Monitor Newsletter February 12, 1996
Bowling Green State University

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President will receive summary of issues raised at focus groups

Ever try to get all constituents of a midsize state university together for an earnest discussion about their concerns and suggestions for improvement? Faculty, staff and students made it work last week at Bowling Green.

From Monday through Friday representatives from all areas took time to visit 101 Olsen Hall where they participated in hour-and-a-half long discussion groups on topics ranging from "Customer Service to Students," "Welcoming Newcomers to Campus" and "Exploring Our Core Values.

"Many of the concerns I had were taken care of just by offering these focus groups," said Angie Slade, a dispatcher in the Office of Public Safety. "I appreciated the opportunity to participate." Carol Kreienkamp, an administrative secretary in cooperative education who volunteered to serve as a facilitator for the focus groups, said she feels the number of volunteers who turned out for last week's discussions showed how hopeful the University faculty and staff are regarding the future.

"I think everyone is coming here because they are hopeful that something will come out of it. They sincerely believe that by sharing their ideas positive solutions will develop." There will be an end result to the week-long discussions. "This is not merely an opportunity to come and get things off your chest and then return to your offices, classrooms and residence halls and go back to business as usual," said Sandra MacNevin, one of four co-chairs of the Building Community Task Force, which was behind the "Focus on February" event.

"President Ribeau is expecting the task force to make concrete recommendations that are prioritized and accompanied by possible strategies for implementation." This executive summary will include the issues and ideas brought out in the discussion groups, MacNevin said. Each group discussion was tape recorded and will be transcribed, without identification of the speakers, for this purpose.

In addition, focus group participants were encouraged to write down any additional comments they may not have had a chance to express and turn them in through an anonymous drop box at last week's event or through campus mail to the president's office by Feb. 23.

The summary is expected to be completed by the first week of April and will be made available on the Internet and in paper version for constituents to read. Approximately 300 took part in the groups held Monday with a total turnout estimated at more than 2,000 by week's end.

In addition to those who took part in the discussions, about 120 students, faculty and staff volunteered to facilitate the groups.

All areas of the University encouraged to get involved in admissions

The survival and growth of Bowling Green State University was the focus of President Ribeau's talk to Administrative Staff Council Wednesday.

If the University is to succeed in its mission of serving students, the president said, it needs to do business in a new way.

"We're not doing these community-building activities just because we want to or it makes us feel good. We're doing it because we have to," Ribeau told ASC members.

The hard facts are that the University's enrollment is below the state-mandated cap of 16,000 full-time equivalent students by about 1,000. In addition, freshman applications are down from where they were this time last year, he said.

Fewer students translates directly to fewer funding dollars, which will inevitably lead to institutional shrinking if the trend is not reversed quickly.

"Once you get into a downward spiral, it's very hard to get back out of it," Ribeau said.

Enrollment affects every aspect of University life, thus, it is important that the University community gets to work immediately on defining its core values and comes up with a vision statement through some "very careful and concise planning," he said.

The focus groups that took place last week will help in this process. The next, even more important step, will be to arrive at five priorities for the 1996-97 school year. "Obviously, one of these will have to be enrollment management," Ribeau said.

All areas of the University need to be involved not only in bringing more students to Bowling Green, but also in retaining them once they are here, he said. Ribeau said his goal is to increase the retention rate from 71 to 80 percent in the next few years.

One council member who serves as a student adviser expressed concern that not enough classes are offered, making it difficult for students to take what they need to graduate.

Ribeau said he and his staff are looking at how funds are allocated for teaching salaries and are analyzing such programs as supplemental retirement and early retirement incentives. He added that Charles Middleton, the new vice president for academic affairs, will also be focusing closely on this issue.

Faculty and staff development can play a big role in the area of retention as well, Ribeau said. He is in the process of creating a faculty development center that will offer programs, workshops and other resources to enhance the quality of teaching.

Accountability will be very important, especially considering the recent actions of the Ohio Board of Regents toward centralizing control of state universities and consolidating graduate programs. Ribeau said it needs definite and specific information from all areas of the University if he is to successfully defend Bowling Green against these incursions on its independence.

There were several questions from ASC members about professional development for staff. The president responded that he is strongly in favor of such things as professional leave and educational advancement, and would like to begin with a small amount of money for this purpose. He would give priority to those activities that enable individuals to further the University's stated goals over strictly personal pursuits. But, he stressed that only when there is sufficient funding can these initiatives be considered.

The collaborative model must be adopted campus-wide, he said, for the

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University opens its doors next week to potential students and their parents

The University will be in the spotlight next Monday when it plays host to an estimated 1,000 high school students accompanied by parents and family members attending a special President's Day Open House.

Throughout the day, the students and their guests will be touring campus sites, visiting residence halls, eating in the dining halls, shopping at the bookstore and talking with University representatives.

All areas of campus have been involved in planning for this first-of-its-kind program and many staff members will be volunteering their time for the day's events, said Kerry Foldenauer Diehl, an associate director of admissions.

"We've noticed the number of high school students who were visiting the University on President's Day in the past has been large," Diehl said. This year's event was organized as a way to welcome these students and invite others who may not have considered using the day for a campus visit.

Although many students will be out of school for the holiday, the University is open and classes are in session.

The high school students who have already been accepted for admission to Bowling Green can use the day to tour the residence halls before making their final housing decisions and those who aren't sure where they want to go to college can come see what the University has to offer, Diehl said.

Open House attendees will be checking in at the University Field House where they will board shuttle buses for one of three tours taking place at 10:15 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. From 12:30-3:30 p.m. students and their guests will be welcomed to visit the residence halls and speak with representatives from college, academic and administrative offices who will be staffing information booths in Olscamp Hall.
Presses roll, journalists made during 75 years of BG News

The BG News has reached the illustrious age of 75. What began as a quaint publication of the Country Life Club has evolved into an award-winning daily with a circulation of 11,200.

Though the paper has always reflected the changing times, it has held fast to its independence throughout the years. "Bowling Green has always had a fine tradition of freedom of expression," said Bob Bortel, director of student publications. "We've never operated in an environment of intimidation or fear. We try to use the power of the press in a responsible manner."

In talking to people on campus about the history of the paper, several names are mentioned repeatedly: Emil Dansker, James Gordon, Wallace Eberhart and Donald Brenner, to name a few. The reporters and photographers they taught and nurtured have gone on to achieve great success all over the country.

Brenner, who is retired from the University of Missouri in Columbia, remembered that his second year here, then-President Ralph Waldo McDonald decided the newspaper's editor should be someone from outside journalism. "It didn't go over too well with journalism," Brenner said. The arrangement lasted only one year.

In spite of the awkward situation, The BG News was voted best college newspaper in the state in the spring of 1961 by the American Newspaper Association. Brenner credits the success to the way students handled coverage of a plane crash at the Toledo airport. All members of the California Polytechnic State University football team, who had just played at Bowling Green, died in the crash.

Gordon's photojournalism students provided the paper with high-quality photos over the years, and in the process "trained a lot of very successful photographers," Bortel said. Marcy (Lanz) Nighswander won a Pulitzer prize for her White House coverage for the Associated Press. Her husband, Larry, became photo editor for National Geographic. Both Nighswanders graduated in 1973.


During Brenner's tenure, the newspaper was published twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. "We'd go over to a printing place on East Wooster Street on Mondays and Thursdays and assemble it by hand," he said.

"If I have any claim to fame, it's bringing the paper from twice weekly to three times weekly. Offset printing was a breakthrough for us," said Wallace Eberhart, who was adviser from 1964-68. Eberhart now teaches at the University of Georgia in Athens. "The students brought a lot of energy and a lot of responsibility to the job," he said. Some of the "bright lights" of the day were Tom Walton, now editor of The Blade, and Roger Holliday, today a Blade travel writer.

Eberhart's style was to let the students have free rein but to offer a daily written critique he called "The Morning After." Only once did he step in and exert his control, when the students were so displeased by the results of a football game they decided to leave a blank spot on the page where the story would have gone as an editorial comment. "'Write an editorial if you want to express your opinion, but at least give us the story," he told them.

Dansker, who served as adviser from 1970-80, also maintained a "hands-off" policy, he said. Dansker presided over a tumultuous decade that witnessed many changes in both the newspaper and American society as a whole. Yet, he noted, The BG News was able to maintain continuity over the years, from editor to editor and staff to staff.

Against the backdrop of campus-wide protests against the Vietnam war, The BG News grew and increased its output to four days a week. In a step toward greater autonomy, it purchased its own typesetting equipment and experimented with putting out a fifth edition.

In 1976, the paper experienced a budget crisis that precipitated a major change in the way it was run. Ultimately, a committee was set up, a director of student publications was hired and the position of faculty adviser was eliminated.

The paper was given an ultimatum in 1979 by the board governing University Student Publications, of which Gordon was the first chair, to become self-supporting. Within a few years, The BG News achieved this goal, and has grown steadily since. "Its revenue has easily doubled in the last 15 years," Bortel said. Five years ago, The News began publishing five days a week.

The change to electronic typesetting has been both a blessing and a challenge, according to Bortel. While it has made the process of receiving and disseminating information much easier, it has also increased the chance of error. "There's less of a safety net."

Bortel praised the professionalism of the students at The News, pointing out that student editors are often called on to make weighty decisions. "They (reporters and editors) are learning their skills while taking the full responsibility of putting out a daily newspaper. This is a unique situation in which students are subjected to public scrutiny on a daily basis, and they take the job pretty seriously."

-Bonnie Blankenship

Changes in Blue Cross and Blue Shield contract may affect University staff

As of Jan. 1, a contractual agreement between The Toledo Hospital and Blue Cross and Blue Shield no longer exists.

Blue Cross is notifying people of the change with a message reminder enclosed with Explanation of Benefits statements. However, the information on the reminder is not correct for BGSU employees, pointed out Donna Wittwer, manager of benefits for the University.

The claims of employees who are in Plan I and Plan III and are receiving services from The Toledo Hospital will be processed at the payment level of their plan, she said. Benefit payments will be made directly to The Toledo Hospital.

However, since there is no contract between Blue Cross and The Toledo Hospital, employees who receive services at The Toledo Hospital will be responsible for the following: contacting Blue Cross when a hospital admission is required and paying any services deemed "not medically necessary" by BCBS.

Also, since there is no contractual arrangement between Blue Cross and The Toledo Hospital, the bills for services can be higher than if received at a contracted hospital, Wittwer said. "This results in a higher cost to you through your co-insurance and the amount the BGSU plan pays."

For University employees enrolled in the Super Blue Plus Plan (the PPO), charges associated with services received at The Toledo Hospital will be processed as non-network benefits.

For further information call the benefits office at 2-2112.
Monday, Feb. 12
Film, M, 8 p.m., Gish Film Theater. In German with subtitles. Free.

Tuesday, Feb. 13
Arts and Sciences Forum, Peter Levine, author of From Ellis Island to Ebets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience, 12:30 p.m., Towers Inn, McDonald Quadrangle. Advanced reservations required for lunch at noon but lecture is free and open to the public.
Black History Month presentation, Lila Curry, "Global Learning, the Experiences of a Graduate Student in Ghana," 7 p.m., Amri Hall, the Commons. Free.

Wednesday, Feb. 14
Feminist Forum, "Blowing the Whistle on Sexual Harassment," a workshop presented by Kendall Kissinger, BGSU alumna, 4-5 p.m., Faculty Lounge, University Union.
Film, The Ballad of Gregoria Cortez, 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater. Part of the Latino Film Series. Free.
Men's basketball hosts Eastern Michigan University, 7:30 p.m., Anderson Arena. Theatre presentation, The Citizen, 8 p.m., Joe E. Brown Theatre. For ticket information call 2-2719.

Thursday, Feb. 15
Master class, Jane Carl, clarinetist, 4 p.m., Byam Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Free.
Recital, Jane Carl, clarinetist, 8 p.m., Byam Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Free.
Theatre presentation, The Citizen, 8 p.m., Joe E. Brown Theatre. For ticket information call 2-2719.
Film, The African Queen, 9 p.m., Gish Film Theater. Free.

Friday, Feb. 16
Women's Gymnastics hosts Eastern Michigan University, 6 p.m., Eppler Center. For ticket information call 2-2719.
Hockey hosts Illinois-Chicago University, 7 p.m., ice arena.
Film, Kiss Me Kate, 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater. Free.
UAD Film, How to Make An American Quilt, 8 p.m. and 11 p.m., 111 Olscamp Hall. $2 admission.
Theatre presentation, The Citizen, 8 p.m., Joe E. Brown Theatre. For ticket information call 2-2719.

Saturday, Feb. 17
Women's basketball hosts University of Toledo, 1:30 p.m., Anderson Arena. Hockey hosts Illinois-Chicago University, 7 p.m., ice arena.
Film, Swiss Family Robinson, 7:30 p.m., Gish Film Theater. Free.
UAD Film, How to Make An American Quilt, 8 p.m. and 11 p.m., 111 Olscamp. $2 admission.
Black History Month presentation, "Anthology '96: A Salute to the Black Family," 8 p.m., Eva Marie Saint Theatre, University Hall. Tickets are $3 at the University Hall Box Office.
Theatre presentation, The Citizen, 8 p.m., Joe E. Brown Theatre. For ticket information call 2-2719.
Black History Month concert, "Reggae Jam," 10 p.m.—2 a.m., Lenhart Grand Ballroom, University Union. Free.

Sunday, Feb. 18
Theatre presentation, The Citizen, 2 p.m., Joe E. Brown Theatre. For ticket information call 2-2719.
Musical performance, BGSU Philharmonia, 3 p.m., Kobacker Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Free.

Monday, Feb. 19
Arts fair, Guevarra, 8 p.m., Gish Film Theater. With English subtitles. Free.

Continuing events
Planetarium presentation, "Dinosaur Light," 8 p.m. Tuesday and Friday, 7:30 p.m. Sunday through March 22. $1 donation suggested.

At Firelands
Art exhibit, student copper enameling, through Feb. 16, Little Gallery. Concert, El Seecho Jazz Quartet, 7:30 p.m., Feb. 15, Firelands cafeteria. Free.

College health
explored at program
Faculty, staff and students are invited to participate in an interactive teleconference with the professor of medicine who developed widely used guidelines for how institutions should provide AIDS awareness for students.
"Get Real! What's Next for Campus Health?" will be screened at 1 p.m. Tuesday (Feb. 13) in 113 Olscamp Hall. Admission is free.

Undergraduates offered research grants
Faculty and staff have until March 15 to nominate students for the newly created Distinguished Undergraduate Research Award.
The award, which is being sponsored by the Alumni Association and the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research, will honor undergraduate students for their research accomplishments with a faculty adviser or mentor.
"The Distinguished Undergraduate Research Award will be granted annually as a way of recognizing and promoting excellence in research and mentoring," said Tony Boccanfuso, director of the Office of Sponsored Programs and Research.
Two awards will be made annually. Each student will receive $1,500 and the sponsoring department will be presented with $500.

Classified Staff
host graduate dean
Louis Katzer, dean of the graduate college, is scheduled to speak about the campus technology plan during the Feb. 20 meeting of Classified Staff Council.
The meeting will be held from 9 a.m.—noon in the Taft Room of the University Union.
Besides Katzer's presentation, the group hopes to address issues such as the 4 percent cap on salary increases for employees who are reclassified or transferred to a higher position, the wording on the Outstanding Classified Staff Award concerning uncompensated time, compensation for one-third of accumulated sick leave, establishment of joint committee of executive councils from Faculty Senate, Administrative Staff Council and Classified Staff Council and suggestions for the inauguration committee.