



## NKU Degree Production Grows 24% in Five Years

Northern Kentucky University awarded 1,706 baccalaureate degrees in 2007-08, an increase of five percent over the previous year and an increase of 24 percent from 2002-03.

To build on its student retention and graduation rate, the university is conducting a comprehensive review of its general education program, developing an active learning pilot program, strengthening advising at all levels of the undergraduate curriculum and identifying a student learning outcomes assessment instrument.

Several other initiatives have also been implemented to retain students and focus them on graduation, including a One-Stop Center that integrates student communications for the offices of admissions, bursar, financial assistance and the registrar.

The center assists students in finding answers to questions effectively and efficiently. In addition, all 2,000 of NKU's first-year students were called and surveyed to inquire about their experience at the university, with support and help offered to each student contacted.

### ***NKU Helps Maximize Nonprofit Service to KY Citizens***

The NKU Institute for Nonprofit Capacity (INC) has marshaled the intellectual capacity of the university to help non-profits become stronger both as individual organizations and in collaboration with one another during this time of significant economic downturn.

INC recently unveiled a new website, <http://inc.nku.edu>, that provides a detailed catalogue of university resources available to local nonprofits. Many of the services are free.

"Some of the services we are able to offer might surprise people," Vissman said. "We have everything from a Virtual CIO program – which sends students out into local organizations to assess their IT capacity, report on where the organizations stand and recommend solutions to possible problem areas – to services to help with marketing, branding and fundraising."

### ***Prof. Receives One of NSF's Most Prestigious Awards***

NKU Ashland Endowed Professor of Integrated Science Dr. Hazel Barton has received a \$710,691 National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) grant for her worldwide cave research on microbial communities.

Career awardees are considered by NSF to be the "most likely to become the leaders of academic research and education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Barton is the first recipient of this award at NKU, and is among a very few number of faculty in the nation to receive the award.

Dr. Barton carries out her research primarily in undergraduate research labs, integrating her work directly into the curricula and involving large numbers of undergraduate students. Her findings could result in unprecedented isolation of microbial species that could, in turn, lead to breakthrough developments in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries.

***NKU and Gateway have teamed up for effective facility utilization. NKU has closed its Covington campus (saving \$4 million in immediate repairs) and is working to lease a Gateway facility for the NKU PACE Program.***

### ***NKU Helps Students Address High Cost of Gas***

NKU has partnered with the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) on an eco-friendly initiative that is saving students money in the face of high gas prices and a sluggish economy. The U-PASS program allows all NKU students, faculty and staff to ride TANK busses free. Students don't even have to sign up - they just show the driver their NKU ID card and their trip is free. And based on new TANK data, results from the program are already being seen.

Nearly 100,000 trips were made under the U-PASS program from August 2007 through May 2008. Those trips helped to cut traffic and parking congestion at the university while also saving students hundreds of dollars in gas and parking costs. And, what's more, those nearly 100,000 U-PASS trips reduced CO2 emissions by more than 47,000 pounds.

"This is a program that not only saves our students money, but also emphasizes our commitment to serving

as a community leader in environmental stewardship," said NKU President James Votruba.

The program has dramatically increased TANK ridership among students. Over half of those surveyed said they did not ride TANK prior to the free U-PASS program. And to make the ride more time efficient and enjoyable, students in the NKU College of Informatics have developed technology to equip TANK Express busses with free wireless Internet.