Quality Checkup Visit

January 2010

www.rio.edu
Welcome to the University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College. As a former consultant-evaluator for the Higher Learning Commission, I respect the importance of your visit and look forward to the opportunity of working with you on our continuous improvement plan. Your timing is perfect, as we are moving toward a new era as “One Rio.”

The State of Ohio has one of the highest numbers per population of colleges and universities in the country. Under what is now termed the University System of Ohio, there are 23 community colleges, of which Rio Grande Community College is a member. The 37 private institutions range from very small commuter institutions to larger liberal arts colleges. Rio Grande is the only combined institution in the state, and indeed nationally. This public-private partnership creates a wonderful opportunity for the citizens of southeastern Ohio and those coming to us from other parts of the state, country and world.

As the new president, I am very cognizant that two outstanding features of Rio Grande are the sense of “family” and a genuine commitment to the individual learner. The faculty and staff hold a deep passion for both the students and the institutions they serve. With a wide variety of majors, our students have the opportunity to complete an associate degree at a very reasonable cost, and move on to new careers or additional upper division higher education. In so doing, Rio meets the challenges set forth in the Ten-Year Strategic Plan of the Ohio Board of Regents – affordability, access, economic development and accountability.

We look forward to your visit and insight as we continue to make a substantial difference in the lives of thousands of first-generation learners. You will find a commitment to qualify as well as a very vibrant student life. There is beauty in the region, and an educational gem sitting here in Rio Grande.
Organizational Overview
University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College

01. Distinctive Features
The University of Rio Grande, founded in 1876 and known for its excellence, creativity and innovative approach to learning, is located in Gallia County in rural southeastern Ohio. A safe and beautiful university town with great amenities, Rio Grande is small enough for students to feel a sense of belonging to the community. The campus is friendly, casual and cosmopolitan and includes acres of rolling lawns, expansive athletic fields and attractive facilities. The two nearest large cities are Chillicothe, Ohio (approximately 50 miles northwest) and Charleston, WV (approximately 50 miles southeast).

The University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College (URG/RGCC) form a unique institution that combines a state-assisted public two-year institution with a four-year private university offering programs in professional, arts and sciences and graduate education. Rio Grande Community College opened its doors in 1974.

Deeply rooted in Appalachian history, both institutions are committed to encouraging effective written and oral communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, personal and professional growth and life-long learning to students from the southeastern Ohio area, the state, the nation and the world.

Of 88 Ohio counties, 29 in the southern and southeastern part of the state are identified as Appalachian. The four counties (Gallia, Jackson, Meigs and Vinton) which comprise the Rio Grande Community College district are described as 79% rural compared to an Ohio average of 13%.

These same four counties and four of the six counties contiguous to the Community College district are also ranked in the top 10 poorest counties in the state with poverty rates ranging between 17-33%.

02. Educational Scope
The University of Rio Grande/Rio Grande Community College provides programs in the liberal arts, sciences, business, teacher education, fine and performing arts, nursing and technologies.

The Academic division consists of two colleges, each with four schools and a graduate program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Bachelor</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Certificate</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL PROGRAMS</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Granting associate’s, bachelor’s and master’s degrees, the diverse curriculum offers a range of educational opportunities with open access at a reasonable cost. Students can choose from 85 degree and certificate programs.
03. Student Base
The University reports an average annual enrollment (2007-2009) of 2400 students yielding an average Full-Time Equivalent of 1889 students. RGCC supports 65% of students enrolled while the University sustains 35% (23.3% baccalaureate and 11.6% graduate). The distribution of FTE student enrollment increases to 69.7% RGCC with 30.3% URG (25.9% baccalaureate and 4.4% graduate).

Most students are in the traditional age group with 78% of undergraduates age 24 or under. Eighty-three percent of full-time students commute.

04. Collaboration
The interdependence of the University and Community College is reflected in a thirty-three year history of developing responsive educational programs that meet regional needs and provide a foundation for continuing degree work. Many professional programs, such as teacher education, nursing, social work, business and allied health have strong service learning components that benefit from the numerous cooperative agreements the University has with agency and business work sites.

The main campus also serves as a center for cultural and community events in the region. Music and fine arts programs, political and discussion forums, training, conference meetings, athletic events, festivals and celebrations all take advantage of the buildings and accommodations that the University can provide.

The University is also engaged in the life cycle of the community as the site of wedding receptions, high school graduations and memorial services.

05. Faculty and Staff Base
University faculty are well-qualified and dedicated to teaching and community service. Although research is not required, a significant number of faculty are active in state and national professional groups, publish articles and are involved in collaborative projects with support partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>URG/RGCC</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>47 (50%)</td>
<td>19 (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>42 (45%)</td>
<td>54 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>23 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Across the classification of employees (FT/PT faculty, administrators, hourly employees), the University presents an average 5.4% ethnic minority profile, ranging from 2% of hourly employees to 8% among administrators. The Faculty Association is the only recognized bargaining unit on campus.

06. Facilities, Equipment, Technologies and Regulatory Environment
In addition to numerous classroom facilities with a range of technological capabilities, the campus also has a library, social centers, five residence halls and a performing arts center. A number of recreational and sports facilities such as squash and racquetball courts, an Olympic size pool, basketball courts, soccer and football fields, aerobic and many other physical training facilities also attract student activity. Established in 1998, the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College Meigs Center makes access to higher education more convenient for the residents of Meigs and Mason Counties.

RioNET is a network which offers services to persons having a user account and provides access to computer login privileges,
e-mail login, WebCT login and the Internet. ResNet is a network connection for each room in the residence halls at Rio Grande.

The Ohio Board of Regents is the governing authority for both private and public institutions of higher education in the state. Seven programs offered by the University are also reviewed by external national accrediting agencies. Other program graduates must also pass state licensure examinations to qualify to practice in the state.

07. Competitive Environment
In the past decade, URG/RGCC have responded similarly to the extension of most of the competitors in the region. Ohio University (OH) has several branches in surrounding counties, Marshall University (WV) expanded course offerings at a site in a neighboring county and Shawnee State University (OH) has grown from a Community College to a four-year state supported institution.

Colleges/universities with over 2000 students nearest to Rio Grande:
- MARSHALL COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE (about 32 miles; HUNTINGTON, WV; Full-time enrollment: 2,535)
- MARSHALL UNIVERSITY (about 32 miles; HUNTINGTON, WV; Full-time enrollment: 12,361)
- OHIO UNIVERSITY-MAIN CAMPUS (about 36 miles; ATHENS, OH; FT enrollment: 18,721)
- SHAWNEE STATE UNIVERSITY (about 40 miles; PORTSMOUTH, OH; FT enrollment: 2,849)
- HOCKING COLLEGE (about 41 miles; NELSONVILLE, OH; FT enrollment: 4,050)
- WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY AT PARKERSBURG (about 64 miles; PARKERSBURG, WV; FT enrollment: 2,306)
- WEST VIRGINIA STATE COLLEGE (about 70 miles; INSTITUTE, WV; FT enrollment: 3,688)

08. Opportunities and Vulnerabilities

Opportunities:
The history of responsive academic programming, resulting from the partnership between the University and Community College, will continue to be a major asset developed by its sponsoring community. Transforming accessibility into opportunity is a reputation that drives the URGRGCC strategic plan.

Vulnerabilities:
- Future demographics suggest that competition for students in higher education will increase.

- State support for higher education will require greater accountability and value-added evidence of achievement.
- Academic programs must be sensitive to the general economy.

Quality Program Summary

Category #1: Helping Students Learn

1.1 Coursework Mini-projects.
Since fall 2006 and for the past seven semesters, full-time faculty have completed nearly 500 coursework assessment mini-projects. Focused on providing evidence of student learning, faculty have designed course embedded projects that target learning concepts and use rubrics, pre-post design and other outcome models to give students feedback about their individual learning process. A repository of accumulated projects is available for faculty to review and adapt for ongoing action research.

1.2 Program Outcomes
A State of Ohio initiative required all public institutions to file Student Success Plans which detailed the learning outcomes for all programs in higher education. Curriculum mapping, course content pedagogy, formative and summative assessment planning and benchmarking are all recommended activities that promote accountability and transparency for the learning stakeholder. Beginning fall 2009, all programs began a semester cycle of assessing program-level achievement of learning outcomes. With each successive semester, programs will assess a different learning outcome until the full list of outcomes demonstrates a cycle of continuous quality improvement.

1.3 Specialized External Accreditation
The University sustains the specialized accreditation of seven programs supported by various School disciplines (Nursing, Social Work, Business, Education, Diagnostic Medical Sonography, Radiology and Respiratory Therapy).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Last Visit Date</th>
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<td>March 2007</td>
<td>Initial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>AAB</td>
<td>IACBE</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>April 2005</td>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>AAS</td>
<td>NCATE</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>BS</td>
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1.4 NSSE 2009 and CCSSE 2010
The University participated in its first NSSE (and FSSE) cohort in 2009; results were released in August and analysis of the survey results is continuing campus-wide. As a random sample, 474 Rio Grande four-year students were invited to participate and 131 responded. A 28% response rate yielded 71 first-year students and 60 seniors.

An application in CCSSE for 2010 was accepted and will provide valuable information about the experiences of the two-year student population.

Category #2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

2.1 One Rio
Following a three-year period of strained collaboration, the University and Community College celebrate the reunification of the partnership of private and public higher education in the region. Separate Boards of Trustees administer the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College, while one president serves both institutions. Instructional services for both the two-year and four-year programs, as well as the graduate program, are coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs.

2.2 Mission and Vision Resolution
The mission statement shared by the University and the Community College is “Putting your future within reach by providing educational, personal growth and economic development opportunities.” A Rio Grande education instills self-confidence and motivation and prepares students for the challenges of living a fulfilling life, reaching career and professional goals and being a responsible citizen in a culturally diverse, global community.

2.3 Rural Appalachian Southeastern Ohio
The four counties (Gallia, Jackson, Meigs and Vinton) of the Community College District and the six surrounding contiguous counties are all deeply embedded in Appalachian Southeastern Ohio. The region, composed of beautiful rolling hills, forests and valleys, is primarily rural and extremely poor. For generations, the area has struggled with high poverty rates and few job opportunities. The Community College District poverty rate averages nearly 17% as compared to the Ohio statewide average of 10.6% (2009). A vast majority of Rio Grande's students (84%) require financial aid to pursue their education and during the 2008-2009 academic year, only 16% of students had all their financial needs met based on the FAFSA Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) guidelines.

Students from Southeastern Ohio are faced with major obstacles in order to live successful, independent and fulfilling lives. Most have few well-educated family members or friends to serve as role models and family or peer encouragement to complete a program in higher education is absent, if not resistive. The University and Community College seek to assist qualified low-income, first-generation college students and students with disabilities to successfully earn associate’s, bachelor’s and master’s degrees, certifications and/or transfer to four-year institutions to continue their higher education goals.

2.4. Small Business Internships
In August 2009 the University of Rio Grande and the Ohio State University formed a partnership to provide experiential learning for undergraduate and graduate students. A full-time position was created with responsibilities shared equally between URG and OSU. This position works with URG’s Small Business Development Center to coordinate new internships and experiential learning. Students enroll in an internship program that includes a course to cover resume preparation, job interviewing skills and work experience. At the conclusion of their internship, they present the results of their experience to the rest of the class thereby benefitting from other’s experience. The surrounding community benefits from better coordination with internship providers in the area as well as building a small business outreach for URG/RGCC and OSU.

2.5 Global Projects
Rio Grande’s two-year exchange program with Baoli University in China culminated with a commencement ceremony in China for 26 faculty members who received their Master of Education in Classroom Teaching degree in June 2008. The program has been dormant since December 2008. Efforts in 2007 to establish an exchange program with India to offer a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Entrepreneurship were not sustainable as staffing and budget cuts strained the project. Both projects have been suspended until a progressive strategy can be developed. Undergraduate summer travel to Mexico was suspended temporarily in 2008.
A student exchange program with Trinity College in Carmarthen, Wales has persisted since 2002. During this time 40 students from the University of Rio Grande and 33 Trinity students have been able to expand their educational and life experiences by spending a semester abroad. Welsh immigration to southern Ohio in the 1800’s established the strong ties that re-emerged with the establishment of the Madog Center for Welsh Studies at the Rio Grande. Each year since 2003 a Faculty Fellow is selected to conduct research and present findings that foster understanding and appreciation for Welsh heritage and contemporary Welsh culture.

**Category #3: Understanding Students’ and Other Stakeholders’ Needs**

**3.1 National Survey of Student Engagement**

In reviewing 85 total items, the Rio sample fared better than the national sample on the following items: For seniors, (1) “Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary),” (2) “Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor” and (3) “Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance.” For first year and senior students, (4) “Good quality of relationships with other students,” and (5) “Good quality of relationships with faculty members.”

Responses scoring lower than the national sample were noted as concerns: For first year students, (1) “Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue.” For senior students, (2) “How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?” and (3) “If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?” For both groups, (4) “Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept,” and (5) “Institution provides the support you need to help you succeed academically.”

**3.2 Open Admission and Developmental Course Enrollment**

Records (fall 2009) show that 57% of Rio Grande students enroll in at least one remedial course. According to the January 2009 Ohio Board of Regents’ (OBR) report, *Preparation for College Level Coursework at University System of Ohio Institutions*, RGCC students needing help with mathematics or English are some of the least prepared for college-level work in Ohio. According to FY2007 OBR data, 41% of RGCC students needed remediation in mathematics, 39% needed assistance with English, 56% needed help with mathematics or English and 24% required assistance with both subject areas.

In spite of their weak educational background, Rio Grande students who stay enrolled in the community college complete their degrees in the shortest time of all other community colleges in Ohio. The median across Ohio was as long as 5.7 years at some institutions while the median time to completion at RGCC is 3.0 years. Only 29% of Rio Grande students need four years or more to earn an associate degree in comparison to 38 to 69 percent at other schools.

**3.3 Off-Campus Program Development**

The University has a primary off-site location at the Meigs County facility. URG maintains a strong on-site affiliation with Hocking College where the University provides programs for baccalaureate degree completion.

A new relationship with Shawnee State University provides an Occupational Therapy program and a graduate degree in Classroom Teaching.

**3.4 Online Education**

Online enrollment has nearly doubled (99%) in the past two-year period (2007-2009) over the previous three year period (2004-2006). A recent environmental scan of the four-county Community College service district revealed that there are approximately 6000 residents with some college and no degree. To meet this need, URG/RGCC plans to launch four degree-completion programs in hybrid format beginning with at least two by March 2010 and following with the other two by fall 2010. Three of the programs, Public Administration, Bachelor of Technical Studies (BTS) and Business Management, are existing URG programs.

The Public Administration degree and the majority of the courses in the Business Management degree are already in hybrid format. Hybrid courses for the BTS still need to be developed. Integrated Studies is a newly approved degree with a multidisciplinary core and focuses on the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students in the four-county area are challenged by a lack of access to high-speed internet. To overcome this barrier, local school districts have agreed to allow students in the programs access to their computer labs at night.
Category #4: Valuing People

4.1 Reduction of Overload

Among eight Schools and 90 full-time faculty, overload assignment has proven to be high with an average 43.3 FTE faculty teaching overload. This means that current full-time faculty would be teaching the equivalent of a 48% overload, or 1 ½ times the normal teaching load (24 to 36).

One emphasis of the 2009 negotiated contract with full-time faculty is to lower overload assignments to not more than 6 hours per academic year. The current 2009-2010 academic year load assignment will provide the evidence of compliance with this objective.

4.2 Addition of Lecturer Position

The adjunct faculty teaching load for the University was reduced 12.5% from 88 FTE equivalent in the 2007-2008 academic year to 77 FTE equivalent in the 2008-2009 academic year. Most of this reduction was gained by a campus-wide curriculum credit load review that enforced credit load limits for the range of major and minor programs. However, the University also created a lecturer position with a required teaching load of 30 semester hours. With an entry salary of 76% that of an entry instructor rank, it is nearly double the cumulative adjunct rate and includes benefits. Three lecturers were hired fall 2009 and the University will continue to monitor the mix of full-time faculty, overload and adjunct utilization in delivering teaching for student learning.

4.3 Staff Benefits Reduction

At the point when the strained relationship between the University and Community College was beginning to show signs of healing, the nation’s economy nearly collapsed. Ohio’s unemployment rate was 10.5% in October 2009. Employment in Appalachia has fallen back to 2002 levels (Appalachian Regional Commission) and most business entities in the region are strained in waiting for the recovery.

As operating budgets were challenged, University faculty and staff were generous in accepting a 25% cut in employer pension contribution and an increase in the health insurance deductible from $2000 to $4000. Effective January 2010, the University will contribute $500 to a Health Savings Account to help off-set the high deductible.

4.4 Projected Employee Retirements

Records reflect that 21% of employees of all classifications are between the ages of 60-75 and 29% of employees have years of service between 20 and 50 years. A large number of retirements are expected within the next five years. Research has been done on early retirement incentives for faculty, staff and administration. However, due to budgetary constraints, early retirement incentive packages have not been implemented. With new allied health programs and additional hybrid educational programs being added, emphasis will shift in the numbers and types of both full- and part-time employees.

Category #5: Leading and Communicating

5.1 Reunification of University and Community College President

A very difficult past year ended with an optimistic and stabilizing reconciliation for the University and Community College partnership. Marked by threats of dissolution since the Presidency was split in January 2006, consideration that the University and Community College might be marketing as separate educational institutions challenged all administrative divisions to develop strategies to sustain the shared vision and mission for higher education in the region. Negotiations and supportive state administrative rulings have now renewed the partnership, formally convened in the unified Presidency for both entities by the appointment of Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley as President, effective October 1, 2009.

5.2 Resolution of Interim Positions

Resolving the impasse and reunifying the Presidency was groundbreaking and provides opportunities for growth. Both College Dean positions are filled but the Vice-President for Academic Affairs/ Provost position is now vacant. The position has been posted and interviews are anticipated for spring semester 2010. An appointment is planned by May 2010.
5.3 Strategic Planning
A five-year (2008-2012) comprehensive strategic plan was initiated and generated over 400 strategies for 39 areas across campus. The challenge to close the loop was evidenced in the struggle to generate the metrics for performance indicators. The community is slowly learning to develop the soft discipline of mapping quality.

5.4 Data-Collection Protocols
During the spring 2009 academic term, two open forums were arranged with representative members of the University and Community College Boards of Trustees to open discussion regarding the strategic planning process and the contractual relationship between the two Boards. From these meetings, over 200 suggestions/recommendations were made by faculty, staff and administration. The President's Cabinet reviewed all of them and prioritized issues in the areas of budget, communication and productivity.

In addition to two Action Projects, one of the recommendations that the URG/RGCC partner team generated at the Strategy Forum in Chicago in October 2008 was the need for Rio Action Meeting Minutes. The importance of creating a record of discussion, decision and assignment was emphasized. A template was created and all meetings are now required to be posted on the University intranet at rio-minutes@rio.edu.

Category #6: Supporting Institutional Operations

6.1 Establish Financial Stability
In September 2008, the Chief Financial Officer resigned and his duties were absorbed by the recently appointed Chief Operating Officer. A consultant was hired to assist in the preparation for the annual audit due March 31, 2009. In early March, the current Vice-President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer was hired and the audit was completed. Related to financial processes, the consultant and CFO concluded that the financial and accounting data base maintained by Student|Space software was accurate. The persisting challenge, however, is the need to construct a schedule of budget reports with the reliability to support accounting and strategic planning.

Confirming that the fiscal database was valid and accurate was essential. A belief had developed that the software was flawed and had limited utility for fiscal management. The working principle now is that the ability to produce usable reports has more to do with controlling access to the data and having relevant stakeholders meet to agree on content, protocol, process and distribution.

The cash flow for this past summer was 10% below projections and required a short-term loan due in September 2011. Over the course of the past year, significant benefit concessions in health insurance and retirement contribution were necessary to avoid staff reductions.

6.2 Pursue a Marketing Plan
The University is currently moving toward an Enrollment Management model. An Enrollment Management Team has been established encompassing Admissions, Financial Aid, Records and Institutional Research. The purpose of this team is to bring vision and focus to all enrollment matters by working collaboratively across the institution to build the strongest possible Rio Grande. Marketing of programs and targeting specific populations will be coordinated by this team until a full-time marketing position can be established. A Marketing Committee has been developed to obtain input from various segments of the campus and the committee will strive to enhance the recruitment and marketing efforts for the University.

Category #7: Measuring Effectiveness

7.1. Planned Systems Assessment
There is a need to stabilize the inventory of assessment activities to make it planned and meaningful. The Action Project on Transparent Information Accountability (TIA) is designed to help all sectors of the University use information because all sectors will create information. Facilitating a user-friendly repository is the outcome of this project; the upgraded intranet will roll into full operation in January 2010.

7.2 Status of Institutional Research
The new Enrollment Management Team collaborates with the MIS department, the Chief Compliance Officer and the Accreditation and Assessment Coordinator to provide institutional research at Rio Grande. The Quality Assurance Council Action Project is currently focused on auditing the audit system and tempering the eagerness of planning with the metrics of evidence.

7.3 Identification of External Benchmarks
The University has adjusted and stabilized its IPEDS comparison group. Recent participation in NSSE (and
scheduled participation in CCSSE) is providing a new point of reference for assessing student engagement. The University has also partnered with the Ohio Coalition of AQIP Institutions to sponsor training in Columbus in October 2009. This group has helped to generate comparison templates for the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) requirement in Ohio for community and public colleges.

7.4 New Compliance Officer
In May 2009, the University appointed a new Vice-President position as Chief Compliance Officer (CCO). Responsibilities include the development of an institution-wide program of compliance and internal controls assessment to centralize the monitoring of requirements under laws, regulations and internal policies and procedures. Additionally, the CCO will require monitoring of accreditation requirements and financial aid programs on campus. With a persistent emphasis on quality improvement, the CCO will be an important asset in “closing the loop” between data collection and outcome achievement. This appointment represents the University’s commitment to invest in the continued improvement of the institution’s administrative capability.

Category #8: Planning Continuous Improvement

8.1 Creating a Culture of Assessment
Demonstrating that collaboration can be restored through faithful persistence is the enduring lesson of the efforts that bring the University and Community College together, again. However, at the same time that AQIP facilitates an assessment culture, the institution must find those elements that are the foundation of sustaining this culture. Reflecting on the risks and threats that challenged the partnership for the past three years is the foundation of resilience and the heritage of the region. Leading forward to quality is the culture that URG/RGCC’s stewardship of higher education must pursue.

8.2 Institutional Strategic Plan
There are several efforts from the past that build toward a strategic plan for the University and Community College. The current focus on planning emphasizes the importance of a collaborative effort for both URG and RGCC. The two Boards of Trustees and the President’s Cabinet are working together to create a comprehensive multi-year plan with measurable metrics. Faculty, staff and external stakeholders will be involved. Embedded in the context of “a culture of evidence,” the plan includes a detailed look at the external environmental trends impacting Rio Grande. These include local, state, national and international trends – many based on the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) research. A detailed “current state” of the internal environment will be included, after which forums will be held to review the implications of all these trends on Rio. The recommendations and metrics will be presented to the Boards in March in time for budget preparation for fiscal year 2011, and a final report due by July 2010.

8.3 Action Project Summary
Student Learning as Vision Realized (start date: May 2004)
This project aims to validate the success as an institution of higher learning by establishing learning as a transparent developmental process. Rio Grande embraces that good teaching is evidenced only by measured student learning. The institution endorses that a plan of learning is evidenced only by a premeditated process of (1) accurate entry-level assessment, placement and challenge, (2) embedded benchmarks for frequent feedback of student success and (3) achievement that is confirmed by stakeholders’ expectations of the graduates. The student learning project seeks to make permanent and persistent a process of measuring and improving student learning throughout the University.

The most recent Action Project Review notes that in addition to the new Action Projects related to information management and quality assurance, it is important that progress is made on the Student Learning project as well. Work related to program outcomes has progressed to the point where learning outcomes have been defined for all majors and a program assessment cycle has been developed and will be launched this academic year. Results from the spring 2009 administration of the NSSE, currently under review, will provide the institution with benchmark data related to student engagement in academic programs and student life activities. Work on the assessment of general education outcomes has stalled.

The institution has experienced significant challenges during the life of this Action Project, but appears to have emerged from these experiences as a stronger, more focused institution. Now is the time to rebuild and sustain commitment to this important Action Project. The institution must declare the expectations it has for its faculty with regard to assessment of student learning (particularly for the course-level assessment and the general education outcomes work that has not progressed).

URG/RGCC will consider positioning curriculum mapping work as a validation process for the outcomes that have been developed, as well as a mechanism by which course and
program outcomes are aligned and refined. To the extent that the programs with specialized accreditation have already done this work, they can serve as a best practice model for all programs to follow.

**Financial Assessment Planning Intervention Evaluation (A.P.I.E) (start date: May 2004)**

This project seeks to establish an ongoing sound financial process that analyzes, plans, implements and evaluates its effectiveness in supporting the mission of Rio Grande. Much has happened since this Action Project was initiated; the institution has experienced significant upheaval and considerable focus and effort have been expended to re-stabilize the institution. The planned next steps include: 1. Closing the July 2009 financial statement, 2. Adjusting the financial cycle to have audit completed by November 2009, 3. Producing monthly statements that describe budgets, expenditures, encumbrances and variance and 4. Recommending policy changes to support standard business practices related to registration, billing and receipts, halt processes and aging accounts receivable.

It is the intention to retire the comprehensive scope of this action project and resubmit a project that focuses on the fiscal activities related to retiring a short term loan due in September 2011.

**Mission and Vision: RETIRED (September 2009)**

**Accountability: RETIRED (September 2009)**

**Transparent Information Accountability (TIA) (start date: January 2009)**

TIA is to create a user-friendly, reliable intranet website that strengthens the level of communication between boards, departments and schools. “There is an opportunity to coordinate data collection, storage and analysis to align with institutional goals regarding learning and overall institutional objectives.” (7P4-7P5) The system will be a repository for documents, discussions and other data pertaining to the goals and objectives of the University. Future plans will include adding and displaying current information regarding admissions, finance, degrees, etc.

The Committee recommended and the University purchased SharePoint software and completed a preliminary mapping of the document repository. Initial use and training with staff will occur December 2009. Full operational status is expected in January 2010. Outcome measure indicators include: 1. Level of “First-Stop” data search, 2. Document storage and access and 3. Mapping of preferred use patterns for information and posting.

**Quality Assurance Council (QAC): Closing the Loop (start date: April 2009)**

With representatives appointed from each of the academic schools and other administrative units, the Council’s goals are to: 1. Identify internal and external indicators of quality achievement throughout the University enterprise, 2. Review existing processes to determine effective and efficient practices in the full range of University operations, 3. Recommend modification or innovation as solutions to persistent opportunities and 4. Champion the “Rio Grande” brand and suggest prioritized strategies to sustain the institution’s mission and vision.

To this end, the QAC has reviewed the Outstanding Opportunities for improvement as identified in the 2007 AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Report and selected four of those opportunities to determine progress made since the Appraisal as evidenced through the institutional strategic plan and other external measures, and to make recommendations as to how quality can be further improved and continually assessed on a regular basis. This report is pending.

**8.4 Proposed Action Projects**

The University recognizes the value of complementing large initiatives with targeted Action Projects. To this end, several initiatives on campus could benefit from a two-year stimulus of Plan-Do-Check-Act (Deming) decision-making.

Increasing retention with each year’s cohort would benefit from an intentional *First Year Experience*. Supporting the initiatives requires an assertive marketing plan driven by an *Enrollment Management Conversion* Team. Proving the rich Appalachian heritage of regional collaboration will be proven by celebrating with intentionality the durability and resilience of the *Community Partners Collaborative*.

**Category #9: Building Collaborative Relationships**

**9.1 URG/RGCC Reconciliation**

In February 2009, the Boards of Trustees for the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College signed a new two-year operating contract. The preceding three years of tension had provoked the intervention by the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents and the appointment of a Coordinating Officer to mediate the crisis between the two Boards. Ohio
House Bill 1, which was passed by the Ohio General Assembly in July 2009, provided the legislation needed for one president to serve both institutions. The legislation confirmed the year-long “One Rio” collaborative effort and made it possible to name a new president. A recent joint board retreat in October further embraced the importance of continued collaboration and cooperation between the two boards.

9.2 Articulation with Higher Education Partners
For the first time this year, Washington State Community College is offering their Medical Laboratory Technology courses on the URG/RGCC campus with students taking generals from RGCC. At Hocking College, URG offers two BS degrees—Wildlife and Fish Conservation and Management and Public Administration. Wildlife is strong and is on the way to becoming a “premier” URG program with students and faculty all doing research projects. Public Administration is in its first year of being offered in a hybrid format with competitive pricing. The new format is being well received by the students, and the numbers are expected to grow once the program is marketed as one of the adult-degree completion programs.

This year a new collaborative partnership was formed with Shawnee State University to offer an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program to URG/RGCC students. The students take general courses from RGCC, do clinicals in the area and travel to Shawnee State one-two days per week for OTA courses. The MEd in Classroom Teaching Intervention Specialist classes are offered at Shawnee State University and Washington State Community College via video conferencing.

9.3 Partnership Learning Sites
The University has a rich history of service learning partnerships. The administrative offices of the Area Agency on Aging, District 7 and the Gallia-Vinton Educational Service Center are located on the main campus. Nearly 200 sites in the tri-state region are qualified for professional and para-professional internship, field placement, clinical rotation and cooperative education. High school students can participate in Post-Secondary Enrollment Options and take designated college courses to earn high school and college credit. Dual credit courses are offered at several local high schools.

9.4 Graduate School Vision
A new major in Educational Leadership has been added to the MEd program and the Reading Concentration in the MEd in Classroom Teaching has been revised. The MBA program is offered on the main campus and at Shawnee State University. Consideration is being given to putting the MBA in Entrepreneurship on hold until it can be revised for hybrid delivery and thus reach a wider audience.

Fall Semester 2009, classes were reinstated in the MEd in Classroom Teaching Concentration in Athletic Coaching Leadership. No decision has been made about reinstating the remaining Concentrations in Integrated Arts, Instructional Technology, Humanities or Mathematics.

This is a very exciting time for the University of Rio Grande and Rio Grande Community College. The board leadership of both institutions is very strong and collaborative; the public is very aware of the shift toward “One Rio.” Outreach is increasing daily, and key stakeholders are providing very positive feedback about the future of the University and Community College. The Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents and the Governor have reinforced repeatedly their support for the importance of the institution in southeastern Ohio.

They join many others, including community leaders and alumni, in celebrating the future of One Rio. Student life is vibrant and active. Fiscal oversight and controls will lead toward surpluses within a few years, funds that will focus on learners, professional development for faculty and staff, new program development and marketing. For the first time in years, Rio is on the state radar screen for a new era of hope, promise and continuous improvement in serving the learners. It is certain that their future (and Rio Grande’s) is within reach.