

Community Support and Relevance to Community: Indispensable Underpinnings for Branch Campuses

Ken Shaw and Steve Bornhoft

Abstract

This case study of Florida State University (FSU) Panama City illustrates the essential importance of strong synergy among a branch campus, its main campus, and its community. The interdependence of the branch campus and its community is highlighted through discussion of the role of the campus administrator, various partnerships, and niche programs targeted to meet the specialized needs of employers in the campus's service area.

An ominous headline threatened to overshadow the 2009 annual conference of the National Association of Branch Campus Administrators (NABCA). Especially for Ken Shaw, who was then completing his term as NABCA president, 29 characters in bold-faced type running across the top of the front page of the Panama City *News Herald* came as no small distraction (Segal 2009).

For months, NABCA committees had worked diligently to nail down conference logistics and anticipate contingencies that might affect the meeting planned for a resort destination promoted as the World's Most Beautiful Beaches. Finally, all signs pointed toward a highly successful event. Already, it had been a momentous year in the life of Florida State University Panama City, the conference host. Newly completed was work on a \$32 million academic center housing classrooms, engineering program laboratories, and offices for faculty and administrators.

Conference attendees were scheduled to participate in large-group meetings at the conference hotel on Thursday April 16 and then report to Florida State University Panama City's twenty-five-acre campus for breakout sessions on Friday April 17. Dr. Shaw anticipated with pride the opportunity to show off Florida State's campus on the coast, where students attend classes literally within a hundred yards or so of cavorting dolphins, schooling mullet, and soaring ospreys.

Then, the presses ran.

"Officials consider closing FSU-PC," the headline read (Segal 2009). Here was a development that no one had envisioned.

Shaw, certainly, and state university system officials throughout Florida were aware of dramatic state budget shortfall projections. Florida State University, itself, had projected a deficit of some \$80 million budget cuts, they, surely were inevitable but

Shaw and the communities served by FSU Panama City never figured that the outright closure of the branch campus would be contemplated as a budget-balancing measure.

Participants arriving at the NABCA reception Wednesday evening found themselves offering Shaw compassion rather than congratulations. Closure consideration, surely, was not the backdrop Shaw had in mind for the conference. Indeed, his concern that the meeting be visited by good weather now seemed trivial. It was suddenly clear that FSU Panama City was faced with a storm that it might not survive. To survive that extraordinary threat, FSU Panama City would find it necessary to re-examine its role and employ all of the human resources at its disposal: administrators, faculty members, students, alumni, prominent citizens, journalists, other opinion shapers, and the community at large. This article gleans key lessons for branch campuses from the case study of FSU Panama City.

Branch Campuses – Keys to Success

Speak with administrators from across the United States and it becomes evident that every branch campus is unique. Indeed, there is no universal title for those entrusted to run branch campuses. Titles include vice chancellor, dean, vice provost, vice president, campus director, and others. Too, there is no universal funding model. Some campuses are funded directly by a state legislature. Most are funded by their main campuses. Funding may be based on student credit hours or represent an arbitrary allocation from the main campus. Some receive locally generated tax dollars.

Some campuses own land and buildings, others lease space. Some campuses have tenured faculty, others rely on the main campus to send faculty to teach. Still other campuses have nontenured faculty that provide a majority of the teaching, and some have a combination of these. Some campuses supervise and fund their faculty, others have faculty that are under the supervision of the department heads on their main campuses. There exist many other differences among campuses in areas including recruitment, marketing, communication, admissions, registration, financial aid, fundraising, and the like.

Even given the varied ways in which campuses function, there are common elements among branch campuses that are important to ensure that campuses succeed—and survive. We will lay out a few of these elements as they relate to FSU Panama City.

Campus Dean in the Community

The role of campus dean is varied and complex. To be successful, the dean must be a community leader, branch campus leader, and a main campus leader. Striking a balance among these roles is often difficult and challenging.

It is important for the dean to be visible in the community and to add value to the community. In Bay County, Florida, the community is focused, among other things, on economic development and bringing businesses to the community. Without a higher

education partner, they would have a very difficult time attracting new businesses. Part of the job as dean is to be actively involved in the economic development of our region. Currently, Shaw serves on the following boards: Bay County Chamber of Commerce, Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Alliance, Bay Defense Alliance, United Way of Northwest Florida, Community Service Foundation, Bay Defense Alliance, and several other local boards. Though these committees are not essential to success as a campus administrator, they provide FSU Panama City with opportunities to engage in the community and provide opportunities for staff and faculty to play meaningful roles in the community in which they live and work.

A very real challenge is that community work can easily take all of the dean's time. Striking the balance between working with the community and the other two roles is critical. Some boards will allow the dean to send representatives when he is unavailable. This leads to faculty and other department leaders interfacing with community members. Shaw has found that involvement in the community is very satisfying personally, as well as it is beneficial to the campus. It provides him an opportunity to better understand the community and its needs, and how the university can contribute best to our community. Conversely, it allows him an opportunity to discuss the importance of the university and what opportunities and needs exist on campus.

Being active in the community will often result in positive things happening. Examples include the Panama City Beaches Chamber of Commerce endowing a scholarship for students on our campus. The Community Service Foundation has provided our campus over \$100,000 for scholarships. Membership on the Bay County Economic Development Alliance has opened doors to interact with potential new businesses, sharing with them the programs that might be beneficial to their employees, and forging partnerships that help both their businesses and our campus.

The presence of a branch campus of a college or university in a community is extremely important. Often, one's history shows that there was sacrifice, hard work, and an investment to establish the branch campus. Being insular is not an option. The branch must not only provide quality education, but must be embedded and active within its community. The property that FSU Panama City has was deeded to the state from the Bay County Commission to establish a campus. Given that investment, Bay County leaders expect FSU Panama City to be an integral part of the community. Beyond the dean's role in the community, it is also important to have faculty and staff engaged in the community.

Dean's Role on the Branch Campus

The dean of a branch campus is typically responsible for the operation of the campus and is largely accountable for its success. Time is necessary to ensure the processes and policies are in place to run an efficient campus and maintain quality academic programs. In talking with administrators around the country, Shaw has learned that FSU Panama City resembles other branch campuses in that its employees tend to

remain loyal and stay with the branch for a long time. With little turnover among a total of about one hundred employees, staff members get to know one another, and the work environment is more family oriented. They know and care about each other. This is seen when there is a personal emergency or a birthday, etc. In this culture, the dean must be employee oriented. The dean must care for the employees and have a leadership style that is communicative and collaborative rather than authoritative. The dean should be open with campus employees about campus goals, about direction from the main campus, etc.

At FSU Panama City, the dean has weekly administrative team meetings that include discussion of the activities of the upcoming week and news from the main campus or the community. The administrative team is made up of department heads, a faculty representative, and our student government president. This allows for a diverse cross section of campus stakeholders to be represented. Everyone has an opportunity to share what is going on in their areas and everyone has an opportunity to ask questions or learn how certain functions might interact with functions in their area.

Though there are as many leadership styles, Shaw has found that it is very helpful to personally communicate with each staff member and ask how things might be better in their area. Being a good listener and acting on items that are important to your staff goes a long way in ensuring the campus operation runs smoothly.

Dean's Role on the Main Campus

The dynamics of working with the main campus are extremely vital. FSU Panama City has been in existence for twenty-eight years. Over a period of that length of time, it can be easy for both the branch campus and the main campus to become accustomed to the branch existing as it always has. However, when pruning becomes necessary due to severe budget cuts, the branch may seem to be an obvious place to cut if dialogue and strong communication has not been in place. From conversations with other administrators, sometimes it is the case that the main campus does not know what to do with the branch and the branch doesn't understand how it fits into the operation of the main campus.

FSU's main campus and FSU Panama City have distinct missions. Though we do have common values, our mission overlap stops with providing quality education programs to our students. The main campus takes great pride, and rightly so, in its research endeavors and providing value to the nation and the world with its research. FSU Panama City focuses on teaching and providing local businesses and industries with employees who are prepared to help them meet workforce needs. Though one might view these missions as somewhat complementary, they sometimes can result in tension that is difficult to surmount.

Here are three examples. Around the state of Florida, community colleges are being allowed to offer selected bachelor degree programs. One of these programs is helping registered nurses pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing. At FSU Panama City, we have

offered the RN to BSN program for two decades. The College of Nursing has decided that it needs to be more research focused and with more educational institutions offering the RN-BSN degree, it has suspended its RN to BSN program. This decision has caused us to close down our program, resulting in the loss of our nursing faculty and more importantly the loss of a source of degreed nurses for our hospitals. Though we were established by the legislature to meet the higher education needs of the community, we must uphold the decisions of the main campus. Not only does this decision have an impact on us internally, we have three hospitals in our area and many doctor's offices that are now without a local institution that can help provide registered nurses with a more advanced degree. Private institutions are eager to fill the void.

The impact of the state budget crisis on the main campus led the College of Business to downsize its faculty; this, in turn, caused them to discontinue a face-to-face master in business administration program on our campus. They are now offering the program online and allowing students from our region to apply. Though it is understandable why the College of Business made its decisions, our campus, which funded faculty to teach the courses, now shows a decrease in graduate student hours and we no longer can meet the needs of those students who desire to have a face-to-face program.

Though we are a branch campus, all of our academic programs have the same quality as the main campus. Admission and graduation standards are consistent with programs on the main campus. The main campus turns away some 10,000 students each year. This causes the main campus to sometimes increase its admission standards due to the increased caliber of applicants they receive. This almost always is done without consulting us and, in turn, the admission standards become arbitrarily high for students applying for admissions. Once we learn that the admissions criteria have increased, we discuss the ramifications with the academic departments. They often say that they had forgotten about us. We have argued successfully in a couple of cases that since they have increased the standards to limit enrollment, they should give us a variance to keep the old admissions criteria.

With the primary metric of success for our campus being based on student credit hours, changes in admission criteria made at the main campus can make a significant difference in our numbers. Decisions made on the main campus can adversely affect how the branch campus operates. By maintaining a good relationship with the main campus, a branch campus can be in position to understand major issues prior to decisions being made. And, when decisions are made on the main campus in isolation from the branch, and this will occur, one must have the relationships to professionally discuss these to ensure students in your region can be served as your mission dictates.

Fundraising for the Branch Campus

We live in times where state dollars do not meet the needs of the university and the need for private dollars is at an all-time high. We are fortunate at FSU Panama City to have a good relationship with the FSU Foundation, the organization that invests and maintains the many accounts established to benefit students, colleges, sports, etc. Since

2005, we have raised \$6.7 million. A portion of these funds was used to provide scholarships for our students. We now have seventy-five endowed scholarships. These are scholarships where donors have invested a minimum of \$10,000. (Current minimums are now at \$25,000.)

Each year, the FSU Foundation provides 4 percent of the principal to be used for expenses related to the scholarship, another 2–3 percent goes for overhead, and the remaining revenue generated by the investments goes back to the principal. For all accounts that have been established and designated for our campus, the campus dean has signature authority and approves expenses related to those accounts.

With our new academic center building, we raised \$446,000 to be used to provide lab equipment and other furnishings and equipment.

We have a lectureship fund that helps cover expenses for guest speakers at events held for our students and the community. As in many states, there are specialty license plates that go to support education. The proceeds for the FSU license tags sold in our county come to us to support scholarships for our students. We also have a building fund, which supports our equipment needs in the academic center and we have an academic excellence fund that supports our academic needs.

Since the branch campus offers many different degrees from various academic colleges, fundraising personnel from those colleges on the main campus work with our graduates to support their needs on the main campus. Meanwhile, we also look to our alumni to help us meet the needs of our campus. Having the support of the community through private donations and having control of the money to use to benefit the branch campus has been an essential element for the success of the campus.

The prominent citizens, representing diverse walks of life, who comprise the FSU Panama City Development Board, serve as invaluable links between the FSU Panama City campus and the region it serves.

Carving out Niche Programs

Branch campuses are typically established to provide educational opportunities and access to high education in markets that are removed from the opportunities provided by main campuses. In time, it is nice to build niche programs that will bring notoriety and prestige to the campus. This has been done at FSU Panama City.

The master's degree in Psychology with emphasis in applied behavior analysis is one of our niche programs. Applied behavior analysis is a specialty that has been evolving since the mid-1960s as an area of extensive basic and applied research and as a profession related to behavior change. Applied behavior analysis can be differentiated from other areas in psychology in that it is focused on analyzing and modifying behavior using well-established principles of learning that stress environmental variables that can be manipulated directly to improve performance. For many years

FSU, under the leadership of Dr. Jon Bailey, has provided a generation of behavior analysis research. Bailey currently serves as codirector of the master's program.

The master's degree in Psychology at the Panama City Campus is accredited by the Association for Behavior Analysis International, one of only fourteen accredited programs in the country. Our graduate curriculum has been preapproved by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board, which certifies professionals at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels. Courses are taught by resident faculty from the Panama City campus and faculty from the Tallahassee campus. These courses are typically taught via the Interactive Television Network, which allows students to live in either Panama City or Tallahassee.

Associated with this graduate program is an auxiliary program that the campus operates: Early Childhood Autism Program (ECAP). Its mission is to provide effective behavioral treatment for children with developmental disabilities using only evidence-based methods that have proven to be effective. The program is a nonprofit early intervention and community outreach program based at our campus. Our ECAP program provides in-home therapy, parent training/consultation, and parenting workshops. All service levels use scientifically validated approaches for improving social skills, as well as language, academic, and daily living skills. It is coordinated by our faculty and staff and meets the needs of the community. It also provides students supervised experiences in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis and autism/developmental disabilities. This allows graduate students opportunities to work in the field and gain critical experience in behavior analysis.

The notoriety of the program is such that we attract students from all over the world. Of the seventy applicants, only sixteen students are chosen to start the program each fall.

A second example of being unique is our Underwater Crime Scene Investigation Certificate Program. With many television shows (e.g., *CSI Miami*, *CSI New York*, *NCIS*) there is an interest in the science of solving crimes. About eight years ago, our Advanced Science Diving Program and Criminology Program faculty and staff met and began bouncing around the idea of a need to have an Underwater CSI (UCSI) program. The more they thought and talked about this, the greater was their enthusiasm. In 2010, we have a one-of-kind academic certificate program in underwater crime scene investigation. Prior to our team putting together protocols in working underwater crime scenes, there was primarily a snatch-and-grab mentality of collecting evidence underwater. Now, many of the same collection and forensic science techniques used above water have been modified for use beneath the surface.

Similar to our Early Childhood Autism Program, we created a UCSI auxiliary operation. The auxiliary operation is a vehicle by which we can obtain funds for services we provide. The auxiliary is run through the financial operation of the campus. Each year, a small percentage of the revenues go back to the main campus so that they may provide oversight of all the auxiliaries. With this auxiliary, we were able to develop curriculum that would assist law enforcement officers to be better able to

collect data in an underwater environment. To date, we have trained over 200 law enforcement officers.

We have also received federal funding to do joint exercises with the military as it relates to incidents on or below the surface of the water. Having an auxiliary operation that complements the academic program is ideal as it allows our faculty and staff to be active in the field, which in turn, provides much credibility with students in the classroom.

One example of our collaboration with other law enforcement officers stands out. The exercise took place in Tampa Bay and we were collaborating with the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, a mobile forensic lab; related agencies in Washington, DC; and other defense contractors. A portion of the exercise was to locate an anomaly in the bay and then determine what that anomaly was. Once the anomaly was located, one of our tethered remote operated vehicles (ROVs) was deployed, which took pictures of the anomaly, and an assessment was made that this target could very well be an underwater mine. Under closer examination with the underwater ROV magnifying lens, a fingerprint on the mine was photographed. This information was sent topside to the vessel being used to deploy the ROV. The fingerprint was sent via satellite to the mobile forensic lab, which in turn ran the fingerprint through its files and determined that it belonged to one of our employees. The exercise was a success and the experience of coordinating technology, data, techniques, and science was invaluable.

FSU Panama City's UCSI team now has acquired some of the latest equipment that can be used in call-outs to assist law enforcement officers around the country. Over fifty cases have been worked, including the Natalie Holloway case in Aruba, the Shuttle disaster in Texas, a downed airplane in the Atlantic Ocean, a downed EMS helicopter in one of Florida's bays, a number of missing body cases, and weapon recovery cases. In some callouts, the environment is quite dangerous. It may be that the currents are swift, there may be underwater caves, or even wildlife (alligators and poisonous snakes) to contend with. Each situation is different and calls on professionals to assess the situation prior to putting divers in the water.

Creating Partnerships

Partnerships are critical for the success of the branch campus as well as to the community. Three of our strongest partnerships are tied closely to the community college; the civil and environmental engineering community; and a focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.

Partnership with Gulf Coast Community College

FSU Panama City and Gulf Coast Community College are colocated, separated only by a common entrance road, Collegiate Drive. It is easy to walk between the two institutions. In the state of Florida, we are fortunate to have a strong 2+2 articulation agreement between the state community colleges and the state universities. Simply put,

the articulation agreement states that if a student completes his or her associate of arts degree at a community college, he is admissible at one of the state's universities. Several years ago, FSU Panama City and Gulf Coast Community College decided to enhance this statewide articulation agreement. For the past twenty-seven years of our existence, we have teamed with Gulf Coast Community College as they offered students in our region opportunities to obtain their two-year degrees while we offered upper-division courses assisting students to obtain their baccalaureate degrees along with a few master's programs. We called this enhanced articulation agreement, the Connect! Program.

As a Connect! Program student at Gulf Coast Community College, students receive a personalized academic map from Florida State University Panama City. This map leads them through the coursework required to earn their associate in arts degree from Gulf Coast Community College and their bachelor's degree from Florida State University. Personalized academic maps include opportunities to take classes on both campuses even during the student's freshman year. This provides students a jump start on their major. Upon completion of the associate in arts degree, students seamlessly transition to full-time enrollment at FSU Panama City with their major choice guaranteed.

Students within the Connect! Programs are issued both a Gulf Coast Community College and FSU Panama City student identification card. This allows students in this special program to take advantage of FSU football and other events, Gulf Coast Community College sports, student clubs, and organizations.

Civil and Environmental Engineering Community Partners

In 2002, FSU Panama City started a Civil and Environmental Engineering program due to a need within the engineering community. Early in the program's history, we met with several of the engineering firms to get their input on our program. One company official took the lead and decided to obtain from his colleagues an investment of \$25,000 to endow scholarships in their firm's name. Currently, we have eleven endowed scholarships from eleven different civil engineering firms. The Civil and Environmental Engineering Community Partners meet twice a year and obtain updates from the faculty and students on the program and are given opportunities to help students. The partners provide guest lecturers for select classes and provide assistance on offering specialized colloquia to students, faculty, and the community.

As a result of the success of this partnership, each faculty has been challenged to create a steering or advisory committee for their academic areas. This, we feel, is essential as it will allow professionals to become aware of our programs, our needs, and allows them to interface with our faculty and students. These partnerships allow business leaders to become familiar with the quality of our students and allow our students to get to know businesses. This is a win-win for our community and students.

STEM Education Partnerships

Since 2008, FSU Panama City, the Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division, AT&T, Bay District Schools, Gulf County Schools, and Holmes District School Board formed a partnership to provide teachers and students in the region a strong emphasis in STEM education. Over these three years, nearly 500 middle and high school students from the region have participated in STEM activities. Summer camps and institutes held at Florida State University Panama City provide students and teachers the opportunity to utilize state-of-the-art engineering and computer labs and other campus facilities, and to interface with engineering instructors, FSU students pursuing academic degrees in STEM programs, and practicing scientists and engineers from the Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division.

During the summer of 2010, STEMflorida, a business-led council whose purpose is to connect education, workforce, business, and economic developments, held its first multisector STEM Business and Education Conference. During the conference, awards were presented to twenty-two businesses, organizations, and education initiatives from across Florida. STEMflorida described our regional partnership as a multidistrict public/private partnership that is producing the highly qualified workforce needed to meet the demands of Northwest Florida's local employers. We received a Business-Education Partnership award, one of fourteen in that category. We also received one of only two Excellence in Instructional Staff Development awards. The award recognized the partnership's excellence in providing teachers with in-depth, hands-on learning experiences to increase content knowledge in STEM, and providing over one hundred teachers access to materials including rocket launchers, Van de Graaf electrostatic generators that produce high voltage and lots of sparks, probes, and other materials needed to improve classroom instruction.

The partnerships that FSU Panama City has are extremely valuable to both the education of students and to businesses who are seeking highly educated employees.

Communication and Marketing Partnership

With competition for students coming from online universities; community colleges becoming state colleges and now offering specific four-year programs; and out-of-state universities marketing heavily in the region, it is critical to have a strong communication and marketing program. At FSU Panama City, staff of the Department of Advancement has worked closely with a citizen's committee headed jointly by the publisher of a daily newspaper and the marketing director of a community bank. That partnership has seen to the relevance and effectiveness of our marketing messages in the community and the cost-efficient delivery of those messages.

First Campus Transformation

From 1999–2002, a number of state universities who had branch campuses received a special allocation from the legislature to expand course offerings. FSU Panama City received \$2.9 million. Prior to obtaining these funds, the campus had only five resident

faculty members. These faculty held positions in accounting, nursing, elementary education, mathematics education, and educational leadership. With one van and a small bus, we transported faculty from the main campus to teach the courses in two-evening teaching slots, one beginning at 5 p.m. and the other beginning at 7:30 p.m. With the funds, we were able to grow our resident faculty from five members to thirty. We were also able to offer ten full-time, day-time programs along with maintaining the evening programs. This infusion of money was very instrumental in building a faculty base that could provide advising, recruiting, and quality teaching. Furthermore, these faculty would become additional ambassadors for the university in the community. Some serve on community boards, others provide presentations at local clubs, etc.

With the growth in faculty, it was important to establish a structure for them. Though this did not happen readily; it evolved through time. For example, it was established that our faculty would not be tenure-earning faculty. It was also decided that the budget line for the faculty would reside on our campus and that all assignments of responsibilities, annual evaluations, and promotions would be initiated on our campus and conducted in conjunction with the main campus departments. Even though the campus faculty is affiliated with their academic programs on the main campus, they are unified under the structure on our campus. They have formed committees and created bylaws, promotion policies, and merit policies. These now have the approval of the faculty and are used in their governance.

One might suspect this is not the most ideal of situations for our faculty. Some of our faculty are fully integrated into their departments on the main campus where they are expected to attend faculty meetings and have voting privileges, with the exception of voting on promotion for ranked positions. Other faculty are excluded from faculty meetings on the main campus and, if they do attend, they do not have voting privileges as voting privileges are only given to tenured or tenure-earning faculty. Since assignments and promotions are done jointly between the main campus departments and colleges and our campus, there are times when disagreements occur and negotiations inevitably occur.

Community Responses to a Looming Threat of Closure

The campus closure scare brought out the best in our community. After it became known that our campus might be closed, the chairman of our development board called a special meeting. Two local representatives from the Florida House of Representatives were invited to attend. Tensions and emotions ran high during the meeting. Some called for the immediate firing of the university president, believing that this was no way to treat our community or our campus. Some were claiming that since the legislature instituted our campus, it would take legislative action to close the campus, so central administration in Tallahassee could not shut us down. The representatives shared that they both had communicated with the university president and he assured them that he would not close our campus. Some then concluded that he was

deliberately creating a stir in the community to help gain more legislative support for more funds for higher education in the state. The community members did not appreciate being used as a pawn for the political well-being of the main campus.

The community leaders responded by championing a letter writing campaign to legislators and FSU administrators. A community rally was held on campus; T-shirts were worn that read, "Save Our Campus." Students and community leaders described the benefits of our campus to a standing room only crowd in excess of 500 people. A bus was leased to bring community members, staff, and media to an event on the main campus where attendees discussed the benefits of our campus.

Ultimately, more money was allocated to run higher education in the state and the campus was taken off the closure list. However, FSU Panama City took a sizeable budget cut. Taking into account cuts from the previous year, the total cut was 33 percent of our operating budget. This was devastating and twenty positions would have to be eliminated.

A month after the campus closure story hit the local newspaper, on May 29, 2009, the university president came and met with community leaders and campus administrators to discuss the ramifications of the budget cuts to FSU Panama City. He said that FSU Panama City must become self-sufficient in three years.

During the meeting, a question was raised about establishing a community committee that could review our overall operations and make recommendations on how we could meet community needs and how we could become self-sufficient within three years. The president agreed to this and within a couple of months had established a Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee.

Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee

The Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee was made up of twenty-six members. One of the two co-chairs was an active community leader, who has held many community leadership positions including being president of the Bay County Chamber of Commerce. She is a local attorney. The other cochair was a previous speaker of the Florida House of Representatives. He has held many statewide leadership positions. Both co-chairs have a passion for the success of FSU Panama City and understand how important the campus is for future economic development in the region.

Other members included legislators, legislative aides, a mayor, a county commissioner, a physician, the local superintendent of schools, the community college president, presidents and vice presidents of influential companies, the technical director of the Naval Surface Warfare Center, a publisher, accountants, an economic development director, FSU central administration, director of Finance and Administration at FSU Panama City, and the campus dean.

The president tasked the Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee to make recommendations on the following items:

1. Review the current mission of FSU Panama City and propose a mission statement for FSU Panama City that focuses on access to higher education, providing opportunities to specific degree fields, and engagement with the community that resonates with the regional, state, and national needs.
2. Create a five-year vision for FSU Panama City.
3. Create a feasible plan of action including timelines and goals that will ensure the success of the five-year vision.

The Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee met for the first time on July 22, 2009, continued to meet through October and then presented their report to the Board of Trustees on Nov. 20, 2009.

After considering the importance of FSU Panama City, the many contributions it makes to the community, and the potential it provides our region, the committee proposed that the following mission and vision statements be adopted.

Mission Statement

The Florida State University Panama City enhances communities and creates education and economic opportunities by providing access to high-quality undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as encouraging regional military and business research partnerships to enrich and empower individuals to engage and change the world with strength, skill and character.

Vision Statement

The Florida State University Panama City will provide undergraduate and graduate programs of academic excellence and outstanding value while ensuring student success through personalized and rewarding educational experiences. The leadership, faculty, and staff of the campus will strive to anticipate and meet the higher education needs as served by Florida State University Panama City, as well as engage the area military and businesses in partnerships, research and commercialization opportunities.

After four months of deliberation, the Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee identified four goals, thirty-one recommendations, and 119 action items. In the chart below is a list of the four goals along with nine major recommendations Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee, 2009).

**Goal 1: Increase enrollment to 1,400
Students to meet self-sufficiency goal by 2012**

Recommendation 1: Increase enrollment market area to include all Northwest Florida counties from Escambia to Leon and all Georgia and Alabama Counties that are included in the tuition differential areas.

Recommendation 2: Establish target enrollments by academic program and by feeder school and utilize faculty and recruiters to meet set targets.

**Goal 2: Strengthen the working relationship
between FSU Main Campus and FSU Panama City**

Recommendation 1: Improve working relationships with administrators and deans at main campus and preserve and enhance local flexibility.

Recommendation 2: Formalize regular reporting to the FSU Board of Trustees.

Recommendation 3: Investigate the potential for an FSU Panama City person to serve on the FSU Board of Trustees or assign a Trustee to serve as a liaison to FSU Panama City.

Recommendation 4: Establish an FSU Panama City Campus Board.

Recommendation 5: Explore additional funding to support FSU Panama City.

**Goal 3: Increase and enhance partnership opportunities
with Gulf Coast Community College and Bay District Schools**

Recommendation 1: Review and Enhance the Connect Program between Gulf Coast Community College and FSU Panama City.

Recommendation 2: Expand academic presence in all Bay County high schools.

**Goal 4: Seek separate Southern
Association of Colleges and Schools Accreditation**

The committee offered its recommendations after an in-depth study and was encouraged by the receptiveness of FSU administrators, deans, and others who participated in the research and discussions as they went through the process and helped design many of the recommendations that have been outlined in the report.

It is clear that meeting self-sufficiency in three years is a daunting task that will require close monitoring. This committee is willing to meet semiannually with the staff of FSU Panama City and main campus administrators to obtain reports on how well these goals and recommendations are being carried out and to make further recommendations to help keep FSU Panama City sustainable and successful.

Second Campus Transformation

The FSU Board of Trustees received the Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee report graciously from the two co-chairs and thanked them and the committee for their work. Since this time, FSU has gone through administration changes. A new university president joined FSU in March 2010. And in September 2010, the provost announced that he would step down by December 2010. Even with these changes, the current administration has sought ways to help FSU Panama City be successful. Two things have occurred during 2010 that will forever change the way that FSU Panama City does business.

A New College

The Faculty Senate, Council of Deans, and the FSU Board of Trustees in separate meetings, approved the formation of a new college that would be operated at FSU Panama City. The new college name, College of Applied Studies, would influence the types of degrees offered, degrees that would have application to needs that exist within the community and region. The dean of the campus would now also be dean of the new college.

Though most of the academic program offerings at FSU Panama City will remain the same and will still be offered through the main campus utilizing to a large extent our faculty, the new college will provide the academic means to offer new programs that will enable the campus to grow their enrollments.

Due to the budget crises at FSU, the Recreation and Leisure Services Administration Baccalaureate program and the graduate certificate program in Event Management were suspended. These two programs have now been moved to the new college. The College of Communication has offered in Panama City an undergraduate and a graduate program, which is unique to our campus. Negotiations are being conducted to move these two programs to the new college. New programs, some of which will have both face-to-face and online delivery are being considered. In many ways online programs will allow the campus to increase its market reach and be better able to meet its enrollment targets.

New Funding Model

In the past, the branch campus funding model has remained fairly consistent in receiving an annual allocation. The charge to grow our campus from around 1,000 students to 1,400 in enrollment by 2012 and budget cuts that have exceeded 33 percent have combined to present real challenges. After 6–8 months of working closely with the main campus, a model has been established that will reduce our base budget considerably, but will allow us to keep the tuition and student fees we generate. This change is both refreshing and daunting. As enrollment increases and tuition increases, this will be good for the campus, yet, if the enrollment drops, our campus will be impacted.

Regardless, the new college along with the funding model, places the campus in the driver's seat to press ahead, grow programs, and increase enrollment. The funding model incentivizes the campus to grow.

Conclusion

This article represents a brief case study of FSU Panama City, one which highlights the challenges and successes it has experienced in recent years. Throughout, the campus has discovered the need to be adaptable and innovative and has practiced and refined its abilities to do so. The authors trust that the lessons learned by FSU Panama City will have application to other branch campuses and will have value to campus administrators.

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Author Information

Ken Shaw, who earned his doctorate in mathematics education, was named dean of the Florida State University Panama City campus in August 2009 after twice serving as acting dean. Given his experience at FSU Panama City as a faculty member and administrator, he has learned much about the importance that a branch campus has to its community and how hard one must work to ensure the branch campus remains successful and viable.

In December 2007, Steve Bornhoft became the first student in FSU Panama City history to earn a graduate degree in communication with distinction. Bornhoft, who served on the Presidential Blue Ribbon Committee, serves as an adjunct faculty member at FSU Panama City, in addition to his duties as vice president for marketing and communication at a community bank.

Ken Shaw
Florida State University Panama City
4750 Collegiate Drive
Panama City, FL 32405
E-mail: kshaw@pc.fsu.edu
Telephone: 850-770-2103
Fax: 850-770-2081

Mr. Steve Bornhofs
8201 Palm Cove Blvd.
Panama City Beach, FL 32408
E-mail: sbornhofs@knology.net
Telephone: 850-890-3583
Fax: 850-233-3139