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Editorial

Drake S. Levasheff

Azusa Pacific University, dlevasheff@apu.edu

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Editorial

Drake S. Levasheff

Director

Orange County Regional Center

Azusa Pacific University

Like many colleagues who work in higher education, I am a regular reader of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and similar industry news sources. Over the past few weeks we have seen stories about one institution's sagging academic reputation, the University of California's statement on tolerance, and a National Labor Relations Board ruling about college athletes' freedom to unionize. Likeminded branch campus administrators perhaps share my interest in much of what is discussed, but my continuing observation is that broader higher education circles fail to address significant items central to branch campus life. In particular, questions related to working-adult students, community relations, and power dynamics between parent and remote campuses escape notice within the broader field.

That is not to say that branch campuses are all the same or share the exact same concerns. Our parent institutions and campuses are incredibly diverse, so we differ in a number of ways.

- **PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE:** Both publicly supported and private institutions establish locations separate from main campus.

- **SIZE:** Some serve 150 or fewer students, while others serve 15,000 or more students, with many between the two.
- **DEGREE OFFERINGS:** Both two- and four-year institutions are represented within our segment.
- **LOCATION:** Many are co-located on other college campuses; others rent elsewhere or occupy space owned by the parent institution.
- **POPULATION SERVED:** While a number of our branches serve the sort of two- and four-year student populations main campuses have targeted for the last fifty years or more, many provide education for working adults and other nontraditional students.

Much more could be said about the diversity of branch campuses. Nevertheless, the shared experience of serving at a remote campus embedded in a different community than the parent institution and advocating for our often-overlooked student populations provides significant common ground for the leaders who serve at such campuses. In light of the circumstances that branch campus leaders often share and the dearth of news and research unique to our segment, it is vital that organizations like the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators (NABCA) serve our community and higher education at large by contributing to the collective conversation about

branch campus issues.

This inaugural issue of *Access: The Journal of the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators* is thus presented in light of the evident need for relevant research and because of NABCA's unique position to represent and advocate for this segment within higher education. This first issue of *Access* is headlined by Stephen Gavazzi's article that discusses a survey conducted to investigate the relationship between a university branch campus, a co-located technical college, and their community. Additional articles for this issue are in the works and will be posted on the NABCA website before the end of 2015.

Current efforts by NABCA's Research Committee are a cause for optimism as we look ahead to the 2016 volume of *Access*. In particular, significant work is being done to document and list existing branch campuses in key regions throughout the United States. Once data collection is complete, a survey addressing branch campus characteristics, student services, budget allocations, and supervision/leadership will be sent to a large number of administrators and leaders. We expect these efforts to contribute greatly to our knowledge about branch campuses in the United States and are enthusiastic about bringing this information to the NABCA membership and the higher education community at large in 2016.

For now, we are pleased to offer new research to enlighten the conversation about branch campuses and are enthusiastic about what is to come.

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Using Assessment Methods to Advance Campus-to-Campus and Campus-Community Partnerships: Town-Gown Relationships as Yours, Mine and Ours

Stephen M. Gavazzi

The Ohio State University, gavazzi.1@osu.edu

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Using Assessment Methods to Advance Campus-to-Campus and Campus-Community Partnerships: Town-Gown Relationships as Yours, Mine and Ours

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Using Assessment Methods to Advance Campus-to-Campus and Campus-Community Partnerships: Town-Gown Relationships as Yours, Mine and Ours

Stephen M. Gavazzi

Dean and Director

Mansfield Campus

The Ohio State University

ABSTRACT

The regional campus of a large Midwestern university and its co-located technical college partner jointly conducted a community survey in order to gather data on the state of each institution's relationship with the community. An instrument known as the Optimal College Town Assessment (OCTA) was used to gather important information on two primary dimensions of town-gown relationships: effort and comfort. Results indicated that three specific groups of community stakeholders (business owners, leaders of non-profits, and local school district educators) largely perceived their relationships with both institutions in similar ways. The data gathering effort was seen as part of a larger mobilization cycle for advancing campus-community partnerships, and served as the launching point for a joint task force dedicated to economic development planning for the geographic area immediately surrounding the campus.