## DATA SPOTLIGHT: TOP 5 TIPS AND TRICKS TO SURVEY DESIGN

Survey season is upon us! The strategic use of surveys can effectively assess program outcomes and student learning objectives. Whether measuring customer satisfaction or student engagement and growth, surveys can be a quality measure for evaluating your department's efforts. Here are our top five tips to help you get started with your survey design:

1. Start With Clear Objectives
How will this inform your department's decision making? What does "success" look like?
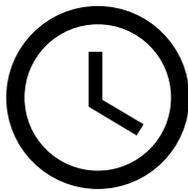
2. Keep It Short (Survey Fatigue Is Real!)
5-10 minutes max for most surveys. Consider removing "nice to know" questions.

3. Timing is Everything!
Avoid sending surveys during mid-term and finals weeks. If it is program related, send at the conclusion of the event.

4. Use Multiple Contact Touchpoints
Personalized invites and subject lines can help your survey stand out in a sea of emails received by students. Consider adding incentives and flyers to help improve response rates.

5. Close the Loop (Most Important)
Closing the loop on survey assessment is critical to keeping your stakeholders engaged. Share summary findings and the changes that were made base on results. If your office received a 90% satisfaction rate, shout it from the rooftops!
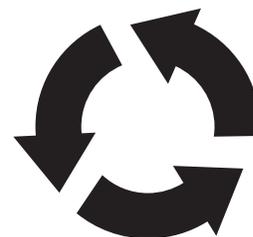
Thinking about conducting a survey this semester? Contact us at ir@nku.edu.

Survey Spotlight: We want to recognize the **Subdivision of Student Affairs** for their dedication to assessment as they develop a cross-unit survey implementation plan. All nine directors are committed to using survey design to assess each of their offices and how they engage with students. We want to recognize the **Veterans Resource Station (VRS)** as well for their strategic use of survey administration to assess our military related students' satisfaction with the VRS and its resources. Results will be used for national benchmarking within the Best for Vets survey. Kudos SA and VRS!


Introducing Our New Internal KPI Dashboard

Building on the success of our Forward Together KPI Dashboard, we are excited to announce the launch of a new internal strategic metrics dashboard that will help users more closely monitor and support student success. This dynamic tool allows users to drill down to departmental-level data, giving new insight into trends in retention, graduation, persistence, and other core indicators of student success.

In addition to overall performance, several of the metrics allow for disaggregation by student subpopulations, including low-income, first-generation, and in some cases, online programs, providing a more nuanced look at outcomes and opportunity gaps.

This launch advances the Forward Together priority of using data to drive meaningful improvement and uphold NKU's commitment to equitable student success for all learners. Access to the dashboard is now available through the Planning and Institutional Research Data Center.
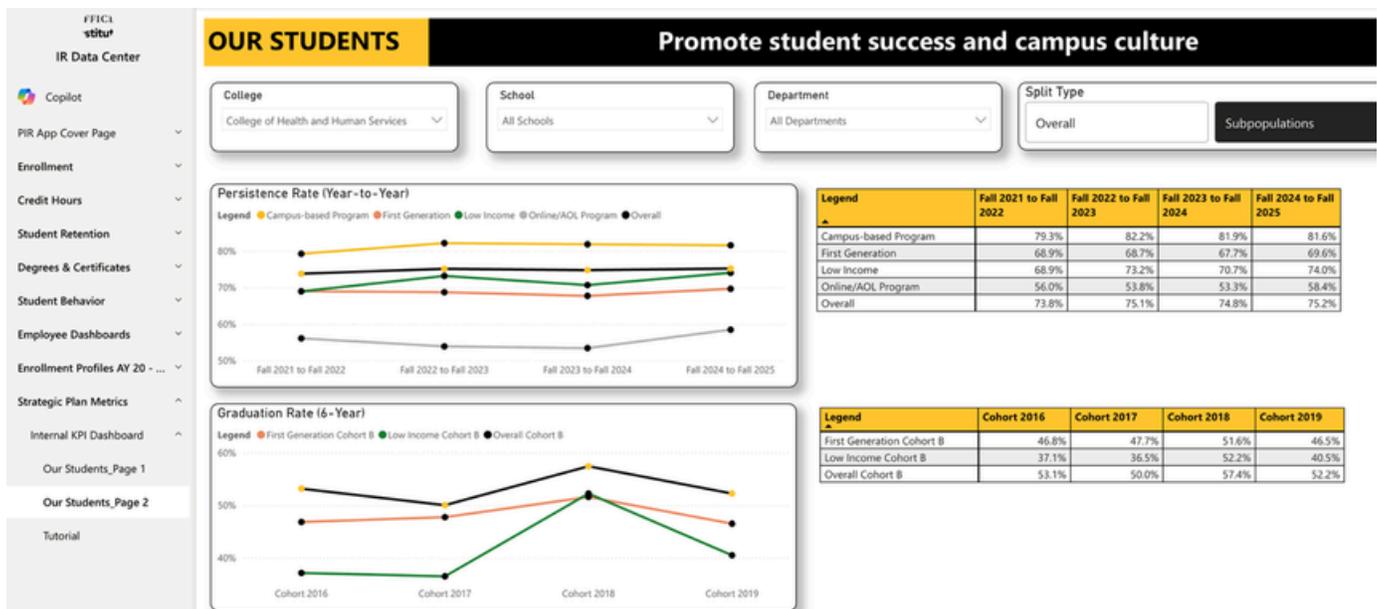
Forward Together KPI Dashboard Update with Refreshed Data

In addition to our new internal dashboard, we are pleased to share that the Forward Together KPI Dashboard on the strategic plan website has been refreshed with the latest available data, providing an updated view of progress toward our key student success and institutional performance goals.

In this latest refresh, the data shows some areas for targeted improvement but also highlights some encouraging trends. In addition to reporting a record-high 6-year graduation rate, the data show that our first-generation students have experienced consistent year-over-year gains in completion. Likewise, graduation outcomes for low-income students have demonstrated substantial growth over the past three years. These positive trends reflect the university's ongoing commitment to expanding opportunity and ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has a clear pathway to success.

As a reminder, the [Data Sources and Definitions](#) page provides important context for how each metric is defined and the frequency of reporting.

We invite you to explore the updated dashboard and supporting documentation to see how our collective efforts continue to move NKU forward.
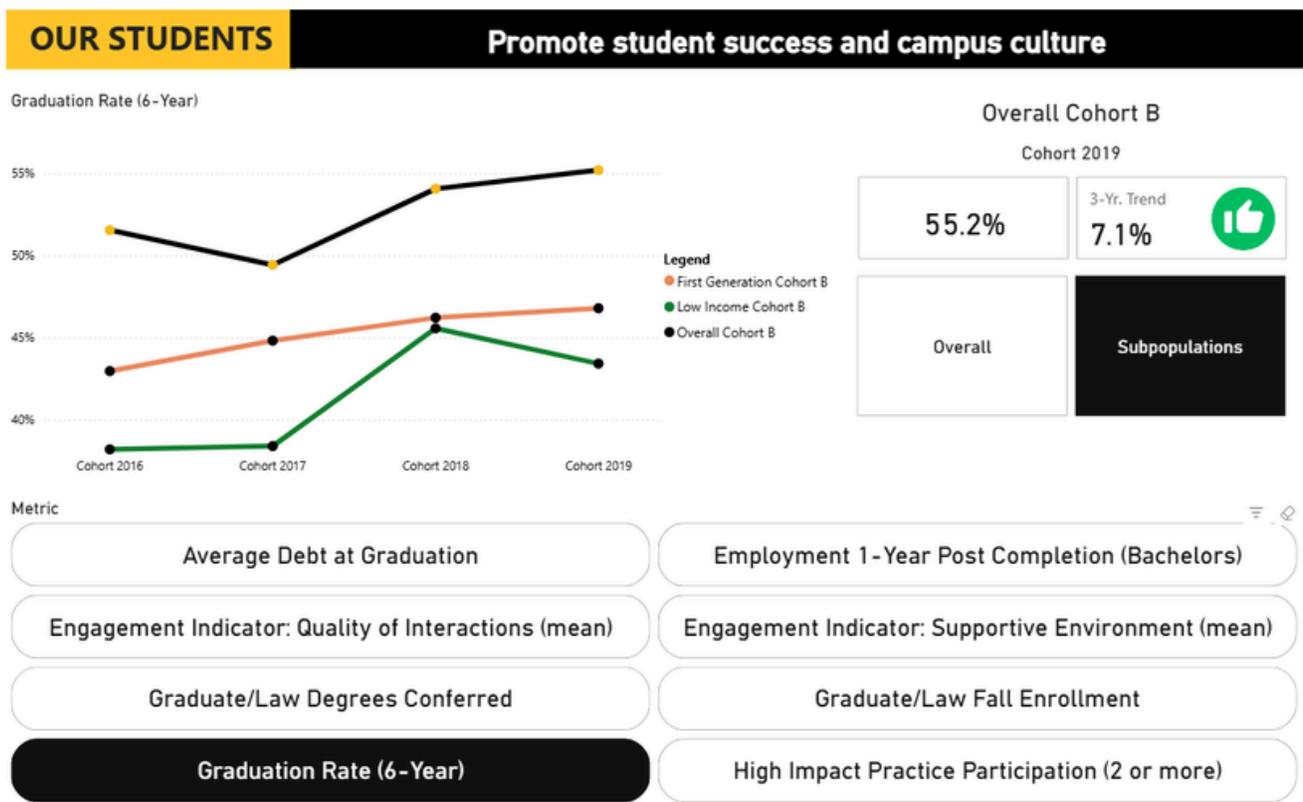
ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Semester Survey Calendar

A Semester Survey Calendar is now available! This survey calendar includes all university level surveys to help faculty and staff in scheduling their survey to prevent survey fatigue. Have an upcoming university-wide survey? Contact us at ir@nku.edu to have your survey added to the calendar.

SPRING 2026 SURVEY CALENDAR
Planning and Institutional Research

|	Feb 1 - Feb 28, 2026	Mar 1 - Mar 31, 2026	Apr 1 - Apr 30, 2026	May 1 - May 31, 2026
Health and Wellness Kentucky (HAWK)	2/2/26 - 2/16/26			
Great Colleges to Work For®		3/2/26 - 3/27/26		
Student Tech Survey		3/17/26 - 4/3/26		
Exit Survey to Graduating GR Students			4/1/26 - 4/30/26	
Destination Survey (Spring 2026)			4/3/26 - 4/24/26	

Great Colleges to Work For® Survey Launching March 2nd

On March 2, all full-time employees will receive an invitation to participate in the Great Colleges to Work For ® survey. This confidential survey will be conducted by a third-party, ModernThink LLC, and will help guide our efforts to create the best possible workplace at NKU.

We encourage all employees to take a few minutes to participate and help shape the future of our workplace. Your voice matters. Thank you in advance for your engagement and continued commitment to making our university great.
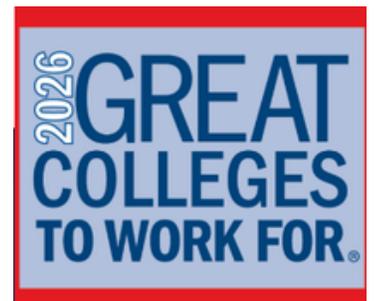
Assessment Reminders

Annual Assessment: Mid-Cycle Reviews

The PIR review committee has completed the mid-cycle review of the Administrative and Support Services assessment plans. PIR will be following up with divisions in March to discuss our feedback and to answer assessment questions. Thanks again for your continued partnership to support continuous improvement.

Assessment Pro Tip - Build Assessment Into Your Workflow

Make assessment part of your regular routine—not a year-end scramble.

- Schedule mid-year check-ins with your colleagues.
- Review progress during regular staff meetings.
- Assign clear responsibility for data collection.
- Begin drafting Findings and Analysis of Findings as your data become available.