Northern Kentucky University Strategic Planning Demographic/Labor Market Forces Work Group

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Content

Overview and process

The demographic/labor market forces workgroup was asked to address three primary questions.

- **Who are our students and what is our market?** What is the size of the pool of NKU's potential student body? How does it compare to our current pool?
- **Are our incoming students ready for college?** How prepared are NKU's incoming students for academic success?   Are the current assessments of college readiness and graduation indicators adequate?
- **What is the market demand for NKU graduates?** How prepared are our graduates for career success? What is the market demand for NKU graduates? Is more than just a degree required?

Additional questions arose in the process of completing this report.

- **What is the impact of non-traditional students?** What is the potential size of the pool for non-traditional students? Do they have special needs or interests?
- **What majors do we currently offer?** The strategic planning committee asked the demographic/labor market forces workgroup to provide a list of NKU majors.

The demographic/labor market forces workgroup divided into three sub-workgroups, with each addressing one of the three primary questions. The added questions pertaining to non-traditional students were addressed by two sub-groups; the sub-group examining student readiness, and the sub-group reviewing the market demand for NKU graduates.

Each sub-group conducted research on its assigned questions and prepared a report on its findings. These reports were then reviewed and edited by the entire working group. From that set of reports, this executive summary was prepared. Each of the full-length reports from the three sub-groups is included following the executive summary, along with the requested list of NKU-offered majors.

Executive Summary

Defining our students and our market

Our students: Northern Kentucky University's typical student is an undergraduate 22 years of age, Caucasian, commuting to campus and on some form of financial aid. NKU students are primarily from the Northern Kentucky and metropolitan Cincinnati region. As of fall 2012, ninety-one percent of NKU undergraduate students came from Kentucky and Ohio. The majority of NKU graduate and online students came from the same geographic areas as our undergraduate students.

Rate of enrollment increases likely to slow: Over the past decade, NKU experienced rapid enrollment increases. Undergraduate enrollment rose 9.7 percent, from 12,164 in 2002 to 13,344 in 2012. Graduate enrollment rose 59.7 percent from 1,107 in 2002 to 1,768 in 2012. The overall population of high school graduates in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio is projected to decline over the next 3 to 5 years (an estimated decline of 3,000 graduates each in both Kentucky and Indiana, and 8,000 in Ohio). In each state, the pool of African-American high school graduates is expected to decline or remain stable, while the pool of Hispanic graduates is expected to increase.

Opportunities for growth: Even with the expected near-term decline in the number of high school graduates, opportunities for growth still exist outside of the traditional college student base. With the current military active-duty drawdown, student veteran enrollment should continue to increase. Transfer students will continue to be an important and growing population for NKU. Also, with the economy still recovering from the most recent recession, the need for training and additional education for adults returning to the classroom is expected to grow. Growth opportunities also exist for additional geographic areas. Nationally, the number of students pursuing a master's degree is expected to outpace the growth in students pursuing a bachelor's degree. While non-traditional students are expected to increase faster than traditional students, the majority of NKU's student body will remain traditional students.

Assessing current college readiness and graduation indicators: Are they adequate?

College readiness defined: College "readiness" is typically defined as the level of preparation a student needs to succeed in college without remediation and in order to complete a program of study. Improved levels of readiness should lead to higher levels of persistence to graduation. The number of students entering NKU with academic deficiencies has declined since 2005.

Traditional indicators of college readiness are not adequate: College readiness is currently measured using ACT, SAT, COMPASS, and KYOTE scores as mandated by the Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education. Scores earned on these traditional measures are moderately predictive of an entering

freshman's academic preparation and readiness for college success. These measures are required by the Council on Post-secondary Education.

Non-traditional indicators provide additional information: Educational literature demonstrates students with meta-cognitive and leadership skills perform better on exams and assignments. Examples of meta-cognitive skills include: study skills, time management, social problem-solving skills and self-control. Examples of leadership skills include: effective communication and the ability to establish goals and measure outcomes. At this time, NKU is not required to collect or report these data. Additional data are available, but are not currently tied to academic indicators.

Traditional graduation rate indicators are too narrow: The Integrative Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS) methodology is the traditional (although somewhat misleading) indicator of student persistence. For example, the IPEDS methodology calculates a six-year graduation rate for bachelor's degrees by following the cohort of students entering a college in a given fall semester as full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students. It then tracks them until graduation. The weakness of IPEDS is its singular focus on that particular type of student group. IPEDS does not include NKU students who transfer to another institution to complete a degree or those students who transfer into NKU. IPEDS measures also exclude students enrolled part-time, who are non-degree seeking, and who enter in a spring semester. Of the 1,937 students awarded a baccalaureate degree by NKU in 2011-2012, just 44 percent were part of an IPEDS cohort.

What is the market demand for NKU graduates?

Job growth projected for the Cincinnati market: Over the decade from 2010 through 2020 the number of jobs in the Cincinnati metropolitan area is expected to increase by 1.1% annually, slightly below the national rate of 1.4%. With retirements, turnover and exits from the market, total job openings will average 33,900 per year for a total of 339,000 openings.

Labor market demanding workers with post-secondary education: Most high-paying jobs (93%) require some combination of a post-secondary credential, on-the-job training and work experience beyond one year.

Healthcare practitioners, education, training, computer and mathematical occupations are among those with fast growth (2% or more annually), above average wages ($35,000 or more) and a significant number of projected jobs in 2020 (more than 30,000).

Key talent shortages are on the horizon: Several occupational groups that are considered key to the economic growth of target industry clusters are expected to have talent shortages over the decade. Among those requiring a post-secondary degree are: industrial engineers; a variety of IT occupations including, programmers, systems analysts and support specialists; and medical professionals from nurses and diagnostic technicians to surgeons and medical scientists.

Education is a necessary but not sufficient standard for career success: Education's return on investment is well-documented. All else being equal, as educational attainment increases, wages rise, labor force participation rates rise, and labor force attachment increases. However, the benefits to education vary substantially by occupation, industry and degree. Also, education alone does not guarantee career success. Employers are looking for candidates with additional skills and experience beyond the classroom.

A variety of skills and attributes are demanded by employers: Employers are looking for more than college degrees in candidates when making hiring decisions, according to the most recent survey of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Employers also take into account GPA and a variety of skills and attributes. According to the survey, leadership is the top attribute employers seek. Ability to communicate is the number one skill wanted, with the ability to work as part of a team running a close second. Skills in problem-solving, organization, research, and analysis are not far behind. More than 70 percent of respondents said they prefer candidates with related work experience.

School-sponsored programs, student organizations, and alternative education programs are the primary avenues for developing skills outside the classroom offered at NKU: While opportunities abound for students, a relatively small percentage actually takes advantage of them. Nearly 1,000 out of the roughly 16,000 enrolled students participate in school-sponsored programs with approximately 840 involved in student organizations. Seven percent of full time, undergraduate students under age 26 are involved in fraternities or sororities. Alternative education programs include internships, co-ops, externships, practicum learning, assistantships, integrated learning, and others. Co-op enrollment goes through Career Services. The number of unduplicated students working in co-ops for credit in 2011-12 totaled 207. Internship enrollment is decentralized through the academic departments. The number of students involved in these other programs is not readily available. However, these opportunities provide unique ways for students to engage in real-world employment-like situations and develop skills that employers most desire in employees.

What is the impact of non-traditional students?

Growing number of non-traditional students: In general, a non-traditional student is older (25 years and over), often has family and work responsibilities that can interfere with educational objectives and lives off campus. According to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau on enrollment status more than 7.6 million students over the age of 25 are enrolled in college; nearly 3 out of 10 students nationwide. In 2001, just 20 percent of college students were over 25 years of age.

The U.S. Department of Education recently released its [Projections of Education Statistics to 2020](#), examining projected changes in educational enrollment from elementary school through college. Total enrollment in postsecondary degree-granting institutions is expected to increase 13 percent between 2009 and fall 2020. Enrollment is projected to increase by 9% for students 18 to 24 years old; by 21% for students 25 to 34 years old; and by 16% for students who are 35 years of age and over.

There are steps institutions can take to enhance adult learning and success: Recent research points to four major actions that institutions can take to enhance adult learning and success. "These include developing pre-baccalaureate, career-related certificate programs that incorporate academic credit that can be counted toward a degree; providing part-time degree programs; creating year-round, accelerated and convenient programming and facilitated degree mapping."[1]

Some initiatives are underway to help non-traditional students persist to graduation. For example, through CPE's initiative, Project Grad, returning students with 80 or more credit hours after some absence are tagged and their progression followed. In 2012 NKU had identified 266 Project Grad students.

Traditional measures of college readiness likely do not apply to older students: The measures used to assess college readiness of new high school graduates likely do not apply to older students who graduated from high school some time ago. The ACT or SAT scores and high school grade point average as predictors of academic success are less relevant for older students. Non-academic factors related to family and career, have an impact on their ability to succeed. For this group of students, the current institutional initiatives to offer credit for prior learning may have a positive impact on their progression toward graduation.

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[1] Returning to Learning: Adults' Success in College is Key to America's Future, http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/ReturntolearningApril2007.pdf.

Section 1: Defining our students and our market

Conclusions:

- NKU's typical student is an undergraduate 22 years of age, Caucasian, commuting to campus and on some form of financial aid. Students are primarily from the Northern Kentucky and metropolitan Cincinnati region.
- The overall population of high school graduates in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio will decline over the next 3-5 years, including a decrease in African-American students. NKU's ability to meet diversity goals could be impacted. Establishing new markets for traditional undergraduate students should be considered. According to market research, potential for growth exists in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. Growing the adult and online student populations might also offset the decline in high school graduates.
- Hispanic high school graduates in NKU's primary market are projected to increase in number over the next 15 years. Enhanced efforts should be made to attract these students.
- Transfer students will continue to be an important population for NKU. Establishing and maintaining partnerships with local community colleges is essential.
- The market for students who are military veterans is expected to increase over the next several years due to the current military active-duty drawdown. Identifying and meeting the needs of these students will be imperative.
- New markets for International students need to be developed due to current maximum enrollment of Saudi Arabian students allowed by their Cultural Mission in most popular disciplines. International students not only help diversify the campus, but are also a significant revenue stream for the institution.
- New pipelines for graduate students need to be established, as this population has declined over the past few years.

Who is our student?

- In fall 2012, NKU served 13,344 undergraduate students. That number represents a 9.7% increase over fall 2002 undergraduate enrollment, which totaled 12,164. In fall 2012, 82% of undergraduates were Caucasian. When looking at the entire student population, 83% are Caucasian, 6% are African-American and 2% are Hispanic. Non-resident, foreign-born students comprise 3% of the student population.
  - Source: Dashboard; Fall 2012 Enrollment File Executive Summary
- Approximately half of first-time, first-year students (40%) lives in college-owned housing; however, the majority of undergraduates (87%) commute to campus.
  - Source: Common Data Set, 2012-2013
- The average age of first-time, full-time, freshmen is 19; whereas, the average age of all full-time undergraduates is 22.
  - Source: Common Data Set, 2012-2013

- In fall 2012, NKU served 1,768 graduate students. That number represents a 59.7% increase over fall 2002 graduate enrollment, which totaled 1,107.
    - Source: Dashboard
- Of students choosing to pursue additional credentials after earning a bachelor's degree at NKU, approximately half return to NKU. The majority of students enter into a master's or first-professional program. The average bachelor's degree earner returns to a graduate program within one to two years after graduating.
    - Source: "Where Do NKU Undergraduates Go to Continue Their Educations?"
- Approximately 80% of students receive some kind of financial aid (federal, state, institutional, need-based, non need-based, student employment).
- Freshman profile (Fall 2012):
    - AVG ACT = 22.2
    - AVG HSGPA = 3.14
    - 55% female, 45% male
    - 83% Caucasian, 8% African American, 3% Hispanic, 3% Two or more
    - 66% come from KY, 26% from OH and 4% from IN
    - 40% receive a Pell grant
    - 33% receive a merit-based scholarship

CPE College Readiness Deficiencies – Fall 2012

	Count of Deficiencies		
	1	2	3
Overall Cohort	**453**	**155**	**31**
English	41	65	31
Math	312	124	31
Reading	100	121	31
Bachelors Cohort	**389**	**76**	**8**
English	28	21	8
Math	274	66	8
Reading	87	65	8
Associates Cohort	**64**	**79**	**23**
English	13	44	23
Math	38	58	23
Reading	13	56	23

- Approximately 19% of the 886 transfer students for fall, 2012 came from the Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS), with the largest share (105) coming from Gateway Community and Technical College. Almost 17% of transfers came from Cincinnati State (148). Forty percent of incoming transfers were from four-year institutions.
    - Source: Fall 2012 Enrollment File Executive Summary

- There are more than 400 students receiving veteran's educational benefits on campus.
- There are several metrics that affect recruitment strategies for students including CPE's (Council on Postsecondary Education) Diversity Metrics (e.g. undergraduate enrollment, graduate enrollment, retention, etc.). Additionally, CPE has three metrics within the Performance Scorecard including online learning, transfers from KCTCS, and credits to degree that affect enrollment and retention efforts.

What is our region?

- CPE has indicated that NKU's geographic area of responsibility includes the Kentucky counties of Boone, Kenton, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Pendleton, and Bracken.
- In fall 2012, ninety-one percent of undergraduate students came from Kentucky and Ohio.
  - Source: MIR (Management Information Reports)
- In fall 2012, the top 10 Kentucky counties included Kenton, Boone, Campbell, Jefferson, Grant, Fayette, Pendleton, Oldham, Gallatin, and Mason.
  - Source: MIR (Management Information Reports)
- The majority of graduate and online students come from the same geographic areas as our undergraduate students.
- For the fall 2012 incoming freshman class, there was potential student interest demonstrated in geographic areas including: Northern Kentucky, Lexington, Louisville, metropolitan Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Southeastern Indiana, and the Indianapolis metro area; however, the majority of the freshmen class came from Northern Kentucky and the Cincinnati metro area.
  - Source: Enrollment Management

Market Reality:

- High school graduates in the state of Kentucky have declined from 46,090 in 2010-11 and are not expected to return to that level until 2023-24. The number of students statewide is projected to decrease by more than 3,000 graduates through 2014-15, at which point it is expected to remain stable until climbing to 45,000 in 2022-23. The number of African-American students in Kentucky is projected to remain stable over the next 15 years while the number of Kentucky's Hispanic students is expected to more than triple during this time (1,097 to 3,931).
  - Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), 2012
- High school graduates in the state of Ohio have been declining since 2008-09 and are expected to decrease by almost 8,000 students until 2015-16 (135,506 to 126,074). At that point, there will be slight increases through 2018-19, followed by another decline over the next 10 years, bottoming out at 117,020 in 2027-28. Ohio's African-American graduates are expected to decline by more than 2,000 students over the next 15 years (15,158 to 12,894) while Hispanic graduates in Ohio are expected to increase by 1,500 during that time (2,805 to 4,386).
  - Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), 2012
- Although a relatively small percentage of students come from the state of Indiana, potential exists in this market and high school graduate projections should be noted. From 2010-11 to 2014-15 there is a projected decline in Indiana high school graduates of approximately 3,000

students (70,056 to 67,047). From 2014-15 to 2018-19 there is expected growth back to 70,175 students. From 2018-19 through 2024-25, the number of high school graduates in Indiana is projected to fluctuate between a low of 66,821 and a high of 70,461. Over the next 15 years, Indiana's African-American high school graduates will remain relatively stable, with a low of 5,653 graduating in 2013-14 and a high of 6,316 graduating in 2025-26. The number of Hispanic high school graduates in the Hoosier state will increase each year over that period from 3,908 to over 6,000.

- o Source: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), 2012.
- Transfer students come primarily from KCTCS institutions as well as Cincinnati State. Enhanced partnerships with Gateway Community and Technical College will help create more seamless opportunities for students to transfer. It should be noted that in fall 2012, approximately 40% of transfers came from four-year institutions, which are much more difficult to actively recruit.
- The NKU graduate student population has declined slightly over the past few years as our primary market has become flooded by the competition, coupled with fewer companies offering tuition reimbursements to their employees.
- With the current military active-duty drawdown, student veteran enrollment is expected to continue to increase. The single largest source of veterans to NKU comes from those using post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. There is Census data available on the number of current veterans living in our primary market; however, these data combine veterans of all ages and are difficult to disaggregate.
- After significant gains the past few years (specifically in students from Saudi Arabia), international student enrollment is expected to decline in the near future as new markets are being established. Presently, the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM), which funds the majority of our Saudi students, will only allow a limited number of students in each academic program. Many of our popular majors are now considered saturated. It took three years to increase enrollment from Saudi Arabia and will likely take a couple of years of systematic recruitment in new markets to yield similar results.

Remaining Questions:

- What are the institutional goals for enrollment at the undergraduate, graduate, and law levels?
- What are our capacities for enrollment?
- Would we consider expanding housing in order to broaden our market?
- What is the appropriate mix of resident, Metro, Indiana Rate, non-resident/international and online students to meet budgetary goals for the institution?
- How do we assess and market to the emerging adult/non-traditional population?
- Who are our competitors? Who do we project our competitors to be?

Section 2: Assessing current college readiness and graduation indicators: Are they adequate?

Summary of Key Points

Recommendation: Current indicators used for measuring college readiness and graduation rates have serious flaws. As NKU develops its strategic plan, the university must consider using **non-traditional indicators** of college readiness and graduation rate to accurately gauge its level of success at attracting college-ready students who can persist to graduation.

College Readiness

College readiness is typically defined as the level of preparation a student needs to succeed in college without remediation and to complete a program of study. Traditional indicators of college readiness are ACT or SAT scores, placement tests and high school grade point average (GPA). According to 2010-11 data compiled by the Kentucky Council for Postsecondary Education (CPE), 41 percent of the recent public high school graduates in the Northern Kentucky region met statewide standards for readiness in English, mathematics and reading, compared to 34 percent statewide. Effective as of fall 2012, the CPE revised the benchmarks that all public universities must use to determine a student's college readiness – specifically benchmarks for readiness in English, reading and mathematics using scores on the ACT, SAT or the following placement tests, COMPASS or KYOTE (Kentucky Online Testing). Students not meeting the college readiness benchmark are required to enroll and successfully complete remediation courses in English (ENGD090), reading (RDG091 or RDG110) or mathematics (MAHD090 through MAHD099).

National initiatives are underway to standardize the measure of student readiness for college across the 50 states. Federal mandates such as *No Child Left Behind* have expanded its mission to include a focus on college and career readiness (Barnes, Slate, J. & Rojas-LeBouef, Abstract.) The key question driving this new initiative is, "What is it that students *need* to know in order to be successful in college?" (Haycock, L., p. 1-19). There is also debate over whether the concept "academic preparedness" is more appropriate than "college readiness." Some argue that academic preparedness encompasses other requisite skills and cognitive qualities necessary for college success including creativity, critical thinking, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and time management skills (Barnes, et al, 2010).

In an effort to enhance a student's ability to succeed at college-level coursework, NKU has established many collaborative P-12 partnerships with schools throughout the region and state. These partnerships encompass a variety of programs and activities including: initiatives to help elementary and secondary students develop the competencies required for success in college, summer camps and institutes for elementary and secondary students as well as teacher training and support programs. (A list of NKU initiatives is posted on Blackboard.)

In conjunction with a 2005 change in the admissions policy, average ACT scores of NKU's incoming freshmen have trended upward. Each year at fall convocation the president proclaims this year's freshmen class as the academically strongest entering class in our institution's history. Yet, the first-year

retention rate of freshmen cohorts as defined by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) continues to hover around 67 percent and NKU's graduation rate ranks the lowest among all public universities in Kentucky. (Note: IPEDS participation is required by The Higher Education Act for all colleges and universities receiving Title IV funds.) The important question that needs to be asked is: "How is it that the institution's most academically prepared freshmen as defined by these standard college readiness indicators are not persisting to graduation?"

 Unfortunately, college readiness cannot be measured by simply using standardized test scores or high school grade point average because non-academic factors are also critical for predicting a particular student's chances of succeeding in higher education. Non-academic indicators include: individual psychological factors (i.e., motivation, emotional control), family factors (i.e., support, care-giving responsibilities), social factors (income, culture) and clarity with regard to career goals. For example, when students pursue a college degree simply to please parents or because they see no other options, they may lack the necessary commitment and motivation to succeed academically. In addition, many students do not understand what it takes to be successful (i.e., the amount of rigor, the level of preparation). As noted by several researchers, "junior high and high school students should be made aware of [college] faculty expectations and postsecondary academic standards" (Barnes et al., p. 14).

The transition to college is difficult for those students who are not clear about or are unwilling to do what is expected for them to succeed at the university level. The transition is also difficult for those students who do not have the emotional, social, and financial resources to meet expectations. Institutional data supports these insights:

- 43% of freshmen studied less or the same amount of time in their first year of college as they did in high school, according to recent results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Another freshmen survey (NKU Foundations of Excellence, 2010) found workload, time management, and motivation to be the biggest challenges students faced during their first year.

- Other surveys consistently show that NKU students work more hours particularly in off campus jobs than students at other Kentucky universities. NSSE (2012) also shows that 52 percent of freshmen work 11 hours or more per week. Given that 55 percent of freshmen reported working 11 hours or more per week in high school suggests students have become accustomed to juggling academic and work responsibilities. However, some analysts suggest this unwillingness or inability (for financial reasons) to reduce work hours may be an indicator that students do not clearly understand the time commitment need to achieve academic rigor.

Over the past few years, much has been written about the generation of students born between 1982 and 2002, referred to as "Millennials," who share certain characteristics that make them distinctively different from previous generations. Millennials are labeled as "digital natives" and "multi-taskers" and are portrayed as having high expectations with little tolerance for services which they perceive as not meeting their needs. Other traits of particular relevance to colleges and universities include:

- Impatience: Millennials expect immediate responses and have little or no tolerance for delays.

This suggests that colleges and universities must find faster and more efficient ways to deliver services to students (e.g., admission, support services, registration, and instructor feedback).

- An aversion to reading: This generation of students is more likely to play an electronic video or computer game than read a book. This aversion undermines academic success, which hinges on strong reading comprehension and writing skills. Moreover an aversion to reading suggests that students are not likely to read the required texts.

- Strong preference for experiential learning: The Millennial generation resists reading instructions as they strongly prefer to learn by doing. This preference has implications for the classroom as it is necessary to engage these students in new ways (i.e., active learning, hands-on experiences).

- Resiliency and locus of control: Relative to other generations, this generation has been very protected by their parents (i.e., helicopter parents) and society (i.e., no "losers" in t-ball). Many have never experienced failure. Students who have never failed at course work in high school and who struggle academically for the first time in the college setting often do not know how to adapt to the increased rigor of college coursework or how to respond to dismal or failing grades (Barnes et al., p. 14).

The university must also be cognizant of the students historically considered "non-traditional." This population is projected to increase in size. While NKU data shows the average age of students over the past 15 years has decreased slightly (24.8 in fall 1997 versus 23.9 in fall 2012), NKU has experienced considerable growth in student populations such as veterans, transfer, and international students. The Program for Adult Centered Education (PACE) program has experienced increased growth and interest over the last few years as well.

The measures used to assess college readiness of new high school graduates likely do not apply to older students who graduated from high school some time ago. The ACT or SAT scores and high school grade point average as predictors of academic success are less relevant for older students. Non-academic factors related to family and career, have an impact on their ability to succeed. For this group of students, the current institutional initiatives to offer credit for prior learning may have a positive impact on their progression toward a graduation.

Measurements of College Readiness

Traditional Indicators:

College readiness is currently measured using ACT, SAT, COMPASS, and KYOTE scores as is mandated by the Kentucky Council on Post-Secondary Education.

Scores earned on these traditional measures are moderately predictive of an entering freshman's academic preparation and readiness for college success.

Non-traditional Indicators:

Measures of incoming freshmen's meta-cognitive and other related skills should also be gathered. Educational literature shows students with these skills perform better on exams and assignments. These skills relate to:

- Self-awareness
- Self-monitoring
- Self-control
- Study skills
- Work habits

- Financial management
- Time management
- Help-seeking behaviors
- Social problem-solving skills
- Resiliency

Leadership and goal-setting skills are also important to college success. These skills include the ability to:

- Function as a change agent
- Collaborate/teamwork
- Manage projects
- Establish goals
- Measure outcomes
- Communicate effectively

Current Retention/Graduation Measurements

Traditional Indicators:

The Integrative Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS) methodology is the traditional (though somewhat misleading) indicator of student persistence. The IPEDS methodology calculates the six-year graduation rate by following the cohort of students entering a college in a given fall semester as full-time, first-time, degree-seeking students. It then tracks them until graduation. The weakness of IPEDS is its singular focus on full-time freshmen entering in the fall semester. IPEDS does not include students who transfer to another institution to complete a degree or those who transfer into NKU.

Non-traditional Indicators:

Despite persistent and focused criticism about how the IPEDS graduation rate is calculated, IPEDS still remains as the most frequently used measure of persistence. Other existing indicators of academic progress and persistence include:

- Overall number of degrees conferred by an institution. This metric is a strong indicator of student persistence and success.

- The Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) College Portrait (a new metric) calculates a Student Success and Progress Rate for first-time, full-time students and full-time transfer students. These measures follow students who graduate from NKU; students who transfer to another institution and graduate; students still enrolled at NKU but who have not yet completed a degree; and students who transfer to another institution, are still enrolled but have yet to complete a degree.

- "Three categories of college completion" metrics -- outcome metrics; progress metrics; and context metrics. These comprise a new set of metrics being developed under the leadership of Complete College America, a national nonprofit agency established in 2009, with support from the National Governors Association and other stakeholders.

Limitations of Retention/Graduation Measurements

The first-year retention rate for students who entered NKU in fall 2011 and returned in fall 2012 is 67 percent (IPEDS cohort). The six-year graduation rate (fall 2006 IPEDS cohort) is 37 percent. The IPEDS cohort includes ONLY first-time, full-time students degree-seeking students that entered in the fall semester. Thus, students who transfer (in and out), enroll part-time, who are non-degree seeking and those who enter in a spring semester are not included in these metrics.

The problem with the current standard retention and graduation metric is that:

- It does not accurately measure what really happens. The most recent data shows that 33 percent of NKU students leave between freshman and sophomore year, an unknown number of

who transfer to another university. The problem is that this 33 percent is counted as **not graduating, even if they eventually go on to graduate elsewhere**. In other words, students who leave NKU and transfer to another university are counted as "drop-outs."

- In order to assess the usefulness of the graduation rate as currently measured, it is important to identify the number of students that are now counted as "drop outs" but who have actually transferred to another university. We must also know how many students in a given freshman class simply drop out of higher education altogether and for what reasons. When NKU students do transfer to another university, it is important to know why they did so and also to find out if they eventually graduate.

Are there other indicators that more accurately measure student persistence? One more inclusive metric of academic success is the number of degrees conferred. In the past decade, the rate of growth in the number of degrees conferred by NKU has outpaced that of all the Kentucky public universities. As reported by CPE, between 2001-02 and 2011-12 the total degrees conferred by NKU grew by 62 percent. It is also important to consider that of the 1,937 students awarded a baccalaureate degree by NKU in 2011-12, just 44 percent came from an IPEDS cohort.

In addition, a new metric designed by the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) College Portrait, "Student Success and Progress Rate," follows native students, transfer students and students still enrolled but who have not yet earned a degree. For NKU, the current six-year success and progress rate for first-time, full-time students is 65 percent, meaning that 65 percent of students starting in fall 2005 either graduated or are still enrolled at a higher education institution (NKU or other) six years later.

This report recommends that the Student Success and Progress Rate as well as others named in this report be included in institutional discussions until such time that these types of metrics are reported externally. For example, College Completion America is leading an effort to develop and collect data in support of "college completion" metrics that will be more multi-faceted within the following categories: outcome metrics, progress metrics, and context metrics.

Currently NKU's effectiveness is based on the narrowly defined IPEDS graduation rate. This measurement does not reflect the growth in the number of degrees conferred. Additional indicators are required to accurately describe the situation.

Conclusion

Our current measures of college readiness must be supplemented with measures that assess meta-cognitive, leadership and goal-setting skills. Likewise, the measure currently used to calculate the graduation rate must be replaced by more valid indicators. In addition to reassessing these measures, new strategies must be implemented that give attention to cultivating measures that capture metacognitive skills that increases educational achievement but [which] are not measured readily by standardized tests or directly taught as content. Meeting the rigorous demands of college requires behavioral, problem-solving, and coping skills so that students identified as unprepared can successfully manage the academic and social demands of college (Barnes, p. 190). It is also essential that college

students visualize a goal of successfully graduating. As these college students learn to value and adapt to change as it occurs in college, they will be better prepared to adapt to change as in occurs in the workplace and life (Hazard & Nadeau, p. 18).

As Northern Kentucky University prepares its next strategic plan, it is imperative that additional accurate measurements of college readiness and graduation rates be recognized. Additionally, new strategies must be developed to assess, educate, and graduate students who are ready for the continuously changing world.

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Section 3: What is the market demand for NKU graduates?

Projected Job Growth 2010-2020 by Occupation and Educational Attainment

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nationally, "slow labor force growth and a gross domestic product growth of 3.0 percent annually are projected to result in a gain of 20.5 million jobs between 2010 and 2020; the fastest job growth is projected for industries and occupations related to healthcare and construction, although the construction industry is not expected to regain all the jobs it lost since its annual average peak employment in 2006."[2]

Highlights from the projections include:

- The labor force will grow slowly and become much older
- The labor force will continue to become more diverse
- Nonfarm payroll employment is projected to increase by 1.4 percent annually
- The most rapidly growing sector in terms of employment is expected to be the health care and social assistance industry
- The largest number of new and replacement jobs are expected in the office and administrative support occupations
- Occupations in which a master's degree is typically needed for entry are expected to grow by 21.7 percent, faster than the growth rate for any other education category. However, these occupations account for only 1.5 percent of projected total employment.
- The demand within an educational attainment level varies by the field of instruction. For example, the demand for bachelor's degree occupations in the computer and mathematical occupations group are projected to grow by nearly 23 percent, much faster than the 14 percent growth projected for bachelor's degree occupations in the education, training, and library group.[3]

While the numbers are different, the projected trends for the local market are expected to mirror the national forecasts.[4]

In the Cincinnati MSA, nonfarm payroll employment is projected to increase by 1.1 percent annually over the decade for a total employment of 1,069,405 jobs in the region by 2020.

Over the decade ending in 2020, job openings (net new jobs plus replacement workers) are projected to total about 339,000.   In addition, demand for replacement workers will outnumber net new job growth by 2 to 1. The business press often focuses on the new, emerging sectors, but to maintain its economic

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[2] Dixie Sommers and James C. Franklin, "Overview of projections to 2020", Monthly Labor Review, January 2012, http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2012/01/art1full.pdf

[3] Sommers, Dixie and Morisi, Teresa L., "Employment projections through the lens of education and training," *Monthly Labor Review*, April 2012, pp.13-28.

[4] For a more detailed discussion of Cincinnati's occupational demand see *Jobs Outlook 2020: A Regional Indicators Report*, available online at http://www.crc.uc.edu/region/jobsoutnew.htm

prosperity, the Cincinnati region should not lose sight of the need to provide workers with the skills and education to keep the jobs we already have.

Projections of job openings serve as an estimate of the minimum number of workers who will need to be trained for occupations.

In the Cincinnati region, occupations related to health care and community and social services are expected to be the most rapidly growing; however, office and administrative support and sales occupations are projected to add the largest number of jobs by 2020. Several sectors are projected to lose jobs, including protective services; life, physical and social sciences; management; architecture and engineering; and farming, fishing and forestry.

- Healthcare practitioners; education, training and library occupations; as well as computer and mathematical occupations are the only major groups that are projected to be fast-growing (more than 2 percent a year), well-paying (median wage above $35,000), and projected to have a significant number of jobs in 2020 (more than 30,000).
- Jobs of the future, especially those that are well-paying, increasingly require some education or training beyond high school. 93 percent of all net new jobs that pay $35,000 or more will require the combination of a post-secondary credential, on-the-job-training, and work experience beyond one year.

Key talent shortages

Ohio, Kentucky and the Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati metropolitan area have each identified key industry clusters that are likely to drive the economic prosperity of the region over the coming decade. Industry cluster groups are defined by an unusually high concentration of specific industries and their suppliers within a region. Advanced Energy; Bio Health; Consumer Products and Brand Development; Food Processing and Agriculture; Finance, Insurance and Information Technology; and Advanced Manufacturing are the identified clusters for the Cincinnati metro area.

Recent research[5] has identified several occupational groups that are integral to the growth of these clusters, where the demand for talent is likely to outstrip the supply produced by our regional educational pipeline. Among these are:

- Industrial engineers
- Medical scientists
- Diagnostic related technologists and technicians
- Software developers and programmers
- Computer systems analysts
- Computer support specialists

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[5] Unpublished research on labor supply and demand by cluster in the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky region, research conducted by the Center for Economic Analysis and Development, Northern Kentucky University and the Institute for Policy Research, University of Cincinnati, January 2013.

- Healthcare practitioners including nurses, physicians and surgeons

This same research has identified several occupational groups that will have an oversupply of talent produced by our regional educational pipeline. In an era of scarce resources, it is imperative to leverage our educational dollars to their best use. Meanwhile, it is also necessary to recognize that some educational programs are designed to serve larger multi-state and national markets. For example, most institutions do not have medical, dental, pharmacy, veterinarian, law or architecture programs.

Education is a necessary but not sufficient standard for career success

The economic benefits from post-secondary education have been well-documented. Income, education and labor market outcomes are inescapably linked. All things being equal, the more educated an individual is the higher his earnings will be, the more likely he will be to participate in the labor market, and the more likely he will be to remain employed through the ups-and-downs of the business cycle.

The benefits of education are apparent in a number of labor force statistics including: higher median wages, lower unemployment rates and higher average hours worked per week. However, much of the benefit of education is also dependent upon the occupation and industry. Additionally, education alone does not guarantee a student will have a successful career after college.

What employers look for in job candidates

Employers are looking for more than college degrees in candidates when making hiring decisions, according to the most recent survey of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). The survey is conducted annually with the organization's employer members across the country to forecast hiring trends and market influences.

The survey suggests that after the degree, grade point average and leadership experience are two important factors weighing heavily in hiring decisions. Also factors include a wide range of skills and personal qualities as well as work experience. In some cases, geography is also a factor in hiring.

The job outlook for students with a bachelor's and master's degrees in business, engineering, and computer/information sciences is optimistic, according to the survey.   The outlook is best for those with degrees in business, finance, accounting, and business administration/management, followed by degrees in management information systems, marketing, economics, logistics and materials management, and international business.

The most sought after bachelor-level engineering degrees are mechanical, electrical, computer, chemical, and civil in that order.

Other high demand bachelor's degrees are in the sciences, communications, and liberal arts. In the sciences, mathematics degrees (including statistics) lead the way followed by chemistry, biology, construction science/management, and physics. The high-demand undergraduate degrees in communications are: communications, public relations, and advertising. Within the liberal arts

disciplines, bachelor's degrees in psychology, political science, sociology, English, and history are favored by employers.

The most-desired master-level graduates are those holding an M.B.A., followed by computer and information sciences, computer engineering, electrical engineering, accounting, mechanical engineering, and chemical engineering.

At the doctorate level, the survey shows that engineering, computer science and information sciences, sciences, business, humanities and social sciences, and education are in most demand.

However, the degree in hand in a specific major is not enough for employers when making hiring decisions. They also take into account GPA and a variety of skills and attributes, according to the survey. For example, 78 percent of survey respondents said after the degree, they will consider GPA with 63.5 percent using 3.0 as the cutoff.

The survey reports that leadership skills are the top attribute employers seek, with more than 80 percent indicating that they want to see evidence of leadership abilities on the resume. A candidate with leadership experience will win out over comparable applicants.

Employers also wish to hire candidates with a wide range of skills and personal qualities and want to see them listed on resumes (see charts below). Ability to communicate is the number one skill wanted, with the ability to work as part of a team running a close second. Skills in problem-solving, organization, research and analysis are not far behind.

For the most part, employers say they are satisfied with the level of these skills possessed by new candidates. However, the writing skills, work ethic, and initiative of new hires were all ranked low.

Experience is one more factor taken into consideration by employers when making hiring decisions. More than 70 percent of respondents said they prefer candidates with related work experience. Another 20 percent will consider any type of work experience relevant or not. Less than 5 percent don't consider work experience at all. Of employers wanting work experience nearly 57 percent said they prefer experience gained through an internship or co-op.

Location appears to be a factor in law firm hiring, according to a study by Paul Oyer and Scott Schaefer published in a working paper for the National Bureau of Economic Research. They found that even in large law firms, hiring decisions are significantly influenced by geography.

2013 Employer Rating of Key Candidate Skills/Qualities

Skill/Quality	Weighted Average Rating
Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization	4.63
Ability to work in a team structure	4.60
Ability to make decisions and solve problems	4.51
Ability to plan, organize and prioritize work	4.46
Ability to obtain and process information	4.43
Ability to organize quantitative data	4.30
Technical knowledge related to the job	3.99
Proficiency with computer software programs	3.95
Ability to create and/or write written reports	3.56
Ability to sell or influence others	3.55
5-point scale, where 1=not important; 2=not very important; 3=somewhat important; 4=very important; and 5=extremely important)	
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Attributes Employers Seek on a Candidate's Resume

Attribute	% of Respondents
Leadership	80.6
Problem-solving skills	75.3
Communication skills (written)	74.7
Ability to work in a team	74.2
Analytical/quantitative skills	72.0
Strong work ethic	73.1
Communication skills (verbal)	67.2
Initiative	66.7
Computer skills	64.5
Technical skills	64.0
Detail-oriented	57.5
Flexibility/adaptability	57.5
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	57
Organizational ability	49.5
Friendly/outgoing personality	33.3
Strategic planning skill	32.8
Creativity	25.8
Entrepreneurial skills/risk taker	25.8
Tactfulness	23.7
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Beyond the classroom at NKU

Employers have reported that among other qualifications, they look for certain skills on a candidate's resume during the hiring process. These skills include: leadership, problem-solving skills, written communication skills, ability to work in a team, analytical and quantitative skills, strong work ethic, verbal communication skills, initiative, computer skills, technical skills, detail-oriented, flexibility and adaptability, interpersonal skills, organizational ability, friendly or outgoing personality, strategic planning skill, creativity, entrepreneurial skills or taking risks, and tactfulness. Therefore, it is important that NKU strive to provide students with these abilities and qualities in order to make them more marketable for future employment.

Currently, NKU's campus environment provides primarily three separate avenues for developing these kinds of skills. These avenues are school-sponsored programs, student organizations, and alternative education programs. Although the list is certainly not exhaustive, these programs offer the majority of options for students hoping to develop these skills. School-sponsored programs include Norse Leadership Society, Presidential Ambassadors, Activities Programming Board, Student Government Association, as well as many other opportunities. The student involvement in these groups totals almost 1,000 students.

Student organizations also provide many diverse opportunities for growth and skill development. There are currently more than 200 organizations run by students on campus. These organizations have various functions and characteristics. There are 46 academic groups, 42 special interest groups, 25 recreational groups, 22 faith-based groups, and 10 leadership groups. Also, there are various law, cultural, departmental, service, political, media, graduate, housing, and student governance organizations. Within these collective groups, nearly 5,300 students are involved and represented. These 200 organizations are also in addition to the Greek life on campus. Approximately 7% of full time, undergraduate students under the age of 26 are involved in fraternities or sororities. As of fall 2012, there were nearly 850 members in these organizations.

Another option for students to develop these employer skills is presented through alternative education programs. These programs include internships, co-ops, externships, practicum learning, assistantships, integrated learning, and others. Co-op enrollment goes through Career Services. The number of unduplicated students working in co-ops for credit in 2011-12 totaled 207. Internship enrollment is decentralized through the academic departments. The number of students involved in these programs is not currently readily available. However, these opportunities provide unique ways for students to engage in real-world employment-like situations and develop skills that employers most desire in employees.

In a recent survey, first-year students were questioned about their classroom experiences and whether such experiences had positive effects on certain employment related skills. For example, 78.2% of these students agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and instructors had a positive influence on critical thinking skills. Maybe most importantly, 69.7% of students agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and instructors had a positive influence on their career development and work-related skills. Additionally,

61.4% of students agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and instructors integrated NKU out-of-the-classroom experiences. Some of these experiences included volunteering, campus lectures, cultural events, theater performances, and other similar opportunities. These experiences were integrated into classroom discussion and assignments. Faculty and instructors also made connections between coursework and real-world experiences, according to 79.5% of students. And finally, 69.6% of these students also agreed or strongly agreed that faculty and instructors discussed opportunities to work with them outside the classroom. Such opportunities included: working in a lab, writing on an academic paper, volunteering, and so on.

NKU Campus Resources for Development Employment Attributes

School Programs	Student Organizations
Activities Programming Board	American Medical Student Association Northern Premedical Chapter
Association of Campus Residents	Black Men's Organization
Campus Recreation Student Employee Advisory Committee	Black Women's Organization
Freshmen Service Leadership Committee	Business Informatics Group
Homecoming Committee	Climb Time Entertainment
Leadership Mentors	Colleges Against Cancer
LEAP	Enactus
New Student Orientation	Finance Accounting Students Association
Norse Leadership Society	Freshmen Service Leadership Committee
Presidential Ambassadors	Greek Life Organizations
Student Government Association	Latino Student Organization
Student Wellness Advisory Committee	Model United Nations
	NAACP Campus Chapter
Alternative Education Programs	National Society of Collegiate Scholars
Assistantships	Norse Lazer Tag Club
Externships	Norse Libertarians
Integrated Learning	Norse Women's Club Volleyball Team
Internships	Northern Kentucky Marketing Association
Practicum	Odyssey of the Mind
Service Learning	Organizational Leadership Collaborative
	R.O.C.K.S.
	Self Diploma Student Organization
	Social Work Club
	Society of Professional Journalists Campus Chapter
	Sports Business Club
	Sports Clubs Program
	Student Nurses' Association
	Student Support Services Ambassadors
	The Northerner
	Think Tank
	Undergraduate Mock Trial Team
	Up 'Til Dawn
	Women in Informatics
	Young Americans for Liberty

Student Organization Breakdown

Student Organizations by Type

Type	Count
Academic	46
Special Interest	42
Recreational	25
Faith-based	22
Law	15
Cultural	13
Departmental	12
Service	11
Leadership	10
Political	8
Media	5
Graduate	4
Housing	1
Student Governance	1
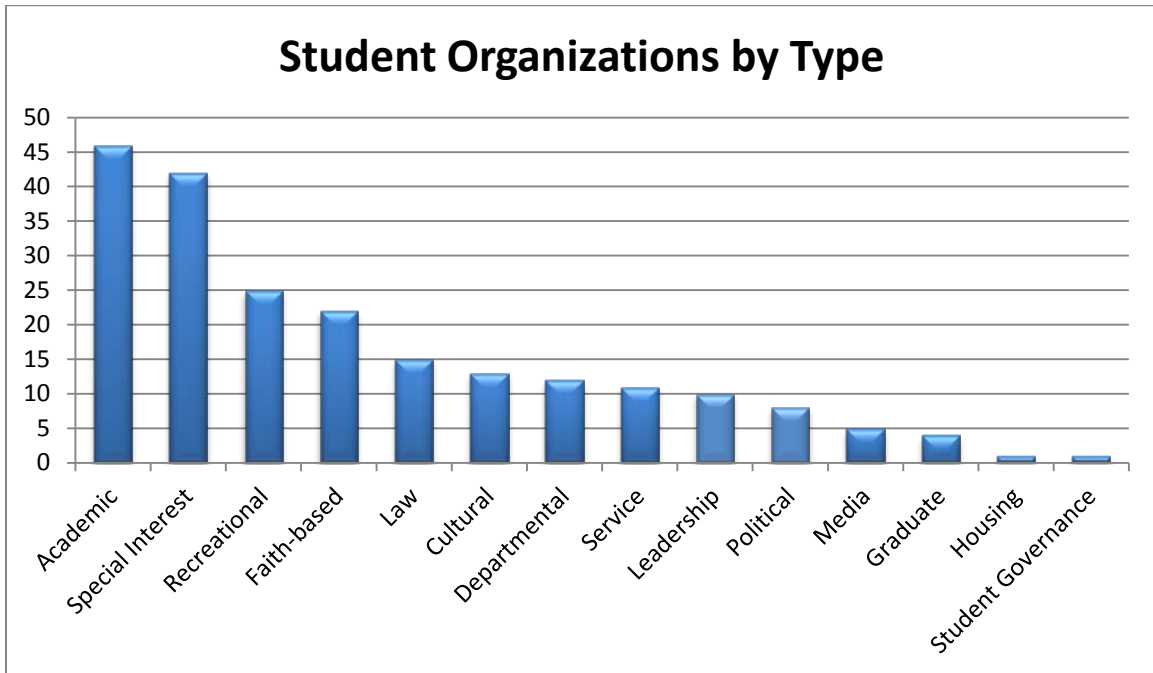
Student Involvement in on Campus Resources

Involvement in Programs*

Program	NKU non-participating students	NKU participating students
School Sponsored Programs	14,000	1,000
Student Organizations**	9,700	5,300
Greek Life	14,200	900
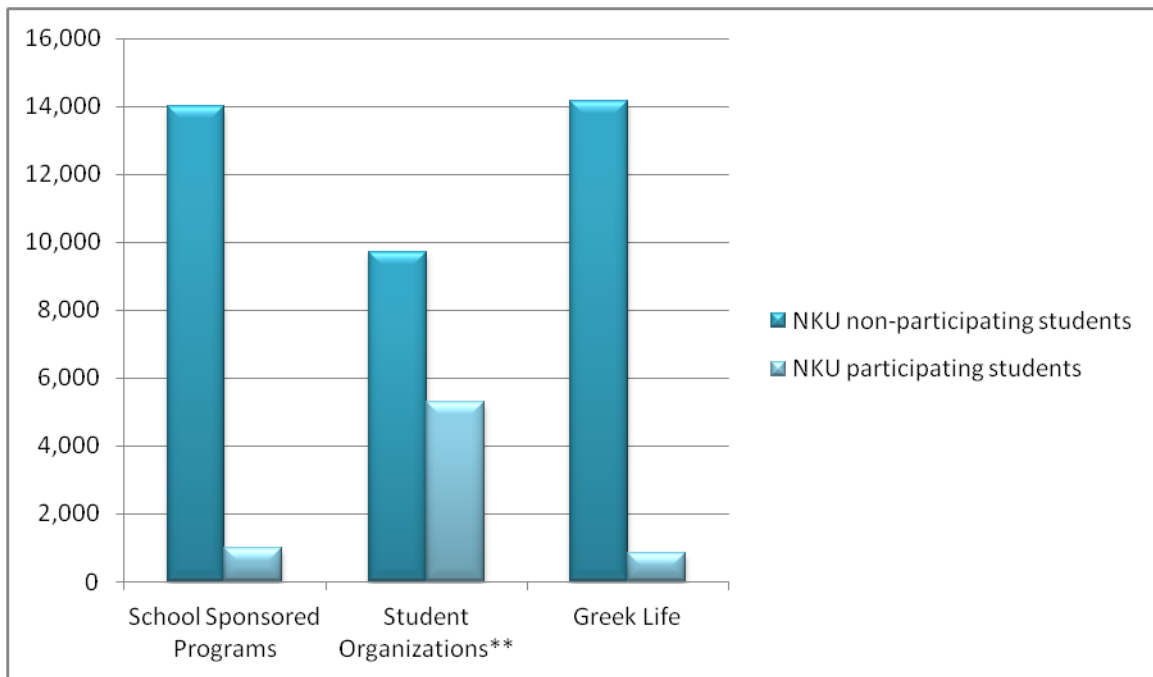
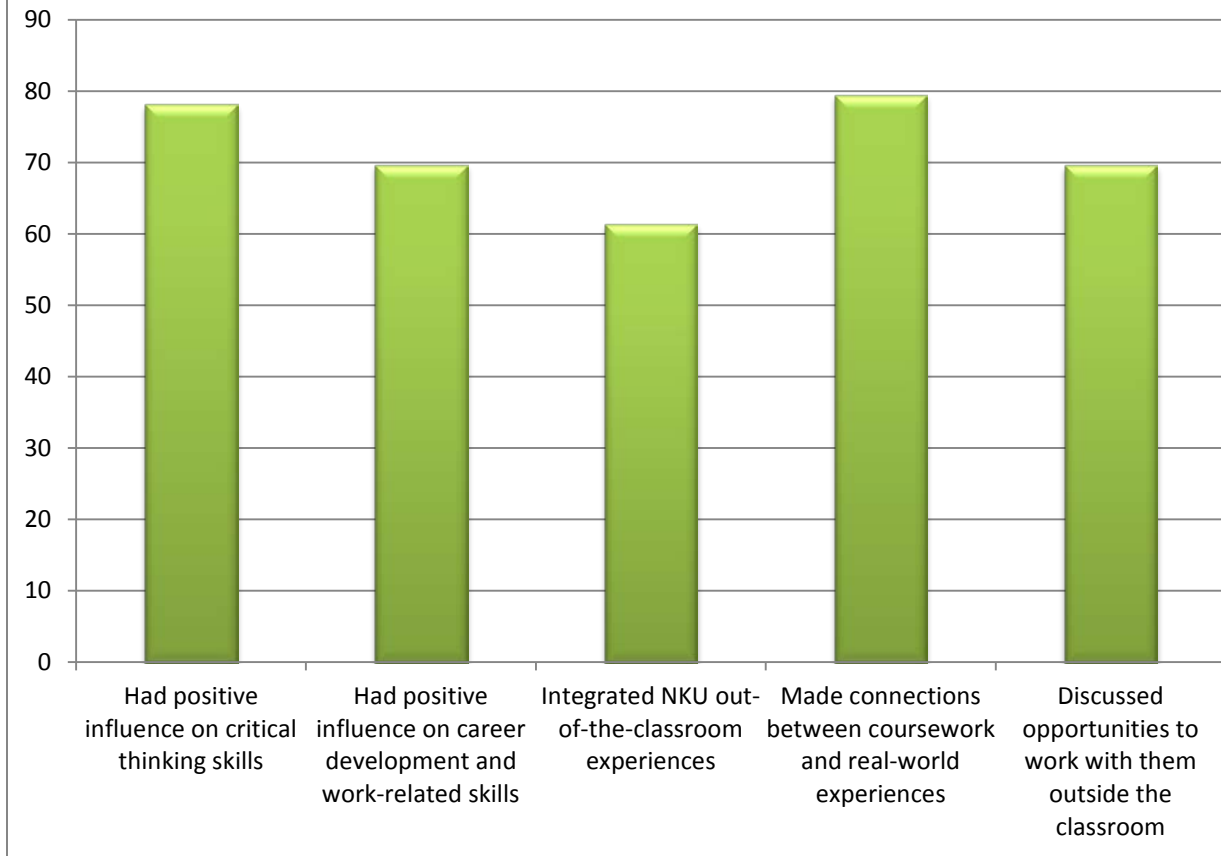* All numbers are approximate.
** Numbers for Student Organizations include all student organizations rather than only the student organizations listed previously.

Percentage of First-Year Students Who Agreed/Strongly Agreed that Faculty/Instructors…

Data source: NSSE

Section 4: NKU program offerings (Undergraduate Catalog 2012-13)

The table that follows shows the undergraduate programs available at NKU. Here's how to read the tables:

- The **bachelor** column shows the majors and the degree (or degrees) associated with each major: BS = Bachelor of Science; BA = Bachelor of Arts; BFA = Bachelor of Fine Arts; BM = Bachelor of Music; BSN = Bachelor of Science in Nursing; and BSW = Bachelor of Social Work.

- The **certificate** column lists "PB" for a post baccalaureate certificate and "U" for an undergraduate certificate.

- The other columns indicate by "AD" if one can earn an associate degree; "M" if one can earn a minor; and "TC" if one can obtain teacher certification in the listed discipline.

- In addition, three superscript codes are used:

  * means students with an interest in majoring in one of these fields will be placed in a pre-major status.

  P means the program is available through PACE, a special program for adult learners; these programs are also available through a traditional delivery model.

  O means the program is available online; most of these programs are also available through a traditional delivery model.

Discipline	Associate	Bachelor	Minor	Teaching Certification	Certificate
Accounting		BS*	M		
(General) Accounting					PB
Aging and Society			M		
Ancient Civilizations			M		
Anthropology		BA/BS	M		
Archaeology			M		
Art		BA/BFA	M	TC	
Art History			M		
Athletic Training		BS			
Automated Manufacturing Processes and Systems					U
Biological Sciences		BA/BS	M		
Biology				TC	
Black Studies			M		
(Pre)-Business Studies	AD^P				
Business Administration		BS*^{P}	M		
Business and Marketing Education				TC	
Business Informatics		BS*^{P}	M		U^O

Discipline	Associate	Bachelor	Minor	Teaching Certification	Certificate
Career and Technical Education		BS		TC	
Celtic Studies			M		
Chemistry		BA/BS	M	TC	
Chinese Studies			M		
Cinema Studies			M		
Civic Engagement					U
Communication Studies		BA°	M		
Computer Forensics			M		
Computer Information Technology		BS^P	M		
Computer Science		BS	M		
Construction Management		BS°	M		
Construction Technology	AD				
Counseling and Human Services		BS^P	M		
Creative Writing			M		
Criminal Justice	AD°	BA°	M		
Criminalistics			M		
(Interdisciplinary) Early Childhood Education		BA		TC	
Earth/Space Science				TC	
Economics		BS	M		
(Applied) Economics and Public Policy					PB
Electronic Media and Broadcasting		BA	M		
Electronics Engineering Technology		BS			
Electronics Technology			M		
Elementary Education		BA*		TC	
English		BA	M	TC	
English for Business Students			M		
Entrepreneurship		BS	M		PB°
Environmental Science		BS*			
Environmental Studies			M		
Evolutionary Studies			M		
Exercise Science		BS			
Finance		BS*	M		PB
French		BA	M	TC	
Geographic Information Systems					U

Discipline	Associate	Bachelor	Minor	Teaching Certification	Certificate
Geography		BA	M		
Geology		BA/BS	M		
German		BA	M	TC	
Graphic Design		BA/BFA			
Health Education			M	TC	
Health Science		BS^o			
History		BA	M^o		
Honors			M		
Human Resource Management		BS			
Industrial Technology			M		
Information Security			M		
Information Systems Development					PB
Information Systems Management					PB
Integrative Studies	AD^p	BA^p			
International Studies		BA	M		
Japanese Studies			M		
Journalism		BA	M		
Latin American & Caribbean Studies			M		
Library Informatics		BS^o			
Management		BS*	M^o		
Manufacturing Processes					U
Marketing		BS*	M		
Marketing Research					PB
Mathematical Sciences			M		
Mathematics		BS		TC	
Mechanical & Manufacturing Engineering Technology		BS			
Media Informatics		BA	M		
Medieval and Renaissance Studies			M		
Middle Eastern & North African Studies			M		
Middle Grades Education		BA*		TC	
Military History			M		
Music		BA/BM*	M	TC	
Native American Studies			M		
Neuroscience			M		
Nursing		BSN*			

Discipline	Associate	Bachelor	Minor	Teaching Certification	Certificate
Nursing: Registered Nurse to BSN		BSN*º			
Organizational Leadership		BA^PO	M		U
Philosophy		BA	M		
(Applied) Philosophy			M		
Physical Education		BA*	M	TC	
Physics		BA/BS	M	TC	
Piano Pedagogy					U
Political Science		BA/BS	M		
Popular Culture			M		
Pre-Law			M		
Professional Writing			M		
Psychology		BA/BS	M		
Public Administration			M		
Public Relations		BA			
Radiologic Technology	AD*				
Religious Studies			M		
Respiratory Care	AD*				
Social Justice			M		
Social Studies				TC	
Social Work		BSW			
Sociology		BS	M		
Software					UG
Spanish		BA	M	TC	
Special Education				TC	
Sports Business		BS*			PB
Sports Medicine			M		
Stage Management		BFA			
Statistics		BS			
Technological Leadership and Innovation					U
(Advanced) Technology			M		
Theatre		BA/BFA	M		
Women's and Gender Studies			M		
World Cultures and Theatre		BA			