

Comments from Open Forum #1: Our Students. Our Opportunities.

Serving Nontraditional Students

- It is important to develop “community” to keep students. The question is, how do we create more communities for the homogenous groups of nontraditional students.
- We need to have work groups figure out what works for keeping students.
- Flexible class times and offerings are important for nontraditional students.
- Students need “life support” on campus such as optometrist and transportation to grocery store.
- The economy is tied to monetary concerns and concerns about rising tuition costs.
- Will the new Student Success Center be a place for nontraditional students to find child care and other services that need to be addressed? (Answer: the Student Success Center will have services such as the career development center and coop opportunities.)
- We don't have child care services for school-age children (for when other schools have a snow day and NKU does not).

Marketing

- When we are recruiting from areas outside the state, students need to be made aware of the cost; knowledge is power.
- Our tendency is to look initially within the state for recruitment. There's a big opportunity to recruit north of the river. We are a suburb of Cincinnati, and NKU is a commutable distance from many of the areas north of Cincinnati. Our cost can be competitive.
- We recruit many transfers from Cincinnati State Technical and Community College; more than from KCTCS institutions. Most people don't know that.
- The Honors program is trying to expand recruitment but budget is a problem. We could do more targeted recruitment in the Cincinnati area.
- Lots of people don't realize that NKU is a residential option for regional students.
- People need to know about the reciprocity agreements because it makes NKU so much more affordable than they would have thought.
- We do have more and more prospective students from the Cincinnati area. At a parent financial fitness program, it was noted that half of the parents in the room were from the Cincinnati area. There is an increasing awareness of NKU.
- From a media perspective, we are receiving attention as a leader in IT. There has been a lot of press about mobile app technology. This is a good branding tool.
- (GM) Do students have a more favorable view of NKU than the parents?
- Yes, more marketing is needed.
- We need to bring prospective students on campus to get them to see the value of an education they would receive here.
- We need to have parents talk to other parents at open sessions to convince others of the value of NKU.

- Return-on-investment is the concern: we need to show parents and students how we stack up against other schools; give them real data that shows our value.
- (GM) NKU has the lowest average debt per student of the KY universities and other area universities. We need to market that.
- The scholarship luncheon turned around my son (to go to NKU). We need more activities like that for non-scholarship recruits; it would really engage the students.
- Professional experience like research as an undergraduate is another selling point; it makes a real difference for students.
- The free press we received last week on the research that a faculty member has done on the effects of alcohol is a good example of how to get the news out about NKU and that NKU is nationally recognized. We need to talk more about those successes.
- We need to look at the infrastructure if we are going to expand our marketing and recruitment. In other words, do we have the infrastructure needed to support more students adequately? For instance, training and professional development is needed.

Serving Traditional and Residential Students

- We know that living on campus helps to engage students, so more on campus housing will help our students.
- Increasing residential housing would be good, but be sure you have the infrastructure to support those students, such as health care services and counseling.
- Working with homecoming events, we find that it is mostly the residential students who are involved in these activities. There are strong ties between living on campus and being engaged as a student.
- NKU used to be known as a Parking-lot-to-classroom-to-parking-lot campus. We need to have more activities available on campus.
- My daughter is a residential student (elsewhere) but half of her classes are online, so remember that those are not mutually exclusive groups.

Online and Innovative Offerings

- We need to be looking at where the jobs are going to be and designing our curriculum to meet those needs.
- We need to remember that online classes are not all equal. I have had a good experience with hybrid classes where you have a better ability to ask questions and interaction is going on. It is the best of both worlds.
- We have to be aware that employers are talking about pulling funding for online courses if they aren't good enough. There should be a threshold for performance. Graduates must be indistinguishable between those who have taken online v. on-campus students. If we are not matching graduates to the needs of the business community then we must find that balance. Don't let the trend of the day overshadow our mission.
- We must be strategic about online courses. Don't just add courses; it impacts all our services such as food services, etc.

- I often wonder about having Saturday classes with a component online.
- Online courses match with the needs of the adult population. Adding more online programs doesn't take away from the on-campus programs. Students do like hybrid classes best of all, but they are hard to do. We have talked about Saturday classes but they have fallen flat with faculty.
- I have taught online for 10 years. It helped a great deal to have more technical designers to create a high quality online course. There has been very positive feedback to having the IT designers in the buildings.
- We need to train faculty to do more online. There are technology needs; people need to know technology for just about any job.
- (GM) I wonder if technology can be an impediment rather than an enhancement sometimes. Faculty can identify students who are struggling when they are in the classroom. I wonder if when we go more online that you miss what are the students' weaknesses.
- In A&S, we piloted an online tutorial. It was successful as a partial answer to identifying students with problems.
- We need to create a personal experience through advising, especially for online students.
- Students need to have conversations with advisors about career counseling.
- It is hard to match up job titles for students who get a liberal arts degree, although that degree may have helped the student to get the job.

Affordability

- (GM) We have talked about needing more counselors and more advisors which increases the cost of education. How do we balance that with affordability?
- Parent gave example from Thomas More that billing was done on a monthly basis and it was easier to pay there than at NKU, even though NKU cost less.
- Should we look at offering 5-6 quarters per year with more intensive sessions? We know that students who are enrolled for 15+ hours are persisting at greater rates. If we offer 5-6 quarters, students would be taking 2 classes each term.
- (GM) We have substantial physical facilities that are not in use during the summer months; not many businesses would do that.
- We have had PACE course offerings that are 8-week terms. Those students take two courses each 8 weeks. It has been very successful. We could consider offering more.
- We need greater employment opportunities for students on campus.
- We have a waiting list for the 8-week courses. We also need to consider more 2+2 agreements.

Other Questions

- (GM) What can we do to ensure that our campus is more attractive to diverse students?
- We need more faculty of color.
- We need to be involved in P-12 activities to improve the pipeline of students coming here.
- We need to be sure we have services available outside the classroom for these students.
- We should highlight the safety of our campus.

- I hope we can encourage more of a faculty voice; not sure how many faculty are here today.
- Switching from semesters to a quarter system would be detrimental; most schools are leaving the quarter system. However, we can be more flexible within the semester system in scheduling of classes. We must keep the federal government regulations for veterans in mind if changes are to be made (start and stop dates needed).
- I would encourage us to be bold, move forward, be strategic with our plan.
- I want to challenge us. I know that we need to attract nontraditional students. Sometimes those students ask, how can I go back and not have to repeat what I have already accomplished; how do I get credit for what I know (we need competency-based credit).
- From a business perspective, the big issue is talent; how can we get and retain talent to keep our place in the business world? What do you see the world of NKU after the degree?

(GM) Please encourage students to attend the sessions.

- We have a number of services that are not generally known. We need to advertise more.