied or satisfied).

Question 12: Do you plan to complete your degree at Lancaster Regional Campus?

- More transfer students, (76%), plan to complete their degree at the regional campus than non-transfer students (59%).

Pickerington Center and Lancaster Campus

Among the respondents, 126 (83%) indicated that their primary location was the Lancaster campus while 26 (17%) students identified Pickerington Center as their primary location.

Question 11: Rate your *overall academic* experience at each location: Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center.

- Transfer students have somewhat higher satisfaction with Lancaster Campus (87% reporting very satisfied or satisfied) compared to Pickerington Center (82% reporting very satisfied or satisfied).
- A majority of respondents (83% Lancaster Campus) and 82% (Pickerington Center) report being satisfied or very satisfied with their overall academic experience.

Question 24 and 25: Do the Lancaster and Pickerington Center bookstores' hours of operation currently meet your needs?

- The 26 students whose primary class location is Pickerington Center are less satisfied with the hours of operation of both bookstores than their Lancaster counterparts.

Appendix A

Comprehensive Focus Group Analysis Ohio University – Lancaster Campus and Pickerington Center

Summary Report

VOINOVICH CENTER staff facilitated a total of four focus groups in order to gain a better understanding of why current students of Ohio University – Lancaster campus and Pickerington Center chose to enroll in their respective schools. Two of these were conducted at the Ohio University – Pickerington Center on February 15th, and two were conducted at Ohio University – Lancaster campus on February 22nd. One focus group at each location consisted of traditional students and the other consisted of non-traditional students in order to ensure that a range of perspectives was attained. All participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential. During the interview process, facilitators utilized a standardized open-ended interview protocol that included using one of two interview guides (Appendices A and B) to facilitate discussion. An interview guide was used for the following reasons: (a) to help ensure that the limited time in an interview session is optimally utilized; (b) to maximize effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the group format; and (c) to allow individual perspectives to emerge while keeping the interactions focused. .

Focus Group Analysis Ohio University – Lancaster Campus Traditional Students

Executive Summary

A focus group consisting of two traditional students from Ohio University – Lancaster campus was facilitated by VOINOVICH CENTER staff. Due to the limited number of participants, results should be interpreted with caution. All participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential. During the interview process, facilitators utilized a standardized open-ended interview protocol. This protocol used an interview guide (Appendix A) to facilitate the discussion. An interview guide was used for the following reasons: (a) an interview guide helps ensure that the limited time in an interview session is optimally utilized; (b) a systematic approach is more effective and comprehensive when participants are interviewed in groups; and (c) an interview guide allows individual perspectives to emerge while keeping the interactions focused.

Overview of Findings

There were six main findings of the focus group. First, participants describe Ohio University – Lancaster campus as a great place to go to school at the beginning of one's college experience for a number of reasons: (1) because it allows many students to live at home and save money; (2) because the school eases students into the college experience with a smaller and friendly student body; (3) because the quality of the faculty is so high; and most importantly to students, (4) because the financial aid the school offers is outstanding. Second, participants said there is a need for greater variety in programs and courses offered. For example, both participants said the programs in which they want to participate are not offered at the Lancaster campus. They also said English and history classes are too basic and do not offer enough specialized courses. Third, participants expressed a desire for a greater effort to be put toward trying to attract more traditional students to the school through specialized marketing strategies and program incentives. Participants suggested creating more student organizations and offering more sports as ways to attract a greater number of traditional students. Fourth, participants said a student book swap needs to be created to bypass the problems associated with local bookstores. Fifth, parking presents a problem with few spots available close to campus, and parking lots with insufficient lighting cause students to feel unsafe while returning to their cars at night. Sixth, participants said they know many people who take classes at other campuses or leave the Lancaster campus altogether, in an attempt to avoid certain professors. Participants said more should be done to address this problem.

Application and Enrollment Information

When participants both were asked why they decided to attend Ohio University – Lancaster campus, they indicated that they chose to apply and enroll at the campus because of the financial aid options they were given. Based on their ACT scores, both participants were offered Freshman Excellence Scholarships, which cover tuition for up to two years, contingent upon maintaining a 3.3 GPA. They also listed the convenient location of the school as being a factor in both of their decisions. One participant applied to two other schools before deciding on Ohio University. The other participant decided to only apply to Ohio University – Lancaster campus because of the financial aid offer.

Strengths and Benefits

Participants were asked to identify the factors that made attending Ohio University – Lancaster campus a valuable educational experience. Both participants agreed that the strongest asset of the campus was its faculty, which was described as inspirational, inviting, and almost always accommodating. One participant said certain faculty members have inspired him to stay at the school longer than he had previously planned and that he maintains close ties to past professors who still assist him in his schoolwork. The participants also noted the excellent childcare the school provides for its students, without which, they said many students would not be able to attend classes. The participants also mentioned smaller class sizes and the friendly demeanor of the student body as being selling points.

Perceived Areas for Improvement

Academic Improvements. Participants were asked how their experience as a student at the campus could be improved. Their main observation was that it wasn't possible to complete a bachelor's degree in the areas of their interests. Because of this limitation, both participants said they planned on transferring at the end of two years. Both participants described a lack of variety in classes, especially in the areas of English and history. Also, they said many of their peers have taken identical courses at other campuses or left the Lancaster campus altogether in an attempt to avoid certain professors. Participants said they think more needs to be done to address this issue.

Service Improvements. The participants expressed a strong interest in the creation of more student organizations in an attempt to create more opportunities for social interaction with their peers outside of the classroom. Their main observation was that the campus was a commuter school, which made it hard to maintain long-term friendships because most often, when classes ended, so did their interaction with new friends. One participant is in the process of organizing a Bible study group, but said drawing new members is a greater challenge than it would be than if the school got behind the effort. The other participant said he wanted a school-sponsored writers' group, where he could meet with fellow students in familiar locations. Both participants are athletes at the

university, with one participating in basketball and the other in baseball, but both suggested a greater variety of sports be made available to students.

Participants also suggested a student book swap be created to ease the financial strain and the logistical headache caused by trying to buy their books from local bookstores. They said in many instances, professors will use old editions of books in an attempt to reduce the price of books, but local bookstores usually only carry the newest version of a book, making it difficult to find many of the required texts.

Participants also noted difficulties associated with parking, saying that they are often forced to park far away from their classes, and do not feel safe when walking back to their cars at night, especially with the lack of sufficient lighting in parking lots.

Ideas for Increasing Enrollment

Marketing Strategies. Both participants said the best selling point for the university would be the options for financial aid. Participants said the university's location, which allows many students to live at home and save money, is another positive attribute of the school. Participants listed the third selling point as the small student body, which brings along with it, friendly staff and students, small class sizes, and the increased chance to participate in sports. Marketing these attributes to local high schools and the surrounding communities is the best strategy, participants said. Also, having more events that bring more residents of the community into the school would be a good idea, such as dances, plays, etc. This might encourage more traditional students to enroll simply through their knowledge of the university.

Target Populations. Ohio University – Lancaster campus is an affordable institution that prides itself on friendly staff and an intimate setting. Therefore, the school is bound to appeal to people from all walks of life. But the school's flexible class times in conjunction with quality childcare make the campus most appealing to students with families and careers to juggle along with their schooling, participants said. Finding a way to make the university more attractive to more traditional students through increasing the variety of classes and programs and providing more clubs and sports, is the ultimate challenge, they said.

Conclusions

- Both participants said they would recommend Ohio University – Lancaster campus to a friend or relative because of the opportunities for financial aid, the inspirational faculty, and the friendly student body.
- Participants would like to see a larger variety of classes being offered, especially in English and history.

- The issue of students leaving campus to avoid certain faculty members should be closely examined.
- More student organizations should be formed to help create an environment where students can interact with each other outside of the classroom.
- More sports should be offered.
- More should be done to attract traditional students.
- A student book swap should be created to bypass the problems associated with local bookstores.
- Parking presents a problem, with few spots available close to campus, and insufficient lighting, which makes students feel unsafe while returning to their cars at night.

Focus Group Analysis Ohio University – Pickerington Center Traditional Students

Executive Summary

VOINOVICH CENTER staff facilitated a focus group consisting of five Ohio University – Pickerington Center traditional students. All participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential. During the interview process, facilitators utilized a standardized open-ended interview protocol. This protocol used an interview guide (Appendix A) to facilitate the discussion. An interview guide was used for the following reasons: (a) an interview guide helps ensure that the limited time in an interview session is optimally utilized; (b) a systematic approach is more effective and comprehensive when participants are interviewed in groups; and (c) an interview guide allows individual perspectives to emerge while keeping the interactions focused.

Overview of Findings

There were four main findings of the focus group. The first was that participants were often acquainted to Ohio University regional campuses through a personal connection – a friend, family member, or direct contact with Ohio University staff. Second, participants unanimously agreed that Pickerington Center’s strongest assets were: small class size, outstanding professors, and sense of community between faculty and students. Third, participants cited that an expansion of degree and course offerings, advising opportunities, and the addition of career services are priorities among students at Pickerington Center. Finally, Pickerington Center is an excellent institution for students who (1) aren’t ready to move away from home, (2) have financial restrictions, (3) have full-time jobs in the area, (4) have family commitments, and (5) enjoy the atmosphere of a small, regional campus.

Application and Enrollment Information

Participants were asked how they first learned about Ohio University’s regional campuses. Three of the five participants reported that Nathan Thomas (Student Services, Ohio University-Lancaster) was instrumental in exposing them to the opportunities available at both Pickerington Center and the Lancaster campus. Participants typically were acquainted with Nathan Thomas through college fairs and through visits to their high schools. Participants, in general, described Nathan Thomas as being “very helpful.” Students were also referred to Ohio University regional campuses through friends, and one participant found Pickerington Center by “just driving by.”

When asked why they applied to Pickerington Center, two participants specifically mentioned that the application fee was waived, so it was a risk-free venture for them. Several participants also cited that Pickerington Center was close to home. Two participants applied because of the scholarship opportunities available to attend a regional campus. One participant specifically mentioned exposure to Pickerington Center via post-secondary programming and decided to apply because of the easy transition to the Athens Campus.

Participants were also asked how many other colleges or universities they applied to. One participant applied exclusively to Pickerington Center. The other students' responses ranged from 1 other school to 4 other schools (with Ohio University-Athens, Bowling Green, and Heidelberg being the other schools specifically mentioned).

Participants chose to enroll at Pickerington Center for a variety of reasons. The most commonly cited reasons were financial reasons (including scholarship opportunities) and close proximity to home. Participants also mentioned smaller class size and personal atmosphere. One participant also mentioned the "relaxed" application deadlines, which made it easier for her to submit her application materials. Additionally, several institutional-related factors also played a role in students' decisions to enroll at Pickerington Center. The fact that students could complete their entire degree between Pickerington Center and the Lancaster Campus was an important factor for two participants. Ease of transfer from regional campuses to the Athens Campus was another factor that attracted students to Pickerington Center.

Strengths and Benefits

When asked what they liked best about Pickerington Center, participants unanimously agreed that the campus' strongest assets were: small class size, outstanding professors, and sense of community between faculty and students. Students reported that professors often went "above and beyond" to help them succeed and were very friendly and supportive.

Perceived Areas for Improvement

Degree Offerings. Participants would like to see the degrees that Pickerington Center and Lancaster Campus offer expanded. Specifically, one student would like to have the opportunities for a business degree expanded to include more specialized offerings, as currently the general business degree is the only choice. Since the waiting list at the Chillicothe and Zanesville campuses for nursing clinicals is "two years", one participant suggested adding a nursing degree. Three participants shared that a degree in psychology would be their first choice. The general consensus was that psychology was a common interest for many first year students and that Pickerington Center could easily support more and varied psychology courses.

Course Offerings. In general, participants would like to see more course offerings along with a better variety of course offerings each quarter. Additionally, participants would like to have courses spread out through the week. Under the current system, students report that “it seems like all classes are offered at the same day and time” which results in students having course conflicts and being forced to take “filler classes” that are not related to their degrees in order to meet enrollment requirements (total hours).

Social Organizations. Participants felt strongly that more social organizations and opportunities for students relate to each other socially would be beneficial at both Pickerington Center and Lancaster Campus. Participants noted that while there are many options for service organizations; they require a substantial time commitment and those with jobs and family tend to shy away from such organizations. Therefore, more social activities or groups would be helpful to create more of a sense of community among students.

Along with social organizations, participants recommended that Pickerington Center have a place similar to “The Zone” at Lancaster Campus. At Pickerington Center, students often have to use empty classrooms to meet with each other or meet in the central office. Although the central office at Pickerington Center is a friendly and comfortable place to meet, participants shared that they often feel as if they are disrupting the staff who work there. Participants would like to see a gathering area with vending, a small cafeteria, television, and meeting space at Pickerington Center. With respect to “The Zone” at Lancaster Campus, participants recommended that the food choices be improved or expanded.

Rental Assistance. One participant mentioned that rental assistance would be helpful for students. With no campus housing and expensive rent, perhaps such assistance would attract students who want to live near home, but not at home.

Student Services. With respect to student services, three of the six participants recommended holding the career fair at Pickerington Center in addition to Lancaster Campus. Participants also mentioned that career services (1-on-1 career counseling, job postings, and career testing) would be a welcome addition to existing services at Pickerington Center. Expanded advising services were a priority for two participants. Participants suggested that Pickerington Center and Lancaster Campus need a nursing advisor (because it is impractical to drive to Zanesville for a quick question) and a business advisor (because the current advisor is retiring).

The addition of work study programs were mentioned by one participant, as college could be affordable by more students if there were expanded work opportunities at Pickerington Center. Participants also thought that tuition assistance could be provided in lieu of payment for campus employment.

Safety at the Lancaster Campus was an issue raised by participants as an area of improvement. Participants noted that panic buttons existed in the parking lots, but security officers would be a welcome addition to make students feel safer. Students also

noted that better lighting in the Lancaster Campus parking lot would help with safety and security issues.

Bookstore. Participants requested that the bookstore at Pickerington Center expand its hours. They would like to see a “real store” instead of a “janitor closet.” Participants also cited that the bookstore frequently does not have the proper stock of books required for courses. Participants also thought it would be appropriate for the bookstore to sell Ohio University merchandise, so they could get small items without having to drive to Lancaster Campus.

Transfer Plans

Two participants revealed that they are planning to transfer to Athens Campus next year. For one participant, Ohio State University was the first choice to transfer to, but academic credits did not transfer as planned. Therefore, the participant will be completing a degree on Athens Campus. The other participant had planned to transfer to Athens Campus all along. For this participant, the plan is to attend two years at Pickerington Center and two years at Athens Campus.

Two participants have not considered transferring because their degree programs are offered at Pickerington Center. Because of long waiting lists for the nursing program, one participant is thinking of transferring to COTC to get a degree in ultrasound technology.

Ideas for Increasing Enrollment

Participants were asked the following question, “If you wanted to convince a close friend to attend classes at Pickerington Center, how would you do so?” Participants agreed that they would speak to Pickerington Center’s strengths: caring professors, small class size, convenient location, intimate atmosphere, lots of scholarship opportunities.

Participants were then asked, “What types of people are a good fit for this campus?” Responses included: Students who (1) aren’t ready to move away from home, (2) have financial restrictions, (3) have full-time jobs in the area, (4) have family commitments, and (5) enjoy the atmosphere of a small, regional campus.

When asked how Pickerington Center could increase enrollment, students unanimously agreed that better signage would make the campus more visible. Students reported that the Pickerington Center looks like a “doctor’s office” and that more people might take notice of the campus if the sign was more visible. Further, a sign at “the first Stonecreek Road” would also point people to the campus.

To attract the more traditional student, participants suggested: (1) offering more classes during the daytime hours, (2) advertising Pickerington Center as a “stepping stone” or

conduit to the Athens Campus, and (3) offering combined 5 year programs which would result in students earning both their bachelor's and master's degrees.

Conclusions

- Traditional students often hear about Ohio University's regional campuses through personal connections – family, friends, college fairs, and academic advisor (Nathan Thomas) visits to high schools.
- Traditional students enroll at Pickerington Center for the following reasons: (1) convenient location, (2) affordability, (3) small class size, and (4) personal atmosphere.
- Institutional-related factors that attract traditional students are: the ability to complete an entire bachelor's degree between Pickerington Center and Lancaster Campus and the ability to easily transfer from regional campuses to the Athens campus.
- The perceived strengths of Pickerington Center are: (1) small class size, (2) outstanding professors, and (3) sense of community between faculty and students.
- The participants seemed equally knowledgeable about both Pickerington Center and Lancaster Campus, suggesting that the population between the two campuses is fairly fluid.
- In general, students would like to see both degree and course offerings expanded at Pickerington Center and Lancaster Campus.
- While student-faculty relationships were considered to be strong, participants felt more could be done to foster peer relationships that extend beyond the classroom by expanding social organizations and activities and creating a meeting space especially for students at Pickerington Center.

- Career and advising services are perceived to be a priority for traditional students.
- It was also suggested that the quality of the bookstore services be improved.
- Participants suggested that Pickerington Center could increase their visibility to the public by utilizing better signage on and around campus.
- To attract the more traditional students, participants suggested: (1) offering more classes during the daytime hours, (2) advertising Pickerington Center as a “stepping stone” to the Athens Campus, and (3) offering combined 5 year programs which would result in students earning both their bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

Focus Group Analysis Ohio University – Lancaster Campus Non-Traditional Students

Executive Summary

VOINOVICH CENTER staff facilitated a focus group consisting of five Ohio University – Lancaster campus non-traditional students. Two of the participants left after 30 minutes due to other obligations. All participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential. During the interview process, facilitators utilized a standardized open-ended interview protocol. This protocol used an interview guide (Appendix A) to facilitate the discussion. An interview guide was used for the following reasons: (a) an interview guide helps ensure that the limited time in an interview session is optimally utilized; (b) a systematic approach is more effective and comprehensive when participants are interviewed in groups; and (c) an interview guide allows individual perspectives to emerge while keeping the interactions focused.

Overview of Findings

There were five main findings of the focus group. The first was that in an overall assessment of Ohio University – Lancaster campus, all participants agreed that it is a convenient and affordable place to attain a high-quality education. Participants were unanimous in their opinion that the faculty and staff were highly knowledgeable, friendly, accommodating, and interested in students' educations. Small, intimate class size was perceived as the other main asset of the regional campus. The second finding was that two participants believed the campus needed to increase the diversity of the student body as well as of the faculty and staff. The third finding was that participants were frustrated by the lack of classes offered at the Lancaster campus. All of the participants suggested that the campus offer a wider variety of classes within each area of academic study in order to minimize the amount of traveling between Ohio University campuses. Additionally, three participants suggested that the campus sponsor more student organizations to promote a "college atmosphere." Lastly, participants believed that the Lancaster campus was an excellent institution for students who are interested in 1-on-1 interaction with professors, and was an especially good option for people who lived in the area, had a limited budget, and needed to attend classes that fit into their family and career schedules.

Application and Enrollment Information

Participants were asked why they decided to attend Ohio University – Lancaster campus. One participant found out about the campus while searching for colleges online. Three of the participants stated that they applied to many other schools besides Ohio University – Lancaster, one person transferred to the regional campus after having attended three other schools (Central State, Columbus State, The Ohio State University), and one person did not look at any other colleges due to financial restrictions. All of the participants indicated that they chose to enroll at the campus because it was the most reasonably priced institution in the area. One participant stated that he chose to apply and attend because of his involvement in the “Freshman Excellence” program which paid for his first two years of tuition. He stated that without this program he would not be able to pursue a college career. Two of the focus group members also stated that its convenient location also factored into their decision to enroll. One participant stated that the size of the college made it less intimidating as compared to larger institutions in the area, such as Ohio Dominican or OSU. She was also very pleased about having her other college credits transfer easily, a factor that also played into her decision to attend college at the Lancaster campus.

Strengths and Benefits

Participants were asked to identify the factors that made attending Ohio University – Lancaster campus a valuable educational experience. All of the participants agreed that the strongest asset of the campus was its faculty. Professors as well as administrative and support staff were characterized as friendly, supportive, accommodating, enthusiastic motivators, and as having genuine concern for students’ education. One participant was careful to qualify his praise of the faculty by stating that did not apply to all of the adjunct professors, however. When asked about her advisor, one person enthusiastically responded, “she cares about you and your future, and your goals.” All participants were most impressed with the fact that their advisors were willing to sit down with them and develop a personalized plan for how to succeed in college, and how their college experiences would directly relate to their desired career goals. Participants also agreed that there was a sense of community that permeates the campus. They also stated that the wide age range of the student body made it easy for non-traditional students to fit in. The other major strength that was identified was small class size. Focus group members seemed to believe that the above strengths were unique to a smaller, regional campus as opposed to larger universities such as Athens campus and OSU, and were the deciding factors in all of the participants’ decision process. Two of the participants stated that the opportunity to play collegiate sports was also an important factor, since they believed it was unlikely they would have such an opportunity anywhere else.

Perceived Areas for Improvement

Academic Improvements. Participants were asked how their experience as a student at the campus could be improved. All of the participants agreed that the main drawback to the Lancaster campus was the lack of class offerings. Because all of the participants had restrictions in their lives that prevented them from taking classes at the main campus, they stated that it was very difficult to fulfill their degree requirements. Participants also expressed frustration with the fact that the limited number of classes that were offered often conflicted with each other, resulting in students having to take “filler” classes in order to register for the proper amount of credit hours. It was suggested that class schedules within the campus should be coordinated better with the other regional campuses, especially the Pickerington Center, so that more classes and more time slots are available to students with other obligations. Additionally, participants suggested that the Lancaster campus and Pickerington Center both increase the number of degree programs offered at each location

Service Improvements. Two participants felt that the student body lacked diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. Although one participant credited the campus for recently forming a diversity task force, she was disappointed in the lack of action that had been taken by this task force thus far. It was also suggested that the administration play a more active role in developing and supporting student organizations, such as the non-traditional student’s fraternity, in order to enhance the “college experience” of its students. The non-traditional student fraternity was given as an example of such a campus organization.

Additionally, all participants agreed that the operating hours of both the Pickerington Center’s bookstore and the Lancaster campus’ library should be expanded to better accommodate night students. Three participants also stated that parking availability should be improved. One woman stated that the lack of adequate lighting in the parking lot caused her to feel unsafe while walking on campus at night, and believed that additional lighting or other security measures should be installed.

Ideas for Increasing Enrollment

Marketing Strategies. All of the participants agreed that the Lancaster campus was under-marketed. Most of the participants indicated that they first heard of the campus through personal connections including friends, relatives, guidance counselors, and Ohio University – Lancaster staff members. All seemed to agree, however, that its presence is not well-known throughout the community. One participant believed that this was due to a lack of television and radio ads. All of the participants stated that in general, people who do know about the campus do not think highly of it. One participant suggested that future advertisements highlight the “qualified, top-notch” professors and the overall high-quality education one can receive at Ohio University – Lancaster.

Target Populations. While the majority of participants believed that Ohio University – Lancaster campus was an excellent university for anyone interested in attaining a higher education in a friendly, intimate environment, most felt that the campus’ unique qualities made it more attractive to certain populations. Specifically, participants agreed that students with limited budgets should be targeted in advertising campaigns because it is one of the most affordable institutions in the area. Additionally, the convenient location and availability of both day and night classes make the campus an excellent choice for people in the Columbus and Lancaster areas who must divide their time between academics, careers, and families. All participants, including one who had previously attended three other colleges, stated that they would recommend the campus to a friend or relative looking to attend college.

Conclusions

- In an overall assessment of Ohio University – Lancaster campus, all participants agreed that it was an excellent place to pursue higher education. All stated that they would recommend the campus to a friend or relative.
- The friendly and supportive demeanor of faculty and staff as well as small class size were the two factors mentioned as being responsible for engendering a sense of community at the Lancaster campus.
- Affordability, scheduling flexibility, and location were other advantages of the campus identified during the focus group.
- The largest drawback to attending Ohio University – Lancaster campus is the small amount of courses offered there. Having to travel to other campuses, including the Athens campus, to fulfill degree requirements was viewed as highly inconvenient for non-traditional students with career and family obligations that prevented them from traveling long distances on a regular basis.
- Participants expressed disappointment at the lack diversity in the student body of the Lancaster campus. One participant credited the campus for developing a diversity task force, but expressed disappointment in its lack of action thus far.
- It was also suggested that improvements be made to the quality of the bookstore services and the parking lot lighting.
- Participants suggested that the Lancaster campus develop a more aggressive advertising campaign that highlighted the quality of the education it offered, as well as its affordability and flexibility for non-traditional students.

Focus Group Analysis Ohio University – Pickerington Center Non-Traditional Students

Executive Summary

VOINOVICH CENTER staff facilitated a focus group consisting of six Ohio University – Pickerington Center non-traditional students. All participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential. During the interview process, facilitators utilized a standardized open-ended interview protocol. This protocol used an interview guide (Appendix A) to facilitate the discussion. An interview guide was used for the following reasons: (a) an interview guide helps ensure that the limited time in an interview session is optimally utilized; (b) a systematic approach is more effective and comprehensive when participants are interviewed in groups; and (c) an interview guide allows individual perspectives to emerge while keeping the interactions focused.

Overview of Findings

There were five main findings of the focus group. The first was that in an overall assessment of Ohio University – Pickerington Center, all participants agreed that it is a convenient and affordable place to attain a high-quality education. Participants were unanimous in their opinion that the faculty and staff were highly knowledgeable, friendly, accommodating, and interested in their students' educations. Small, intimate class size was perceived as the other main asset of the regional campus. The second finding was that despite the personable nature of the faculty and staff, participants agreed that the campus lacked sensitivity to issues of diversity. It was suggested that professors be trained to be more sensitive to people of differing races, ethnicities, and sexual orientations. The third finding was that participants were frustrated by the lack of degrees that one can attain by attending Pickerington Center. Because all of the participants had obligations that prevented them from taking classes at the other Ohio University campuses on a regular basis, it was impossible for most of them to pursue the degree of their choice. Fourthly, participants agreed that the Pickerington Center was under-marketed. They reported that not many people in the area knew of its existence, and suggested increasing the amount of advertising to improve the campus' public visibility. Lastly, participants believed that the Pickerington Center was an excellent institution for students who are interested in 1-on-1 interaction with professors, and was an especially good option for people who lived in the area, had a limited budget, and needed to attend classes that fit into their family and career schedules.

Application and Enrollment Information

Participants were asked why they decided to attend Ohio University – Pickerington Center. All of the participants indicated that they chose to apply and enroll at the campus because it was conveniently located close to their homes and offered class times that were flexible enough to accommodate restrictions imposed by their career and family obligations. Two of the participants indicated that they applied to one other school, and four did not apply anywhere else. Although two participants stated that they “shopped around” extensively before deciding to apply, they indicated that the campus was the only option for them due to its location, scheduling flexibility, and relative affordability compared to similar institutions in the area (e.g. Columbus State, Ohio State).

Strengths and Benefits

Participants were asked to identify the factors that made attending Ohio University – Pickerington Center a valuable educational experience. All but one of the participants agreed that the strongest asset of the campus was its faculty. Professors as well as administrative and support staff were characterized as friendly, supportive, accommodating, enthusiastic motivators, and as having genuine concern for students’ education. All stated they enjoyed the sense of community that permeates the campus. They also stated that the wide age range of the student body made it easy for non-traditional students to fit in. The other major strength that was identified was small class sizes. All participants agreed that these factors were also present at the Lancaster campus, although not to the same degree as at Pickerington. Focus group members seemed to believe that the above two strengths were unique to a smaller, regional campus as opposed to larger universities such as Athens campus and The Ohio State University. The above two strengths were cited as the main reasons participants chose to attend the regional campus.

Perceived Areas for Improvement

Academic Improvements. Participants were asked how their experience as a student at the campus could be improved. All of the participants agreed that the main drawback to the Pickerington campus was the lack of bachelor’s degree offered there. Because all of the participants had restrictions in their lives that prevented them from taking classes at the main campus or other regional campuses, they stated that it was impossible to pursue degrees that could not be completed exclusively at the Pickerington campus. One participant estimated that 80% of the students there were pursuing a degree that was not their first choice due to this drawback. Participants also stated they would like to see a wider variety of courses offered each quarter, and to have course offerings spread out throughout the week in order to reduce scheduling conflicts. It was suggested that professors should have less control over course time offerings so that time conflicts could be reduced or avoided. Participants with career and family commitments found the current course offerings at Pickerington Center especially frustrating because under the

current system, they are required to travel to the Lancaster campus regularly in order to fulfill their degree requirements. Having to commute to another campus was viewed as an unnecessary burden on their lives, since they believed that it would be very simple for Pickerington to expand its course offerings.

Service Improvements. All participants agreed that the quality of the bookstore's services needed to be improved upon. Participants who had full-time jobs suggested that the bookstore extend their operating hours beyond 5:00pm to accommodate their family and career obligations. The bookstore was also characterized as a very unreliable because it frequently does not purchase a sufficient amount of copies of each textbook. Four participants suggested that student identification cards be made available on campus for those that are unable to travel to Lancaster for one.

Additionally, participants unanimously felt that the student body lacked diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. They also thought that professors were poorly-equipped to handle issues of diversity in the classroom, and believed that diversity education and awareness programs needed to be conducted in order to create a safer environment for minority-status individuals. The general consensus was that this was especially true for the Lancaster campus.

Ideas for Increasing Enrollment

Marketing Strategies. All of the participants agreed that the Pickerington center could increase its public visibility. Two of the participants stated that they learned of the center through extensive research on all the academic institutions in the area, one stated that she learned of the center through a flier, and three stated that they found out about it through personal contacts with campus employees or through friends and relatives that have attended. All seemed to agree, however, that its presence is not well-known throughout the community. One participant believed that this was due to a lack of television and radio ads, and all agreed that the campus should invest in larger, more noticeable signs on and near the campus.

Target Populations. While the majority of participants believed that Ohio University – Pickerington Center was an excellent university for anyone interested in attaining a higher education in a friendly, intimate environment, most felt that the campus' unique qualities made it more attractive to certain populations. Specifically, participants agreed that students with limited budgets should be targeted in advertising campaigns because it is one of the most affordable institutions in the area. Additionally, the convenient location and availability of both day and night classes make the campus an excellent choice for people in the Columbus and Pickerington areas who must divide their time between academics, careers, and families. One participant stated that she would not recommend the school to anyone, as she prefers Columbus State due to the ease of scheduling classes and wider range of degree programs offered there.

Conclusions

- In an overall assessment of Ohio University – Pickerington Center, the majority of participants agreed that it was an excellent place to pursue higher education. All but one of the participants stated that they would recommend the campus to a friend or relative.
- The friendly and supportive demeanor of faculty and staff as well as small class sizes were the two factors cited as being responsible for engendering a sense of community at Pickerington Center.
- All of the participants stated that they regularly traveled between the Pickerington Center and the Lancaster campus, since Pickerington Center does not offer all of the courses necessary to complete many degrees. This was seen as the largest drawback to the Center, and participants strongly recommended that Pickerington Center increase the number of degrees offered and also increase its course offerings to accommodate students with travel restrictions.
- Affordability, scheduling flexibility, and proximity to one's home were other advantages identified during the focus group.
- Participants expressed disappointment at the lack of sensitivity to issues of diversity at both the Pickerington and Lancaster campuses. It was suggested that diversity training programs be implemented to faculty and staff in order to create a safer atmosphere for students of varying race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and ability level.
- It was also suggested that the quality of the bookstore services be improved.
- Participants suggested that the Pickerington Center could increase their visibility to the public through increased television and radio advertising, and by investing in larger, more visible signs on and near the campus.
- Participants stated that the Pickerington Center should target non-traditional students with family and career obligations, as well as those with limited finances.

Focus Group Interview Guide
Ohio University Lancaster Regional Campus
Traditional First- and Second-Year Students Focus Group Master Script

Hello. Thank you all for allowing us to talk with you this afternoon. My name is _____ and I work for VOINOVICH CENTER – Ohio University’s Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development. I will be facilitating this focus group today.

Our institute is interested in finding out information about the Ohio University Lancaster Regional Campus. Specifically, we are interested in learning what factors influenced your decision to apply and enroll here in order to attract and retain more students. As current students of these regional campuses, your input today is very valuable to us. Our goal is to improve the quality of the education and other services provided here, as well as to increase enrollment, and your open and honest input will be greatly appreciated.

Because of the limited time frame from which we are working, it is necessary for us to utilize a structured format. Because there are many points that we feel are important to cover I may interrupt or abruptly change the topic from time to time. I apologize in advance if I appear rude should this happen. Also in the interest of brevity I will often refer to both regional campus locations as “OU.”

Our discussion today will be recorded on audiotape. The recording will be used for our reference only and will be erased once the research report is complete. Additionally, _____ of ILGARD will be facilitating the process by taking notes. Our reports will not include your names, so your individual comments will be strictly confidential. Should you feel uncomfortable at any time during the discussion, remember that your participation in today’s discussion is strictly voluntary. Does anyone have any concerns about this procedure?

Are there any other questions so far?

Let’s begin. Firstly, we’d like to find information about what brought you to OU’s regional campuses.

1. ***ICE BREAKER*** Let’s go around the room until everyone has a chance to respond. If you do not wish to respond, feel free to pass. As a way to get to know everyone, I’d like you to state your first name, major, class rank, and what degree you are working towards.
2. How did you first hear about the OU regional campus?
- What made you decide to apply here?
3. How many other colleges did you apply to?

- If you applied to more than one, why did you choose OU?
- Were academics or other services more important in your decision-making process?

Next we would like to ask a few questions about your experiences as a student here.

4. What do you think are the strongest assets of the regional campus that you attend? In other words, what do you like best about OU?
5. Are there any areas that you feel OU could improve upon?
 - What degrees would you like to see offered at OU regional campuses?
 - What services would you like to see (ex. career fairs, mentoring, student organizations, health services)?
 - Are there any existing services that you would like to see improved? How so?

Now we would like to ask you about long-term college plans.

6. Have you ever thought about transferring to a different school, including Ohio University's main campus?
 - If yes, how come?
 - When did you first begin thinking about transferring?
 - If you are planning to transfer, has your experience so far at an OU regional campus made it more or less likely that you will continue your college career at the main campus in Athens? Why?

We now have two final questions about enrollment.

7. If you wanted to convince a close friend to attend classes at OU, how would you do so? What would you say to that person?
8. Lastly, we would like to hear your suggestions for how OU could increase enrollment and/or retention.
 - What types of people are a good fit for this campus?
 - What improvements to the campus would attract more students?
 - What new degree programs would you like to see offered?

Thank you for your time!

Focus Group Interview Guide
Ohio University Lancaster Regional Campus
Non-Traditional First- and Second-Year Students Focus Group Master Script

Hello. Thank you all for allowing us to talk with you this afternoon. My name is _____ and I work for ILGARD – Ohio University’s Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development. I will be facilitating this focus group today.

Our institute is interested in finding out information about the Ohio University Lancaster Regional Campus. Specifically, we are interested in learning what factors influenced your decision to apply and enroll here in order to attract and retain more students. As current students of these regional campuses, your input today is very valuable to us. Our goal is to improve the quality of the education and other services provided here, as well as to increase enrollment, and your open and honest input will be greatly appreciated.

Because of the limited time frame from which we are working, it is necessary for us to utilize a structured format. Because there are many points that we feel are important to cover I may interrupt or abruptly change the topic from time to time. I apologize in advance if I appear rude should this happen. Also in the interest of brevity I will often refer to both branch campus locations as “OU.”

Our discussion today will be recorded on audiotape. The recording will be used for our reference only and will be erased once the research report is complete. Additionally, _____ of ILGARD will be facilitating the process by taking notes. Our reports will not include your names, so your individual comments will be strictly confidential. Should you feel uncomfortable at any time during the discussion, remember that your participation in today’s discussion is strictly voluntary. Does anyone have any concerns about this procedure?

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2. How did you first hear about the OU regional campus?
 - What made you decide to apply here?
3. How many other colleges did you apply to?
 - If you applied to more than one, why did you choose OU?
 - Were academics or other services more important in your decision-making process?

Next we would like to ask a few questions about your experiences as a student here.

4. What do you think are the strongest assets of the regional campus that you attend? In other words, what do you like best about OU?
5. Are there any areas that you feel OU could improve upon?
 - What degrees would you like to see offered at OU regional campuses?
 - What services would you like to see (ex. career fairs, mentoring, student organizations, health services)?
 - Are there any existing services that you would like to see improved? How so?

We now have two final questions about enrollment.

6. If you wanted to convince a close friend or colleague to attend classes at OU, how would you do so? What would you say to that person?
7. Lastly, we would like to hear your suggestions for how OU could increase enrollment and/or retention.
 - What types of people are a good fit for this campus?
 - What improvements to the campus would attract more students?
 - What new degree programs would you like to see offered?

Thank you for your time!



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