

Comments from Open Forum #2: Our Services, Our People.

What are we doing to be more efficient and effective as an institution?

- In Enrollment Management, we have implemented a document imaging system that almost all the colleges are using for undergraduate admissions. Approximately 90-95% of applications are processed electronically through this system.
- We have eliminated and combined positions (which has caused more stress and increased workload).
- We are using an online student evaluation process. We get about a 70% response rate, and the process is saving time and money.
- We have a project management system and are using the cloud and a smart sheet program to keep track of projects and to be more efficient with our work.
- We are using student interns paid through grant funds. We need more money for student employment.
- We are able to do online appointment scheduling, but the downside is that we don't have a full-time person for front desk coverage; this has been a challenge for us.
- Standardization for student jobs would be helpful; would provide a more equitable experience for students.
- The acquisition of professional advisors within the colleges has transformed the lives of chairs and faculty; the advisors solve problems that free up time on task for chairs and faculty.

What could we do more of or should we think about doing, especially around student success?

- We should be doing more with class research projects across campus.
- We need to produce a roadmap, a template to empower others to be able to get things done. We should create more standardization in our processes; this applied to lots of areas, such as events planning to the mentoring program.
- We should encourage direct deposit; even consider mandating direct deposit for all employees. Currently, there is about 98% compliance.
- I would like to see us leverage more of what SAP can do for us. It would eliminate many manual processes that we now do. I would like to see end users of SAP trained and to see the structure of SAP improved for ease-of-use for end users.

Should we consider outsourcing?

- Group travel for students on trips.
- (GM) Examples at other institutions for outsourcing include dorms and food services.
- I would be concerned about the potential added fees to students. We need to be sensitive to the degree that the student burden is increasing, and we need to balance that.
- (GM) Another example is at OSU, they have outsourced parking. It has allowed them to raise rates for parking by 6% per year, and they don't have to deal with the parking complaints.

- On some level, we have a moral responsibility to students. What are we if we are no longer responsible for the student experiences of housing, food, parking. We become a business model like prisons.
- (GM) I envision that if we do any outsourcing, it would be done under a set of principles and have criteria to evaluate those options.
- I think we would lose the NKU family environment with outsourcing; lose the sense of family.

Are there ways to foster better communication among groups? Are we doing enough?

- I wonder how students know what's going on at NKU. The electronic signs are great, but it's a 5-second view.
- As a student, I don't look at email because I get so many in one day. But if the email has an interesting title, I might read it.
- It would be helpful if we had a standard master calendar. I don't know about other committees on campus – when they meet, what they are doing. People who are involved in the work of a committee know what's going on and assume everyone else does.
- The Midweek email is good, and the Provost's email is good. The radio is also a positive tool to get news out to students.
- The IT staff is thinking about building a student portal.
- The student portal concept would be a one-stop internet place for students to receive their emails, go to Blackboard, all in one place. It would be customizable for each student.
- With all this big data, meeting notes, why can't we come up with a simple searching process for information?
- I wonder if students prefer texting as an option for communication. Would that be an effective means of communicating to students?
- Students do tend to check text messages rather than email.
- People make efforts to get news out, but it's more of a timing issue. I need to have more than one day's notice. We tend to get 11th hour communications and things have to be done instantaneously. We need more advanced warning.

Do we have a university culture that fosters innovation?

- Pat and I gave a talk about the online student evaluation system. Other universities are now contacting NKU to find out how we get such good response rates. We are innovative in this regard. We are doing something that other colleges want to copy; we could use this as a branding option. It was 12 years in the making, but we are innovating faster than ever. We are looking at making the evaluations available to students. We hope that will make students better able to know the courses.
- I attended a conference in San Antonio where 13 southern states were represented, and we presented about our partnering with the Student Clearinghouse. I am new to NKU, so I was not responsible for the changes; IT partnered with the Clearinghouse to write a custom application that allows for processing transcript requests. IT was very successful and innovative with this project. Kudos to the IT staff on this.

- (GM) What if we had a clearer roadmap for students' majors, something like Pandora software that could be overlaid with requirements needed (to look for courses consistent with major or at certain times)? The software could find the options for the student. It would be a way to analyze big data to foster student success.
- That is exciting technology and it would be nice to explore the possibilities.
- That's an excellent thought. It is entirely feasible that a student would find particular classes closed and that software could direct students to other courses that are suffering in enrollment. We cannot replace a good advisor, but it would be a great tool to help increase enrollments in programs with declining enrollment.

Professional Development – How should we invest in our people? What would be beneficial for professional development?

- We need to offer Fundraising & Development 101 and a course on grant writing.
- We need to offer membership to associations.
- We need mentorships to foster new experiences.
- IT does a good job of providing training.
- I'm in the process of finishing my Ph.D., but there's not a method of knowing where outside of the department that I can use these skills.
- Some groups on campus have clear career paths, but others do not. There should be career paths for all.
- The key is to individualize the training. School A may have different needs from School B. It would be great if IT came to us to map out an individualized training program for a department or discipline or unit.
- Some institutions include plans for professional development in their performance evaluations – to include your interests and what you may want to be doing in the future, not just a review of your work. Make it more about performance management, not just performance review.