

## Comments from Open Forum #4: Our Collective Future.

Should we focus recruitment efforts outside of Kentucky?

- Yes, we should market in the metropolitan region.
- We are cautiously optimistic about our increase in applications. We have been much more aggressive this year in our marketing efforts. We have a higher market saturation and penetration than ever before. We have a metro tuition rate so we are aggressively marketing to those areas. We have a better yield from our efforts. We are tracking students paying the confirmation fees and that is up 40% for now. Our goal to increase the student quality caused a reduction in the number of freshmen. We are targeting to close that gap this year. Hyper-aggressive efforts are paying off. The market is becoming more competitive as we continue to see decreases in the number of high school graduates from all three states. If we want to continue to grow, it behooves us to look outside the region.
- (GM) Our constraint to external recruiting is the number of residential beds that we have. How do you feel about acquiring more residential halls?
- I am on a committee for adult learners. It is a great group of people to go after; a good target. It bridges the problem of going outside the area and the declining trend in the traditional age population.

What should we be doing to better serve the nontraditional students?

- There is a lack of lab space. We don't need more dorms. Older students are more likely to be in majors like nursing or business.
- We don't advertise for our second degree in nursing, but we easily fill the courses. We get transfer students. We need to ensure that we have housing in the area (not on campus) where they can get an apartment close by. Good support systems are needed to be in place for our adult learners.
- If we look at dorms, maybe do family dorms or adult dorms. We need to figure out what the adult student needs or we will be crippled.
- (GM) we might consider advertising for some disciplines in some areas.
- We might need more hybrid and alternative courses to be flexible for adult learners.
- I've heard students comment that they like to take at least one class online because they are commuters.
- Is the number of nontraditional students a sustainable trend or has the downturn in the economy brought more adults to higher education?
- (GM) that's a good question for the demographic work group to look at. Is it a straight line trend?

- I had lunch with two individuals and want to offer up their perspective. The incubator for startup companies, that's the future of the College of Business and how it plays in their future.
- We need an increased presence on the web and expand it to more on the campus. MIT has their entire curriculum on online. The model is to take classes online and it doesn't have to be for credit. Use that as a teaser to get people interested in taking more classes online.
- There is a need for it from students and recent graduates who want to start a business. Resources are available in our area, but they don't know how to access; how to fill out the applications for grants.

Graduate enrollment has flipped a bit; institution must be mindful of cost of graduate programs. Should we be expanding or maintaining graduate programs?

- The growth of graduate programs has not been matched by a growth in faculty. I am worried that the quality of our programs could be called into question if we expand more without adequate supporting structure. Only do it if there is sufficient resources and quality.
- Many graduate programs do have accreditation and that speaks to their quality. We should always be looking at the quality of all our programs.

Last Friday's session we talked about public engagement and that we interpret public engagement broadly. Is that a strength or weakness?

- It applies to teaching, research, and service activities. In working on the faculty handbook, we are making sure public engagement applies across the board on all three areas.
- It gives a sense of locale and it resonates with donors. It really inspires donors to give back to NKU.
- (GM) does this broad focus dilute our impact?
- I believe that this process (strategic planning) will give us more focus; that is the expectation. It is not possible to support everything to the level everyone would want. The strategic planning process should help us focus; not to eliminate or stifle creativity, but helps us decide how to leverage our resources.
- (GM) what if faculty want to work on a reservation in New Mexico, as an example?
- You do have to balance the resources and investments. You do have hard decisions to make, but you can spread it around.
- (GM) there's a perception of Highland Heights residents that we don't serve their needs. Do we run the risk of alienating our closest neighbors?

- That's a good point. Some universities have not paid attention to their community and they pay the price, so we should look at Highland Heights. We do have a responsibility to the community where we sit, but it could vary from discipline to discipline.
- To build a donor base, as a strategy, we may want to have public engagement be broader. I see it as ways to enhance and deepen relationships with particular areas.
- We are trying to build identity with different stakeholders. Trying to create avenues of involvement to create a sense of identity. Creating more beds on campus can lead to more donors. Create avenues of involvement as a way to increase their commitment and identity with NKU. Avenues of involvement – as they get more involved, they move to the next level of commitment.
- (GM) data shows that to be true. Residential students and others who are more involved give back more.

#### How can we improve our retention?

- Not all disciplines lend themselves to public engagement, but undergraduate research can be done and it does help to retain students.
- Funding for undergraduate research can be from the research foundation; some monies will be made available from Administration and Finance and there will be a new process to apply for that.
- Do we have data on why we have such a high attrition rate?
- (GM) Data is being gathered by various offices.
- We took the IDs of the first-year, full-time students this year and gave them to the dean and chairs and all those who didn't return fall to spring we are reaching out to. We are aggressively tracking those students. If they can see what the outcome would be if they continue, more would likely stay.
- (GM) NSSE data shows a greater percentage of our students work off-campus and fewer work on-campus. We should evaluate the opportunities to increase on-campus employment because of the return-on-investment.
- 67% of general education courses are taught by part-time faculty. We have first-year experience issues.
- I work with Upward Bound students who are all first generation students. 15 years of research shows students who finish the program are three times more likely to be in college in later years. Motivation is the issue, and that cannot be measured. Here's an idea: make every freshman come here for one week of summer on campus and complete a one credit hour course. Then we would know who is going to be here one year later.
- (GM) there's a growing gap between what students expect to do in college and what they perceive needs to be done.

- (GM) 50% of our freshmen report studying 10 hours or less per week on the NSSE.
- I asked students in the Student Union how it's going. The student said he didn't know how much commitment college takes. He was going to class MWF and working TT (to reduce his commute time to campus and to work). Financially, many of our students must work, but this student doesn't feel connect and he is drowning. He can't find a job on campus. Economically, it is what he feels like he has to do. Our office would hire 20 more students if we had the funds.
- We need to prepare students on how to interview with others on campus. Teach them the basics.
- At the College of Business, we have no interaction with freshmen. Sign me up as a mentor to be involved with freshmen. I'm available.
- Our tuition rates are still competitive. Maybe we are attracting students who need a good value. A lot of our students work part-time.
- In our program, students ask for peer mentors and we did it but it didn't work. This year we brought in parents and it looks more successful. We really need parent involvement.
- Tuition banding for 12-16 hours.
- Why do we get less money?
- (GM) We are the youngest public institution in Kentucky.
- On the question of where we should recruit, we should recruit as widely as possible. Geographic diversity is important for the student body.
- (GM) our international student population has grown and we provide travel abroad opportunities.