

Growing Gains

Ivy Tech Story Continues to Evolve

By Tom Schuman

Thomas Snyder was no stranger to the workforce development mission of Ivy Tech prior to becoming the president of the state's community college system on July 1, 2007. During a lengthy business career with General Motors and its affiliates, he had relied on Ivy Tech for its training expertise.

Eighteen months later, however, he admits, "What has surprised me is how critical our role is in changing the face of Indiana. If we're going to change our workforce skills shortage and our college-going culture, the most likely person at the table is going to be this team here at Ivy Tech."

The makeup of the student body has also proven to be different than common perceptions. Snyder points to the numbers that show 51% of Ivy Tech students being under the age of 24. A number of other demographic factors come into play (see breakout on Page 37) when considering the mission of the school that he says is the "only institution of our kind in the country."

Although there are approximately 1,200 community colleges (more than 900 of them public), Snyder says Ivy Tech is the one "singularly accredited college that goes border to border. We're the statewide provider of both for-credit training and workforce development. That's our mission."

The college has been aggressively telling its story over the last 18-plus months. Tremendous growth is taking place, with the anticipated long-term impact of helping the state realize a higher-educated and better-trained workforce. The growth also brings immediate funding challenges.

Thomas Snyder (left), meeting with provost Don Doucette, emphasizes telling the Ivy Tech story throughout the state, including Marion, where the new facility has helped boost enrollment.

By the numbers

In fall 2008 enrollment figures released by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, Ivy Tech became the state's largest public postsecondary institution with more than 120,000 students enrolled annually. Indiana University (IU) had nearly 119,000 students at its seven campuses.

In January, the school reported more than 90,000 students enrolled for the first day of the spring semester – an increase of 14.2% compared to the previous year. Leaders expect the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students to reach 53,600 this year. First-time freshman students at Ivy Tech totaled 17,800 in the fall of 2008 (compared to 12,160 two years earlier), which is 3,000 more than the



newcomers at the IU-Bloomington and Purdue-West Lafayette campuses combined.

“We think that is not driven by the economy because we were growing at that rate when Indiana was at a job shortage,” according to Snyder. “Young people are realizing two years and a career, or two years and a transfer, can happen.”

More students are taking more classes at each of the 23 campuses in the 14 Ivy Tech regions. The largest growth, however, has been in areas “where we put in a new campus that is more convenient, like Marion (campus is adjacent to the Marion exit off Interstate 69). That demonstrated the real return on investment you get when you make your campus more convenient,” Snyder shares.

While the FTE count is above 53,000, current state funding was calculated on an estimated 46,000 students. Snyder explains that Ivy Tech’s enrollment forecast compiled in the summer of 2006 was part of the budget approved by the General Assembly and signed by the governor in 2007 for the two budget years that run through June 30, 2009. The shortfall is having its biggest impact now – at the end of the budget cycle. Add to that the national economic downturn and its impact on state revenues that has the governor proposing a 4% cut for higher education in the fiscal 2010 budget.

Resource allocation

With state funding accounting for about 60 cents of every \$1 in the school’s operating budget, the leadership team is looking to make the best use of every dollar. Among the initiatives already in place:

- A private company managing all the bookstores as of July 1, 2008, with a one-time benefit of more than \$7.6 million and projected yearly revenues of \$600,000
- A single computer contract with Dell with estimated savings of \$1.3 million
- A similar copier agreement that is nearly finalized
- Insurance changes, including becoming self-insured on health care, with actuaries projecting \$3.4 million in savings

The 35 top administrators have agreed to forego raises in 2009. The goal, Snyder says, is no salary reductions and no layoffs. Whether funding for staff pay raises, and at what level,



Student Population

- 98% – Indiana residents
- 84% – Enrolled in degree program
- 74% – Work
- 66% – Attend part-time
- 60% – Receive financial aid
- 39% – Have children
- 25% – Married
- 18% – Minority
- Average age – 27.5
(20% between ages 15-19; 31% between ages 20-24; 16% between ages 25-29)

Upward Spiral

Category	1996-97	2007-08
Total students	62,422	120,370
Full-time equivalent students	20,986	49,752
Full-time faculty	657	1,024
Part-time faculty	1,706	3,852
Square footage	2,583,523	4,197,444
Credentials (<i>degrees, certificates, certifications</i>)	3,758	29,734

Source: Ivy Tech Community College

will be available is unknown at this time. “Because of our funding over time, there is a culture of leanness anyway,” Snyder reveals. “We’ve also formed eight teams to re-engineer the school further to save money, which we can then redeploy in other areas. The target is to save \$5 million this year and \$10 million next year, over and above what we’re doing.”

Faculty divide

Accomplishing that would still leave a significant shortfall compared to the growth numbers, Snyder admits. “We recognize the (state) budget constraints – that process will take its own course. We’ve got to demonstrate we’re good stewards of that 60 cents of every dollar.”

With the growth outpacing the funding, compromises have to be made. An unfortunate one, Snyder admits, is in the hiring of faculty. A better balance is needed, he says, between full-time and part-time teachers. “Over the last decade, our full-time faculty composition dropped from 29% to 23%. That’s how we’re able to keep up with the growth,” he concedes. “That’s the biggest single issue facing the school. Students need half (the faculty) to be part-time, to bring you the current skill sets, and half to be full-time to bring you that 24/7 know-how, to look at your full career.”

The fiscal challenges, however, are not preventing a much-needed expansion of the near downtown Indianapolis campus. A \$3.8 million grant from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, combined with \$6.2 million in federal funding, will be used to construct a multi-modal facility (in conjunction with the city’s IndyGo bus service) on the northeast corner of 27th and Illinois streets.

The IndyGo hub will benefit many of the more than 17,000 students at the campus that is currently confined to two city blocks. Several levels of parking are expected to top the building, helping alleviate a significant shortage of space. Possibilities for the facility (final plans are yet to be determined) include learning labs; admissions, testing and financial aid offices; expanded library and/or cafeteria services;

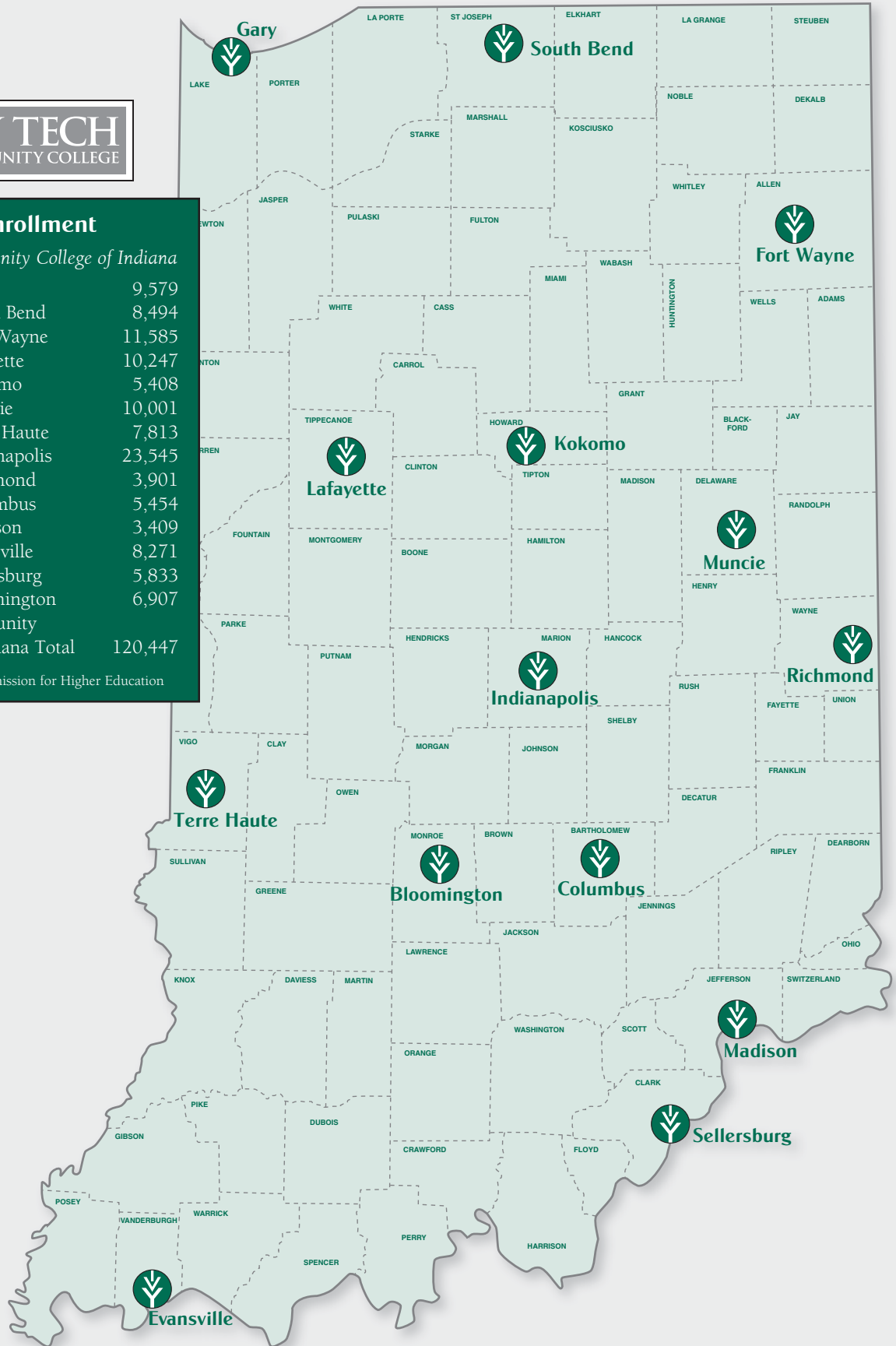


Fall 2008 Enrollment

Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana

Region 01-Gary	9,579
Region 02-South Bend	8,494
Region 03-Fort Wayne	11,585
Region 04-Lafayette	10,247
Region 05-Kokomo	5,408
Region 06-Muncie	10,001
Region 07-Terre Haute	7,813
Region 08-Indianapolis	23,545
Region 09-Richmond	3,901
Region 10-Columbus	5,454
Region 11-Madison	3,409
Region 12-Evansville	8,271
Region 13-Sellersburg	5,833
Region 14-Bloomington	6,907
Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana Total	120,447

Source: Indiana Commission for Higher Education





Ivy Tech donated 1,000 basketballs to Boys & Girls Clubs throughout the state. Snyder and Mark Keen (bottom, left), chancellor of Ivy Tech's Fort Wayne Campus, did the honors at the Fort Wayne Boys & Girls Club.

coffee shop; and convenience store.

Snyder terms it the first step in a 20-year plan to renovate and grow the Indianapolis campus. State money for the project has been appropriated, but is awaiting release from the State Budget Committee.

In addition, Ivy Tech owns an adjacent building that once served as St. Vincent Hospital. It has been determined the facility is not compatible to classroom use. A task force is reviewing ideas and working to save the structure, if possible.

Helping the workers

Ivy Tech's roots, of course, are in workforce development. Indiana is one of three states to receive a Shifting Gears grant from the Joyce Foundation. Joyce Rogers, vice president of development, and team members have been meeting regularly with Department of Workforce Development leaders and other officials.

Snyder believes progress has been made in the areas of GED remediation and the correlation of various assessment tests. He states bluntly, "We think one of the biggest tragedies we have is someone who finishes their GED and is not college ready."

The college is the largest training agency in the state, he notes, is self-funded in that area and provided services to 25,000 people last year. Ivy Tech is committed to doubling that number in the next few years. Snyder, however, points to the chart in the Indiana Chamber's February 2008 study titled *Indiana's Adult Education and Workforce*

Performance Report, and realizes more needs to be done from all parties to address the up to 900,000 people who lack a high school diploma, college education or earn less than a living wage.

Lesser known to many is the community college's role in economic development. Before Medco decided to place its high-tech pharmacy operation in Boone County, it required studies from Purdue and Butler universities on the number of pharmacists available, but also from Ivy Tech on technicians in logistics, advanced manufacturing and other fields.

"It's clear," Snyder affirms, "that the state, the country with the best prepared workforce is going to win. A new company that comes in brings with them a cadre of accountants, engineers and managers. What they want you to provide is this technical group – technicians, skilled managers."

Solving problems

Serving students is at the top of Snyder's priority list. The College for Working Adults program – he terms it the associate degree equivalent of an executive MBA – that keeps students in cohorts and is intended to move them to a degree quicker has experienced retention rates as high as 85%.

A grant from the Lumina Foundation for a national community college convention to be hosted by Ivy Tech will bring like-minded institutions together to brainstorm ways to improve that program.

Technology (along with awareness and outreach) was the third ingredient in Snyder's original game plan. Items such as a frequently asked questions section on the web site, online answering service and centralized "war room" call center are among the methods of meeting student needs.

Snyder tells of one student – a female with three children who is divorced and currently not working. "She is going to school on financial aid; she is going to graduate, get a job and go on for a four-year degree. Absent Ivy Tech, she would be in the entitlement system for years to come."

He concludes, "Our students can't afford a problem – they can't get a book or their loan is not there on time. They have a babysitter or a bus to catch. What we have said to ourselves is no unanswered questions, no lines.

"One of my missions is a sense of urgency, which I think we have. If a student has a problem, we want to solve it."

INFORMATION LINK

Resources: Ivy Tech Community College at www.ivytech.edu