



Strategy for Action Workbook

Shawnee State University OHIO

A. Shawnee State University's *Present*

1. Distinctive organizational features

Shawnee State University was created in 1986 by an act of the Ohio Legislature from what was formerly a community college. Since then, Shawnee State University--the regional state university of Southern Ohio--has continued to prepare students for the changing needs of business, industry, education, and society through its diversified degree programs at both the associate and bachelor degree levels. Shawnee uniquely serves the Appalachian region of southeastern Ohio. Recognizing the importance of knowledge, values, and cultural enrichment, Shawnee State University is committed to providing higher education that fosters competence in oral and written communication, scientific and quantitative reasoning, and critical analysis/logical thinking. To enrich the lives of the community, Shawnee State University provides opportunities for continuing personal and professional development, intellectual discovery, and appreciation for the creative and performing arts.

The only public university in Ohio located on the banks of the Ohio River, Shawnee State University sports a beautifully-landscaped 52-acre campus featuring 21 buildings including the Advanced Technology Center that features one of only 50 Digistar II planetariums in the world; a three-story library featuring computers, Internet access, and thousands of books, videocassettes, CDs, government documents, and periodicals; the 102,000 square foot Vern Riffe Center for the Arts featuring a 1,139 seat Main Theater; the James A. Rhodes Athletic Center that features weight rooms, racquetball courts, gymnasium, a dance classroom, and a junior Olympic-size swimming pool; and the Children's Learning Center, a facility that serves as a learning center for the children of students/faculty/staff/community members and a lab school for teacher education students at SSU.

Shawnee State University has a rich tradition of success in athletics. A member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, SSU has participated in 11 National Championships in 3 of 11 sponsored sports.

Shawnee State University is engaged in relationships with universities in China, Germany, Morocco, and Spain. This attracts a growing number of international students while SSU students themselves have the opportunity to travel and study abroad thanks to the Hodgden Travel Fund and the Center for International Programs and Activities (CIPA).

2. Scope of educational offerings

Shawnee offers more than 80 bachelor's and associate degree programs in areas such as arts and humanities, mathematical sciences, natural sciences, social sciences, teacher education, business administration, industrial and engineering technologies, and health sciences. SSU has the lowest tuition rate among Ohio public universities and reduced in-district rates to eligible students in Kentucky and West Virginia. Shawnee State University is the university of opportunity serving southern Ohio. Shawnee was recently approved to offer a master's degree in occupational therapy.

The university is composed of two colleges, the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Professional Studies. The specific programs offered under each college may be viewed on the following web pages.

Arts and Sciences: <http://www.shawnee.edu/acad/coas/programs.html>

Professional Studies: <http://www.shawnee.edu/acad/cops/programs.html>

3. Students

Students come to SSU for many reasons including a low student/teacher ratio, more than \$1.5 million in scholarships, and proven programs that ensure success in the classroom and in finding jobs. Many students coming to Shawnee are first generation college students from the Appalachian region of Ohio. Approximately 85% of the students identify their ethnicity as white/Caucasian. The campus enrollment averages around 60 percent female and 40 percent male. Approximately 90% of first year students last year were of traditional college age – a notable shift away from non-traditional students which dominated enrollments a decade ago. This shift has resulted in a change in student demand for services. Recent enrollment trends can be seen in the following table.

	2002	2003	2004
Student enrollment (headcount – fall term)	3,606	3,693	3,798
Student enrollment (FTE – fall term)	3,022	3,179	3,275

Much of the growth noted above is from traditional age, Ohio students from outside the immediate region.

Residence	2002	2003	2004
Scioto County	1,881	1,713	1,770
Other County-Ohio	1,399	1,627	1,680
Out of State	46	56	41
Other National/Foreign	15	24	26
In Region-Out of State	265	273	281
Undisclosed	0	0	0
Total	3,606	3,693	3,798

4. Collaborative or partnership arrangements

Select and describe three most important partnerships and/or collaborative arrangements.

- Area schools and other educational agencies such as OACHE – Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (recruitment, especially serving first generation college students; field experiences for students in a number of degree programs; employers of SSU graduates; and source of adjunct faculty, especially developmental reading, writing and mathematics)
- Other higher education institutions and the IUC – Inter University Council (OSU South Centers with Outreach Services programs; Southern State and other two year institutions for articulation agreements and transfer students; Ashland Community College and other institutions participating in tuition reciprocity agreements; institutions offering programs through the Graduate Center)
- Public/Private Partnerships (student housing development adjacent to campus; outreach activity for business/industry/government training; internships for students; and employers of SSU graduates) and area medical facilities (field experiences for a students in a number of degree programs; employers of SSU graduates; and source of adjunct faculty).

5. Faculty and staff

Shawnee State University employs 137 full-time faculty members. The majority of these individuals have terminal degrees in their discipline, mostly at the Ph.D. level. The institution uses a number of adjunct faculty, approximately equal in number to the full-time faculty. The full-time faculty is represented by the Shawnee Education Association, a National Education Association affiliate.

The university employs 240 other staff in administrative and hourly positions. The hourly employees are represented by Local 4372 of the Communications Workers of America.

6. Three operational environment requirements

- As a state university in Ohio, Shawnee has its own governing Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor. For many issues and funding, SSU works closely with the Ohio Board of Regents, an oversight body which coordinates higher education in the state. The Ohio Legislature has taken an increasingly active role with mandates to higher education ranging from accountability measures to course transfer requirements.
- A number of Shawnee's programs, notably teacher education and the allied health professions are accredited by national accrediting bodies. For a list, see page 8 and 9 of the online catalog: <http://www.shawnee.edu/pub/cat/2005catalog.pdf>
- Ohio, like many states, has a recent record of declining support of higher education. In the past four years, state support per FTE has declined by \$1611 in Ohio. Average tuition increases of \$1311 have made up for some of this loss, but it has put a squeeze on the operating budgets of the state supported institutions. Legislative tuition caps are

constraining higher education in Ohio. With a tradition of providing support to Appalachian students, these reductions in overall and special support have proved difficult for Shawnee State. Operating in a high tuition and low state funding environment is particularly challenging for Shawnee State.

7. Three important competitors

Listing three important competitors led to an interesting discussion. The difficulty in responding to this question says something about the changing nature of Shawnee State. For a number of individuals, the list of competitors included institutions like Ohio University – Southern campus and Ashland Community College. Five years ago these may have been significant competitors, but Shawnee is in transition with more and more freshmen being traditional age college students seeking a bachelor's degree. Today, Shawnee's important competitors are institutions with large baccalaureate programs in our immediate vicinity. These institutions also have significant graduate programs in addition to their undergraduate offerings.

- Morehead State University (Kentucky)
- Marshall University (West Virginia)
- The University of Rio Grande (Ohio)

8. Three important opportunities and three critical vulnerabilities

Opportunities

- Enrollment growth at SSU can continue as Shawnee is “discovered” by more Ohio families who desire a moderate sized, state-supported institution with quality programs, a safe campus, and good housing. The question of “right-sizing,” or what should be Shawnee’s long term enrollment goals is being discussed as we enter an update/revision of the SSU Master Plan. Increasing the low college participation rate of 25% in the Appalachian region of Ohio is another enrollment growth opportunity.
- Shawnee State has an opportunity to increase giving and visibility, especially from alumni who are now established in careers and have fond memories and a sense of loyalty to SSU.
- The recent enthusiasm about and enrollment in a new simulation and gaming program highlights the need to explore new innovative and cutting edge programs. The development of new programs is one avenue to continued growth.

Vulnerabilities

- Shawnee State University has a history of some labor strife. While relationships have improved over the last couple of years, an underlying tension still exists and presents continuing challenges for the institution.
- Shawnee State has received supplemental state support since its beginnings in 1986. The special supplement is declining along with general state support while Ohio law mandates tuition restraints.

- Shawnee is located in a rural region about two hours from a major metropolitan center and airport. This makes attracting qualified faculty candidates challenging.

B. Shawnee State University's *Future*

1. Three chronic frustrations

- Perception by others that Shawnee State is not as good as it really is.
- Expectation by local community that Shawnee is going to be the answer to all challenges and solve economic woes.
- The challenges involved in responding to changing conditions (student demand for programs, availability of technology, opportunities for collaboration, etc.)

2. Three elements of your shared vision

- Quality undergraduate and selected graduate higher education for the southern Ohio region in particular as well as the rest of the state.
- Improved college attendance and completion by high school graduates in our region.
- Partnerships with other entities in our region to promote education, economic development, and cultural opportunities.

3. Three most critical Principles of High Performance Organizations

It is difficult to select just three principles, but right now these three are critical.

- Learning – is central to our mission and, in many respects, what we do best. Improving learning at all levels is essential to moving Shawnee forward.
- Involvement – drawing on the expertise and experience of all segments of the university community will result in widespread engagement in improvement projects and processes.
- Planning – needs to increase and become more pervasive to foresee and respond to challenges, especially financial issues.

Agility and Information were the other two principles that received significant support in the preparation and review of this document.

4. Three to four tentative Action Project ideas; titles (up to 10 words) and descriptions

Two overarching needs identified during the *Vital Focus Survey*, *Conversation Day*, and subsequent discussions were the need for improved communication across the campus and a more engaged governance process. As Shawnee considered Action Project ideas, we had a proposed project relating to communication and governance (number 5 below), but we realized that the project idea was very general and that a better way to address this concern would be to integrate communication and governance improvements in all of the Action Projects developed for the Strategy Forum. Each of the following projects was subsequently revised to include communications and governance component.

1. Improve Advising, Retention, and Graduation Rates Via a University College (6, 8.2, 12, 39, UN3, AA1, GEAC3, GEAC 4)
2. Develop a Scheduling System that Enhances Retention and Completion Rates (7, 11.2, AA2)
3. Enhance Student Life and Recreational Opportunities (11.1, 30, 34, 36.2, 44)
4. Develop a Teaching and Learning Center for Faculty and Staff (13, 16.1, 17, 18, 24, UN7)
5. ~~Enhance Communication and Governance Processes that Engage the University Community (21, 22, UN1, UN2, UN4, UN8, UN9)~~

NOTE: The numbers in parentheses following each Action Project title represent the original ideas generated during the spring 2005 Conversation Day and follow-up that formed the basis for the proposed Action Project.

*Please enter a page break between **each** Action Project Worksheet*

Action Project Worksheet Shawnee State University, OH	<i>Challenging</i>	X	<i>Easy</i>
	<i>Complex</i>	X	<i>Simple</i>
	<i>High Payoff</i>	X	<i>Low Payoff</i>

Action Project idea 1: Improve Advising, Retention, and Graduation Rates Via a University College

AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates:

(1) *Helping Students Learn* and (3) *Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs*

Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish.

This project will address the needs of SSU students, particularly "at-risk" students, with assistance and services at the beginning of their academic career through the creation of a University College. The University College will help undecided and under prepared students navigate the initial college experience. The University College will provide students with good choices and increased confidence that come with initial success. Improved initial advising, improved advising in the major, increased retention, and a higher graduation rate are goals of this project.

Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate?

Several groups during the Conversation Day and the following discussions proposed similar projects or projects that had elements incorporated into this Action Project. The SSU Student Success Center has an excellent record of working with placement, remediation, and advising of undecided students. Shawnee has seen improved advising and retention through a Title III project during the last several years. This project will enhance and extend those results.

Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How?

Many SSU students are first generation college students. In addition, Shawnee is an open enrollment institution, so some students arrive at the institution with inadequate preparation and learning difficulties. The student population at Shawnee State is changing toward more traditional age freshman and transfers, yet the challenges of entering college and being successful continue for these students. An element of this project will communicate to all employees their role in working with incoming and returning students.

How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees' needs? Which, specifically?

Advising students who are unprepared for college work and undecided about majors can be a frustration for some faculty. Placing these students in a University College with advisors who specialize in assisting them with their special needs will improve advising and allow faculty to focus on students in declared majors. Working with advising systems and communicating with faculty concerning advising for advanced as well as entering students will be an important aspect of this project.

How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution's culture?

The importance of advising and the faculty role in working with students outside of class would be enhanced by this project. Institution wide acknowledgement of the importance of retention and the responsibility that every employee has toward each student will be emphasized. A focus of this project will be to effectively engage the university governance systems in a change process and find ways to communicate challenges, proposed changes, new procedures and results across the campus.

What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now?

Results from Vital Focus, discussion during the Conversation Day, and input from campus departments and offices indicate a general awareness of problems with the current advising system, the need to provide better services for at-risk students, and the importance of retention. The University College idea surfaced from a number of groups and individuals.

Action Project Worksheet Shawnee State University, OH	<i>Challenging</i>	X	<i>Easy</i>
	<i>Complex</i>	X	<i>Simple</i>
	<i>High Payoff</i>	X	<i>Low Payoff</i>

Action Project idea 2: Develop a Scheduling System that Enhances Retention and Completion Rates

AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates: (3) *Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs* and (6) *Supporting Institutional Operations*

Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish.

Shawnee State University is switching from a quarter calendar to semesters so an opportunity to become more responsive to the needs and expectations of a changing student population exists. The current perception is that too many courses are offered in the same time slots creating conflicts for students and creating potential difficulties in being able to schedule courses necessary for graduation. The switch to semesters will allow for better space utilization and a change in the "scheduling" culture that currently exists on campus.

Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate?

Recent class/section enrollment data and trends suggest that an increased demand for day classes exists from the 90% of entering students who are traditional age college freshman. In addition, a number of groups from Conversation Day recognized this issue as important for improving retention, addressing student athlete scheduling, avoiding conflicts when required courses are offered at the same time, and moving students toward timely graduation.

Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How?

With more traditional age students and increasing campus-life activity, SSU students are more and more registering for day classes first and evening classes second. Too many students are forced into their last choices for scheduling. Better use of time and space can address this problem. Better use of Fridays under a semester calendar will provide an opportunity for improved campus-life activity and increased student participation.

How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees' needs? Which, specifically?

Better scheduling and the elimination conflicts will make advising easier in some instances. To succeed, this project will require increased communication among departments on campus and it will involve the institutional governance structure in changes in processes.

How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution's culture?

The "scheduling" culture at Shawnee has been based on use of historical schedules and individual faculty desires rather than data on student needs, best space utilization, and creative solutions to scheduling problems. Moving the scheduling to a more information-based process would be an important and significant culture change. A successful project would also require improved communication among different groups on campus.

What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now?

Scheduling improvements are widely supported by campus leadership and administration. Less support exists among some faculty and staff. Many faculty and staff are neutral and disconnected from this process. Therefore, communicating effectively with all campus groups and gaining the support of the governance structure will be essential for the success of this project.

Action Project Worksheet Shawnee State University, OH	<i>Challenging</i>	X	<i>Easy</i>
	<i>Complex</i>	X	<i>Simple</i>
	<i>High Payoff</i>	X	<i>Low Payoff</i>

Action Project idea 3: Enhance Student Life and Recreational Opportunities

AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates: (3) *Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs* (4) *Valuing People*

Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish.
 With the growth in enrollment, especially residential students, and the increasing use of university facilities by the community, we have outgrown the current University Center and student recreational spaces. With more residential students at SSU, there is a need for increased recreational and student life programming. This project will result in increased programming and space to serve students and the community. Recruitment and retention will benefit from additional campus-life programming, student facilities and campus recreational space.

Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate?
 The need for expanded student life programming and space has been put forth by students and the Student Affairs staff. The idea also emerged during the Conversation Day from several groups.

Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How?
 With increased numbers of students in residential housing the cafeteria/eating areas and recreational spaces in the current University Center are inadequate. There are times that community groups are turned away because of lack of space. Increased residential students also increase the need for campus-life programming and opportunities.

How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees' needs? Which, specifically?
 Student Affairs staff, especially the residential housing staff, will benefit from the implementation of this proposal by having greater opportunity for programming and meeting the student life needs of Shawnee students. Shawnee employees have generally not been involved in campus-life student activities. Active communication with all employees about changes in student programming and activities will increase the knowledge of faculty and staff of campus-life activity.

How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution's culture?
 The emphasis on residential students and serving community needs is a broadening of the role that many employees see as important to Shawnee's future.

What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now?
 There are always competing demands for resources and space. This project is recognized as needed to attract and retain students.

Action Project Worksheet Shawnee State University, OH	<i>Challenging</i>	X	<i>Easy</i>
	<i>Complex</i>	X	<i>Simple</i>
	<i>High Payoff</i>	X	<i>Low</i>

Action Project idea 4: Develop a Teaching and Learning Center for Faculty and Staff

AQIP Criterion to which this primarily relates: (1) *Helping Students Learn*, (4) *Valuing People*, and (5) *Leading and Communicating*

Briefly describe what you would like this Project to accomplish.

The goal of this project is to increase the opportunities for professional development for faculty and staff. A secondary goal is that all university employees find ways to enhance student learning through their contact with students and faculty adopt the most successful teaching strategies in their classrooms. Much of the success of this project will be dependent upon effective and timely communication with faculty and staff to determine needs, plan programs and implement professional development activities.

Where did the idea or stimulus for this Action Project originate?

An active faculty development process that has utilized Faculty Learning Communities has demonstrated the potential of a Teaching and Learning Center that reaches all employees. Numerous groups had elements of this proposal in their Conversation Day ideas.

Which specific needs of your students or other external stakeholders would be better met if you accomplished this Project? How?

Students and external stakeholders will benefit from interacting with more effective, knowledgeable and highly motivated employees.

How would doing this Project allow you to better meet your employees' needs? Which, specifically?

This specifically addresses the needs of faculty and staff to have up-to-date skills, knowledge and information to do their jobs effectively and efficiently.

How would accomplishing this Project change or affect your institution's culture?

An effective Teaching and Learning Center would help faculty and staff find ways to do their jobs better. An institutional culture where all employees are constantly asking the question, "How can I improve how I do this?" and then knowing they would be supported in answering that question, would be a significant step forward toward a culture of continuous improvement. Effective communication among employee groups is essential for this project.

What leadership and employee enthusiasm and support is there for doing this Project now?

Many employees are enthusiastic about professional development and improving the way they work. Elements of such a plan have been in place, including training to use technology, specifically *Blackboard*, but these efforts have not been universally embraced.