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## Innovating in Higher Education -- Challenges and Responses within a Conservative Context

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# Innovating in Higher Education -- Challenges and Responses within a Conservative Context

## **Abstract**

This article presents a case study of a community college – Ivy Tech-Bloomington (IN) – to illustrate challenges faced by postsecondary institutions around the world. Ivy Tech-Bloomington has faced reduced state funding and increased pressure to emphasize the instrumental value of education – namely, “workforce development” – with constructive responses that diverge in many ways from dominant trends in higher education. Inspired by a vision of serving the common good, of helping those students most likely to fail, and valuing the role of the arts and humanities, the leadership of Ivy Tech-Bloomington has accomplished many of its goals in an otherwise hostile climate. It has been able to do so by skillfully employing a logic and language understandable to state officials and education system administrators, but grounded in a distinctly different set of values. The campus leadership also has been able to mobilize public support for its strategic initiative.

## **Keywords**

leadership, innovation, partnerships, centers of excellence, vision

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# Innovating in Higher Education – Challenges and Responses within a Conservative Context

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*This article presents a case study of a community college – Ivy Tech-Bloomington (IN) – to illustrate challenges faced by postsecondary institutions around the world. Ivy Tech-Bloomington has faced reduced state funding and increased pressure to emphasize the instrumental value of education – namely, “workforce development” – with constructive responses that diverge in many ways from dominant trends in higher education. Inspired by a vision of serving the common good, of helping those students most likely to fail, and valuing the role of the arts and humanities, the leadership of Ivy Tech-Bloomington has accomplished many of its goals in an otherwise hostile climate. It has been able to do so by skillfully employing a logic and language understandable to state officials and education system administrators, but grounded in a distinctly different set of values. The campus leadership also has been able to mobilize public support for its strategic initiative.*

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## The Institution: System Goals and Context

As background, Ivy Tech Community College is the single community college system for the state of Indiana, with a 14-region, statewide system that enrolls over 160,000 students annually. Community colleges are the access point to higher education for many first-generation and minority students, and Ivy Tech Community College is the largest single community college in the nation. The regional campuses within the Ivy Tech system are as diverse from one another as are the communities they serve. Gary and Madison are two communities at geographical ends of the state, and they are as culturally different as they are geographically distant.

The designation of “community college” was awarded the institution on July 1, 2005, a result of legislation passed in the 2004 session of the Indiana General Assembly. Senate Enrolled Act 296 created Ivy Tech Community College, formerly Ivy Tech State College, with the dual mission of workforce development and transfer opportunities for Indiana students to one of Indiana’s seven institutions of higher education that offer undergraduate degrees.

In Indiana’s political climate, the Governor appoints all 14 of Ivy Tech’s state trustees, who in turn appoint the college’s president. As a result, a governor so inclined

has tremendous power to shape the priorities, goals, and direction of the state’s community college. Against that backdrop, Ivy Tech’s emphasis since 2005 has been more heavily weighted to “workforce development”. . . job entry skills, terminal workforce degrees, and incumbent worker training. . . than on the transfer mission, with its emphasis on core liberal arts education. In addition, the state’s four-year institutions for higher education initially were not proponents of expanding transfer opportunities, often citing economic rationale.

The Bloomington campus of Ivy Tech is unique, even within such a diverse system and political climate. Located in the same community as the flagship campus of Indiana University, Ivy Tech-Bloomington has become a magnet campus, attracting students from as many as 82 of Indiana’s 92 counties to locate to Bloomington to attend classes at Ivy Tech for the purpose of transfer. The demographic profile of an Ivy Tech-Bloomington student is different from his or her counterparts at other Ivy Tech campuses. The largest group of students is between the ages of 17 to 24, and 60% of the students self-identify as transfer bound rather than as degree seeking.

Enrollment over the years at Ivy Tech has grown from 2,600 in 2002, when the campus located to its current academic building on the city’s west side, to over 6,500 students in 2013, including out-of-state students and over 100 international students. The largest group

of international students is from China, and most are direct admits who applied to Ivy Tech from China. The goal of most out-of-state and international students is eventual transfer to Indiana University. The majority of these students are assimilated into apartment living in the Bloomington community, often with siblings or friends from their home communities. As a result, Ivy Tech-Bloomington's primary focus on transfer often has been at odds with the primary "skills training" focus of political stakeholders.

The relationship between the Ivy Tech-Bloomington campus and Indiana University-Bloomington has been transformed since 2003 in formal agreements that have expanded the transferability of credit hours from 39 to over 400. Ivy Tech students may transfer general education credit hours with a grade of C or above at any time to Indiana University. In addition, several articulation agreements between degree programs have been formalized to include degrees in programs not offered at many other Ivy Tech campuses, including biotechnology and kinesiology.

By 2004, a program entitled "Hoosier Link," believed to be the only one of its kind in the nation between a two-year public community college and a four-year public university, was initiated as relationships between the two institutions improved. In an agreement between the Bloomington campuses of Ivy Tech and Indiana University, applicants to Indiana University from around the state who did not meet its admission standard, usually because of class rank, are admitted conditionally to IU each academic year in the Hoosier Link cohort of 100-110 students and dually admitted to Ivy Tech. They are required to live in one of the IU residence halls; enroll full time in general education courses at the Ivy Tech campus; meet regularly with advisors from both institutions; and, upon the successful completion of either 15 credit hours with a 3.0 GPA, or 27 credit hours with a 2.5 GPA, their conditional admission is lifted at Indiana University, and their credits are transferred in to an IU degree program.

### **Leadership and Constituent Responses to Developmental Challenges**

These developments were not without struggle. In 2002, Indiana University-Bloomington met only the minimum course and credit transfer required by legislation. Although its regional campuses accepted more credit hours in transfer from Ivy Tech regional campus partners, IU-Bloomington resisted. Efforts by Ivy Tech to achieve

greater transfer opportunities for students were not addressed.

Several factors changed that environment. First, the Ivy Tech-Bloomington campus leadership was a vocal proponent of increased opportunity, speaking publicly and writing guest columns in the local newspaper. The argument was that taxpayers were paying twice for support at both state institutions for duplicate credits; IU regional campuses were accepting more credits than their flagship campus; and, in one instance at IU's Indianapolis campus, a formal transfer program was already in place. The result of the campaign was increased and vocal community and legislative support.

Second, the 2003 session of the Indiana General Assembly passed HB 1209, which required more transfer acceptance from the four-year public institutions. That legislation was sponsored at the request of the Ivy Tech-Bloomington leadership, but a sponsor had to be found from another area of the state as a result of the political pressure against the bill at Bloomington. State Representative Ron Herrell (D-Kokomo) carried the legislation and was awarded an honorary associate degree in college and community service the following spring for his efforts from the Ivy Tech-Bloomington campus.

Several Ivy Tech-Bloomington students traveled to Indianapolis and spoke in support of the legislation at hearings of both House and Senate education committees. Indiana University lobbyists and administrators spoke against the legislation. The lobbying effort initially was undertaken by only the Bloomington campus. Only as the bill was making progress through the legislative session did Ivy Tech President Gerald I. Lamkin, who has since retired, join the effort. Testimony from IU administrators, including the chancellor of the Richmond regional campus, was that a degree from IU-Bloomington was more prestigious than one from its regional campuses, including his own. It was argued that IU admission standards at Bloomington were higher than at its regional campuses, faculty appointments were more prestigious, and the fact that its regional campuses accepted Ivy Tech students was not a relevant argument. In fact, one of the faculty members from the Kelley School of Business remarked, "You would be surprised at the caliber of students we (IU) admit at our regional campuses."

Third, the arrival in 2003 of Adam Herbert from the Florida system to become President of Indiana University marked an attitudinal shift. President Herbert came from a system in which transfer of credit among Florida's institutions for higher education had

existed since 1957, and common course numbering at institutions made student transfer more seamlessly accomplished. President Herbert brought back from retirement Chancellor Kenneth R. R. Gros Louis, whose support and advocacy for greater transfer between Ivy Tech-Bloomington and IU-Bloomington broke down the last institutional barriers.

Last, meetings between program faculty of the two campuses did a great deal to dispel the myth of “quality” as an issue. IU faculty, many of whom were on the Ph.D. committees of Ivy Tech faculty, realized that Ivy Tech courses that were of the 100 and 200-level courses taught on the IU campus were being instructed by faculty who, at a minimum, held a master’s degree in the discipline. Those with similar academic credentials do not frequently teach IU’s corresponding courses.

### **Centers of Excellence**

In addition to the academic areas, the Ivy Tech-Bloomington campus has created five centers of excellence that are not replicated at any other Ivy Tech campus, but support the vision of transformation to a comprehensive community college: the Center for Civic Engagement (2004), the Center for Lifelong Learning (2007), the Indiana Center for the Life Sciences (2009), the John Waldron Arts Center (2010), and the Gayle and Bill Cook Center for Entrepreneurship (2010).

The Center for Civic Engagement was created and modeled on the metaphor of a three-legged stool, the first leg being volunteerism. The campus was committed to modeling volunteerism on the part of faculty and staff, in order that students would become engaged in their communities and leave with the commitment to giving something back to their local communities. Student surveys demonstrated that 90% of Ivy Tech students who leave with a certificate or degree are employed in a related field in their communities in south central Indiana. The campus culture held a belief that students have the same dreams and aspirations as others, and they want to make a contribution to their communities through their chosen work fields. Civic engagement held that they could leave with that same commitment to being productive community members through community service.

The second leg of the metaphorical stool is “service learning,” which is the integration of a service project into the curriculum and course objectives for academic classes. The concept is for individual faculty to develop a service project with a local non-profit organization that would add to the students’ learning experience through an

experiential opportunity, while also providing a service to the non-profit organization. A prime example is the VITA (Volunteers in Tax Assistance) program undertaken by second-year accounting students in a partnership with the City of Bloomington and the IRS. Each year, accounting students mentored by faculty prepare tax returns for qualified individuals meeting income guidelines. The students then reflect on the activity as part of their course requirements. Faculty assert that the real-life examples are better than textbook examples, and students’ assistance to low-income residents has returned more than \$4 million in federal returns to qualified residents over the years.

The benefit to the local economy of volunteerism and service learning is measurable. A national non-profit organization, The Independent Sector, placed the value of every hour in community service to a non-profit organization in 2013 at \$22.55 per hour nationally. Ivy Tech-Bloomington’s contribution to its communities in 2013 alone, using that formula at over 104,000 hours donated, was over \$2,350,000. That does not include the return on investment generated through the VITA program of an additional \$1.2 million. For the sixth consecutive year, Ivy Tech-Bloomington was named a member of the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. In May of 2013, 95 graduates received a transcript with the first “service-learning” recognition notation.

The last leg of the stool is the way in which the campus makes use of its institutional resources to engage its service area. Since 2004, the campus has annually hosted each April, free to the public, the O’Bannon Institute for Community Service, which engages attendees through a panel discussion and a “conversation” with a guest speaker to discuss the benefits of service. Conversation guests over the years have included former Senators Birch Bayh and George McGovern, Arianna Huffington, Richard Dreyfus, former Indiana Governor Joe Kernan, and Pulitzer Prize winner Eugene Robinson, to name a few.

The Center for Lifelong Learning was created to expand the non-credit offerings to residents of the campus service area to include “personal enrichment”. . . arts, music, cooking, history. . . as well as professional and career development offerings. In Bloomington in particular, where arts activity is a \$73 million annual economic development contributor, arts-related activity was community development oriented. Thousands of area residents have participated in its program offerings over the years.

### **Unique Programs and Partnerships**

The addition in 2010 of the John Waldron Arts Center created several opportunities for unique programs and partnerships. The campus acquired the Waldron Arts Center as a result of the demise of the Bloomington Area Arts Council, which had managed the facility since 1992. The building housed a community radio station, as well as gallery and performance spaces for the public. Ivy Tech-Bloomington was leasing space in a building in downtown Bloomington, and its analysis of the operating expenses for the Waldron indicated that it could be operated more inexpensively than the leased cost expenses of the other facility. The City of Bloomington transferred ownership of the Waldron to the campus in May 2010 for \$1.00, with a “restriction” on the transfer that the facility must be used primarily for community arts-related activity. In accepting the building, the campus announced that the “restriction” was actually part of the mission of the campus as a community college, and the facility permitted expansion of personal enrichment and non-credit offerings to the general public, as well as provided space for the campus academic credit arts courses.

The campus extended its non-credit programming in arts and theatre in the Center for Lifelong Learning at the Waldron to include two age groups not commonly associated with community college enrollment: children ages 4-11 in a year-round “Ivy Arts for Kids” program, and middle schoolers in grades 6-8 in a summer “College for Kids” program. Through the generosity of private donors, scholarships are made available to low-income children who qualify by being eligible for free or reduced lunch at school. In a partnership with the Bloomington Playwrights Project (BPP), theatre courses were extended to both age groups throughout the school year and summer. (The BPP is a not-for-profit theater that, over the past 35 years, has produced over 500 new plays, including winners of two national playwriting competitions.) As a result of the campus commitment to arts programs, in 2012 the Indiana Arts Commission asked the campus to become its regional arts partner in an eight-county service area covering south central Indiana. The Indiana Commission for Higher Education subsequently awarded the Ivy Tech-Bloomington campus an Associate of Fine Arts Degree, and Indiana University has agreed to accept credit theatre courses in transfer to its theatre department.

### **Reformulated Goals and Vision**

These activities and their enrollment growth have stemmed from the Ivy Tech campus goals, established

in 2002, that have served as the building blocks for each new initiative. Those four goals include: a focus on the success of the individual learner; responsiveness to the needs of regional workforce partners; seamless educational opportunities for students from high school to the campus, and from the campus to the university; and a formalized commitment to community service through volunteerism, service-learning academic courses, and campus-wide civic engagement.

At the same time in 2002, the Ivy Tech State Board of Trustees released a vision statement that described the changes necessary to transform Ivy Tech State College, as it was then named, to a truly comprehensive community college needed by the state of Indiana. The trustees identified five areas that must be addressed in order to make that transformation complete. First, the college had to grow its academic programs and expand its degree offerings. Second, it had to be responsive to its workforce partners by developing relevant training programs. Third, it had to develop student life activities to better connect a commuting student body to the campus, faculty, and staff. Fourth, it had to develop continuing education opportunities for the non-degree seeking, lifelong learner. Last, it needed to recognize that community service was an integral commitment in the development of any community college.

Ivy Tech-Bloomington’s campus goals were recognized after a presentation to the state trustees in 2004 as a system model for the vision articulated in their statement. In 2005, the college administration adopted a system strategic plan that included centralized plans for the implementation of the first two goals of the vision statement, expansion of academic programs, and responsiveness to workforce partners. The remaining goals of student life, continuing education, and community service were left to be developed by regional campuses to meet the various needs of their communities and students. The result was that the 14 regional campuses developed unevenly in their plans for implementation in those three areas. Student life activities developed differently at each regional campus. Continuing education at some campuses was limited to open enrollment professional and career development courses, while some campuses did not offer any non-credit courses to the general public. Community service was left to local activity, and in many cases was limited to volunteer activities on the part of student groups. To date, no system plan is in place to implement the 2002 vision statement.

### **Constructive and Creative Responses to Questions and Skepticism**

The Ivy Tech-Bloomington campus growth in unique programs, liberal arts education, lifelong learning programs — specifically in arts, pre-school, elementary school, and middle school offerings — and transfer students has not come without questions and skepticism from some stakeholders regarding the campus mission differentiation, if any, from the system's mission. Specifically, the conservative political climate in which the college operates has put some campus activities and initiatives under a microscope. Although workforce training and new academic degrees in areas such as biotechnology, radiation therapy, engineering technology, electrical engineering technology, nursing, and health sciences have been unquestionably in support of workforce development, liberal arts education, focus on transfer, and arts programs have been viewed more skeptically.

Liberal arts education, the core curriculum for baccalaureate degree programs at four-year institutions, has not been an equal emphasis of either the college or Indiana's Higher Education Commission. In fact, the number of credits for a two-year degree was lowered to 60 from 62. The reduction to that lower goal could be reached with fewer courses in general education, or a reduction in the number of contact hours and credits for college success courses, such as the three-credit hour student success seminar, critical in the eyes of some educational proponents for retention and success.

To make the case for continuing the strong emphasis on liberal arts, the argument had to be made to stakeholders that liberal arts associate degrees are “workforce development related.” The community college student who successfully completes an associate degree in math, science, English, or history, and then successfully transfers to a university on a baccalaureate path, may be our next generation of teachers or life science employees. It is “tasting success” at the community college level that may be the key for many first-generation students to continue their journey to professional careers. In addition, area employers consistently rank critical thinking skills, communication skills, and problem-solving skills as their highest priorities for new employees. Those skills are found in liberal arts curricula and course objectives.

Another factor, not as easily quantifiable, is the support for community economic development activity with the existence of a strong community college campus, with comprehensive credit and non-credit programs, transfer opportunities, and community-based

activities such as the Waldron's performance and gallery spaces and centers for excellence. On several occasions, the campus was asked by the Bloomington Economic Development Corporation to make presentations to potential businesses and industries that were considering Bloomington as a destination location. The goal was to make potential new employers aware of opportunities that existed at Bloomington for employees, their families, and higher-level administrators in which to participate and benefit from campus activities. It was extremely helpful in advocating to college system-level administrators for continued unique programming when it could be pointed out that the campus was used by the local economic development entity as an example of “quality of life” opportunities in attracting new employers.

Unfortunately, the success metrics created by state funding sources and the college's central administration do not reward transfer, but reward “completions” as measured by awarding certificates and degrees. That funding model dramatically “under measures” the Ivy Tech-Bloomington campus student transfer rates and number of credit hours transferred to four-year partners, and it significantly fails to account for the fact that Hoosier students are saving millions of dollars in tuition, estimated in 2013 at Bloomington alone at \$3.6 million. Financial stress is reduced for four-year state-supported partners as well, by beginning undergraduate studies at the 100 and 200 course level at the community college.

Most significantly, the college's central administration support of the state's college attainment goal of 60% of Hoosiers being awarded a college degree by 2025 to date does not appear to recognize, without prompting, that in the 2012-13 school year an Indiana student who could graduate in 2025 from Ivy Tech with a two-year degree was enrolled in the second grade in one of the state's elementary schools. In internal budget meetings in March of 2012, a senior vice president of the college was examining the catalog for lifelong learning courses offered at the Bloomington campus, specifically the Ivy Arts for Kids programming, and inquired as to its relevance. Citing the College Attainment Goals of the state, and the fact that the Ivy Arts for Kids program was cultivating the very students who could make that goal possible, ended that line of questioning. There still was no support for the effort, but at least there were no arguments against it. The language of attainment had to be used to advocate for children's programming.

The argument has to be strongly made that it is the students enrolled in Ivy Arts for Kids, many of them on free and reduced lunch in the schools and potentially

the first person in their families to ever attend college, who are the recruits for the Class of 2025. Ivy Arts for Kids, and later College for Kids when they reach middle school, attempts to expose these students and families to the possibility of success in the community college environment.

Also seemingly unacknowledged is research demonstrating that school children who are exposed to artistic and creative activities from pre-school to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade have improved scores in reading, vocabulary, and comprehension. Most ironically, while emphasizing the “workforce development” model over liberal arts education, the state appears to be ignoring its workforce partners’ repeated emphasis on the need for a workforce prepared in communication, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. To contribute to that process by providing opportunities for creativity, project-based learning, and artistic effort to early childhood learners is the foundation for the very skills sought by workforce partners. Rather than dismissing the effort, a community college should recognize the investment in the future. Also, the state needs to recognize that funding in support of arts-related education for “at-risk” children in pre- and early elementary school, which leads to a better prepared, skilled citizen later, is a better investment than deferred public assistance or criminal justice costs.

### **Garnering Validation for Innovation**

The effort has not gone without notice and recognition by others outside Indiana. In 2014, the Community College Futures Assembly of Florida State University named Ivy Tech-Bloomington’s pre-school arts infusion program, in a partnership with Fairview Elementary School in Bloomington, as one of 10 national programs recognized and awarded for innovation in instruction. As a result of that national recognition, Ivy Tech faculty and staff, with the individual from Fairview who teaches in the pre-school program, were presenters in January 2014 at the Futures Assembly national conference in Orlando, Florida.

Ivy Tech’s program, *Educational Arts Partnership: Increasing school readiness in the community college “Class of 2025,”* was selected among nine other community college finalists nationwide in the Instructional Programs and Services category. The Futures Assembly received over 400 entries from community colleges across the United States. The partnership between Ivy Tech-Bloomington and Fairview Elementary School, an Artful Learning School in Bloomington, is one in which the

campus supplements pre-school curriculum with visual and theatrical arts instructional methods. The elementary school noted marked improved outcomes in “Individual Growth and Development Indicators,” specifically vocabulary, alliteration, and rhyming, measured against a control group not receiving arts infused lessons. It should be noted that Fairview is the school with the greatest percentage of low income students in the country’s education system.

### **Countering Negative State and National Trends in Higher Education**

Last, and quite alarming, is a trend in Indiana’s community college system to look to a financial “bottom line” at the cost of student success and community relationships. The college system has made little progress toward increasing the ratio of full-time faculty to students and relies very heavily on adjuncts. That is not unusual in community colleges nationally, but currently there seems little effort to make improvements in those numbers.

Rather, the move is to merge regions, which have little or no connection otherwise, and reduce campus positions that support student success for the purpose of saving administrative costs. At the same time, central administration is expanding. The corporate argument is based on a narrowly constructed “business model” that equates “savings” with “efficiencies” and “success.” The college’s decision-making model has moved from one of greater regional input, in which students are served and revenue is actually generated, to centralization and corporate-style top-down direction. Revenue that in the past “followed the student” — stayed with the regional campus in support of regional student retention and success and funding for faculty and staff positions — is diverted more and more to fund central administration growth, salaries, and initiatives.

Many key positions in central administration have been populated by staff with little or no experience in higher education, and who came to the college from the outgoing administration of state government. A new generation of central administrators has replaced staff who possessed many years of institutional knowledge and background in Ivy Tech’s transformation. That result has been universally viewed by regional campuses as creating a lack of insight into the diverse needs of the campus populations served and the critical importance of local community relationships.

State government and political appointment are not of themselves disqualifying, irrelevant experiences.



However, the regional campuses are different from the state's Bureau of Motor Vehicles system. Unlike a local BMV branch office, where the number of potential transactions is limited and the "next number, please" approach may work, the complexities of student advising, financial aid, orientation for success — to name a few — are not successfully addressed as easily as renewing a driver's license or transferring an automobile title.

Regardless of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's movement to fund graduation and success rates, the college administration remains focused on high "enrollment numbers." The result is a conflict of goals when the semi-annual push to get bodies in seats as classes start in August and January are the priorities, although all the research and experience indicates that ill-prepared students are the first to drop out, usually in their first semester. That priority then shifts to the bodies in seats priority at commencement in May: graduation rates. Regardless, new students are not only permitted, but encouraged, to enroll as late as the first week of classes each semester, even if they are not adequately oriented to college, do not have financial aid in place, do not have textbooks for class, and have not managed "life issues."

These concerns were the rationale for the college's invitation for admission to the Indiana-based Lumina Foundation "Achieving the Dream" national initiative of community colleges. In its first years of this partnership, the college moved away from being enrollment driven to being success driven. It identified the interventions it believed were necessary to better prepare students for the first day of classes, for retention, and ultimately for higher success rates. Three strategies were adopted: a mandatory face-to-face orientation for all new first-time students, required enrollment of students who had tested into multiple disciplinary remedial coursework into a "success" course, and mandatory advising of all first-time degree seeking students.

The answer to the question regarding the reason that campuses are not graduating more students is that they have been directed away from implementing those adopted student success intervention strategies. The central administration gave up too quickly on the strategies that were developed through "Achieving the Dream," and those interventions were in turn blamed, without supporting data, for the first annual declines in enrollment.

Clearly, goals are in conflict, and conflicting goals fight for scarce financial and human resources in a large statewide system. Most important, the argument has yet to be made that these corporate-down directions are best for students and communities.

Several factors are important in advancing the cause of the local campus in today's Indiana higher education environment. First, local relationships are the foundation for success. Collaborations and partnerships with governmental, civic, business, and non-profit organizations create an engagement model that can anchor the campus in the local community. In Ivy Tech's large statewide system, the local campus *is* the college. Whether it is Bloomington, Madison, Gary, or Fort Wayne, local communities are not interested in the size and scope of a 14-region system. Their perception of Ivy Tech, its success and contributions, is local. Their knowledge of degrees and programs is focused on those offered locally. The college's image and ultimate success is built bottom-up at local campuses and does not trickle down from the Indianapolis administration.

Second, multiple external constituencies need to be cultivated, including the community in which the campus is engaged, a major research university, and state legislators who are critical to the support and ultimate funding success of the campuses. External constituencies include the administration of state government, which may have its own goals for the community college. The campus needs to craft its messages to these external constituencies that emphasize how campus objectives support individual constituency goals. And "external" constituencies may arguably include the college's central administration, which is subject to direction imposed by the political goals of the state administration.

Therefore, it is paramount that a campus must define itself before others define it. You are what you hold yourself out to be. Bloomington branded itself as a "magnet campus" for students from around the state of Indiana seeking an alternative entry point to IU-Bloomington (a Tier One research university with over 35,000 students) that was more affordable, provided smaller class sizes, was accessible, and offered transfer of credits. The campus defined itself as one with five "centers of excellence." It offered and marketed unique degrees in life and health sciences. It defined its liberal arts programs as in meeting with the college's "workforce development" mission in a community in which the arts is a \$73 million economic development contributor, and in marketed liberal arts to prospective students and families as a transfer program to various degree programs at Indiana University.

Third, faculty and staff must adopt the campus goals and its uniqueness as part of the culture and environment in which they teach and work. The campus culture must be sustainable. It must be embedded in the campus way of

life and be sustainable regardless of leadership changes. Faculty and staff have to “own it” and embrace it as their own.

Fourth, the leaders on a campus are not found only in an examination of the organizational chart. A theory in political advertising is that the reason 30-second commercials and 10-second sound bites are so successful in political campaigns is that 80% of the general population is not examining issues closely and is, therefore, more subject to superficial messaging. Of the balance of the population, 15% are well informed, and 5% are the “opinion makers.” Those “opinion makers” may be respected individuals in the media, for good and ill, or individuals who are otherwise admired. It was important to the success of messaging to both internal and external audiences of the Bloomington campus to identify the “opinion makers” — those faculty and staff, regardless of position in the campus hierarchy, who could shape the opinions of others on campus and in the community.

Many of these individuals serve in mid-level management positions, are members of various civic organizations, or are volunteers with local non-profit groups. They were pro-actively and strategically engaged in discussion of campus objectives, and were then able to serve as ambassadors to the campus and the community by serving on an expanded campus leadership team. The campus goals, outlined earlier, were created in 2002 by a group of campus leaders formed as the “Chancellor’s Leadership Counsel.” Lest it be thought that the wrong word is being used, it was made clear at the time that “counsel” was intentionally used as a verb, as in to “advise” one another. The concept was that such a group was formed, not just to share information and make decisions, but also to proactively advise the chancellor and one another. That group was expanded to include monthly meetings of an “expanded counsel,” a group of identified campus opinion makers who had mid-level supervisory or campus initiative responsibilities outside the formal organizational chart of “leadership.”

Among the exercises in which the chancellor’s “leadership counsel” was engaged was reading books as a group and reflecting on their application to the development of campus initiatives and goals. The group began very early in 2001 by reading “Who Moved My Cheese?” by Spencer Johnson. Surprisingly, that very quick read led to lengthy discussions about the way in which the campus transition from a technical college to a state college was affecting campus culture. Later readings of “Good to Great” by Jim Collins, “Leading Change” by John P. Kotter, “The Tipping Point” by Malcolm

Gladwell, and chapters from “Reframing Organizations” by Bolman and Deal led to lively discussions, team building, goal setting, reflection, and the deeper development of a culture that began to recognize and implement the transformation of the campus from a state college to a community college.

## **Concluding Concerns**

Challenges remain. The campus leadership changed in early 2014. The chancellor of the 12 previous years retired, which led to a four-month period of uncertainty, as the college administration attempted to merge the Bloomington and Evansville campuses. The ultimate plan appeared to be to merge those two campuses later with the Terre Haute campus. In addition, the campus leader would no longer be a chancellor, but would become a campus president reporting to a chancellor over the merged regional campuses. The campus, the regional board of trustees, and the community were concerned that, in a merger of such geographically and diverse community campuses, and with leadership from Evansville, Bloomington would lose both its uniqueness and its critical relationship with its local community.

In February 2014, the college’s state board of trustees voted to merge the Evansville and Bloomington campuses. That was followed by an intense lobbying effort against the initiative by the leadership of the Bloomington campus regional board of trustees. In April 2014, the state board of trustees reversed itself, merged Evansville and Terre Haute, but left Bloomington as a stand-alone campus. The president appointed a Bloomington campus chancellor, with the strong support of the regional board of trustees. Local leadership was kept intact, and the community response was extremely positive.

Whether that means that the future of the campus is decided long term is yet unclear. The college continues its efforts to seek efficiencies and budget cuts by merging campuses. The stated rationale for the reversal of the Evansville-Bloomington merger was because Bloomington was embarking on a community fundraising campaign. That has resulted in skeptics of long-term “autonomy” once the fundraising campaign is concluded.

Efficiencies, bottom-line “cost-benefit” analyses based solely on financial considerations rather than on analysis of student or local community success, and the future of local campuses will continue to be subjects of interest and concern as the college moves forward over the next three to five years under its current leadership.

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