



## REGIONAL IMPACT, OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT & GRADUATE EDUCATION

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE VISION 2020 WORKING GROUP ON REGIONAL IMPACT, Outreach, Engagement, and Graduate Education was charged with developing ways to capitalize on the extraordinary opportunity that NIU has serving the northern Illinois region, one of the university's few assets that cannot be duplicated. The region can be invaded by the state's other four-year public institutions, but those institutions cannot replicate in their own service areas the same access to educational entities; cultural, social, and governmental agencies; business and industry; or the state's two national labs. More than any other single factor, engagement with this region distinguishes NIU from Illinois' other four-year publics and from most institutions in the Mid-American Conference.

The group met 10 times during the spring 2011 semester. Attendance was excellent and discussion energetic. To assist the committee in its work, the co-chairs placed an extensive library of documents, presentations, and other materials in an online collaboration tool called Wiggio. Meetings focused on specific topics, and committee members accepted "Must Read" and "Must Skim" assignments for each meeting that eventually totaled 65 documents, 50 websites, and 8 spreadsheets amounting to 783 pages. The online library, which also contained general background documents, has been formatted for posting on appropriate university websites.

The committee absorbed an extraordinary amount of material, beginning with the evolution of the concept of engagement and the current national focus on engagement as a central university function. Data was provided on the university's historic interaction with its service region through the provision of credit programming, applied research, conferences, student internships and clinicals, partnerships, and technical support. Institutions with well-developed engagement plans and programs were identified, national assessment tools were reviewed, and NIU's progress toward achieving national recognition as an engaged institution was highlighted. The committee discussed the university's efforts to track, recognize, and reward faculty and staff involvement in engagement activities.

The general recommendation of this working group is that NIU must adapt to a changing enrollment environment that is more dependent on adult learners and community college transfers. In this climate, NIU, surrounded as it is by an

unusually large number of high-quality community colleges and many small- and medium-sized private institutions, has few options. The university can downsize in response to ongoing reductions in enrollment. It can increase its efforts to recruit and retain its historic student body. Or it can adjust its programs, its delivery mechanisms, its pricing structure, and its student services to address the needs of the growing adult market. The following recommendations are designed to address this third option. They would set the university on a new course that will ensure its future. Simply stated, while we recognize the need to pursue the students we want, we urge the university to embrace the students who want us. The cost of acquisition will be lower, and the net return on investment will be greater. Such an approach would be consistent with the university's mission and with its name. Moreover, it would capitalize on the university's most significant asset—a diverse region, essential to both the state and the national economy, with opportunities for engaged research, engaged learning, and engaged service in every discipline.

Specific goals designed to capitalize on the opportunities NIU's service regions provides were established as follows:

#### OFF-CAMPUS AND GRADUATE RECRUITMENT

The recommendation of the working group is to increase NIU's share of the large and growing pool of part-time, off-campus, undergraduate and graduate students (ages 25–45) in the region from 1% (3,000 students/40,000 credit hours annually) to 3% (9,000 students/120,000 credit hours annually). The population of adult, part-time, off-campus students is growing, while the population of 18- to 22-year-olds is declining. Intense competition threatens both off-campus and on-campus enrollments. Meeting this goal will generate sufficient enrollments to sustain and expand degree programs plus revenues to support on- and off-campus activities. To meet this goal the university must engage in several initiatives, such as offering off-campus degree programs that are in the highest demand by students; targeting part-time, off-campus students in university branding initiatives; and providing scholarships for part-time learners.

The group also benchmarked graduate enrollment. NIU's graduate student enrollment is declining, while competitors' enrollments are increasing dramatically. Graduate education and research are essential to the future vitality of the university and the region. Therefore, the working group recommends increasing the number of NIU graduate students at all locations from 5,694 to 8,000 by 2020. There are several ways that the university can meet this goal, including rethinking the off-campus pricing structure; streamlining the admissions and registration process; and capitalizing on the increasing demand for health programs and for interdisciplinary programs that add management skills to an existing career track.

## ONLINE PROGRAMMING

Students demand the flexibility and the increased learning opportunities available through online programming and will go where it is available. The working group benchmarked the number of online certificate and degree programs that meet the Higher Learning Commission criteria. NIU lags behind its competitors and must grow the number of online certificate and degree programs to remain sustainable. Therefore, the working group recommends developing courses for up to 42 additional online degree programs and certificates that are prioritized to meet the highest levels of student demand, and establishing a continuing, adequately-funded infrastructure to create and support more market-driven, online programs.

## OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Additionally, the working group benchmarked outreach and engagement opportunities for students and faculty. In particular, the working group recommends increasing engaged learning activities for all students by capitalizing on regional opportunities. Few institutions can match NIU's location for the engaged learning opportunities that are strongly supported by the strategic plan, but the development of such opportunities for NIU students lags behind competitor and benchmark institutions. This working group embraces the goal put forth by the Academic Programming Working Group regarding participation in academic enrichment programs.

NIU also must increase regional and international outreach and engagement activities. The university needs to establish an internal structure for coordination and support; "claim" its engagement activities in order to promote the university's reputation, reliability, and presence in addressing public needs; recruit students; motivate external funders; and inspire new, mutually beneficial partnerships.

To meet these goals, NIU must do a better job tracking, assessing, and promoting regional and international outreach and engagement activities. An existing tool for tracking and assessment, called ENGAGE!, exists but is not yet well-utilized and lags behind benchmark institutions in terms of listings and site visitors. Tracking and assessment are required to demonstrate increased regional and global impact, justify rewards, and provide information for promoting outreach and engagement initiatives. The goal is by 2020 to have 12,000 listings in the ENGAGE! database and 1,500 visitors per month. This will require the university to, among other things, promote ENGAGE! internally and externally, connect it to Digital Measures, and provide incentives for its use.

Finally, to truly grow outreach and engagement activities on campus, faculty involvement must be encouraged. The group recommends including engaged

research, engaged teaching, and engaged service in promotion and tenure processes and other faculty rewards.

#### MEMBERSHIP

- Anne Kaplan, Vice President, Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies, Co-Chair
- Brad Bond, Dean of the Graduate School, Co-Chair
- Paul Bauer, Director, Music
- Barry Bode, Chair, Biological Sciences
- Terry Borg, Director, External Programs, College of Education
- Judith Hermanson, Director, NGOLD
- Amy Levin, Director, Women's Studies
- Brigid Lusk, Chair, Nursing and Health Studies
- Kirk Miller, Chair, Sociology
- Cliff Mirman, Chair, Technology
- Lynn Slater, Program Administrative Assistant, Music
- Sharon Smaldino, Morgridge Chair for Teacher Education, Partnership Office
- Dan Weilbaker, Professor, Marketing

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## ISSUE

Adult student enrollment at off-campus sites

## INDICATOR

NIU's share of off-campus adult student (ages 25-45) market

## NIU'S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS

NIU currently has approximately 1% of the adult student market.

Although no direct comparison can be made to our competitors regarding the share of the off-campus adult student market, NIU's enrollment has decreased over time compared to some other local institutions. Increasing NIU's share of the off-campus adult student market is vital to change this trend.

NIU's total enrollment has decreased 6.95% over the period 2006-2010 from 25,439 to 23,670.

Illinois community colleges experienced a 9.2% increase in FTE from 2009 to 2010 (14.1% from 2006 to 2010). The College of DuPage and Harper College experienced one-year increases of 16.3% and 13.2%, respectively, between 2009 and 2010. Overall, baccalaureate transfer enrollments at Illinois community colleges have increased 8.5%; career and technical enrollments have increased 10.3%. Since 1995, most of the private institutions in NIU's service region have seen increases in undergraduate enrollment that exceed NIU's.

NIU's graduate enrollment decreased by almost 5% between 1995 and 2009. During that period, most competitor institutions in our region saw enrollment increases: UIC (24%), DePaul (33%), National-Louis (39%), Roosevelt (43%), Dominican (110%), Benedictine (171%), Aurora (214%), Olivet Nazarene (264%), and Concordia (287%).

## GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 1.5% (4,500 students – 2,500 graduate students/33,325 credit hours annually and 2,000 undergraduates/26,666 credit hours annually)

5-YEAR TARGET: 2% (6,000 students – 3,500 graduate students/46,665 credit hours annually and 2,500 undergraduates/33,325 credit hours annually)

BY 2020: 3% (9,000 students – 4,000 graduate students/53,320 credit hours annually and 5,000 undergraduates/66,650 credit hours annually)

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

- Enrolling a greater share of the off-campus market is mission critical to NIU's claim to the region and to the university's regional impact.

- The adult learner market (ages 25–45) is rapidly expanding; the 18- to 22-year-old market is shrinking. Adult learners are place-bound because of work and domestic commitments; they seek innovative solutions that enable them to pursue higher education. These individuals are willing to pay for convenience, speed, and flexibility in meeting their education goals.
- NIU’s regional competitors are aggressively seeking and serving adult learners on terms that complement students’ work and domestic situations.
- NIU’s net revenue from off-campus students exceeds comparable figures for on-campus students.
- Successful off-campus courses can serve as a positive recruiting tool for on-campus programs.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

- Survey the potential pool of off-campus, part-time students regularly to ascertain NIU’s competitiveness in the marketplace; degree program preferences; reputation for quality; pricing; course format, length, and accessibility.
- Use technology to eliminate the barriers of location and scheduling that reduce adult enrollment.
- Offer at off-campus locations the degree programs that are in the highest demand by students – education, business, and healthcare.
- Develop and implement new, workforce-oriented programs that deliver third- and/or fourth-year courses, including competitive 3+1 baccalaureate completion programs, to meet the needs of all 16 nationally recognized career clusters with documented need. NIU currently serves four to six areas.
- Recognize and reward departments and programs that develop interdisciplinary certificates and degree programs.
- Survey community college advisors and off-campus, part-time students to assess satisfaction with services such as admissions, advising, personal support, quality of instruction, scheduling, tutoring, retention, and speed to graduation.
- Target part-time, off-campus students and recognize in general university branding initiatives.
- Integrate on- and off-campus recruiting so that community college advisors increase their familiarity with all NIU programs.

- Track enrollment patterns, persistence, and graduation rates of all off-campus learners to ensure continuous improvement of services and student outcomes.
- Provide scholarships for part-time learners.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

- As part of the university mission, reinforce the need to serve students in the off-campus marketplace so that NIU remains competitive.
- Develop competitive, customer-oriented student services that cater to part-time students who cannot telephone between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., will not come to campus, and require advising as part of their decision-making process prior to admission.
- Streamline admission and registration processes for adult learners.
- Schedule off-campus courses to meet the documented needs and demands of part-time students.
- Price programs to meet or beat private school tuition and fee rates.
- Move to differentiated tuition for graduate courses and programs.
- Offer accelerated formats, alternative evening and weekend schedules, and online coursework.
- Convene all offices involved to plan for short-term and long-term expansion of enrollment by part-time students in regional markets.
- Streamline approval processes for new courses and programs.
- Maximize daytime use of the regional centers, perhaps by offering high-demand undergraduate courses on Fridays and Saturdays and in the summer.

#### BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

- Develop a new business model that rewards departments and programs for expanding off-campus offerings that respond to documented regional needs.
- Determine an appropriate rate of return from off-campus credit revenue to the central fund; devote residual revenue to development of new programs and online courses.
- Open an off-campus student support services office that is open from 4:30 to 10:00 p.m. with staff who are competent to advise students on admissions, registration, and academic programs.
- Increase technical support for online students to include a 24/7 helpdesk.

- Provide scholarships for part-time learners.

#### PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

- Outreach presentation to the Enrollment Management Committee, especially slides about competitors.
- The NIU Great Journeys Strategic Plan, Imperative #3, strengthen and expand NIU's regional and global impact.

#### GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- The Graduate School
- Academic Affairs
- Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies
- Finance and Facilities
- Student Services and Enrollment Management
- Colleges and Departments
- NIU Foundation

## ISSUE

Graduate student enrollment

## INDICATOR

Number of graduate students enrolled

## NIU'S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS

The number of graduate students enrolled at NIU has fallen from a high of 7,715 in 1980 to 5,694 in 2010. On-campus graduate student enrollment has decreased from 4,350 in 1980 to 3,917 in 2010 (10%). Off-campus graduate student enrollment has decreased from 3,365 in 1980 to 1,777 in 2010 (47%). The overall decline in graduate student enrollment is primarily the result of the university's inability to maintain its share of the market for professional programs aimed at working adults.

NIU's graduate enrollment decreased by almost 5% between 1995 and 2009. During that period, most competitor institutions saw enrollment increases: Illinois-Chicago (24%), DePaul (33%), National-Louis (39%), Roosevelt (43%), Dominican (110%), Benedictine (171%), Aurora (214%), Olivet Nazarene (264%), and Concordia (287%). Both Southern Illinois University and Eastern Illinois University offer programs in our region at tuition rates lower than NIU's.

## GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 6,000

5-YEAR TARGET: 6,350

BY 2020: 8,000 (4,000 off-campus and 4,000 on-campus students. Off-campus students will be part-time.)

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

- Maintenance of an appropriately sized graduate program is mission critical and is supported by the strategic plan.
- Graduate education and research is important to the economic development of the region.
- NIU graduates with advanced degrees contribute to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the region.
- Access to opportunities for continuing professional education is a critical component in recruiting businesses, industry, and service agencies to northern Illinois.

- Graduate students make important contributions to undergraduate education.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

- Rethink the off-campus pricing structure.
  - Consider a single graduate tuition rate for in- and out-of-state students such as that used for students at the Quad Cities Center.
  - Simplify student bills by rolling all fees into a single off-campus surcharge. Internal allocation of the surcharge revenue could parallel the current fee distribution.
- Streamline the admissions and registration processes for adult learners, both students-at-large who are not in degree programs and students who are enrolled in degree programs.
- Increase the number of online degree programs and post-baccalaureate certificates.
- Urge state policymakers to include the completion of endorsements, certifications, and certificates in any measure of institutional productivity.
- Capitalize on the increasing demand for health programs and for interdisciplinary programs that add management skills to an existing career track.
- Survey the marketplace regularly to determine current and emerging demand.
- Partner with professional and government organizations to recruit students for high-demand programs.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

- As part of the university mission, reinforce the need to serve students in the off-campus marketplace so that NIU remains competitive.
- Develop competitive, customer-oriented student services that cater to part-time students who cannot telephone between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., will not come to campus, and require advising as part of their decision-making process prior to admission.
- Schedule off-campus courses to meet documented needs and demands of part-time students, including shorter time to degree completion.
- Price programs to meet or beat private school tuition and fee rates.
- Differentiate graduate tuition rates by discipline.
- Simplify the process of offering non-transferable, non-degree credits

for workshop participants and lower the cost to include tuition only.

- Streamline the approval processes for new courses and programs.
- Convene all offices involved to plan for short-term and long-term expansion of enrollment by part-time graduate students in regional markets.

#### BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

- Determine an appropriate rate of return from off-campus credit revenue to the central fund; devote residual revenue to development of new programs and online courses.
- Reward departments and programs for expanding off-campus offerings with accelerated schedules, alternative evening and weekend schedules, and online formats.
- Implement a funding policy that rewards departments and colleges for programming that responds to regional needs.
- Hire additional faculty as enrollments expand.
- Establish an office for off-campus student support services open from 4:30 to 10 p.m. with staff competent to advise students on admissions, registration, and academic programs.
- Increase technical support for online students to include a 24/7 helpdesk.
- Redesign the waiver policies for graduate students so that attracting additional students will, in fact, increase revenue.

#### PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

The NIU Great Journeys Strategic Plan, Imperative #3, strengthen and expand NIU's regional and global impact.

#### GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- The Graduate School
- Student Services and Enrollment Management
- Academic Affairs
- Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies
- Finance and Facilities
- Colleges and Departments

## ISSUE

Online certificate and degree programs

## INDICATOR

Number of online certificate and degree programs that meet Higher Learning Commission (HLC) criteria

## NIU'S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS

NIU offers eight online degree programs, five of which meet the HLC definition of distance education programs, but have not yet been formally approved by the Commission.

Fourteen comparable institutions (Alabama; Central Florida; Florida Atlantic; George Mason; Houston; Kent State; Memphis; North Carolina, Greensboro; North Texas; Old Dominion; Portland State; San Diego State; Texas Tech; and Western Michigan) offer the following online opportunities:

- 103 certificate programs
- 75 bachelor's degree programs
- 160 master's degree programs
- 10 doctoral programs

## GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 3 to 5 additional online certificate and degree programs that meet HLC criteria

5-YEAR TARGET: 6 to 12 additional online certificate and degree programs

BY 2020: 12 to 25 additional online certificate and degree programs, for a total of 49 programs

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

- National surveys show that online students prefer to study at a nearby university and appreciate occasional face-to-face meetings; NIU is well-positioned to maximize online enrollments.
- NIU will be unable to attract the increasing number of part-time working adult students, both undergraduate and graduate, without a significant catalog of online learning opportunities.
- Online courses provide an option for traditional, on-campus students who are unable to enroll in required courses or prefer learning online. Without an NIU option, these NIU students take online courses from other institutions.

- NIU is losing market share of undergraduate and graduate students and revenues to institutions that offer online courses and degree programs.
- NIU is missing opportunities to market niche programs to out-of-state and international audiences.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

- Identify certificate and degree programs in greatest demand among part-time, off-campus students and produce them first because they offer the greatest opportunity for new revenue generation.
- Market online opportunities continuously and aggressively.
- Develop large-enrollment, general education courses, offer them frequently enough to meet demand, and provide adequate faculty and support staff to ensure high-quality instruction.
- Provide strong administrative and departmental leadership for a concerted effort to increase development and delivery of online courses.
- Improve administrative and instructional support for online students, including 24/7 technical support.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

- Establish an adequately funded infrastructure to create and support more online courses and programs.
- Streamline and increase flexibility in the curriculum approval processes, especially for interdisciplinary and multi-college courses, certificates, and degree programs.
- Make all online courses available to both on- and off-campus students.
- Address inequities in compensation across colleges and units for developing and teaching online courses.
- Develop a pricing model for online courses which will contribute to the necessary infrastructure.
- Implement organizational recommendations of the Distributed Learning Task Force.

#### BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Dedicate an adequate portion of increased revenues from the expansion of off-campus, part-time enrollment to fund development and delivery of online programming.

## PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

The Distributed Learning Task Force report will supply planning documents and more detailed recommendations.

## GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- Provost's Office
- Finance and Facilities
- Student Services and Enrollment Management
- Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies

## ISSUE

Engaged learning activities for NIU undergraduate and graduate students by capitalizing on regional opportunities. (Note that while there are many types of engaged learning activities, this recommendation focuses primarily on those that involve NIU students working with external constituencies in credit, non-credit, or volunteer and service activities.)

The Regional Impact, Outreach, Engagement, and Graduate Education Committee fully agrees with the recommendation of the Academic Programming Working Group on enhancing student exposure to NIU's baccalaureate student learning outcomes through academic enrichment programs.

We particularly note our concurrence on the following issues:

- The essential role that engaged learning plays in student learning outcomes, career preparation, and recruiting.
- Clarification and campus-wide understanding of the definition of engaged learning.
- Establishment of an engaged learning infrastructure, which the committee sees as part of the university's infrastructure for engagement of all kinds.
- Collection of baseline data on participation in engaged learning, co-curricular enrichment, service learning, etc.; establishment of a tracking system; and regular reporting.
- Additional staffing in the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning.
- Embedding of credit for engaged learning practices into processes for faculty promotion and tenure, and for other recognition and reward structures.

This committee would add two suggestions for how NIU meets the goals:

- The multiple networks accessible through Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies can be useful in identifying and supporting engaged learning opportunities throughout the region. Few non-urban institutions can match NIU's location for engaged learning opportunities, and OEIT's partnerships span the region.
- NIU's alumni network should be deployed to help provide engaged learning opportunities.

The committee would also add Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies to the list of groups charged with approving or implementing this goal.

## ISSUE

### Tracking engaged learning opportunities

NIU lacks a systemic approach for tracking and assessing the university's wide range of outreach and engagement initiatives, allowing these activities to go uncounted, unrewarded, and unnoticed. The ENGAGE! website is designed to correct this problem.

## INDICATOR

- Number of listings in ENGAGE!
- Number of visitors per month to ENGAGE!

## NIU'S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS

There are currently 261 listings in ENGAGE. The website has not gone live yet, so there have been no visitors.

Benchmark institutions are Ohio State University and the University of Minnesota. Ohio State lists nearly 500 partnerships, many with multiple projects, among more than 16,000 activities, some of them historical; University of Minnesota displays 4,033 current engagement activities.

## GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 2,500 listings in ENGAGE! and 500 visitors per month

5-YEAR TARGET: 7,500 listings in ENGAGE! and 1,000 visitors per month

BY 2020: 12,000 listings in ENGAGE! and 1,500 visitors per month

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

- Tracking and assessment are required to demonstrate the increased regional and global impact directed by the strategic plan.
- Tracking, assessment, and reporting can justify rewards for increasing outreach and engagement initiatives.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

- Promote ENGAGE! internally and externally and provide incentives for its use.
- Continue to increase the ENGAGE! website's usability and functionality.
- Provide departments with a template for annual collection of engagement activity information.

- Designate a leader and a team responsible for tracking, measuring, and reporting.
- Survey partners across the region on a regular basis to measure recognition of NIU's impact.
- Participate in developing and utilizing assessment tools created by national organizations.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

- Establish a system for tracking and measuring the quality of NIU's outreach and engagement initiatives.
- Integrate the engagement accountability system into existing record-keeping processes and reporting.
- Connect faculty record-keeping tools such as Digital Measures with ENGAGE! so that no duplication of effort is needed.

#### BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

- The upgrades to ENGAGE! suggested in these recommendations would cost an estimated \$2,000, plus around \$200 annually for maintenance and upgrades. Cost estimates for connecting ENGAGE! with Digital Measures are not available at this time.
- Add outreach/engagement expertise to the university's communications staff.

#### PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

The NIU Great Journeys Strategic Plan called for “a commitment to engagement and public purpose that simultaneously embraces local needs and global opportunities” and noted that the university would “realize the full benefits of its regional impact only if that impact is promoted widely and broadly understood.”

#### GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies, in collaboration with the Provost's Office, Sponsored Projects, University Relations, and the external programming offices in the colleges

## ISSUE

Regional and international outreach and engagement activities

## INDICATOR

Institutional actions in policy, planning, programming, evaluation, communication, and personnel

## NIU'S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS

Benchmark institutions, including Kent State, Toledo, and Ball State in the MAC, and national leaders Minnesota, North Carolina State, Michigan State, Purdue, and East Carolina, demonstrate the value of outreach and engagement activities in the following ways:

- **POLICY AND PLANNING:** recognizing engagement functions organizationally in planning documents that drive policy, programming and procedures. At Purdue, every college has an associate dean for engagement who promotes and coordinates engagement activities. At Minnesota, Michigan State, and many other institutions, strategic plans for engagement are prominently posted on websites and frequently quoted in relation to engagement activities.
- **PROGRAMMING:** the benchmark institutions implement and actively promote regional, national, and international engagement activities, funding them through institutional budgets, grants, contracts, and contributions from donors. NIU's promotion of engagement is improving, but still limited compared to benchmark institutions. Funding for engagement projects has depended heavily on grants, contracts and local fund revenues.
- **EVALUATION:** tracking, assessing, and publicizing outreach and engagement initiatives. The benchmark institutions have been actively involved with APLU in establishing tools for measuring engagement. They collect data on items such as those required for the Carnegie designations and the survey of external partners and constituents administered as part of NIU's Carnegie applications, and they report annual results on their websites. NIU has been involved in the development of assessment tools and will have an opportunity to adopt the APLU metrics for institution-wide use starting in FY 12.
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** The benchmark institutions include contact information on landing pages so that community members can locate resources and partners. These institutions "claim" engagement through frequent articles, publications, and events that highlight

engagement activities. Michigan State's *The Engaged Scholar* provides an example. NIU Today includes an Engagement tab, but reporting on this topic needs to be expanded.

- **RECOGNITION:** Benchmark institutions (e.g. Michigan State and Minnesota) recognize engagement functions in hiring criteria and tenure and promotion policies.

Illinois State, UIUC, UIC, Wisconsin, and Iowa emphasize outreach and engagement as much or more than does NIU, judging from information available on their websites. Some of these institutions have developed and implemented strategic plans for outreach and engagement, as have some of the MAC schools. Both MAC and Illinois schools that have received Carnegie recognition for Outreach and Partnerships and Curricular Engagement have compiled and tracked extensive data sets on engagement. Currently, NIU has neither developed a plan for expanding outreach and engagement nor does the university maintain the data sets collected for the Carnegie awards received in 2008 and 2010. NIU participated in developing the APLU metrics, but has not yet adopted the tools. At NIU, engagement is largely promoted and practiced by Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies, the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning in Academic Affairs, and the external programming offices in some of the colleges. A more visible university-wide commitment would expand opportunities for students and increase NIU's impact on the region.

## GOAL

Create incentives for, support, and promote engagement activities at regional, national, and international levels through an infrastructure dedicated to engagement.

**3-YEAR TARGET:** Expand the charge of the Outreach Advisory Committee to include an explicit focus on engagement.

**5-YEAR TARGET:** Establish visible leadership in each of the colleges with a designated responsibility for engagement activities.

**BY 2020:** Secure documentation of NIU's community engagement at regional and national levels to create constituent recognition.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

- Public higher education is under increased pressure to show return on the public's investment, build a public constituency, and improve engaged learning opportunities.
- Strengthening regional impact is encouraged by the strategic plan and is critical to NIU's mission.

- Without internal coordination, engagement activities tend to be fragmented, less effective, and sometimes work at cross purposes.
- Neither activities nor impacts can increase without an internal network of support for engagement.
- NIU needs to “claim” its engagement activities in order to promote the university’s reputation, reliability, and presence in addressing public needs; to recruit students; to motivate external funders; and to inspire new, mutually-beneficial partnerships.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

- Consider recommendations developed by Nancy Castle, Brian Hemphill, Anne Kaplan, and Gip Seaver, who are working on a Campus Compact and McCormick Foundation grant project to design institution-wide coordination of engaged learning and implement as feasible.
- Convene, connect, and support individuals, departments, centers, and other units across the university to foster collaborations for more and better outreach and engagement activities.
- Support university personnel in developing expertise in the engagement field.
- Report the university’s impact as part of institutional marketing and student recruitment.
- Use engaged research, engaged teaching, and engaged service as a centerpiece for the university’s marketing campaigns.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

- Hire/assign a major gift officer to outreach and engagement.
- Encourage recognition of engagement activities in tenure and promotion policies.

#### BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

- Budget a salary for a major gift officer who will support outreach and engagement.
- Provide support for one participant annually to attend the summer Engagement Academy at Virginia Tech (\$5,000 to \$6,000).

#### PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

The Campus Compact/McCormick Foundation project is charged with planning ways to enhance institution-wide collaboration for engagement. The project has not yet produced planning documents.

#### GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies, in collaboration with the Provost's Office and the Council of Deans

## ISSUE

Encouraging faculty involvement in outreach and engagement activities

## INDICATOR

Consideration of engaged research, engaged teaching, and engaged service in promotion and tenure processes and other faculty rewards

## NIU'S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS

Michigan State and Minnesota include engaged research, engaged teaching, and engaged service in promotion and tenure processes. They are considered to be leaders in the field of faculty incentives for engagement and outreach.

At NIU, engaged research, teaching, and service are not considered in many departments' promotion and tenure processes, and in many others are only of minimal importance. The recently established NIU Presidential Engagement Professorships is one attempt to recognize faculty involvement in these activities.

NIU's lack of progress is not dissimilar to competitors.

## GOAL

Raise the status and visibility of engaged research, engaged teaching, and engaged service.

**3-YEAR TARGET:** Working from an institution-wide definition of engagement (based on recommendations from the Kellogg reports and the Carnegie Foundation), every academic department or program will develop a discipline-specific definition and a list of appropriate outreach and engagement activities.

**5-YEAR TARGET:** Every academic department or program will include in its governance document, bylaws, or comparable document a statement about how engagement activities will be incorporated into the evaluations of faculty members for annual merit, tenure, and promotion.

**BY 2020:** Documentation of faculty outreach and engagement activities will show a significant increase over baseline data from 2012.

## JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

- Increasing regional and global impact, a strategic planning imperative, depends on faculty rewards for outreach and engagement activities.
- Visible recognition of this function could be a useful recruitment tool for faculty in some disciplines.
- Faculty and staff deserve credit for what they have done and are continuing to do without recognition.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

In his letter announcing NIU's recognition for Curricular Engagement, Anthony Bryk, president of the Carnegie Foundation, conveyed this useful advice: "We urge Community Engagement institutions to initiate study, dialogue, and reflection to promote and reward the scholarship of engagement more fully."

- Assert administrative and departmental leadership for "rewarding the scholarship of engagement more fully."
- Implement an internal information campaign to clarify and emphasize the value of "the scholarship of engagement."
- Incorporate the recently established "clinical faculty appointments" in any consideration of engaged teaching and service. The primary responsibility of these faculty members is the provision of community engagement through clinical service.

## ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

- Review university criteria for personnel decisions described in sections 5.2 and 5.3 of the Northern Illinois University Bylaws.
- Consider the introduction of a personnel evaluation model that recognizes differentiation of load assignment as it relates to interrelationship of teaching, scholarship, and service.

## BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable

## PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

The promotion of engaged learning is a central part of the NIU Great Journeys Strategic Plan.

## GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- Academic Affairs
- Deans and department chairs
- Department, college and University Council personnel committees