

**PRESIDENT DAVID C. SWEET'S ADDRESS
to the Academic Senate
February 7, 2001**

Thanks for the opportunity to share with you some of the projects and issues that I, and many others, are working on. Additionally, I hope there is ample time this afternoon to hear from many of you on these and other issues.

I would like to spend most of my time today commenting on three themes:

- University Planning
- Building the Administrative Team, and
- Labor-Management Relations

University Planning

As I indicated in my first State of the University address this past October, we need to develop a shared vision for YSU's future. To do so, a number of collaborative planning processes must be undertaken. Since October, we have started the following planning initiatives:

Enrollment

- To fulfill the promise and our potential as a public-comprehensive urban university, we need the financial stability sufficient to provide the flexibility to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise—both on campus and in the community. Thus it becomes obvious that reversing an almost-decade-long trend of decline in enrollment must be both our top short- and long-term priority.
- Accordingly, I asked Executive Vice President G. L. Mears to undertake and lead a variety of short- and long-term planning activities to increase YSU's enrollment. His initial focus has been upon Fall 2001 Semester enrollment.
- We have set an ambitious goal of obtaining a five percent increase in our enrollment (see **Figure 1**)—a formidable goal and something that would be unprecedented in recent times given our decade-long decline in students. To reach this goal, we will have to do things more effectively, more efficiently, and in a more student-friendly manner.

TOTAL ENROLLMENT		
	Fall 2000	Fall 2001 with 5% increase
First Time Freshmen	2,006	2,106
Undergraduate Returning	7,571	7,950
Undergraduate Formers (away 1 year or more)	462	485
Undergraduate Transfers	580	609
Graduate Studies	1,168	1,226
TOTAL	11,787	12,376

Figure 1

The goal should be achievable, if we break the enrollment down into its component parts. I've asked Dr. Anderson and Dean Stevens to focus efforts on a committee dealing with retention. Retention is a job we can all contribute to—whether through classroom interactions or through staff interactions.

- We have seen encouraging results, with both Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 Semester enrollment exceeding projected levels (see **Figure 2**), and we believe these results occurred because we have started to approach student recruitment and retention differently.

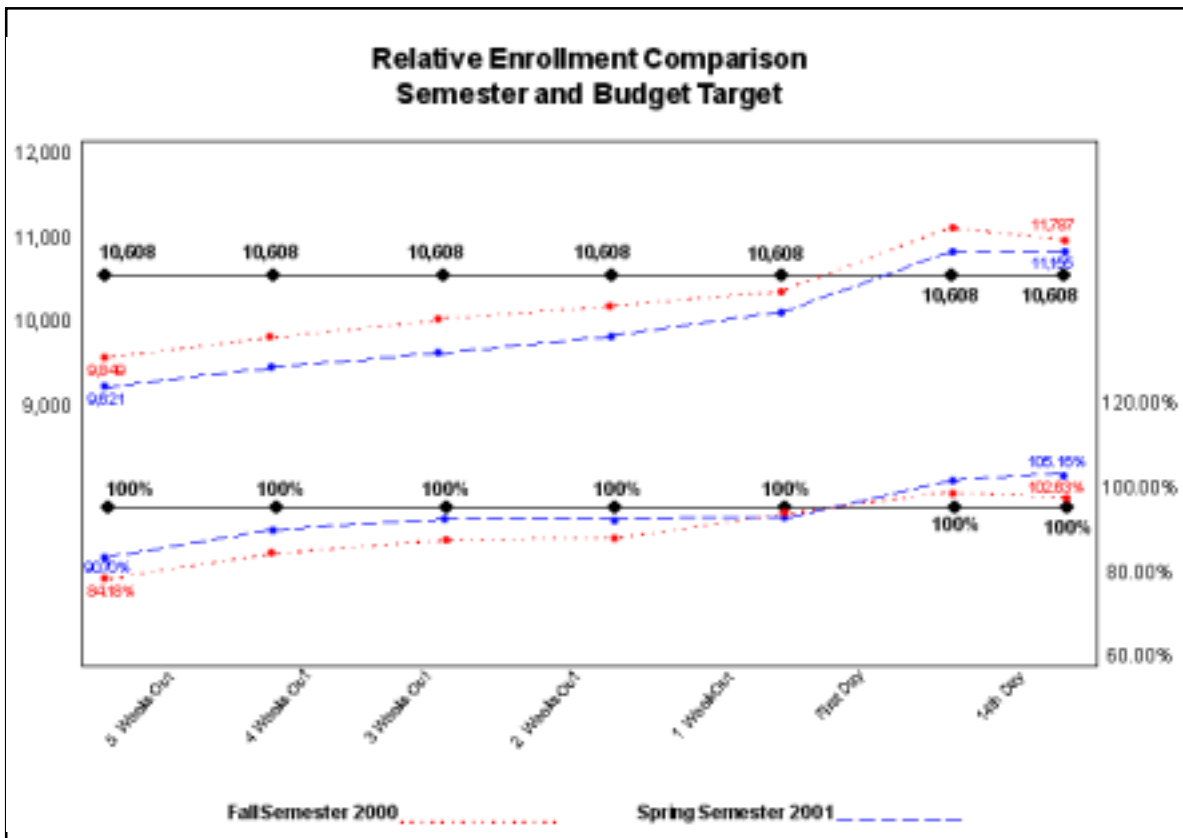


Figure 2

- Several committees are working on specific components of the short-term enrollment plan; more will be needed to implement and manage the actual initiatives.
- **Management Restructuring:** While much focus is required for our short-term efforts, ensuring that a professional staff is in place to implement and manage both short- and long-term plans is key. Accordingly, I have assigned responsibility for restructuring a management team for new undergraduate enrollment services to Bassam Deeb, the Executive Director for Enrollment Management. As a first step, I have authorized the search for new directors in undergraduate recruitment and admissions; financial aid and scholarships; and registration and records. (We appreciate the past contributions of Jane Reid, Eileen Greaif and Bill Countryman, and look forward to their continued service to YSU).
- **Long-Term Enrollment:** We will soon undertake a long-term planning process to develop a comprehensive enrollment management plan and strategy to guide our efforts in the years ahead.

Mission Statement

- As you know, the Board of Trustees has called for the University to revise its Mission Statement—to make it more focused and concise—and to engage all campus constituencies in this discussion. This is an appropriate and necessary first step as we anticipate resuming a long-term strategic-planning initiative to guide our academic planning efforts.
- I am pleased that Dr. Bege Bowers has agreed to chair the Mission Statement Revision Committee. The composition of the committee membership reflects all campus constituencies, including representatives of the Board of Trustees and students. The first meeting of the committee will be Wednesday, February 14.
- While a mission statement may seem to be a simple matter, it is in fact extremely important because it
 - States the reason we exist,
 - Describes our vision of what we want to be,
 - Sets a direction for planning, decision-making, and the allocation of resources, and
 - Serves as the ultimate standard for measuring the organization's achievements.

Note, however, that a Mission Statement traditionally does not

- Specify the means to be used to achieve the goals, nor
- Specify the degree of emphasis given in a particular direction.

Ideally, a mission statement should fit on a 3 x 5 card and contain no more than two or three sentences.

- Once work on the Mission Statement is concluded, we can resume work on the academic strategic plan.
- I know there is a lot of discussion about the role YSU should have in offering 2-year degrees, on one end, and graduate degrees on the other. Let me make two comments on this question:
 - I do believe YSU has more to offer by way of 2-year degree and graduate programs in response to community needs. Currently working on campus are two consultants with the following charges:
 - The first is to conduct an environmental scan of the Metro College that will provide data to be used in YSU's comprehensive academic strategic planning process, particularly as the Metro College relates to workforce development and community partnerships. Further, the environmental scan will provide information about the Metro College's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges.
 - The second project will recommend strategies to increase enrollment (in associate and baccalaureate programs as well as in graduate programs) that will result from recruiting students from diverse demographic groups.
 - However, I am keenly aware of and appreciate the value of YSU's position as the only comprehensive public university in Ohio specializing in undergraduate education—our curriculum is widely acclaimed. This fact will increasingly work in our favor, and we should not lose the advantage it will offer in the future. The baccalaureate program must continue to be the core. There are growth opportunities for two-year and graduate programs, but the focus will remain the baccalaureate programs. With tech prep programs from Choffin Career Center, we can build 2 + 2 + 2 programs. (See **Figure 3**, on page 4.)
- My final comment on revising the Mission Statement is that this is not a process to significantly alter YSU's fundamental mission. Instead, it is an opportunity to clarify, focus, and lay the groundwork for a comprehensive strategic-planning process to start later this year. The revised Mission Statement will drive a planning process that will incorporate our vision, core values, signature areas, and goals and objectives.

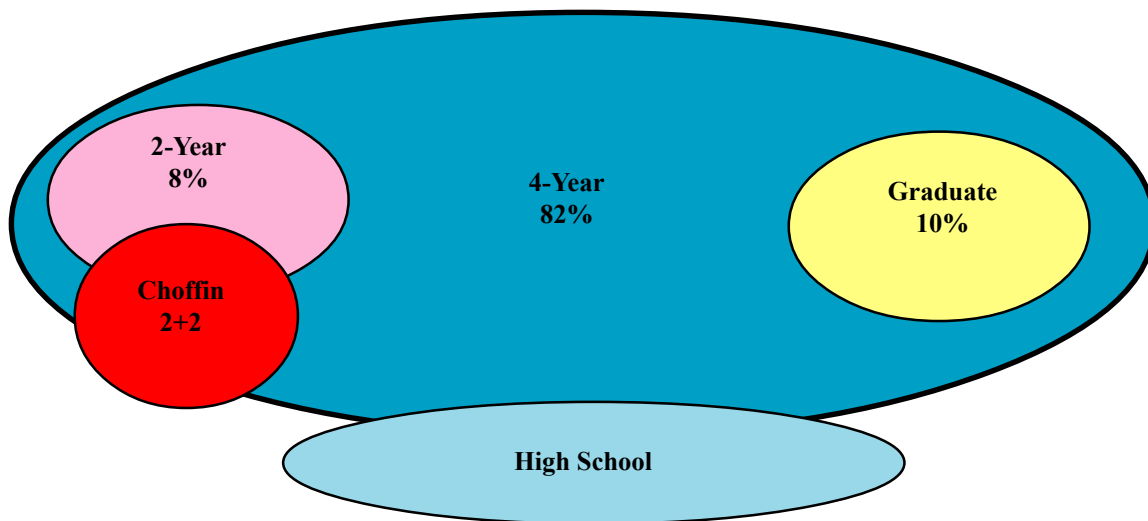


Figure 3

Other Planning Efforts: As you know, a number of other planning initiatives are now or soon to be underway. In the interest of time, I will merely list some of them now, and offer to answer any questions you may have:

- The Operations Improvement Task Force,
- A long-term diversity plan that will emerge from discussions surrounding the findings of the diversity survey recently conducted on campus,
- A long-term campus physical development plan that efficiently utilizes YSU's tremendous campus resources, and
- Campus village student housing.

All of these planning efforts either have, or will have, representation from the various campus constituencies, which is also true for the next theme I will discuss.

Building the Administrative Team

- The searches for the following positions provide a tremendous opportunity to build a new leadership team that will guide YSU in the years ahead:
 - A new Provost,
 - A Vice President for Financial Affairs,
 - Deans for the Colleges of Arts & Sciences and Education, and
 - A new Executive Director for Human Resources and Labor Relations.
- The Provost search is now underway. An ad has run in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and will run again in a couple of weeks. We are also using a variety of networks to recruit candidates for consideration. It is my goal to have a new Provost selected by the end of June. Please use your own networks to generate good candidates, and send your ideas to Dean McCloud, who is chairing this search committee.

- Similarly, the search for a Vice President for Financial Affairs has started. The committee, chaired by Dean Licata, will begin screening résumés shortly.
- With respect to the Deans for the Colleges of Arts & Sciences and Education, I have asked that these searches be delayed until a new Provost has been selected.
- Other searches are now or soon to be underway, including one for a new webmaster plus searches for directors for undergraduate recruitment and admissions; financial aid and scholarships; and registration and records. Some of you have expressed concern about the future of Bill Countryman, our current Registrar. I will soon announce a new, expanded position for him that will be an exciting and needed addition to YSU and our support for students. Jane Reid will return to her faculty assignment, and several opportunities are being defined for Eileen Greaf.
- Finally, we will soon begin a search for a new Executive Director for Human Resources and Labor Relations.

This leads me into my third theme for today:

Labor-Management Relations

Working together, we will accomplish far more for YSU than working against each other.

- The Academic Senate's productivity on key but potentially divisive issues demonstrates that this campus *can and does* address issues collectively and move beyond them once they have been discussed and resolved.
- But let me cut to the bottom line here: I am troubled, disappointed, and dismayed by the escalating rhetoric of individuals in leadership positions in two of the University's four unions. If I believe some of the rhetoric, YSU seems to be an awful and even intolerable place to work, where the forces of good are in daily battle with the forces of evil. The "forces of evil," otherwise known as the Administration, allegedly have a grand strategy to quell the campus labor force and reign in neither restraint nor accountability. Frankly, some of the statements have been both outrageous and grossly unfair, and I have refused to respond to them.
- There is a growing culture of grievances in which that which is wrong—whether real or imagined—is the primary focus and motivating force, occupying a disproportionate amount of our energy and resources. But if we look at these grievances, we find that most are filed by a small handful of people. Therefore, I think it's a small proportion of our overall faculty and staff that are engaged in this process.
- I think we need to step back. The overwhelming majority of us are working for the betterment of the University and the students we educate.
- Last October, I met with the presidents of the four campus labor unions. They asked for two things:
 - An affirmation of my commitment to the collective-bargaining process; and
 - A labor summit.

Additionally, the faculty union stressed the need to develop a campus-wide plagiarism policy, an issue that ranked at the top of the list in last spring's survey of faculty.

- In a December letter to the entire campus community,
 - I stated my unequivocal belief in and support of the collective-bargaining process.
 - I also called for a labor summit on campus that is now in the planning stages. I'm pleased that both Tom Maraffa and David Porter are working on the agenda for that.
 - Finally, I called for the creation of a committee to develop a campus-wide policy on plagiarism.
- I have called for a demonstration of civility in our relationships. I acknowledge that some in the Administration have been uncivil to labor union representatives. This conduct is wrong and will not be tolerated. I will address breaches of civility at this end, and I call upon you, as you encounter instances of uncivil behavior on campus, to stand up against it.
- As I stated earlier, working together, we will accomplish far more for YSU than working against each other.
- We are wasting resources—human and financial—that could be better used to advance University priorities.
- My sincere call for a labor summit stands—let's use it as an opportunity to come together to learn about our collective-bargaining agreements and to take action to improve the labor-management relations on this campus.

In closing, I want to express my strong appreciation to the Academic Senate for professional, constructive, and positive approaches you have taken in working on academic and University issues.

- In particular, I note your excellent work on the General Education Requirements as well as the flawless semester conversion.
- These are but two examples in which strong differences of opinion about priorities and objectives did not degenerate into uncivil behavior.

I am now asking that you take a greater leadership role in reestablishing civility on this campus as well as continuing to address issues pertaining to YSU's future. I thank you for the opportunity for sharing comments on these three themes and would be happy to address questions on those or any others you might want to bring up.

President Sweet's address was followed by a question-and-answer session; a transcript appears in the body of the Senate minutes for February 7.