

# REGIONAL FOCUS

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## The Taskforce

The Northeast Ohio Regional Leadership Taskforce is a partnership formed by the Urban University Program's (UUP) Northeast Ohio Research Consortium and the twenty Community Leadership Programs (CLPs) of Northeast Ohio. Visit our web site at [www.neolead.com](http://www.neolead.com)

## Regional Day Proposed

Over 400 to meet spring of 2004.  
*See page 2.*

## Summit Format and Findings

Delegates propose solutions.  
*See page 2 and 3.*

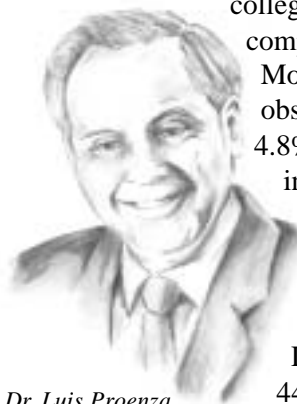
## Programs Have Impact

*See page 4.*

## Delegate Summit Held at Mather Mansion

At the World Class Region Summit IV on Friday, June 28, 2002 at Cleveland State University's Mather Mansion, three outstanding speakers shared their perspectives on Educational Attainment and Economic Development Potential with 65 regional leaders, representing 15 community leadership programs in northeast Ohio. In the morning keynote remarks, CSU president, Dr. Michael Schwartz, and University of Akron president, Dr. Luis Proenza, emphasized the potentially devastating effect of the deficit in educational attainment experienced by the state in general and the region in particular.

Dr. Schwartz noted that the public is way ahead of the State of Ohio in understanding the need for advanced education in the rapidly changing knowledge economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He cited a Public Agenda survey in which 87% of those polled nationally agree that a college education is as important today as a high school education used to be. While Ohio continues to exceed the national average in the percentage of its citizens who have high school diplomas, he noted that in 2000, only 46% of Ohioans completed some form of

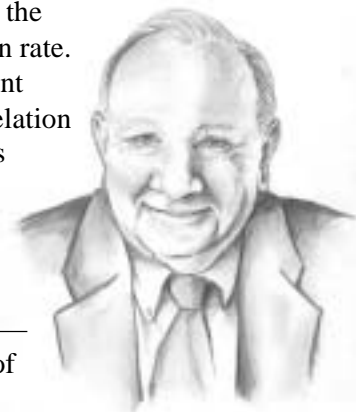


Dr. Luis Proenza

college while the national completion rate was 52%. More alarmingly, he observed that with only 4.8% of Ohioans enrolled in college versus the 5.2% national average, that gap is widening. Translating percentages to people, Dr. Schwartz said 44,000 Ohioans, roughly

the size of CSU and the University of Akron combined, would need to enroll tomorrow to reach the national participation rate and 450,000 would have to complete college tomorrow to reach the average completion rate.

CSU's president drew a direct correlation between the state's cutbacks to higher education that began in 1971 and Ohio's free fall toward the bottom—now 46<sup>th</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> of 50—in economic growth and momentum. Other indications he referenced in the decline and fall:



Dr. Michael Schwartz

- Ohio is 44<sup>th</sup> of 50 in population growth and lost a congressional seat in 2000
- Ohio has slipped from 12<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of 50 in median family income
- Ohio has dropped to 34<sup>th</sup> in increased value of goods and services produced
- Ohio is 41<sup>st</sup> out of 50 in adults over 25 with a bachelor's degree
- Ohio is 39<sup>th</sup> in residents with advanced degrees
- Ohio is 27<sup>th</sup> among states in using technology and knowledge-driven innovation
- Ohio is 40<sup>th</sup> in per capita spending on higher education
- Ohio is 8<sup>th</sup> in tuition costs

*Continued on page 3*

# Regional Day **Proposed**



Dennis Eckart

During his lunch address, Dennis Eckart, president of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, challenged the leadership programs of the region to examine the roles they can and must play in assisting the region achieve its economic potential. To that end he suggested that programs consider developing a common regional day. Plans are underway to bring the current

class members of all the region's leadership programs together for a regional program day on Thursday, April 29, 2004. Fourteen programs representing over 400 participants have committed to adding the day to their 2003-2004 schedule. This will be the most ambitious

undertaking of its kind in the country and an exciting opportunity for participants to exchange regional information and expand their regional knowledge. Please contact Suzanne Fleming at [shfleming@ysu.edu](mailto:shfleming@ysu.edu) for additional information or to attend planning meetings that are scheduled as follows:

**January 27, 2003**

10:30 am – 2:30 pm  
**NEUCOM**

**March 31, 2003**

10:30 am – 2:30 pm  
**Akron**

**July 14, 2003**

10:30 am – 2:30 pm  
**Kent**



Northeast Ohio  
Research  
Consortium



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## New Format

After successful conferences open to all leadership program alumni in Canton (1997), Akron (1999) and Elyria (2001), a more targeted approach was used for the summit this year. The taskforce invited each program to send a delegate team that included the program director, the board chair and an alumni representative, along with a leading educator and an economic development representative from their community. The World Class Region Summit delegates gathered from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm with three outcomes in mind:

1. to enhance their understanding of educational attainment and formulate strategies that the taskforce and programs should consider for raising that bar in the region;
2. to explore the economic development opportunities in northeast Ohio and develop priorities for the taskforce and programs to promote for the region, and;
3. to discuss the public policy implications of these issues with regional office holders.

By utilizing the taskforce resources to support the attendance of delegates that were in key positions related to education, economic development, and leadership program management the impact of the summit was enhanced exponentially.

## Breakout Findings

The morning breakout session following Drs. Schwartz and Proenza's remarks divided the delegates occupationally to develop strategies for increasing educational attainment:

### Educator suggestions

- We need to change the attitude that education is not a priority within the state
- Public/Private partnerships pressuring politicians to share in increased tax base
- Advocate for more business/corporate internships for students in college and trade schools for real world training

### Economic Developer suggestions

- Business and education need to work together
- Lobbying politically for support of education
- Educate-educate-educate people through leadership programs

### Leadership Program suggestions

- Introduce a regional day/participants and staff to improve educational attainment
- Create a system to share information
- Use the regional taskforce as an advocate/convenor/facilitator at the state level

The afternoon breakouts following Mr. Eckart's remarks divided the delegates geographically to identify the regional economic development assets with the most potential:

#### **North Coast Group** – Ashtabula, Lake, Cuyahoga, Lorain

- Lake Erie
- Education Centers
- Health/trauma centers
- Strategic location – global partners

#### **Western Group** – Medina, Summit, Stark, Ashland, Richland

- Strong manufacturing base
- Transportation system
- Higher Education Centers/ R&D
- Market location – between Pittsburgh/Cleveland – Chicago/New York

#### **Eastern Group** – Geauga, Portage, Mahoning, Trumbull, Columbiana

- Geographic location
- Workforce – productive, affordable, work ethic
- Quality of Life - cultural/recreational activities, education choices, health care, cost of living
- Multi-modal transportation

## Public Policy

Hunter Morrison, former Planning Director for the City of Cleveland and newly appointed Director of Urban and Regional Studies at Youngtown State University, moderated a panel of delegates currently involved in a variety of city and county public offices. Participants included Lorain County Commissioner, Betty Blair, Vermilion mayor, Jim Davis, and Lake County Commissioner, Dan Troy. Public policy issues worthy of taskforce consideration suggested were:

- Collective education of the public on the value/crisis in education in Ohio
- Partnerships with educators to promote the importance of education
- Helping our communities create a regional vision of the future
- Development of a greenspace inventory for the region
- Promotion of transportation logistics and development of trail/bikeway systems

### *Summit, continued from page 1*

Dr. Luis Proenza explained that the development of human capital (education of the workforce) is the first, and best known, of the three roles that universities play as engines for economic development. He noted that the talented and entrepreneurial faculties of universities can also leverage millions of new state and federal research dollars into the economy, and finally, that university research produces new knowledge that is the basis for new companies, new jobs, and significant new wealth.

Beyond the need to support higher education at a level that will rapidly increase the number of Ohioans with a college degree, Dr. Proenza called upon the state to re-examine its educational research investment priorities. He applauded the \$60 million annual research investment the state currently makes through Ohio State University in agriculture, the state's largest industry. However, Ohio's second largest industry, polymers, with \$22 billion in annual sales, received a mere \$1.4 million in industry support while the coal industry got \$23 million though coal represents only four-tenths of one percent of Ohio's gross state product.

Dr. Proenza asserted that the return on investment in a more highly educated population and in the strongest industries and clusters would be significant. He observed that the additional income taxes generated by higher incomes of more college graduates would generate almost \$2 for every dollar invested in their education. With Ohio students paying more than 50% of the cost of public college education while the national average is only 20%, he challenged Ohio to do more.

# Program Impact Survey SUMMARY

Be sure to check out the taskforce website [www.neolead.com](http://www.neolead.com) to see the results of the 2002 online survey of leadership program impact in the region. Survey respondents were highly educated – 45% holding a graduate degree and 39% a bachelor's degree. Equal numbers of men and women mostly in the 36-55 age range completed the survey. 65% indicated that they give 10 or more hours per month to community service. Over half of the respondents participated in their community's program in the last 5 years and 91% maintained at least a minimal level of program activity since graduation. Work, community and

family obligations were cited as the main reasons for inactivity. 93% felt that program participation improved their effectiveness as community leaders. The top benefits of program participation offered were knowledge of community needs and assets, connections to leaders in other fields, access to community information, renewed enthusiasm for the community and increased involvement in community activities. Over 80% believe education and economic development remain the two most critical issues facing the region and suggested that possible taskforce strategies in these areas might include:

consensus building, community education, partnership promotion, implementation of a common vision and establishment of a strategic agenda.

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## Programs Highly Effective

“It is gratifying that the survey results document the effectiveness of our community leadership programs.”

*Marta Stone,  
Executive Director  
LEADERship Ashtabula County*

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Northeast Ohio Regional Leadership Taskforce

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