



Message

From:  **Leslie Bates**
Subject: Pres Lawry Vision for Antioch College
To:  Board of Trustees
 ULC
Cc:  Karen Ely

Dear Members of the Board and ULC:

You will soon be receiving in the mail a copy of College president Steve Lawry's report to the Board which he presented to you last week. This mailing will also include a copy of the text pertaining to Antioch College from the 2006 "Insider's Guide to Colleges," which Steve cited in his remarks. The characterization of the College, based on student comments, will convey a sense of how Antioch is being represented to prospective students who are influenced by guides of this nature.

In Steve's report, he provides his vision for building a new Antioch that includes ideas for academic rigor, civic engagement, study abroad, and the arts. The foundation for the new Antioch is one "committed to intellectual freedom, open inquiry, and mutual respect" and a changed culture is paramount not only to this foundation but also in overcoming the College's financial problems.

This report is to be treated as a confidential document because the proposals he raises will require far-reaching discussions with faculty and others at the College, and it is important that he lead and manage them carefully. We would not want some portions to reach members of the community without the careful preparations this kind of process deserves. Thank you for your confidentiality.

Sincerely,

Toni

Toni Murdock
Chancellor

CONFIDENTIAL

Briefing of the Antioch University
Board of Trustees by
Steven Lawry, President
Antioch College
November 2, 2006

The College's chronically-low levels of enrollment and poor levels of student retention, and hence chronic budget deficits, are in my view expressions of an unconstructive social and intellectual climate. I believe that the College's financial problems will not be overcome unless we change fundamentally the culture and put it on a foundation committed to intellectual freedom, open inquiry and mutual respect.

Context: The attributes of a failed culture

Antioch College has become the destination for some considerable number of students who have imbued it with very particular political and cultural characteristics. The notion of "Boot Camp for the Revolution" represents this view. Persons who might not fit the narrow mold of an acceptable Antioch student are subject to severe scrutiny on arrival. Their social values and political credentials are tested through a process of "calling out." A fourth-year student described this process recently in terms of "*forcing* students to come to terms with the context in which they live."

The presence of students who are not of the dominant Antioch culture is seen by many as corrosive and threatening of the particular "community" that has been established here. Many Antioch students bring with them grievances for how they have been treated in the so-called "real world," for some by virtue of non-normative life styles, not fitting in mainstream culture, etc. As one student rather starkly put it, "The Antioch student is the person who did not have any friends in high school." Psychologically, students, in finding comfort and support in persons with similar experiences of estrangement, foster a shared political discourse and set of behaviors based on *resentment* toward the real world.

As such, Antioch is not really a community, but a *commune*, where membership is based on a narrow set of political and social beliefs and an insistence on conformity by all students to those beliefs.

The campus culture and the health of a good number of students are affected by substance abuse and a tolerance within the student community for it. Students arrive at Antioch with an expectation that behaviors not allowed off-campus can be engaged in on-campus. This is a misplaced and misdirected understanding of what we mean by freedom at Antioch. According to the "Insider's Guide to Colleges" (Yale Review Press, 2005), "If you go to Antioch you'd better bring a bike, a bong and lots of food..."

The intellectual and learning environment has over the last two decades been diminished, in my view, through admission of large numbers of students with weak academic backgrounds.

Campus social life and the health of the learning environment are affected negatively by a comparatively high incidence of mental health problems among students. Dr. Cynthia Olson, director of the Wright State clinic in Yellow Springs with which the College has a health services contract, has told me that the student body displays an exceptionally high proportion, for the age group, of persons with bipolar disorders, schizophrenia and eating disorders, exacerbated by high co-morbidity with substance abuse.

Institutional attributes that foster this compromised culture

The College's open curricular model puts great weight on students themselves to design and manage a program of learning. This works for the kind of focused and highly-motivated students it was designed for. It does not work for students who need high levels of advice and mentoring, and without direction they can and often do flounder within it.

Similarly, the College's system for evaluating student performance, based on narrative critiques of student work, can be very helpful for the strongly-motivated student but can fail to hold accountable others for unsatisfactory progress.

Some number of the faculty believes that improving retention extends to keeping students who would otherwise be failed.

A deeply confused "shared governance" model conveys to students unreasonably high expectations for running the College. Community governance structures have become vessels for vociferous opposition to the administration and strangely misdirected power struggles. Community governance, at least as currently practiced, has doubtful educational benefit. The North-Central Association had commented critically on the College's cumbersome administrative processes.

Immediate steps taken in the context of the Renewal Plan

I have spoken clearly to issues of intellectual freedom, open inquiry and mutual respects as essential foundations for the College's success. Obviously, we must address this problem vigorously. Good students, attracted by the College's traditional values and educational ideals, are chased off or leave in discouragement over the culture and its narrow and strident foundations. This compromises our financial situation.

The College is recruiting more academically-qualified students. This will contribute, one hopes, to the constitution of a student body more empathically concerned with study and learning and contribute to greater persistence to graduation.

The College has begun a process of reflection on the roles and purposes of community governance arrangements. My questions include: How do these structures contribute to the College's educational mission? Do they contribute to or detract from the effective administration and management of the College? Do they contribute to the success of the College?

College administrators are taking back direct responsibility for student discipline.

There is some promise that these actions, taken forcefully and effectively executed, will contribute to a shift in the College's culture to one founded on intellectual freedom, open inquiry and respect among all community members.

However, cultural change will be very hard to do should large numbers of those who see the College as a fit socially and politically continue to bring with them values and attitudes anathema to the culture that we are trying to build.

I believe we must change the College more fundamentally, in ways that build a truly challenging and distinctive institution of higher learning, authentically inviting of students who expect to be challenged and stretched intellectually. Such a college will, moreover, not for long be perceived as a fit by those who are not prepared to be authentically challenged intellectually and socially.

I believe that for the College to survive the leadership must be bold and very ambitious in addressing the problems identified above. Incremental change will not be timely or effective.

A New Antioch College

Fervently committed to intellectual freedom, open inquiry and mutual respect.

Providing a highly rigorous liberal-arts education that prepares graduates for ethically-grounded civic and intellectual leadership.

The New Antioch College would be:

Selective

High admissions standards

Diverse student body

Strong focus on personal responsibility and accountability

A more "classical" core curriculum

Critical thinking and writing

Logic and mathematics

Philosophy and comparative religion

Integrated identity studies

Relevant and rigorous flagship programs

Environmental sciences and management

Business and entrepreneurship

Global leadership—politics and economics

Creative writing and music

Integrated cultural studies—building the Beloved Community

Co-ops, reduced to two, would be strongly integrated with classroom learning.

A cosmopolitan education—all students would be required to study or work abroad

New mandates for AdCil and ComCil

Building a New Antioch would be expensive and would require a number of fundamental changes in the College and its structure and operations. It would require realignment of the existing faculty as well as recruitment of new faculty to meet new needs. Significant investment would be required in facilities. Significant Scholarship funding to attract well-prepared students would be essential.

That said, I believe that this effort could attract the kind of attention and commitment of resources that are necessary to meet the College's short and long-term needs, and in ways that the Renewal Plan alone, despite its many positive attributes, has not and arguably will not.

Steven Lawry
November 2, 2006

The Insider's Guide to the Colleges

2006

Compiled and Edited
by the Staff of the
Yale Daily News



St. Martin's Griffin
New York



Ohio

Antioch College

Address: 795 Livermore Street; Yellow Spring, OH 45387	Percent Asian: 1%	Application Deadline: rolling
Phone: 937-767-6400	Percent Hispanic: 4%	Middle 50% SAT range: V 580-670, M 500-620
E-mail address: admissions@antioch-college.edu	Percent Native-American: 1%	Middle 50% ACT range: 19-29
Web site URL: www.antioch-college.edu	Percent in-state / out of state: NA	Most popular majors: liberal arts, performing arts, English
Founded: 1852	Percent Pub HS: NA	Retention: 71%
Private or Public: private	On-campus housing: NA	Graduation rate: 43%
Religious affiliation: none	Fraternities: NA	Tuition and Fees: \$24,902
Location: rural	Sororities: NA	Room and Board: \$6,413
Undergraduate enrollment: 627	Number of Applicants: 467	Financial aid, first-year: 91%
Total enrollment: NA	Percent Accepted: 75%	Varsity or Club Athletes: NA
Percent Male/Female: 37%/63%	Percent Accepted who enroll: 42%	Library: 300,000 volumes
Percent Minority: 12%	Entering class: 146	
Percent African-American: 5%	Transfers: 37	
	Early Decision or Early Action Acceptance Rate: NA	

Antioch College is an anomaly in the middle of Ohio. This small school is known for rejecting mainstream America. Ironically, students experience life outside college for half their years with required off-campus academic programs called co-ops. The ambiguity resonates in its student body. Vaguely summed up by one student, "This place is not normal." Intrigued? Confused? Antioch students wouldn't have it any other way.

More than Just a Year-Round School

Perhaps one of the most unique aspects of Antioch College is its cooperative education programs, "co-ops," in which students leave campus to explore internships and employment—all for college credit.

The co-op program is fully integrated into the basic academic schedule and requires students to take co-ops for two of the four terms (fall, winter, spring, and summer). Freshmen generally stay on campus for their first fall and winter and then participate in co-ops during alternating terms through the rest of their years. The college offers a special co-op office with advisors, ideas, information, and documentation of past co-op experiences to be utilized by students (most often by freshmen). After freshman year, students are allowed to design their own co-op experience and the chosen programs generally agree with the student's major but are not required to. Students are very enthusiastic about the co-op programs, saying that it gives them hands-on experience in fields that they are interested in. Past co-op experiences

have included working for the circus, writing for major publications, filmmaking in New York City, Web site design, and domestic and international travel to name a few. Antioch requires that one co-op involve studying a culture other than one's own. The college is always there to support and help students design experiences, but many upperclassmen say that they don't really use the co-op office.

Are there downsides to this unique and interesting opportunity? Yes. It does require "going to school all-year round," a fact that many Antioch students admit can be a source of isolation from their friends both at home and at school. "It's hard to make relationships because people are always leaving," said one student, and the flux state of the campus can be felt on many different levels. Also, the co-op program can lead to new opportunities and experiences, or as one student said, "Someone could go off and do pottery in Vermont, and really find their niche, and then never come back"—a fact that perhaps contributes to Antioch's low retention rate. On campus, the academic departments are regarded as small and strong. General requirements involve a language and quantitative reasoning, both of which students are able to pass out of by taking placement exams. Academics at Antioch are said to be intense, a fact that should not be lost on those individuals drawn to the school by the absence of tests and grades. Instead of grades, students receive narrative evaluations from teachers, although grades can be provided on request (for students wishing to transfer, etc.) "The philosophy behind Antioch academics is that you learn it because you want to learn it," explained one student. However, stress levels are still said to be extremely high. Class size is small (generally 10-20 students) and the teachers are extremely talented. One student made sure to differentiate between the new teachers and Antioch's long-time professors, saying that new teachers often don't understand the philosophy behind Antioch's academics.

Old Facilities

The facilities at Antioch are generally regarded by students as being simply "old." Dorms are described as "run-down and

shabby." But in typical Antioch fashion, the students would much rather speak about the communities of students within the dorms than the buildings themselves. Housing is characteristically lax, with a mix of all classes occupying most dorms and even floors. Floors are co-ed and some dorms even have co-ed "couple" rooms (though, there are also single-sex dorms and floors available). Housing, like the student population, is extremely flexible and there is no crowding for space. The dorms vary in respect to size and character: North houses mostly first-years, does not have Internet access, and was summed up by one student as "certainly not a palace." Many of the dorms do not have phone lines to individual rooms and instead the residents must share hall phones. There seems to be a dejected acceptance of the living conditions at Antioch, yet most students continue to live on campus for all four years.

Like the dorm buildings, many academic and administrative buildings on campus are also in need of renovation. The Olive Kettering Library boasts a large periodical collection and a "very helpful staff," yet many students complain that the library is in need of new resources. Above all, Antioch students are painfully aware of their school's difficult financial situation. When asked about the facilities, one student stated, "This school needs to be brought into the 21st century," and that "Antioch's biggest shortcoming is its constant need for a larger endowment." While the antiquated buildings may be frustrating for some, others enjoy the atmosphere and the activities that accompany the old campus. One student delightfully mentioned exploring the underground tunnel system as a "must-do activity" and also disclosed that many of the college and historic buildings of Yellow Springs (a nearby town) are haunted. The town of Yellow Springs, described by one student as "unlike anywhere else in Ohio," maintains a strong relationship with Antioch students. First-years are introduced to the town during their first week on campus by dining in the homes of the residents of Yellow Springs. While the local businesses are often viewed as "tourist traps," some inexpensive restaurants, such as Ha Ha's Pizza and Subway, offer a welcome haven

to Antioch students fleeing from the unpleasant food in the college's cafeteria.

Ah, yes, "The Caf." Perhaps the only thing that Antioch students agree on is the poor quality of the food. Although there is plenty of choice in dining at Antioch: a meat, vegetarian, and vegan selection is available at every meal at the Caf most students still cannot stomach it. Instead, snacking is popular at the student-run coffee shop (the C-shop); and for the most desperate, there are kitchens in some of the dorms around campus.

"Anything Goes Here"

If there is one thing that unites Antioch students, it is being different. "It's like the freaky school" one student explained. Indeed, the campus is alive with different groups supporting different causes such as SPROUTS, a student group which stands for "Supporting Plants Requires On Us Together and Separately"—an organization that seeks to gain rights for plants. The Community Government is a student organization that, in addition to organizing themed dances for every Friday and Saturday night, also has some say with the administration regarding hiring and firing of teachers and creation of policies. The dances are highly attended and alcohol is available. There are also many chem-free activities available for students who prefer not to drink—bonfires, weekly shows, and movies sponsored by various student groups are always going on somewhere on campus.

There are no intercollegiate sports teams at Antioch. In fact, women's rugby is the only competing sport, though many club sports such as Ultimate Frisbee are popular. Students also take advantage of Glen Helen, a 1000-acre nature preserve that borders the campus, where many go hiking or biking during the weekends. Following that health-conscious trend, an important organization at Antioch is the student-run Wellness Center. It is dedicated to supporting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of Antioch students.

The gay and lesbian population at Antioch is extremely vocal, with its own center in the Student Union and its own social events. "If you are not bisexual at Antioch, you are in the minority," said one student.

One girl said simply, "There is no gender here—you love who you love and no one bothers you." It is generally agreed that Antioch students are incredibly accepting of different lifestyles, all of which come to a head with the annual spring student-run "Gender Fuck" dance which requires attending naked or as the opposite sex. Cross-dressing is apparently a common occurrence at Antioch. "All parties guarantee at least five boys in drag, at least," said one first-year. Indeed, all forms of sexuality are openly discussed at Antioch, due in part to the controversial SOPP (Sexual Offense Protection Policy.) Though jokingly referred to as the "hooking up policy," students do abide by it. It requires verbal consent between two people before any sexual activity and serves to promote a dialogue between individuals on campus. "There's lots of sex, it's a big part of life here," explained one third-year.

"This place is not normal."

There are also a lot of parties. Antioch students describe the typical weekend as starting on a Thursday night with organized parties on both Friday and Saturday nights. Alcohol is easy to come by and being underage doesn't seem to matter at Antioch. One student mentioned smoking pot and tripping in Glen Helen to be a favorite pastime of many students. Campus security is present yet relaxed, say most students. One student recounted a conversation with a security guard who explained, "I don't bust. It's paperwork, and I hate paperwork." For the most part, social life revolves around the campus due to the fact that Antioch students are "stuck in the middle of nowhere."

The typical Antioch student is hard to pinpoint because the students "are all about NOT being typical." Consider the much-loved student-run annual bike-race known as "Camelot" during which Antioch students collect and throw "all imaginable forms of human waste" at each other. Why? At Antioch, many things defy definitions and answers. Yet as many Antioch students will tell you, sometimes the questions are more important.—*Marisa Benoit*

If you come to Antioch, you'd better bring a "bike, a bong and lots of food because The Caf sucks."

What is the typical weekend schedule? "Thursday night: BYOB to hang out, Friday: party, Saturday: theme party, Sunday: catchup on work and sleep."

Could change one thing about Antioch I'd "change the economic status—we need more money."

Three things every student at Antioch should do before graduating are "ride in Camelot, dress up as the opposite sex, and get a piercing."

Bowling Green State University

Address: 110 McFall Center, Bowling Green, OH 43403

Phone: 419-372-2086

E-mail address: admissions@bgnet.bgsu.edu

Web site URL: www.bgsu.edu

Founded: 1910

Private or Public: public

Religious affiliation: none

Location: rural

Undergraduate

enrollment: 15,481

Total enrollment: NA

Percent Male/Female: 44%/56%

Percent Minority: 10%

Percent African-American: 6%

Percent Asian: 1%

Percent Hispanic: 3%

Percent Native-American: 0%

Percent in-state / out of state: 93%/7%

Percent Public HS: NA

On-campus housing: 44%

Fraternities: 8%

Sororities: 11%

Number of Applicants: 10,281

Percent Accepted: 90%

Percent Accepted who enroll: 38%

Entering class: 3,541

Transfers: 647

Early Decision or Early Action Acceptance Rate: NA

NA

Application Deadline:

14-Jul

Middle 50% SAT range:

V 450-560, M 450-560

Middle 50% ACT range:

19-24

Most popular majors:

education, speech, design

Retention: 76%

Graduation rate: 61%

Tuition and Fees: \$7,794

in; \$15,100 out

Room and Board: \$6,588

Financial aid, first-year:

72%

Varsity or Club Athletes:

NA

Library: 2,468,812

volumes

While for one weekend each year, it is the internationally revered home of the World Tractor Pulling Championships, the town of Bowling Green is perhaps best revealed through its offering of a solid and dynamic liberal arts education to the students of Bowling Green State University.

Pulling Strings (and Majoring in Them)

With over 160 majors including everything from Glass, Popular Culture, and Fiber/Fabric to the more commonly seen Humanities, Arts, and Sciences, it is rare to find a student who cannot find a personal course of study at BGSU. While al-

most every academic program is regarded as strong and marketable, the most popular majors among undergraduates are biology, psychology, and the renowned and competitive education program. Several options are available to fulfill each student's needs, including self-designed majors, double majoring, an honors program, and several pre-professional programs. Getting into classes is not typically regarded as a problem. One student noted that being shut out is particularly unlikely "if you get on waiting lists immediately and actually talk to people to get strings pulled." Another student liked the fact that he could easily take classes outside his major, such as dance and theater. Stu-