OSU plans combined black studies center

By Arum I. Arum

Task forces for Ohio State and Central State Universities will meet in August to compare notes and iron out differences the schools may have concerning the new Center for Strategic Studies on African American Life, said Robert Arnold, associate provost for academic affairs and OSU task force chair.

Ohio State and Central State were selected by the Governor’s Commission on Socially Disadvantaged Black Males as the two possible sites for the center, which, when operational, would examine the state of the black male.

Commission Administrator Adam Troy said the center would be a partnership between CSU and OSU designed to function as a research and academic institute with a mission to explore some of the common problems that face black men in Ohio.

"The center would be used to generate fresh data and update available research information in the commission’s four major areas of interest—health, employment, criminal justice and education," Troy said.

CSU Spokesperson Thyrsa Svaqer, executive vice-president and provost, said Central State was “looking forward to a very productive, collaborative relationship with our colleagues at The Ohio State University.”

CSU considered the issue under study to be of “an impelling and timely nationwide significance,” Svaqer said.

The OSU task force has sought to broaden the scope of the center’s mandate, Arnold said. Instead of focusing specifically on the black male, the center would concentrate on the black family in its entirety.

As far as funding for the center, Arnold said he was sure the money would not come out of students’ tuition.

“A huge chunk of the money would come from foundations and corporate sponsors,” he said.

If successful, the center’s office at Ohio State “would not only bring us a lot of national attention but also contribute to the resolution of a crucial social crisis,” Arnold said.

The Ohio State task force was set up by OSU President Gordon Gee last spring as a feasibility study group to determine the center’s form and funding. The task force’s report is due this fall.
CENTRAL STATE AND OHIO STATE SIGN COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

COLUMBUS -- The presidents of Central State University and The Ohio State University signed an agreement Aug. 26 that calls on the two institutions to cooperate on research projects and on academic opportunities for students.

Arthur E. Thomas, president of Central State, said the signing of the agreement represented a great day for both universities.

"I think that by working together, particularly in the area of joint research projects, we can make progress," Thomas said. He also hopes to encourage Central State students to attend graduate school at Ohio State.

E. Gordon Gee, president of Ohio State, hosted the signing ceremony in his office. "It's important to publicly signify our intent to work together," he said.

Central State is a public university located in Wilberforce, Ohio, with an enrollment of about 3,200 students. Most of its students are African Americans.

Ohio State is a public, land-grant university with an enrollment of 60,000 students on its Columbus and four regional campuses. The African-American enrollment is more than 3,100.

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The agreement between the two institutions suggests cooperation such as to:

--Conduct joint seminars, workshops and assemblies.
--Apply in partnership for research funding and conduct joint research projects.
--Enable students at either university to take selective courses at the other institution.

--Encourage Central State graduates to pursue postgraduate work at Ohio State, and encourage Ohio State students to take advantage of the urban literacy, manufacturing, engineering, water resource management and other programmatic strengths at Central State.

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