



Thomas Snyder, Ivy Tech Community College

University system: Fourteen regions, 23 campuses, more than 100,000 students

Leadership: Thomas Snyder, eighth president in 42-year history
Age: 62

Background: Chairman of Flagship Energy Systems Center, 2006-2007; president of Delco Remy International, 1994-2006; various positions within General Motors in Anderson, 1973-1994; various Air Force positions, including with the Air Force System Command and at the Pentagon, 1967-1973

Education: Kettering University, formerly the General Motors Institute, with a degree in mechanical engineering; master's in business administration from Indiana University

Selected boards and committees: World Economic Forum, Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (2006 co-chair), Indiana Chamber of Commerce executive committee, Indiana Humanities Council, Corporation for Economic Development in Madison County

IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE THOMAS SNYDER

BizVoice®: You retired from Delco Remy for about five minutes last year before becoming involved with the Flagship Energy Systems Center in Anderson. What prompted you to pursue this position at Ivy Tech?

Thomas Snyder: “I think (it’s) because I have been working in this incubator for the last year. I’m starting to get really sensitive to the fact of the link between our talent pool and the jobs that are created. The two are just tied together. Number two is when I realized that Gerry (Lamkin, president since 1983) was going to step down, I started to investigate and talk to people and all those folks encouraged me to think about it seriously because the institution had grown in size and complexity. They thought that I might be a good next step for the school.”

BV: What did you tell the search committee about your vision, what you wanted to accomplish in this role?

TS: “The thing that they were looking for is how to get the school on a more processed basis – how to get the 14 regions to collaborate. That was an area that I thought I could really help with, to strengthen the role of workforce development in the community. Also, how to have the school reach out to get more support and funding to carry on its mission. Those are the things that I emphasized at the time. I think the other thing that I said is that I felt comfortable working with a model that is a shared governance. That is what we have with our state board of trustees and our regional trustees, and (I) have been close to the region for a long time. I told them that I thought I could work in that environment pretty effectively.”

BV: The controversies (Carol D’Amico, an Ivy Tech executive vice president and the expected successor to Lamkin, was not selected as one of the two finalists for the position; the divided board also violated the open meetings law, according to an opinion offered by the state’s public access counselor) that came up. Will there be any implications going forward?

TS: “What I did understand is that any institution that is as critical as this is probably going to get discussed in public. I actually

think it was a good thing to have the selection process be more visible. It certainly highlighted the size and scope of the institution. So many people were not aware that we have 100,000-plus students and 23 campuses across the state. And that it had just been chartered in 2005 with this (community college) mission. That was a surprise to a lot of people. Going forward, we have made it much more of a household word. I'd say also that Carol D'Amico has been an important contributor to the school, and we are going to collaborate and take advantage of her knowledge and experience going forward."

BV: The day you were selected you talked about beginning visits to those 23 campuses. Where have your travels taken you, who have you been talking with and what have you learned?

TS: "I said I would go out and do a listening tour. By the time you publish this, I will have been to every campus. I think what I see is that there is a tremendous enthusiasm about the school from virtually all sectors. Certainly the dedicated administration and staff, and what has surprised me is the breadth and depth of local community support. I knew it was there, but it is pretty powerful and it's not just from regional boards. It's from the elected officials, it's from employers, it's from K-12 educators. They all see a critical role for Ivy Tech going forward."

BV: With 23 campuses and more than 100,000 students, is it difficult at all to get a handle on how that all works together?

TS: "I have told people that actually you break it into two parts. The academic side, which is where you really talk about the 100,000 students, the collaboration, the delivery of those programs has actually been organized quite effectively throughout the state. In other words, the academic programs that you get in any one of our campuses now are virtually the same. What I see there is that we have good standards, and we

have a system through our academic deans.

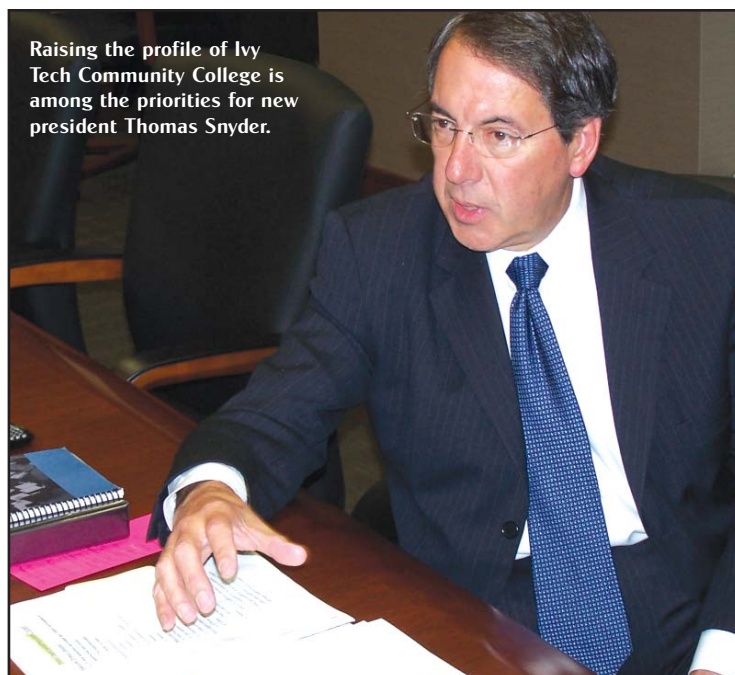
"We use the example of nursing. We have nursing on 12 campuses, and it's the same everywhere. Of course, that is a certified program so it has to be. You take even our English programs – you get the same quality at all of our campuses. I think that is important given the breadth of our campuses.

"What is different in the system is the back office function or the gateway functions. That is primarily driven by the fact that we've had no common systems to use over the years. Our database system is 30 to 35 years old. We are launching a new one July 1, which should permit us to have commonization of a lot more of our business practices."

BV: What are some of the business experiences you have had that apply to your role now?

TS: "I think that one of them is just the schools talking about best practices, within the institution and best practices within community colleges in general. That is something that businesses have done. That is something really now that academic institutions are doing. They have started that process. Mark Keen, the chancellor of the Fort Wayne region, is leading that effort. That is one that is in its formative stages, and I hope that will carry on.

"The idea of thinking more globally outside the state of Indiana: We're going to be a key element in recruiting companies to Indiana because they are going to look to our workforce. The fact that I have had a lot of global experience and have opened offices, businesses and factories in a dozen or more countries gives me a perspective of just how important it is to have a workforce here that can compete with those countries. The final thing is that the people in my industry just go way back with Ivy Tech. We all



Raising the profile of Ivy Tech Community College is among the priorities for new president Thomas Snyder.



started with Ivy Tech being a key element of training on our premises 30 years ago. There is an appreciation among people, like me and other people in the business community, just how important it is that you combine your work experience with your academic experience – your training for the job.”

BV: Despite Ivy Tech being 40-plus years old, the community college mission has been in place for just a few years. There is an ambitious strategic plan in place for 2010. What are some of the elements needed to make that a reality?

TS: “I think the first thing is in place if we can sustain it – that is a capital allocation that has been approved by the Legislature to finally get us out of the old abandoned school storefronts. We have \$162 million, and we are going to work carefully with the Commission on Higher Education and the State Budget Committee to get final approval for all of those projects. Indianapolis is the most critical. It wasn’t at the top of the list that had been submitted earlier in the year, but it is at the top of my list.

“The reason is that it is our flagship campus, 15,000 students in the spring term, which people don’t know about, and for 20 years sitting next to an empty, historic building that was a homeless shelter and a variety of other things. If we want more young people, particularly in Indianapolis and in Central Indiana to go to community college, to go beyond high school, we have got to do something about Indianapolis. That is number one. Number two is to look to use that launch of this new information system called the banner system (that is the name of the software that most universities use), to use that to save money and to reapply that money to increase the number of full-time faculty. Our full-time versus part-time is about 1,000 full-time and 3,600 part-time.

BV: It’s been a criticism or discussion point in the past – the number of part-time faculty, but that is something already being looked at?

TS: “There is some benefit to having an outreach to this adjunct faculty and that is that they have critical up-to-date skills. You have to weigh that against the fact your full-time faculty are available 24/7 for counseling and advising, and your part-time people aren’t. A balance is good, but we need more full-time faculty, and we need to generate some of our own system savings to do that.

“The third thing, which is workforce or economic development, is to make that more seamless so people understand our statewide capabilities and employers can access them more easily. That is in concert with the Ready Indiana initiative (focused on enhancing the skills of the state’s current workforce), that is just now being launched. We think we are going to be one of the key resources because we have about 115 people in our workforce/economic development team. We probably have the largest and most experienced team in the state as far as resources in that area, so working with the (Indiana) Chamber and the other partners in that area is going to be critical.”



Snyder takes notes during a meeting with Ivy Tech staff members.

Ivy Tech Community College Presidents

- Gerald I. Lamkin: 1983-2007
- John Barnett: Aug.-Dec. 1982
- Myron M. Eicher: 1980-1982
- John Barnett: Feb.-Nov.1980
- Glenn Sample: 1975-1980
- W. Dwight Renner: 1972-1975
- Harry A. McGuff: 1969-1972
- Glenn Sample: 1968-1969
- Frederic M. Hadley: 1966-1968

BV: On the academic side, partnerships with the four-year institutions are critical. Going back, there has been extreme frustration with the ability to transfer credits. A lot of progress has been made, but what more needs to be done to make that almost a seamless process?

TS: “I think that is making progress in two areas. Number one is the four-year institutions are de-emphasizing their own associate degree programs, which is putting the responsibility of the two-year programs squarely on our shoulders. Number two is the work on articulation agreements, which is what they are technically called, has been done on a school-to-school basis. I think that the progress, considering the (community college) charter was put out in 2005, is pretty phenomenal. We can tick off quite a few examples. I would say one of the more high-tech examples is our biotechnology degree, which is a two-year program that is being offered in South Bend, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Bloomington and Terre Haute, because they have specific partners out there in the industry. That two-year degree is fully recognized by Indiana University and our target, because of the research capability, is those two-year graduates come to IUPUI in particular and get their four-year diploma. Dr. (Charles) Bantz (chancellor at IUPUI) has been very supportive and encouraging us to do that.”

BV: Those partnerships are critical. You seem to have a situation in Bloomington in life sciences that you might want to try and emulate in other places.

TS: “Bloomington is a great case where Ivy Tech is sitting in what is really a research park. The Bloomington campus is actually now being requested by Cook (Group) to consider a two-year degree in regulatory affairs, which I think is pretty interesting. It is a Ready Indiana issue that on the factory floor they want people who are conversant in FDA (Food and Drug Administration) requirements. They realized that this might be a great way to do that. They want people actually on the shop floor, and we can do that.

“The other thing that was done in Bloomington, and for the entire institution, is we have an experienced pharmaceutical executive, John Stevens, who is on board. He is what I call our pharmaceutical education champion. We have got an industry specialist. It was outside the purview of most of the staff in Bloomington, and they brought on their own expert.

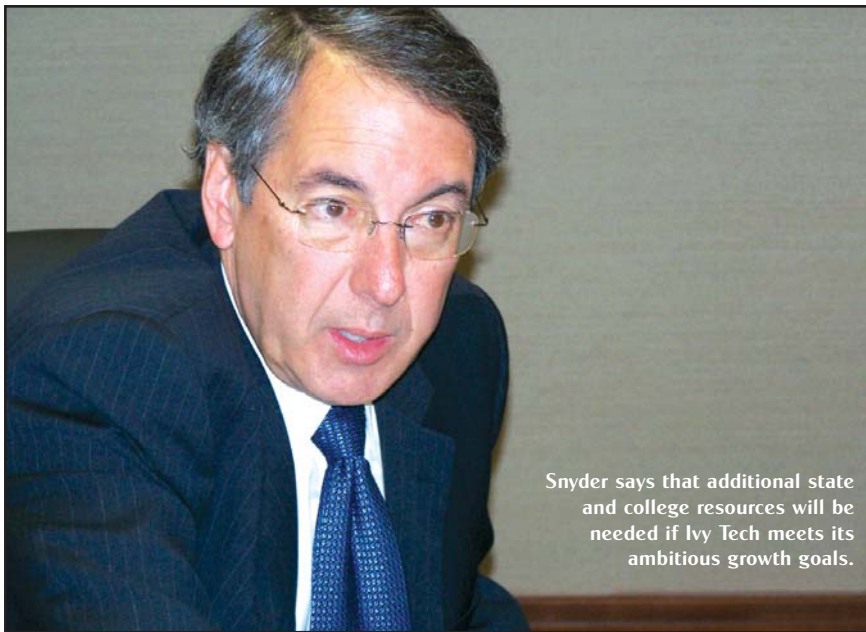
BV: You’re coming on board the same time as the presidents at Indiana and Purdue. What are some of the opportunities you see with that?

TS: “I have spoken with Dr. (Michael) McRobbie (new Indiana University president) and we will be meeting. I have spoken with Dr. (Adam) Herbert (outgoing IU president). Dr. Herbert has been very instrumental in our growth and accreditation because he and Dr. (Martin) Jischke (outgoing Purdue president) both came from states where community colleges are just a way of life. The last few years have been smoother just because the presidents of those schools have an expectation of what a community college should do. And I know Dr. (Jo Ann) Gora (Ball State) quite well and Dr. (Lloyd) Benjamin (Indiana State). We have had a lot of discussions with all four institutions, and I will be reaching out to the new president of Purdue.”

BV: What are some of the influences on your leadership style?

TS: “I’d say early stage was my experience of six years in the Air Force. My engineering training was good preparation for that, but team-based management just really wasn’t talked about in the auto industry when I started. The Air Force, because of the close relationship between the support team and the people operating the weapons, has a lot of team concepts that really served to be a foundation for a lot of industries. I think that when I came back after six years in high technology – I was also in Air Force personnel helping place other officers – that was an excellent start.

“In the middle of my career, I ended up having the opportunity



Snyder says that additional state and college resources will be needed if Ivy Tech meets its ambitious growth goals.

to run engineering and marketing for another start-up, Magnaquench, which was in Indiana for some time. We really tried to put in place all of those team principals. The concept of teamwork is really underpinning all of this. I think it played well with the work we did at Delco Remy and played well with the things I did with my community activities.

“One of the books that we spread around today, in terms of having people read so we are all on the same page, is ‘Built to Last’ and another is ‘Good to Great.’ I think those are things people, even on the academic side, now are starting to pay attention to. One of the other influences has been the work that Bobbette (Snyder’s wife, who is executive director of the Leadership Academy of Madison County) has done in community leadership. Because she has been active in that for 12 years, I have been the beneficiary of her spending a lot of time bringing books home and getting that information to the folks that she is educating.

“Most recently the work that they have done in Madison County is focused on early reading. The key that relates directly to what we are doing here is that if our third-graders are not reading at a third-grade level when they exit that grade, we probably will never get them to where they need to be. They are a potential dropout. A lot of that is driven by the fact that their skill-set level when coming into kindergarten is 40% or more behind where they actually need to be. That’s driving them not being able to read at a third-grade level when they exit third grade, and our system will never catch them up. Now I’m on the receiving end of a lot of that activity – we are doing remediation that really goes back to actually grade three. In terms of coming full circle, we really are all a team in this process. It’s all a closed-loop system where if we want educated workers to leave our schools or any of the other schools, it actually starts at home and it certainly is critical in the kindergarten through third-grade level.”

BV: What do you see as the biggest challenges of this position?

TS: “Now having met virtually the entire team and having also talked to business and government leaders, including the governor, I think everyone is incredibly supportive. I think that the opportunities are certainly achievable. The challenge is going to be in the coming years if we meet our growth objectives, which I think we can. In other words, if we are educating the same number of students as in surrounding states, we will be approaching 200,000 enrollment in the next decade – and the challenge is going to be funding that. We are going to have to think creatively about that. We are going to have to be thinking about raising our own foundation and endowment money.”

BV: *Have you thought at all how long you see yourself in this position?*

TS: “One of the people in the search process, who actually had been president of Wilberforce (University in Ohio), said that after 10 years it is too long and something less than that you may not get enough done. I have agreed to serve a minimum of four, and then we’ll just see how everybody feels about going forward.”

BV: *We’ve talked about what you’ve heard from others, but what’s your mindset going into this opportunity?*

TS: “What I think is that whoever was taking this position at this time was blessed with a great foundation. I think what the school

has done in reaching out has been incredible. But the other thing is the state is on a real charge forward. You go to these regions and you start to appreciate strong opportunities – in Fort Wayne in manufacturing, in the Northwest region with steel and oil and business, in the Louisville area and, of course, in Central Indiana. People are just feeling good about what is going on, and I think the area that we can help is now they realize this won’t continue unless we do something about the strength of our workforce.

“One of things that I have said to people is that one of our concerns is that we have about 80,000 students, young people that turn 18 every year, and about half go to college and half don’t. And of the half that don’t, that’s a combination of high school grads that didn’t pass the ISTEP or dropped out. So we’ve got, under the age of 30, roughly half a million young people that have not taken any post-high school work or finished high school. That’s an opportunity and a concern.

“I think that’s going to be one of the things that we highlight to our own internal people, that we have to reach into these high schools as early as we can to start to talk to them about how important it is to finish high school, get their degree and then get some post-high school work. That can be a real drag on the state. In Ready Indiana, you’ve talked about how we’ve got almost a million people that are undereducated for the job they have. If we don’t do something about this incoming side, we’ll have the same problem.”

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