

FALL STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUMS SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2024

Faculty/Staff Success and Organizational Culture

- **Institutional Culture** - The importance of the institution's student-centered mission while also fostering a collaborative work environment.
- **Compensation Issues** - Lack of competitive salaries, benefits, and transparent compensation structures.
- **Career Development Limitations** - Lack of advancement ladders and professional development opportunities.
- **Workload Concerns & Resources** - Develop workload policies for both faculty and staff to recognize that not one size fits all. Improve technology infrastructure to create efficiency throughout the university.
- **Work Flexibility & Life Balance** – The importance of having the ability to create a flexible schedule whether through flexible hours or remote work options.
- **Organizational Structure** - Establish cross-training and succession pathways to ensure consistency in institutional knowledge.
- **Communication & Transparency** - Unclear communication process with regard to decision making, budgeting, and policy.
- **Community Building and Engagement** - Combat lowered engagement of employees and increase sense of belonging. Increase active collaboration in the presence of increased remote work.
- **Equity Issues** - A perceived differential treatment between faculty and staff and well as workload inequity within faculty and staff positions.
- **Leadership & Management** - Provide those in leadership positions with greater training and support to promote a positive workplace culture and achieve clearly defined goals and objectives.

Academic Excellence and Student Success

- **Holistic, Differentiated Student Support** - Increase equitable access to student support resources for all learners (e.g. adult, online, traditional).
- **Coordination of Support Services** - Expand existing supports to eliminate service gaps and increase collaboration among units to ensure effective utilization.
- **Career Development Integration** - Expand career education and skill development in the student journey.
- **Training Opportunities** - Increase opportunities and participation in trainings related to teaching methods and technology.
- **Cross-Unit Collaboration** - Create more opportunities to connect academic and administrative units in joint initiatives.

Regional Connections, Civic and Community Engagement

- **Community Partnership Infrastructure** - Increase centralized coordination, tracking, and nurturing of partnerships.
- **Resource and Capacity Constraints** - Explore means for providing faculty and staff with the time and incentive to increase engagement.
- **Student Participation** - Identify strategies to increase student participation in internships, co-ops, and other co-curricular experiences.
- **Balancing Online and Regional Engagement** - Clarify resources, supports, and responsibilities as it relates to supporting online students, especially those outside of the tri-state.

Student Open Forum and Survey

1. Factors Drawing Students to NKU

- **Affordability:** NKU offers lower tuition costs, scholarships, and aid packages compared to other institutions, making it an attractive option for students seeking value.
- **Location:** The university's location near Cincinnati provides access to urban amenities while maintaining a safe and welcoming campus environment.
- **Academic Programs:** NKU's academic programs are a key draw, with strong reputations, particularly in nursing, and small class sizes that enhance the learning experience.
- **Campus Culture:** The campus culture is described as welcoming and inclusive, fostering a sense of belonging.
- **Athletics:** Opportunities to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities contribute to NKU's appeal.

2. Factors Keeping Students Enrolled

- **Academic Support:** Understanding professors, strong faculty relationships, and access to academic resources contribute to a supportive learning environment.
- **Community:** Students value the sense of belonging fostered by peer relationships, campus involvement, and student organizations.
- **Available Resources:** NKU offers essential support programs and financial assistance that address students' academic and personal well-being.
- **Personal Investment:** Students' commitment to their program progression, career preparation, and professional development goals encourages them to continue at NKU.

3. Challenges and Concerns

- **Financial Pressures:** Rising costs associated with tuition, fees, and living expenses are a significant concern.
- **Campus Life:** Students desire a more vibrant campus life with increased social events and improved dining options.
- **Academic Support:** Students suggest improvements in advising, course availability, and faculty engagement.
- **Others:** Concerns were also raised about diversity representation, awareness of support services, and communication effectiveness.

4. Suggestions for Improvement

- **Communication:** Enhanced communication efforts should focus on promoting resources, providing clear information, and improving website functionality.
- **Student Support:** Strengthening student support through expanded mentoring, accessible advising, and enhanced career services.
- **Campus Life:** Improving campus life by offering more social events, diverse dining options, and supporting extracurricular activities.
- **Academic Experience:** Enhancing the academic experience through increased course offerings, flexible scheduling, and greater faculty engagement.