

Comments from Open Forum #7: Our Future Graduates.

What difference does it make to be a resident v. nonresident student?

- You feel more attached to the campus (when you are a resident). You are connected better when you are working on campus.
- A lot of students work on campus for flexibility. Most outside employers have a flat schedule you have to meet.
- Working on campus cuts down on commuting time and cost.
- The dorms here are fantastic compared to other institutions. They are cleaner and bigger.
- I give campus tours, and others will say that these are bigger dorms than UK and other institutions.

Would you consider living on campus if you had the opportunity?

- I used to live on campus, but there's more freedom and flexibility and it cost less to live off-campus.
- I am a commuter. I wish I could be more involved in activities on campus. If I could afford it financially, I would live on campus.
- I am an RA (resident assistant). I love housing, but we need more availability for people to live on campus. It helps you get involved. I don't have the drive time. But we don't have enough space in housing and it's overcrowded. We are using hotels and double booking at the beginning of the semester.
- (AS) That settles down typically within the first five weeks of the semester; most of the time, it's within the first week when we have an issue with hotel spacing and 3-persons in a double room or 5-persons in a quad. We have a 95% occupancy rate by mid-semester and low 90% in the spring semester.
- (GM) Housing is an auxiliary unit. When occupancy goes lower, we have to raise rates to cover prices, so that's why higher booking is done at the beginning of the semester.

What do you sense about how active campus life is Monday through Friday?

- I lived in Callahan last semester, but I am now off-campus because of the cost. There's not much to do Monday through Friday over there except eat. We need more interactive things to do. Movies would be good or anything to get people interacting with each other.
- For non-residents, late afternoon stuff is too late. With some evening activities, there's too long of a gap between classes and when the activity happens.

- I am a commuter student, and there are so many people on the volleyball team who have to commute. Activities that meet only once per week conflict with my classes or work.
- I am from Saudi Arabia. Most of my classes are in the evening and I cannot go to events in the evening because of that.
- I disagree. There's way too much for me to do. There's always things going on that I can't do. There will be five events in one day and I can't do them all.
- It's more about timing of events.
- We miss a lot because our class goes from 6-9:00 p.m.
- For commuter students, it depends on how far away you live. I'm only 10 minutes away and can get here for events, but that's not true for all commuters. There are different categories of commuter students depending on how far away you are.
- We have a small residential population compared to commuters. If we expand the residential village we would improve residential life. Part of the issue is we don't have enough students living on campus.

What about weekends?

- If you live close, you can go home for the weekend. It is just easier to go home, so people don't attend weekend events since they are home.
- As an RA, I try to set up events on weekends but no one shows up because they aren't around on weekends.
- I disagree. I go home on weekends because there's nothing to do here.
- (GM) so it sounds like the chicken and egg problem.
- I think there are enough activities but they are all at the same time, such as Tuesday-Thursday. If they were spread out, more people might go.
- I live close and I don't stay on weekends because even if events are going on, they aren't as much fun.

Should we expand our efforts in international recruitment?

- We should have people from different cultures, including different religions and different language groups. There's no substitute for studying abroad. Seeing that life here is different than other places is impactful. NKU is still a small, safe place, but we have Cincinnati close for other activities.

Is our campus a safe place?

- (nearly all agreed)

- I would say that it is not as safe as at my other institution, University of California at San Bernardino. That campus is really safe. Patrolmen are going around every hour. Every corner has lights and the poles with emergency contact buttons.
- It is a safe campus because of our location. We are a small college town but an urban location. Highland Heights is a safe, suburban city. Clifton or Addison is beautiful. We are only 7 minutes from downtown. It's the best of both worlds. We are close to downtown but in a secluded area.
- It would be nice if there was a little bit more around our campus so that you don't feel like you are in the middle of nowhere when you get here.
- I'm from Cincinnati and I was deciding between attending NKU or UC, and safety was a deciding point. NKU is definitely safer.
- Here, the cops are very friendly, they say hello to you, ask how you are doing, very interactive with students, and very friendly during recruitment.
- I don't know if location hinders or helps us. I know some people who did not come here because they thought it was too boring. Our location can be a liability.
- My dad is a cop at UC, and regarding safety, they have a lot of violent crime in the city. We have crime, but it's not the violent level.

How safe and welcoming are we with those of different backgrounds?

- I came to NKU in 2001 because of two people...I received a personal letter from one, so I chose this school. Two things stood out when I got here. The bus system was not as good as it is now, and getting downtown was not as easy. Second, my on-campus job was important. Campus people make it an extremely welcoming campus. I came back after getting my PhD at Louisville. I have nothing but good things to say about the college.
- For me, I didn't know anything about northern Kentucky until I got a letter in the mail. I didn't want to go to UK; it can get crazy there. I'm not comfortable walking in the dark, but I feel completely safe here because of the lights and the safety alert buttons, and they will escort you across campus, if you ask.
- It is very welcoming here. I attended a predominately Caucasian high school, and Latino student affairs welcomed me before even applying. I received a scholarship which was really helpful.

How responsive are we to non-traditional students?

- That's part of why we are a commuter school. NKU provides the chance (for nontraditional students) to come back to school.
- I'm in class with some (non-traditional students) and have not heard them say anything.

What is your perception of the quality of online courses and programs?

- I don't feel that I learned anything in my online class. It was a summer II course. There was no interaction with the faculty and other students. We weren't provided instruction. You had to write a paper by yourself.
- You have to be really organized (to take online classes). I took all online classes last semester. It was great to have that schedule flexibility. I believe that I do learn things in online classes. I have to take the tests in the Disabilities office. I find online easy for me.
- I've had two different experiences with online courses. In my class last summer, the professor would email back responses immediately. This semester is different. It is hard to know the deadlines on Blackboard. This instructor is not as professional.
- I like online classes. I take one or two each semester. I like the scheduling flexibility because of my work schedule. I'm on the technology trends subcommittee.
- In my major, the class is only online. I would prefer classroom courses.
- Why do we get less state money than other institutions?
- (GM) We are the youngest 4-year institution in the state. Many years ago, the state stopped doing funding based on enrollment, but NKU is the institution that has grown the most, which affects our funding per student.

What could we be doing better to improve student retention?

- How much (in terms of student retention) is related to financial problems?
- (GM) It could be financial obligations; we don't know the percent or magnitude of the problem. Some students are not eligible to return. However, peer institutions have the same array of contributing factors.
- I live close to here, and you hear people say that they plan to go to NKU for the first few years because of the cheaper tuition. They will get their general education courses and then go elsewhere to finish.
- I'm from the Cincinnati area, and I have several friends who went to UC Clermont, but they are not joining us here after they finish their two years.
- Some don't have enough money to stay longer. Better career services are needed. They really didn't listen to me. They wanted to put me through the "mold."
- (GM) We want to address such issues with the new Student Success Center.
- Some one-on-one connections will keep you wanting to stay here and graduate. Mentors and other people who can help you along the way are important.
- I started at NKU, and then transferred to UofL after three years, but I hated it. UofL would look better to graduate from because I am biased, but I returned here because I like it.

- More frank discussions about time management during orientation would be good. It was touched on, but not frank, honest, and detailed. It is needed at orientation and to be brought up again at the beginning of the year. I took orientation in June, and it was a long time till the first of the year when classes started. Information (at orientation) was in one ear and out the other.
- I learned more at UNV 101 than at orientation.
- Establish partnerships in with First Year programs and UNV 101; get an understanding of what the bursar is, and many other things.
- I know that we have upped the admission standards, but maybe we should do more.
- (GM) We have, but it's not yet translated into better retention rates.