

Summary of the Campus Presidents' and Ph.D. Program Director's Reflections Regarding the Separation of the College from the University January 2008

The primary relationship of the campuses to the College has been an historical one, drawing on its values, mission, founding and venerable past. The result is a proud shared name that it is imperative to maintain. The campuses were born and infused with the values of the College as represented in this name and it is instantly recognizable not only as the brand of the College but as the heart of *each* campus and program within the University; this point cannot be lost in our planning.

Many faculty, administrators and students express sadness by the course of events. They came to these campuses and their programs because of Antioch and the deep values for which it stands. To un-bundle the Yellow Springs site from the University's structure and future can be done, but it is acknowledged as difficult stemming as much from the "spiritual" level as the organizational and financial levels. Antioch, however, is not just one location, and for the thousands of alumni and community members who have been served over the past several decades across the county, it is not just Yellow Springs.

More than ever, the chasm between the University and the College has come to the forefront in a most disheartening manner. Over thirty years of distrust, paranoia, blame, and anger toward "the University" are now publicly surfaced and openly discussed among the College alumni. National and local press over the last several months have negatively affected the public's perception and opinion of the University, its campuses and the College, including local donors and national foundations.

The damage that has occurred publicly points toward two significant realizations: (1) if the negotiations with ACCC fail, it may be fairly impossible for the University to bring back the College if we think we are solely dependent upon major College alumni donors in its revival. Among many in leadership, there is a feeling that the original plan to close and reopen the College was the best option and remains the single best solution at this time. There are numerous options open to the University in rebuilding Antioch College, albeit most likely not the same envisioned by ACCC or the Alumni Board; and, (2) no matter the outcome, a full-court press with our PR is essential to clean up the aftermath of destruction of our public image and establish a clear understanding on the part of the public as to the distinction between the College and the University. There is, however, a positive potential outcome.

The University, on its own, has the opportunity to create a unique brand and to build solid programs based on research, excellence in teaching, and our mission to serve others. Once the College finds its own footing again, there is every opportunity to join together in unique and powerful ways. We have a shared history that is too valuable to ignore; but until then, the University should be allowed to forge its own destiny. The current state of

affairs with the constant turmoil and the prospect for continued distrust and blame in the future threaten to destroy both the University and the College.

A clear and final resolution of the College's relationship to the University will be very helpful to the campuses in the recruitment of students as well as future local Board members. The greatest direct impact on enrollment appears to have taken place at McGregor. However, the other four campuses have experienced enrollment problems as noted by the confusion on the part of students and donors regarding the closing of the entire University as opposed to just the College. The impact on the morale of the faculty at those campuses has also been a factor as they watch the College alumni websites and blogs, which have not been complimentary toward the University, its campuses, and its faculty. In some cases, local press and national publications mock the University at times in taking "sides" with more vocal College supporters. The emotional strain on the presidents has been great and extremely time consuming as they and the central administration have put a number of initiatives on hold while dealing with College issues.

Financially, the impact would be both positive and negative. The positive would be the ability of the campuses to be relieved of the \$740,000 annual subsidy they pay to the College; the opportunity to invest their funded reserves in their own campus initiatives instead of covering the annual College deficits; and, the overhead paid to central administration for services will instead be used solely for the oversight and strengthening of the University as opposed to primarily providing services in HR, payroll, and budget supervision of the College. Therefore, the campus presidents would have more money to invest in their own operations, create realistic strategic plans for the future, and receive better services from central administration.

Depending on the separation agreements, the negative effect could be the impact on the bonds held by the University and the capability of the University to fulfill its goals of acquiring permanent campuses in California as well as investing in better facilities in Seattle and New England. In addition, the limitations on our debt capacity would prevent the University from investing in itself by acquiring other entities or campuses. Additionally, the University may incur added expenses with the separation regarding library access issues.

Organizationally, the separation of the College from the University will most likely not affect University-wide programming and initiatives. In reality, the College has never made itself a part of the University. The College faculty have little if no interaction with the other campus faculty and virtually few College students ever enroll in the graduate programs at the other campuses. We have had a minimalist transactional relationship with the College, colored by unaddressed distrust, potent hostility, competition for scarce resources, and one based on great disparities and inequities. The graduate non-residential campuses have been able to share and collaborate more with each other because their programs are similar; typically the College has not been involved, by default or by choice.

In fact, the separation will help to focus the University. It will force the University to more clearly define its mission and adhere to high quality standards in its academic programming across all campuses. It will require focus on a “new” branding image that brings together like campuses. It will provide the opportunity to re-imagine academic leadership and faculty voice in the new university configuration. It will provide the opportunity to change the business model to ensure adequate institutional infrastructure, financial flexibility, and contingency reserves. It will provide greater clarification of the relationship among the campuses and central administration, with the overall objective of becoming a “real” University in thought, word, and deed. It will also require a strong, centralized administration and governance structure to prevent a natural tendency for the individual campuses to spin out and demand total autonomy. The University Leadership Council shows a sense of excitement and willingness to embrace this future wholeheartedly.

Antioch University has a special mission rooted in Antioch College’s historical mission and values that, in many ways, is ideally positioned to address the pressing societal needs of the 21st century. It has a unique, geographically dispersed system of campuses with tremendous unrealized potential for university-wide synergies and programs. It has exceptional faculty expertise in adult learning and practice based teaching that can serve the life-long learning needs to today’s and tomorrow’s knowledge workers. The University, absent the College, now has the opportunity, and indeed the responsibility, to capitalize on these strengths.