

12-17-2009

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### Recommended Citation

"No Slowing Down" (2009). *News Releases*. 1286.  
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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## No Slowing Down

12.17.2009 | Faculty, Education

Thomas J. Lasley II may be stepping down as dean of the School of Education and Allied Professions at the University of Dayton, but he's not stepping back.

That's never been his style.

With tenacity, energy and passion, Lasley has fashioned a career out of building programs designed to close the educational divide. After a 12-year stint as dean and a nearly 30-year career at the University, he knows his life's work is far from finished.

Lasley will serve as executive director of EDvention and teach classes at the University of Dayton, shuttling between offices on campus and at The Dayton Foundation. EDvention is a collaborative dedicated to accelerating science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) talent to grow the Dayton region. He's also been tapped as the executive director of the Ohio Early College Association and vice chair of the Ohio College Access Network, both volunteer roles.

"We are pleased to be able to provide office space and in-kind support for this very worthwhile, community collaborative effort that Tom Lasley will lead," said Michael M. Parks, president of The Dayton Foundation. "Helping EDvention is another way The Dayton Foundation can help people and organizations to help the community."

Kevin R. Kelly, who recently served as interim dean of the College of Education at Purdue University, succeeds Lasley as dean on May 1.

"I don't plan to slow down," said Lasley, 62. "I want to use my creative energy in helping to create the workforce that this region needs. The capacity for innovation and the ability to leverage the assets of the region to enhance talent development — that's what excites me."

He's a huge proponent of education reform initiatives, particularly early learning programs. That's why he counts the establishment of the Bombeck Family Learning Center, an early childhood demonstration school, as one of his most rewarding accomplishments as he ends his tenure as dean. The 2002 creation of the Dayton Early College Academy, where every graduate has been accepted to college, tops the list, too. Harvard researchers have studied the school's innovative approach to educating primarily minority, first-generation college-going students.

"Obviously I take a lot of pride in DECA. We went from a nomadic existence with students situated all over campus, to being one of the top urban high schools in America. It is an amazing story," Lasley said.

Lasley is equally dedicated to urban Catholic schools. Students in the Lalanne program teach for at least two years in a Catholic urban school, live together in a faith community and receive free tuition for master's degree courses taken during the summers. The program, run through the Center for Catholic Education, places students in San Antonio, Indianapolis, Cleveland and Dayton.

As dean, Lasley pushed for the University of Dayton's membership in an elite national network of colleges and universities dedicated to radically changing the way students are prepared to teach. The reform initiative, Teachers for a New Era (TNE) Learning Network, was supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Annenberg Foundation. Before that, Lasley served as president of Project 30, which was a Carnegie-sponsored project that brought together arts and sciences and education faculty.

Under his leadership, the school pioneered and has significantly grown online graduate classes; started a popular doctor in physical therapy program with support from the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association; opened a satellite campus outside Columbus; converted its graduate programs from quarters to semesters; and hired former Ohio Governor Bob Taft to improve STEM education in the region and spearhead education policy issues. The school just finished a successful accreditation review for all its programs, including specialty accreditation in selected areas such as counselor education.

"It's been an unbelievable run for Tom," said Joseph Saliba, provost. "He is such an accomplished person. He has an ability to

put people at ease and empower them to reach even greater heights. He nurtures people and gets out of their way. I also love his entrepreneurship, creativity and imagination. He is forward-looking and an extremely well-connected leader. He continues to make a difference on our campus and in our community.

In the early 1990s, Lasley considered an offer from Bowling Green State University to serve as dean of its College of Education, but his gut told him to stay at UD.

Although he's not Catholic, he embraces the University's mission. Maybe that's because his father, a school superintendent, was bivocational and spent his Sundays in the pulpit as an American Baptist preacher.

"I love being in a religious institution," he said. "I like to listen to the chimes when I walk across the campus and work in my office. I also appreciate and value the sense of family that is evident on the campus."