A G E N D A

NIU Board of Trustees
AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ENROLLMENT
9:00 a.m. – Thursday – April 14, 2016
Board of Trustees Room
Altgeld 315

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Verification of Quorum and Appropriate Notification of Public Meeting
3. Meeting Agenda Approval ................................................................. Action .......... i
4. Review and Approval of Minutes of February 4, 2016 ................................. Action ........... 1
5. Chair’s Comments/Announcements
6. Public Comment*
7. University Reports
   a. Enrollment Update ........................................................................... Information ...... 11
      1) Historical Trends and Comparisons
      2) Undergraduate Update
         • Recruitment and Retention
      3) Graduate Update
         • Recruitment and Retention
      4) Off-campus Update
         • Recruitment and Retention
   b. Brand Survey Update .................................................................... Information ...... 12
8. Other Matters
9. Next Meeting Date
10. Adjournment

*Individuals wishing to make an appearance before the Board should consult the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University, Article II, Section 4 – Appearances before the Board. Appearance request forms will be available in the Board Room the day of the meeting. For more information contact Kathleen Carey, (kjahns@niu.edu) Recording Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Altgeld Hall 300, DeKalb, IL 60115, 815-753-1273.

Anyone needing special accommodations to participate in the NIU Board of Trustees meetings should contact Ellen Andersen, Director of Special Events, at (815) 753-1999, as soon as possible.
1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 2 p.m. by Chair Strauss in the Board of Trustees Room, 315 Altgeld Hall. Recording Secretary Kathleen Carey conducted a roll call. Members present were Trustees Robert Marshall, John Butler, Tim Struthers, and Committee Chair Marc Strauss. Committee member Trustee Robert Boey was absent. Also present were General Counsel Jerry Blakemore, Board Liaison Mike Mann, President Doug Baker, Executive Vice President and Provost Lisa Freeman, Vice President Al Phillips, Deputy General Counsel Greg Brady, Vice President Eric Weldy, Asst. Vice President Dani Rollins, and UAC Representatives Greg Long and Holly Nicholson.

2. VERIFICATION OF QUORUM AND APPROPRIATE NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

General Counsel Blakemore indicated the appropriate notification of the meeting has been provided pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Mr. Blakemore also advised that a quorum was present.

3. APPROVAL OF PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

Chair Strauss asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Trustee Butler so moved and Trustee Struthers seconded. The motion was approved.

4. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 17, 2015

Chair Strauss asked for a motion to approve the minutes of December 17, 2015. Trustee Struthers so moved and Trustee Butler seconded. The motion passed.

5. CHAIR’S COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Strauss welcomed the representatives of the University Advisory Council. There were no additional comments.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

7. UNIVERSITY REPORTS

Agenda Item 7.a. Spring 2016 10th Day Enrollment

Vice President Weldy began by noting, I will start with information as it relates to spring enrollment numbers and the 10th day final numbers. I do have some talking points to share with you so it will be easier to follow as I go through and pull out some information, some interesting data and information, and then we’ll talk about recruitment efforts and update you on some programs. There are a few that I would like to update you on and then I will pass it on to Dani Rollins and she will speak more in depth on some of the undergraduate recruitment efforts that we have. What I’m passing around is some ten day counts and some talking points. I understand that you have up there a copy of the details of the enrollment, but I want to put things in perspective in regards to the spring semester. The second sheet that I’m passing around deals with specifically what our undergraduate enrollment has been during the...
spring semester over the past few years. As I noted, it's important that when you get these numbers you put them in perspective and as a comparison as it relates to last year. Total enrollment for spring 2016 is at 18,519 students. This is a decrease of 481 students, a 2.5% drop in comparison to spring 2015 when we had 19,000 students. As with the fall semester, this spring is the lowest decrease at NIU in the past five years. In regards to the undergraduate student total, we were down 245 students in comparison to spring of last year and this is a drop of 1.8 percentage points. This is the smallest decrease in the past five years. The hand out will give you some numbers to put in perspective in regards to our 245 student decrease in undergrad enrollment. Last year we lost 500 students in comparison to the spring before. Spring 2014 we were down 518 students in comparison to the spring before. If you go back to 2013 that number was 713 students and we lost less than 200 students in the spring semester in comparison to 2010 when we lost 187 students. I just want to show from the standpoint of where we have come from, how far we have come in just a short period of time in regards to the drop in enrollment we've been experiencing, particularly amongst our undergraduate enrollment.

Chair Strauss asked, how did we do from fall to spring? What was our retention rate?

Vice President Weldy responded, our retention rate for new freshman was 88.5% and last year the retention rate from fall to spring for our new freshman was 87% and so we had an increase of 1.5 percentage points. If you look at our retention from fall to spring for new transfers, last year it was 90%, this year it's 90% as well. But if you look at retention in other areas, we had some increases across the board. For example, if you look at our colleges we saw increases in student retention among our colleges. They either remain flat or equivalent to last year or they were up anywhere between one and three percent. I give you some numbers as it relates to my talking points. For example, in undergraduates, the College of Business had remained flat at 87%; College of Education increased 2% in regards to their fall to spring retention from 85% last year to 87% this year. College of Engineering and Engineering Technology remain flat at 86%. College of Health and Human Sciences remain flat as well at 84%. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which is our largest college, increased 1% from 82 to 83%. Finally the College of Visual and Performing Arts had the largest percentage increase at 3% from 87 to 90%. The good news is retention is improving. In past conversations that we’ve had, I noted that first and foremost from the standpoint of increasing enrollment, the first big step is improving retention of students that you do have and we have seen continual improvement over the past couple of years.

Vice President Weldy continued, next I’m going to identify some interesting points as it relates to increases in undergraduate student enrollment this spring particularly looking at our new transfer students. Total new undergraduate student enrollment for spring of 2016 totaled 790 students. This is an increase of 33 students or 4.4% compared to spring of 2015. In spring of 2015 we brought in 757 new students. Total new transfer student enrollment for spring 2016 totaled 531 students and I mention this because we had an increase of 28 new transfer students this spring which is an increase of 5.6% when compared to spring of 2015.

Trustee Marshall asked, what things may be coming off the assembly line to help us with retention, new initiatives, are there some that are being developed or just going in to action?

Vice President Weldy responded, we’re continually creating new initiatives from the standpoint of retention programs and then there are some that have continued on over the past few years, but is there anything specifically that you would like to hear about?

Trustee Marshall asked, anything that will bring the numbers up.

Provost Freeman responded, I can also add that we’re in a period of assessing the efficacy of a number of retention initiatives that were launched in the first few years of President Baker’s administration. As you may remember from the leadership retreat, all of the initiatives that we launched. We’re actually doing an assessment to see where the greatest return on investment was for the things that we tried so that we can continue to invest and support those initiatives and perhaps not invest in things that sounded like a good idea but didn’t really work. That work takes a little bit of time to do and those answers take a
little time to get, but that’s where we are and hopefully we’ll have a presentation of that work available to
the Board over the course of the next few months.

Chair Strauss added, I take it from the question that there’s interest in receiving that report. We would
like to become advised as to what is working and also, from Trustee Marshall’s question, what’s queued
up next.

Trustee Butler asked, do you have a sense of if there anything unusual happening with respect to new
transfer students that may have led to one, the retention of the numbers from last year, but also the
increase?

Vice President Weldy responded, our history shows that our transfer students do well overall but also I
think that there has been an increase as it relates to new transfer students because of the work
Admission is doing with our academic programs. President Baker and I we recently had a conversation in
regards to some of the things that were happening with our new freshmen and our enrollment and what
we did this past fall and what we would need to do from the standpoint of making up any differences. A
number of efforts that have focused in on our community colleges and how we can strengthen our
relationships and how we can better attract some of those community college students. I know that some
of our community college are very interested in us spending more time on their campus for recruiting and
we are exploring the possibility of setting up offices on those campuses as well. There are definitely
things that we are looking at to help boost numbers.

Ms. Rollins added, I would just say that the university marketing group has just finished a brand
perception study. In that study, it looks like we’re doing a better job of communicating with transfer
students as to what they can expect when they get here. I’m hoping that will increase both retention
and recruitment as well.

Chair Strauss noted, I know that these statistics haven’t been available for long and also that the
Admissions area aren’t primarily interested in the graduate numbers, but I’m wondering whether Provost
Freeman might be in a position to comment on whether there’s been any response yet or thoughts about
the percentages of the decline in the graduate and the law school.

Provost Freeman responded, for the Law School, I would need to talk to Dean Cordes and for the
graduate numbers, Dean Bond. I can tell you that I know that some of our more popular graduate
programs, and computer science comes to mind, had reached capacity where they couldn’t serve the
increased demand and provide the students with a reasonable experience so they actually deliberately to
limited admission while they hired more resources so that they could continue to grow. Without a
conversation with those Deans, I really can’t speak to it but I’ll provide that information to the trustees.

Chair Strauss responded, that would be good. I think that might be a good topic for the next time that
we get together. We’ve spent a lot of time talking about the undergraduate admissions and not as much
talking about the graduate admissions so it may be time to open that conversation.

Vice President Weldy continued, I was just going to say that as institutions begin to get their numbers for
the spring semester, I think there’s a lot of looking into the data as it relates to what happened between
fall and the spring semester. One of our competitors has recently put out information in regards to their
spring enrollment and they had a significant drop in not just their undergrad student enrollment but their
graduate student enrollment by 11% or 400 plus students from fall to spring. I think that there may be
some interesting things going on. Maybe it’s a result of the budget situation and the uncertainties that go
along with it, but it will be interesting to hear from some of the other institutions as they put out their
numbers for the spring.

Provost Freeman added, I would also just follow-up to say that in general, historically as the economy
gets better graduate enrollment goes down, and we might be seeing part of that phenomenon reflected
overall.
Chair Strauss noted, one other way to take a look at this data is to ask what’s happening off campus as opposed on campus as well. Is that anything on the undergraduate level that you’ve been able to give some thought to yet?

Vice President Weldy responded, no we have not.

Ms. Rollins added, with regard to on-line and off campus students specifically, there’s still some discussion around who’s taking the lead on those kinds of things and so we’re working with our partners on campus to streamline communications for those programs as well.

Chair Strauss noted, it may be an area of opportunity or there may be impediments, but I don’t think we’ve really focused on what’s happening with regard to the off campus situation either. That may also be a good topic for us to take a look at in the future.

Trustee Struthers responded, some general observations and comments. My first is, given the magnitude of the importance of enrollment, I was shocked to get 25 pages of minutes and one page of random, I don’t know if I want to call them random numbers, but some statistics on a page in table. My comparison of that in the private sector would not even be close. I think the reality, this is the biggest thing there is that we have going, the most important thing at the university, and there’s only one page which was stunning to me. Other observations that I hope you can take constructively, one, I think putting data on graphs instead of tables is far more insightful and meaningful. It provides trends and clear pictures of activity over time. I think the other really important piece of that is that you drive the key measures that are important. Chair Strauss asking about off campus and on campus and graduate and law school. We’ve got random information, the Business School did this and Liberal Arts did this, whatever, you all pick the five, ten, fifteen key measures, historical charts, and then most importantly a standard of where you want to get to based on the strategies that you’re deploying, and probably more specifically the immediate next term target. When I look at this we’re all happy that our enrollment decline was less than it was in the prior periods. Did that exceed your targets or did it match your targets? It’s not relative therefore it reduces the relevance of it. Pure data would also be very, very important. Randomly to speak of one college that lost 11% and this one you heard did this or that. For you to choose the most viable peer data to compare to that’s within the State of Illinois that may have challenges or maybe somebody outside the state, it seems again the vigor and the urgency that I would expect to have this data managed. I would appreciate very much if I got information on this weekly. Here’s the 15 charts. Here’s the trends. Here’s the target. For example, new applications for fall, obviously it’s something you look at all the time, but I would surely want to see what that data looked like last fall, the fall before, the fall before that and where did you expect it to be and why did we fall short or why did we exceed? Are the strategies working? Even to pare that down more would be subset, sub strategies of some key techniques or strategies that you were deploying and were they working so that the inputs end the outputs to some degree. Just a lot more bulk and not just random bullet points of things, because when I walk out of here, I don’t feel a whole lot better about really what’s going on and what’s working and where our energy has been focused at, where the investments are and that sort of thing, than I did prior. I’m very, very, very interested in this. I don’t know if I speak for anyone else about the robustness of the data and the strategies. Again, I am willing to help in any way that I can.

Vice President Weldy responded, to address some of your initial questions, I take full responsibility from the standpoint of there being one particular document available to all of you beforehand and I’m still reviewing the data and information and making additional requests to institutional research because there is a lot more I think to be had in regards to the information and the data. I do apologize for not getting additional information to you. I’m definitely happy to meet with you several weeks before the next scheduled Ad Hoc on Enrollment meeting to sit down and discuss the upcoming agenda items and specifically those things that you are most interested in hearing about. We can work out the details as I think it would be helpful for me to hear from you directly.

Trustee Struthers added, I think just as importantly though is I’m interested in what you’re interested in. What you think are the key measures and the key movers, and, are they working to the expectations that
you and Dani and the President see. I would much rather have you provide that data and say Trustees this is what we think are important. These are the needle movers and here's how we're doing relative to our expectations. That's what I want to see.

Vice President Weldy responded, I definitely would be happy to have those conversations with you and share that data with you. You're right, on a weekly basis we do look at a lot of information and track, from the standpoint of applications, enrollment numbers and confirmations. I've also worked with a President Baker as well from the standpoint I know that there's a certain kind of dashboard metrics that the Board is interested in, and so I have had a chance to look through and identify those key measures that are important to me and I think that you will find just as interesting.

Chair Strauss added, those are good comments Trustee Struthers. We traditionally do have a meeting to talk about the agenda several weeks in advance. It would be better if we were able to receive the material ahead of the meeting so that we have a chance to study it before hand and we could have more meaningful conversation. One of the things that we have talked about on prior occasions is the construction of a relevant set of metric that we would be able to follow. My recollection of those prior conversations in the context of this committee structure is that we didn't have clear direction as to which metrics people wanted to take a look at. I think it might be fruitful for us to have some additional conversation about that today so that we might be in a position to be able to provide some clearer direction to people. It would be an indication as to what we're interested in seeing. With regard to the larger scale of items that we want to follow, there are ongoing conversations regarding the overall set of metrics that include items other than admissions data that we would take a look at. We'll continue to have those conversations too, but maybe we could have a little bit of conversation about anything that people want as a data series, how often, but also giving due consideration to some information that would rightfully be regarded as proprietary during the process.

Trustee Marshall asked if there could be an emphasis on those students who would come to us via the community colleges. I have quite an interest there in seeing that we get more of the market share.

President Baker responded, some of the baseline measures that enrollment offices often used are applicants admitted and enrolled, and then underneath that you can look at process measures like time to respond, which is an important one because if you stretch it out for days or weeks then you often have a lower yield rate. We can break that down, Trustee Marshall, by whether they're a transfer student from a community college, or first time freshman, or graduate school. If you really wanted to go granular you could go into the number of visits, the number of communications we have from students out of the CRM, we could go into the number of visits that our advisors and recruiters have in various locations. That's getting pretty molar but you can look at those kinds of process issues too.

Trustee Struthers noted, that would be the place to start; the end measure of success is qualified enrollment, and from there it would be possibly retention rates and new students. Then there would be applicants accepted and enrolled and where are those measures trending. This would direct the strategies of your efforts as to whether you’re going after the community college transfers or the online students or graduate students or law school students, whatever is most relevant. Again if we get too many things on the page we might as well not have any because we’re not focused, but ultimately the numbers that drive to the very top goal, it’s very systematic, the old DuPont formula, you continue to break it down multiple ways and you probably only get to about six or eight or ten numbers that are key that will drive. I would think a very systematic line of thinking with trends and targets would tell you, of course, and would very much tell us if those strategies are working.

Chair Strauss added, I want to make a suggestion here because I think this conversation indicates the direction that we’d like to go in. There are some things to consider aside from information that should understandably remain confidential, and the fact that some of these statistics don’t change even as frequently as we meet and we only meet quarterly. I don’t want to create new data sets that are only available and useful for us. I think that what we have in mind is finding that set of information which is useful to the conduct of your work but also accessible to us so that we can follow along with what's
that interest and that we are definitely attracting that top tier student.

We’ve had updates in regards to the Angel Touch Grant Program. This is a program that we worked with the NIU Foundation to support current NIU students who are in good academic standing, but financially struggling to continue their education at NIU. I just wanted to share some numbers about this. Initially we called it the first initial fall cohort group of students that were supported through this program. We had 83 students that were identified who needed some form of financial assistance in order to return to NIU for this fall. Two of those students graduated this December out of the 83. 41 of those students were able to register for this spring semester without any additional financial help or support. The money that they received through this grant was able to allow them to continue their education and get on good footing. We had 18 students who had successfully completed at least 12 hours during the fall semester with a 2.0 term and cumulative GPA or higher, but still needed financial assistance for the spring semester and the Foundation was able to support those 18 students to help them continue on with their education. We had 16 students who did not successfully complete 12 hours during the fall semester for some reason. They did not do well academically for that semester or as well as they would have liked but they were able to continue on with their education here. Finally, there were just six students who did not successfully complete 12 hours with a 2.0 and so they did not enroll for the spring. Out of the 83 student who were supported through this program, there were 6 students who were not able to continue on with their education. In looking, this is a 93% success rate for this program. I think that it shows that this is something that is needed and I understand that the possibility of continuing on. I believe that the Foundation will continue on with this particular cohort group to make sure these students finish up here at NIU. But I think it’s a wonderful example of the importance of identifying donors to increase our scholarship support for our students.

Chair Strauss asked, what was the total that the Foundation invested in this?

Vice President Weldy responded, I don’t have that number with me, but I can definitely get that number for you.

Trustee Butler noted, if I could just point out before we move on to something else, this is precisely the linkage that I’m looking for between programming and results. It’s entirely possible that we could find out that there was some other factor that really kept them here. There could be some other factor, but I still think we can claim success between the programming and the result. We can at least say that it had some significant contribution here because minus this financial support I think the reasoning is the student would not have stayed.

Vice President Weldy continued, lastly I just want to say that the President had created an institutional financial aid task force to look at overall how we distribute our scholarship, grant funds, and other funding to students and so they continue their work. At this point, the task force has identified five focus areas and they’ve divided their work into two different phases. The first phase which entails three of the focus areas is to prioritize funding resources as well as budget processes and strategic planning to leverage operation improvements for FY18. In phase two, they will prioritize technology and assessment to continue improvements from phase one and ensure sustainability. The big thing is from the standpoint of establishing a system in which we’re able to distribute our funds in the best way possible and utilizing our funds. One of the things that I’m excited about is that you have different areas throughout the university that are serving on this task force, and I’m very excited and looking forward to seeing the final results of the work that they come up with, because I think this will be very essential as we talk about some of the programs like Angel Touch and some of these other programs that help support our students. I think this will be a major focus, to track how we’re able to impact students and show those results.

President Baker added, I had a situation report from the committee yesterday. They’re making good progress. Of course I wanted them to go faster, but they’re making good progress. Part way through the meeting, I asked the co-chairs Anne Hardy and Rebecca Babel what were the big ah-ha’s, epiphanies, surprising things coming together in this. They seem to agree it was the cultural transformation they
happening. If we can get some recommendations as to what those might consist of, that’s something that might be good for me to have a discussion with whoever is appropriate offline and then, to the extent necessary, I can circulate that through meetings to our committee members and maybe we can come up with something that’s both workable and useful. This would allow us to be partners with you in figuring out what would work and to let you know of our interest and support. I think that might be a good way for us to proceed.

Trustee Butler added, I’m looking for more links between strategy and results as you interpret and, without giving away shop secrets, there are some things that we have done such as 2+2 programs and the establishment of means of transferring associates of applied science into some sort of a program. I’m interested if we can connect reasonably those strategies with any evidence that those are contributing to positive numbers. Positive numbers, in my view, are numbers that are not just showing an increase but numbers that would otherwise perhaps not be experienced were it not for those strategies. There’s some reason to argue that the strategies have contributed to the positive number. Again, I also don’t want to ask you to create new things just for me, but I do think at some point one of the roles of the Board, and this committee particularly, is to ask these questions as to whether or not these strategies are linking to positive results and any way that you can provide us that information would be useful even if your answer is no, the strategies aren’t leading to the positive numbers, but we now know that and we’re now thinking differently about this particular problem.

Vice President Weldy responded, I would love to have those conversations particularly not during Ad Hoc Enrollment meeting, and that’s from the standpoint of not wanting to give away the farm as it relates to our competitors. There are definitely certain strategies in which we’re tracking the results of those that we’ll be happy to share and address any questions that you have.

President Baker added, as we have that discussion we need to be honest about how clear a line you can draw from X to Y. We’ve done a lot of stuff all at the same time. It’s not a very pure experiment. You’d want to move one variable and see if the deep ended variable moved. We changed our allocation of financial aid, how we do that. We increased the number of recruiters. We changed the CRM. We shortened the turnaround time from the time we got an applicant to the time they heard from us to a day or less. We’re doing more phone calling. We’re targeting scholarships for particular students that we didn’t do before. Then when we say did that scholarship make a difference, probably but it’s blurred by a bunch of this other stuff so we can give you qualitative examples on where it worked and cases and stuff but we have to be just a little bit hesitant about over interpreting all those pieces.

Trustee Struthers noted, I understood that the recruitment office was a bit in disarray in years prior so my comment to the Board was were you all aware of this. I need to be provided enough data to give me confidence and assurance that we’ve got all the arrows pointed in the right direction and that I can defend that. I’d love to see that on a chart. That would be meaningful to me and would say we’re putting real resources and marketing dollars to project X, Y, or Z. If we go in too many directions, you lose it, but enough to give us assurance and confidence that good work is going on here.

Agenda Item 7.b. Update on Fall 2016 Recruitment Initiatives

Vice President Weldy began, I want to share a few highlights, programs that we have going on. A couple of weeks ago, actually as recently January 30th, we held our interviews for our presidential scholarship, which is our highest scholarship, our top scholarship. We interviewed 27 perspective students who qualified for the on-campus interviews. They were interviewed by faculty and current presidential scholars here on campus. We were very pleased. Last year we had a 77% yield of offers to these enrolled presidential scholars which was 27% higher than anticipated, and this year we expect the same thing. We have ten slots for our presidential scholars and, for the first time, more than ten students said they wanted to come to NIU. The change that we did was basically the interviews and inviting them on campus and giving them an opportunity to interact with faculty and other current students. I think that that really heightened the interest and really helped increase our yield rates with that group. We hope to enroll ten students for fall 2016 if not more. I just wanted to share a bit of that from the standpoint of
were observing. That in the past there were pockets – this is my money to give out, this is my scholarship money or my waiver and I’m not talking to you - to now people clamoring to be on the committee and wanting to figure out how to leverage the dollars more effectively. I appreciate their leadership. I think they’ve helped facilitate that cultural transformation and the fact that this committee’s reaching out to people is helping with that so kudos to them.

**Agenda Item 7.c. New/ Special Projects**

Ms. Rollins began, I’m just going to give some highlights of what we’ve been up to essentially since our last meeting in December. We had an admitted student day on January 30th and out of 254 registered students, we had 217 that attended. So that’s about an 85% show rate, which is up 3% from last year. We increased some calls and e-mails and, so again, we think that because we did more with calls and e-mails that more people showed up. As of today, 61% of those students that attended have confirmed, and on the day, we received about 20 new confirmations as well. We have also added several call-a-thons. These call-a-thons are open to everyone on campus, essentially we’ll give them a script and a calling list and they can either come over to the Office of Admission after hours or they can call from their own offices and we’ll set them up with all the access that they need in the CRM; and we’re focusing on admitted student calls so that we can get our confirmation numbers up. In the past we would do two of these a semester and now we’re doing three. We just finished one up between January 25th and 28th. We’ll have another one February 7th through the 12th, and then, the last one will be March 21st through the 24th. We have some upcoming admissions information sessions and new recruitment events that we’ve added. Naperville is set up for March. Rockford is also going to be in March. Heartland Community College has reached out to us and they will allow us to use some space for free so we’re going to do an information session for their students as well and for anyone in that region that wants to attend. That’s going to be in mid-April. We’re setting one up at Hoffman Estates for April 26th and then we have a couple of events scheduled at public libraries in Chicago. We like the library format because it’s a little more accessible to the public. It’s on bus lines and those sorts of things and the library will also give us the space for free. We utilize Sulzer Library and Toman for those as well. In terms of new projects, I wanted to give you guys some handouts here. These are new student postcards. This is a brand new initiative. In the past if we have a student that would apply and maybe didn’t send us a test score or a transcript or their application fee, we would just send a series of emails. Really it was sort of the same e-mail over and over and over again. We were nagging them and not even nagging them in an incredibly sophisticated way, but we were just sending the same thing over and over again, complete your application, complete your application. Now we formulated these postcards. These will go out to incomplete applicants twice a month and then we’ll also send the e-mails twice a month as well with similar imaging, so again, they make that connection and that branding is there as well. This is a new initiative.

President Baker asked, can you say why a postcard?

Ms. Rollins responded, in the past, one of the other things that we would do would be a letter once in a while. But if you get a letter in the mail, it might sit on the counter, someone has to open it. A 17 or 18 year old student is probably not going to open a letter, but their mom might see the postcard with, hey you’re missing something, someone has to open this. It’s also much more cost effective as well. Even for non-traditional students, they need to know what they need to know, when they need to know it, and so these small information pieces are going to serve us better than letters - that’s why a postcard.

Trustee Struthers added, I think that’s great. I also applaud you for keeping the same graphic in the email as well and the language is clever.

Ms. Rollins continued, University Marketing has been really helpful in working with us. I think I shared in the last meeting that I just hired an Associate Director for Strategic Communications. She just started December 1st and so she and University Marketing have been meeting on a regular basis really to get everybody on the same page. We’ve also been doing a lot of meetings with our departments and our colleges on campus to discuss what we’re trying to get at here in terms of centralizing communications,
making sure they all look the same, have the same voice, and really just sort of educating people on the importance of that because it sounds like a really small thing, but it makes a difference in the long run. The second new initiative is our NIU alumni volunteer recruiter manual. We’re working with Alumni Relations to essentially come up with a roster of interested alumni who would be willing to be called if we can’t make an event in their area. So let’s say that we have a high school appearance or we have a community college visit or a college fair at night that we just can’t make because of staffing limitations. We have about six alumni who have expressed an interest so far and we’re working with the Alumni Foundation to get e-mails out to alumni to see if they’re interested. The idea eventually is to do something along the lines of promotional materials and samples of different things. We’re trying to put that sort of concept together as you tell us that you’re interested in recruiting on our behalf, and we’ll send you a little box with a table blanket and one of these volunteer recruiter manuals and maybe a little thank you gift as well along with inquiry cards that they can then send back to us. So we’re trying to build up to something as we build that roster as well. The last thing, I would just update you on something new since December. We have made progress in our high school counselor appreciate day that’s going to be happening on March 4th. As of right now we’ve had 32 RSVP’s and many of them are also planning to attend the basketball game as well. This is possible because of a grant from the Alumni Foundation. We received a grant of about $20,000 to put on a big appreciation day for all high school counselors. We sent out invitations and save the dates to about 1000 high school counselors and we’ve had 32 RSVP’s so far and that just went out this week so we’re expecting that to grow as well.

Trustee Struthers asked about the 2016 fall enrollment data.

Vice President Weldy responded, I would prefer to schedule a meeting afterwards for us to talk about fall 2016.

Trustee Struthers asked, at some point in time could have an executive session for a very honest, candid conversation about enrollments as a group?

Chair Strauss responded, I’m not aware of how we could do that in an executive session, but I would encourage you to the extend that you have interest in exploring that information to make contact through President Baker.

8. OTHER MATTERS

No other matters were discussed.

9. NEXT MEETING DATE

Chair Strauss added, I hope that we can work on establishing the next date for this committee to meet. We’ll try and use the same protocol that we have in past where between Mike Mann and the President, we can determine availability of the assets that we require from the university and then reach out to see which of the possible dates will work for the committee members. My interest is in keeping us on a frequent schedule for these meetings. I think there still remains considerable interest among the trustees to see that we’re dealing with these matters in an appropriate manner and so we have some items that surfaced today that hopefully we can get on the agenda next time and some other things that will probably will come around and be appropriate that we’ve dealt with in the past.

Provost Freeman noted, Trustee Strauss, just based on our previous conversation in this session, am I correctly inferring that you might want a report on graduate admissions at the next committee meeting? I’m asking so that we can make sure that Dean Bond is available.

Chair Strauss responded, yes, I think that would certainly be a possibility depending on what else we had already for the agenda, but that’s something that we really haven’t focused on at all yet. I think it would be appropriate for us to do that sometime soon. The other topics that were mentioned today were trying
to get some information on what has worked among the programs that have been discussed with us, whatever linkage data we have available, some information regarding what’s happening with the off campus as opposed to on campus, and some continuation of our conversation or a revelation of the results of a discussion concerning appropriate metrics.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Strauss asked for a motion to adjourn. Trustee Struthers so moved and Trustee Butler seconded. The motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Carey
Recording Secretary

In compliance with Illinois Open Meetings Act 5 ILCS 120/1, et seq, a verbatim record of all Northern Illinois University Board of Trustees meetings is maintained by the Board Recording Secretary and is available for review upon request. The minutes contained herein represent a true and accurate summary of the Board proceedings.
ENROLLMENT UPDATE

Background:
This item will provide the Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment with information related to historical enrollment trends and comparisons, undergraduate recruitment and retention, graduate recruitment and retention, and off-campus recruitment and retention.

Vice President Eric Weldy will provide an overview of some historical trends and comparisons related to enrollment. The information provided demonstrates the context and challenges NIU faces in the current recruitment market and the impact on the University and other 4-year State public institutions. The data include an emphasis on new freshmen and new transfer student enrollment, including application yield rates. Additional information shows progress in improving student retention rates, and also reveals the hard work that lies ahead for the University to continue making improvements in order to be competitive. Both retention and graduation rate comparisons among all 4-year public universities are provided.

Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and Director of Admissions, Dani Rollins, will provide an overview of the recruitment and enrollment responsibilities of Undergraduate Admissions, as well as the fall 2015 snapshot of enrollment type (undergraduate domestic; on-campus, non-CHANCE; undergraduate international; CHANCE; and off-campus). In addition, Dr. Rollins will highlight a number of recruitment successes so far, including decreased application processing time, standardized transfer admission process, conducted call-a-thons for prospective students, added application workshops to on-campus recruitment events, held a high school counselor appreciation day, expanded master inquiry form, and centralized communication to prospective students with a variety of offices across campus.

Vice Provost Anne Birberick will provide information on undergraduate retention. This segment of the presentation will focus on several key retention strategies and tools in use that correlate to improved student persistence and success. Since year one is especially important in terms of retention, discussion of Map Works, UNIV 101/201, and Early Alert are highlighted. Ongoing strategies, such as 4-year degree paths, high impact practices (HIPs), and Student Success Collaborative, are also discussed. Retention has been trending upward these past three years.

Dean of the Graduate School Brad Bond will provide an overview of the graduate education at NIU. Graduate education at Northern Illinois University supports the university’s undergraduate teaching and sustains its research mission. As a measure of the significance of graduate education at NIU, graduate students account for one-quarter of enrollment. Graduate programs differ from undergraduate programs in their purpose and structure. Because of the intense collaboration with faculty required by graduate education, recruitment and admission of students is a distinctively shared responsibility between the Graduate School and departments. An overview of ongoing efforts to reimagine graduate recruitment will be made. Graduate retention is high, and time to degree reflects national benchmarks.

Vice President Anne Kaplan will give a brief report on key trends in the off-campus and online environment. Included in the report will be a longitudinal view of the number of off-campus courses and total enrollment, the unique number of off-campus students, off-campus on-line credit enrollments (number of courses and total enrollment), and the unique number of off-campus students with online and online with face-to-face modes.
Historical Data Trends

Eric A. Weldy, Ed.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
Illinois Public Four-Year Universities

Percent Change in Total Enrollment
(Fall 2011 – Fall 2015)

April 14, 2016

CSU  EIU  NEIU  NIU  SIUC  WIU  ISU  SIUE  UIUC  UIC

Series1  -30.7%  -23.8%  -14.6%  -12.4%  -12.7%  -11.6%  -2.4%  0.2%  3.2%  3.4%

Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Ratio of Enrolled to Applied Freshmen (Fall 1983 – Fall 2015)

April 14, 2016

Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Ratio New Freshmen Enrolled to Accepted (Fall 1983 – Fall 2015)

April 14, 2016

Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Ratio New Transfers Enrolled to Applied (Fall 1983 – Fall 2015)

25.00% 30.00% 35.00% 40.00% 45.00% 50.00%

Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Ratio New Transfers Enrolled to Accepted (Fall 1983 – Fall 2015)

April 14, 2016

Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Retention Rates of New Freshmen Cohorts (Percentage)

Retention Rates (Percent)

Starting Fall Term Year

- 1 Year
- 2 Years
- 3 Years

Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Illinois Public University 1-Year Retention Rate

- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Illinois State University
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Illinois at Springfield
- Eastern Illinois University
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
- Western Illinois University
- Northern Illinois University
- Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- Northeastern Illinois University
- Chicago State University

Retention Rate:

- 0.0%
- 10.0%
- 20.0%
- 30.0%
- 40.0%
- 50.0%
- 60.0%
- 70.0%
- 80.0%
- 90.0%
- 100.0%

April 14, 2016
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Undergraduate Recruitment Update

Dani Rollins, Ed.D.
Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management and Director of Admissions
Recruiting and enrollment responsibilities

- Domestic
  - Freshmen
  - Freshmen plus
  - Transfers
  - Reentering
  - Visiting
  - Post-baccalaureate

Application coordination and reporting/technical assistance for all undergraduate populations, including CHANCE, international, online and off-campus
Fall 2015 Enrolled Undergraduate Students

Approximate percentage by type

- Undergraduate Domestic, on-campus, non-CHANCE: 86%
- Undergraduate International: 10%
- CHANCE: 1%
- Off-campus: 3%
Undergraduate Admissions:
Recruitment successes so far

- Hired 7 more processors (total of 9)
  - Processing time went from 4-6 weeks to 1-2 days

- Standardized the transfer admission process
  - 40 additional transfer students admitted since standardization went into effect
    - 17 of those have already confirmed

- 3 spring call-a-thons (one coming up)
  - 2,648 calls
  - Made contact with 2,593 individuals
  - Generated 308 confirmations
**Application workshops added to on-campus recruitment events for 2015-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-Campus Recruitment Event</th>
<th>Open Houses</th>
<th>Admitted Student Days</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendees (2016 prospects and/or applicants)</td>
<td>2,089</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Prior</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Same Day</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied After</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Eligible Attendees Applied On/After Event</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Prior</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed Same Day</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed After</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High school Counselor Appreciation Day (March 4)

- GOAL: To renew relationships with influential HS counselors
- 34 counselors and guests
- Pre- and post survey addressing:
  - Affordability
  - Perceived safety
  - Quality of education
  - Overall impression of NIU
  - Professional development sessions
  - 94% response rate (32)
Undergraduate Admissions:
Recruitment successes so far

Pre and Post Counselor Impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in Support</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Will Graduate Successfully</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>4.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIU IS Affordable</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIU's Campus Is Safe</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Education</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable Sending Students</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Impression of NIU</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared for FAFSA Changes</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared for Transition To SAT</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

April 14, 2016
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Undergraduate Admissions: Additional improvement projects

Expanded Master Inquiry Form
- Collecting more meaningful student data earlier
- Working in the field of study
- Interest in online courses
- First generation
- Interest areas:
  - Honors, LGBTQ Resources, Greek life, Living Learning Communities, etc.

New data can
- drive reports, communications, and formal definitions that will increase accuracy in reporting and tracking throughout the recruitment cycle

Centralized Communication
to prospective students through the Office of UG Admissions and University Marketing:
- Academic Colleges
- Diversity/Cultural Centers
- Orientation & Family Connections
- Financial Aid & Scholarships
- First- and Second-Year Experience
- Testing Services
- OneCard Office
- Parking Services
Undergraduate Retention Update

Anne L. Birberick, Ph.D.
Vice Provost, Division of Academic Affairs
Retention Rates of New Freshmen Cohorts (Percentage)

Retention Rates (Percent)

Starting Fall Term Year

1 Year
2 Years
3 Years

April 14, 2016
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Percent of NIU Students Leaving NIU by semester

- Attrition is Highest During the First Year
- 4 Year Graduation is Critical

April 14, 2016
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Attrition of Transfer v. Native Students

April 14, 2016
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Retention Strategies

Focus on Year One

- Map Works
  - Higher Fall to Spring Retention
  - Higher Fall to Fall Retention
  - Higher GPA
  - Targeted Student Support Referrals

- UNIV 101 / UNIV 201
  - Higher Fall to Fall Retention

- E.A.R.S. (Early Alert Referral System)
Retention Strategies

Year One to Graduation

- 4-Year Degree Paths
- Student Success Collaborative
  - Addition Student Success Advisor
  - Targeted Outreach Campaigns in Colleges
- Non-Enrollment Campaign
- High Impact Practices (HIPs)
High Impact Practices (HIPs)*

- UG Research
- Global Learning
- Service / Community Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone projects
- First Year Seminars
- Learning Communities
- Writing Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Learning
- Common Intellectual Experiences

*Association of American Colleges and Universities
HIPs Related to Reduced Attrition

April 14, 2016
Ad Hoc Committee on Enrollment
Graduate
Recruitment & Retention Update

Brad Bond, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School
Graduate Students

- 25% NIU enrollment
- 80% of graduate students are master’s-level
- 18% of graduate students are international

Retention

- 90% two-year retention rate
- Ph.D. and Ed.D. retention to degree rates are lower
- Career and professional development
Role of Grad School

- Prospect development
  - name buys
  - social media mining
  - support department efforts
- Pipeline communication

Rebalancing Recruitment

- More high tech
- 75% of applicants reside in Illinois
- 60% of applicants graduated more than one year prior to applying
Enrollment Update

Off-campus Recruitment & Retention Update

Anne Kaplan, Ph. D.
Vice President for Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development

April 14, 2016
## Off-campus Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Count of Courses</th>
<th>Sum of Enrollments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2012</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>12,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2013</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>12,450</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY2014</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>12,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2015</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>12,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2016</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>13,079</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiscal Year</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2012</td>
<td>5380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2013</td>
<td>5139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2014</td>
<td>5307</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FY2015</td>
<td>5291</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2016</td>
<td>5543</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unique Number
## Off-Campus Online Credit Enrollments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Count of Courses</th>
<th>Sum of Enrollments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2012</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>4623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2013</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>5180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2014</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>5470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2015</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>5907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2016</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>6484</td>
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</table>
## Unique Off-Campus Students with Online & Online with Face-to-Face Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY2012</td>
<td>2725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2013</td>
<td>2791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2014</td>
<td>3051</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY2015</td>
<td>3196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2016</td>
<td>3620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table B-1
Northern Illinois University
Undergraduate Enrollment by Racial/Ethnic
Fall 2010 - Fall 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Non-Res Alien</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Amer. Indian /Alaskan</th>
<th>Asian Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian /Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 Number</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1,627</td>
<td>11,638</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>17,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Number</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>828</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1,847</td>
<td>10,997</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>17,306</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Number</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>2,696</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,933</td>
<td>10,139</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>16,552</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Number</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2,640</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2,052</td>
<td>9,352</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>15,814</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Number</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,223</td>
<td>8,965</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>15,435</td>
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<td>16.5%</td>
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<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*IPEDS change in 2010 Hispanic definition: persons who are Hispanic should be reported only on the Hispanic line, not under any other race, and persons who are non-Hispanic multi-racial should be reported only under "Two or more races."
### Table B-2
Northern Illinois University
Graduate Enrollment by Racial/Ethnic
Fall 2010 - 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Non-Res Alien</th>
<th>Black Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Amer. Indian /Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian /Pacific Islander</th>
<th>White Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010 Number</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>3,985</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Number</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>3,791</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 Number</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>3,508</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 Number</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>3,377</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 Number</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>3,162</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Respondent</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*IPEDS change in 2010 Hispanic definition: persons who are Hispanic should be reported only on the Hispanic line, not under any other race, and persons who are non-Hispanic multi-racial should be reported only under "Two or more races."
Undergraduate Student Admit Type Definitions

**Freshman**
Still enrolled in high school with no college work completed or in progress or graduated from high school with no college work completed or in progress since leaving high school.

**Freshman Plus**
Still enrolled in high school with any number of hours completed or in progress while still enrolled in high school or graduated from high school with 12 or fewer hours completed or in progress since graduation from high school.

**Transfer**
Graduated from high school with 13 or more hours completed or in progress after graduation from high school.

**Post-baccalaureate**
Holds a baccalaureate degree (Bachelor degree)

**Visiting Student**
Non-degree seeking student seeking to enroll at NIU for one semester only. Cannot have been previously denied admission to NIU & cannot have previously enrolled at NIU as a degree seeking student.

**Visiting High School Student**
Non-degree seeking student who is still enrolled in high school who wishes to enroll at NIU for one semester.

**Reentering Student**
Student who previously enrolled at NIU as an undergraduate student and who did not complete their degree. Student may have left in good academic standing.
Freshman Admissions Process
February 2016

Note: All decisions for applicants on this side of the line are rendered OUTSIDE of admissions

Application

Is this an International Student?

High School Transcripts
ACT or SAT Scores
Miscellaneous Documents

Complete Application

Is the student admissible?

YES
Admit

NO

Is the student an Athlete or other special talent?

YES
Send for Sponsorship Review by College

NO

Is student CHANCE eligible?

YES
Send for CHANCE Review

NO

Did student indicate future ACT and/or would they benefit from sending 7th semester or both?

YES
Hold for ACT, 7th semester or both

NO

Is the student a good candidate for college review?

YES
Solicit Personal Statement & Send for College Review

NO
DENY
What is Mapworks?

Mapworks® is a holistic approach to student success and retention, providing a platform of information that faculty and staff use to identify at-risk students early in the term. It also allows faculty and staff the ability to coordinate interventions with at-risk students by providing the power of real-time analytics, strategic communications, and differentiated user interfacing, with integrated statistical testing and outcomes reporting.

The Mapworks process includes combining data from the institution with information from the students. Using that information, Mapworks uses real-time analytics to provide information directly to the students as well as to the faculty and staff working with the students.

2015-2016

How well did the risk indicator work for Fall 2015 – Spring 2016?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mapworks Risk Indicator</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Mean GPA</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>96% (1452)</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>41.18% (1513)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>89% (877)</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>26.81% (985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>78% (376)</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>13.12% (482)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red2</td>
<td>86% (596)</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>18.86% (963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89% (3301)</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>100% (3674)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mapworks measures academics, social-emotional integration and general well-being to a student’s transition to college. In evaluating these factors, the Mapworks risk indicator accurately identifies students who were at risk of leaving the institution allowing faculty and staff uses to intervene with students early in the semester to get them to the resources that they might need.

Data show that students who participate in the program are more successful in their first year with regards to GPA, academic good standing, and overall retention.
UNIV 101 (University Experience) provides an invaluable introduction to Northern Illinois University. This elective, 1-credit, 11-week course is designed to help new students adjust to NIU and develop the skills necessary to succeed. The course content of UNIV 101 includes:

- Practicing necessary success strategies through collaborative learning activities
- Learning how to use essential online tools such as MyNIU, Blackboard, and NIU Student Email
- Understanding where and when to go for help
- Gaining vital skills in writing, communication, and critical thinking via the Common Reading Experience
- Networking with NIU faculty, staff, and peers while making new and maintaining existing friendships

The table below shows the difference in retention from semester to semester for each fall cohort of traditionally enrolled freshmen students who took UNIV 101 over those who did not. As you can see, there is a modest, yet consistent advantage in retention/persistence for students enrolled UNIV 101 over those who did not. Furthermore, this advantage continues over several semesters.

### Percent Improvement in Retention of UNIV 101 Students Over NON-UNIV 101 Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Enrolled 2nd Semester</th>
<th>Enrolled 3rd Semester</th>
<th>Enrolled 4th Semester</th>
<th>Enrolled 5th Semester</th>
<th>Enrolled 6th Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Northern Illinois University
Early Alert Referral System (E.A.R.S.)
2015-2016

**E.A.R.S. Process**
The Early Alert & Referral System is a collaborative effort between faculty and the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS). The purpose of the E.A.R.S. is to identify students who may need additional support early on in the semester.

Beginning in the 5th week of each semester, faculty are asked to identify students who are not attending class or who are exhibiting inadequate academic skills and behaviors. Once referred, a Student Success Specialist (SSS) contacts each student via a letter as well as with a phone call. If students cannot be reached via phone they receive an individualized email with a list of resources and tips specific to their situation.

Once contact has been made, the referred students and the SSSs work to identify relative campus experts and resources such as tutoring, the NIU Writing Center, the Counseling and Student Development Center, Career Services, the A+ Reading Strategies program, etc. Frequently, the SSSs serve as case managers of sorts to work with the students on a continuing base to make certain that they are making contact with the necessary persons and services.

Additionally, the SSSs assist students with soft skills development in the areas of time management, goal setting, prioritization, note taking, and managing test anxiety. Referring faculty are apprised of the results of the E.A.R.S. contact.

**2015-2016 E.A.R.S Program**
The Office of Student Academic Success targeted 43 different courses during the fall 2015 semester and 114 unique course sections. Faculty put forth an unprecedented 684 referrals for 633 students.

The OSAS team spoke to 278 students over the phone, left 317 voice mails, and sent numerous personalized emails to students for whom there was not accurate contact information in MyNIU. Additionally, Student Success Specialists met with numerous students during the months of October and November.

During the spring semester, the OSAS targeted 43 different courses during the spring and 106 unique course sections. Faculty put forth 855 referrals for 767 students.

The OSAS team spoke to 283 students over the phone, left 415 voice mails, and sent numerous personalized emails to students for whom there was not accurate contact information in MyNIU. Additionally, Student Success Specialists met regularly with referred students during March and April.

**E.A.R.S Program Trends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Early Alert</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Number of Alerts</th>
<th>Percent Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2015</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>Spring 2015</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>1229</td>
<td>68.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2014</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>3111</td>
<td>73.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>Spring 2014</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>659</td>
<td>63.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>75.17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Student Success Collaborative (SSC) is a rapidly growing membership of nearly 100 colleges and universities working together to better understand the drivers of student attrition and measurably impact success.

At the core of the Student Success Collaborative is an innovative predictive modeling platform that mines university data to provide NIU administrators, advisors, and academic support services professionals with actionable insights, identifying systemic and individual risk, and illuminating what steps can be taken to improve graduation likelihood across all groups. The SSC strives to enhance:

- **Executive Visibility**: Identifying and drilling into areas of risk within individual colleges, majors, and specific populations
- **Advisor Effectiveness**: Supporting data-driven advising efforts and enabling proactive, informed interventions with students
- **Student Decisions**: Delivering insight into majors, courses, and careers best suited to each student’s interests and abilities. More than just a technological platform, SSC advances member efforts by providing dedicated consulting services, data analyses, and access to our best practice research library. Recognizing that we often face common challenges, SSC brings members together to exchange ideas through national summits, best practice webinar presentations, and facilitated peer networking.

**SSC Developments at NIU**

**Implementation of SSC-Campus**

Starting in the summer of 2016, Northern Illinois University will implement the new platform in the SSC called SSC Campus. SSC Campus will include many new technologies to aid faculty and staff at NIU in their work with students. Expanded features include electronic scheduling of student appointments, electronic note taking, and streamlined communication tools including texting.

On February 23rd, 60 faculty and staff were trained to utilize the current SSC platform and were also informed about the enhancements coming over the summer. Two engagement teams have been formed to discuss and determine best practices for workflow and training and development needs. These teams will share their findings with the SSC Campus Implementation Team during a day-long planning and integration meeting on April 19th.

**Addition of Student Success Advisor**

During the spring of 2015 the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) and the College Advising Office in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS Advising) partnered to create a hybrid position to identify, advise, and academically coach CLAS sophomore students with a 2.0 – 2.9 cumulative GPA. Titled “Student Success Advisor,” the position was filled in August 2015, and the Student Success Advisor has overseen three distinct outreach campaigns in addition to maintaining a full advising schedule.

**Targeted Outreach Campaigns**

During the fall 2015 semester, the SSA targeted 83 currently enrolled second-year students who had completed 24-60 credits but had not declared a major. The SSA initiated contact with the students via email and follow up calls were made to schedule an advising appointment for each student. The goal of this initiative was to assist students with the exploration and declaration of majors and to make certain that the students have an academic plan and appropriate academic and coaching support to guide them towards a timely graduation. This campaign is being repeated during spring 2016 as well.

The second campaign targeted nearly 100 currently enrolled CLAS sophomore students who had a 67%-80% completion rate for credits attempted verses credits earned. Students were initially contacted via email and then received follow up calls to set up appointments with the SSA. The purpose of this campaign was to identify challenges and barriers for each
student, develop a corresponding student success plan, and connect students to pertinent campus experts and resources. Follow up will be coordinated by the SSA along with the assistance of the Student Success Specialist for the CLAS.

**Campaign Report**

Below is an example of one of the campaigns that was conducted during the fall of 2015 and the assessment that was completed.

**Campaign Summary**

- College: CLAS
- Credits Earned: 24-60
- Major: Undeclared LA&S
- Term Enrollment: Fall 2015
- Campaign Goal: to assist undecided LA&S in the declaration of a major

**Assessment**

**Outreach**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Appointments</th>
<th>Advising Sessions</th>
<th>No-Shows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14 (36%)</td>
<td>14 (36%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Calls</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15 (39%)</td>
<td>9 (24%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>29 (38%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>23 (30%)</strong></td>
<td>6/29 (21%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Major Selection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Declared a Major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Advised</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Advised</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>32</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Impact**

This initiative marks a change in advising practices. Instead of waiting for students to determine if they need advising assistance, the creation of specific outreach campaigns allows the advisor to target students who might not otherwise seek advising help.

**Spring 2016 Campaigns**

The following campaigns are currently underway:

**Campaign Summary**

- College: CHHS
- Course: Math 110
- Grade: D or F in Fall 2015
- Term Enrollment: Spring 2016
- Campaign Goal: Reach out to students and provide them with tutoring options. Get students to meet with an SSS and a tutor regularly to assist them in passing their class.
Campaign Summary

- College: CEET
- Courses: Math 110, Math 229, & Math 230
- Term Enrollment: Currently enrolled
- Grade: Received D or F in Fall 2015
- Campaign Goal: Contact all students who received a D or F in one of the math classes above last semester. Connect them to tutoring and meet with them in person to provide them additional resources.

Campaign Summary

- College: CBUS
- Credits Earned: 120+
- GPA: 2.5
- Term Enrollment: Spring 2015
- Campaign Goal: Catch students who might need to change their major if they cannot meet the phase 1 requirements of their major. Have them meet with an advisor, and provide them with resources to being successful.

Campaign Summary

- College: CLAS
- Courses: 101 of any foreign language for BA track majors
- Grade: D or F in Fall 2015
- Campaign Goal: Contact all students and have students meet with an advisor. During the advisor meeting, students will be provided with options on academic tracks (i.e. stay BA or switch to BS), told about tutoring options, and be provided with any resources to help ensure their success.
E.A.R.S. Process
The Early Alert & Referral System is a collaborative effort between faculty and the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS). The purpose of the E.A.R.S. is to identify students who may need additional support early on in the semester.

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During the spring semester, the OSAS targeted 43 different courses during the spring and 106 unique course sections. Faculty put forth 855 referrals for 767 students.

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E.A.R.S Program Trends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E.A.R.S. Period</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>767</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>1390</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>1092</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>68.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>63.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-Enrolled Process

Each semester the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) monitors student registration appointments for the upcoming semester. Once open enrollment begins, Student Success Specialists/Advisors (SSS/As) contact any students who are academically eligible to re-enroll but have not yet done so.

Many times students do not realize that there are resources on campus that can help them with obstacles and encumbrances. Other times students may forget that they need to meet with their academic advisor or submit final admission paperwork to be able to register. By reaching out to non-registered students, the SSS/As are able to help students problem solve and ultimately register for the next semester.

Spring 2016 Enrollment

During enrollment outreach for the spring 2016 semester, the OSAS team made 693 successful phone calls to students, left 1101 voice mails, and sent numerous personalized emails to students for whom there was not accurate contact information in MyNIU. Additionally, Student Success Specialists met with numerous students during the months leading up to the start of the semester.

E.A.R.S Program Trends

### Spring 2016 Non-Enrolled Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AAC</th>
<th>BUS</th>
<th>EDU</th>
<th>EET</th>
<th>HHS</th>
<th>LAS</th>
<th>VPA</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Change by Date</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/16/15</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>5101</td>
<td>-756</td>
<td>-14.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/23/15</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>1623</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>4345</td>
<td>-382</td>
<td>-8.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30/15</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>1487</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>3963</td>
<td>-369</td>
<td>-9.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/7/15</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>1296</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>3402</td>
<td>-943</td>
<td>-21.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/14/15</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>1131</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2924</td>
<td>-478</td>
<td>-14.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/21/15</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>826</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>2252</td>
<td>-672</td>
<td>-22.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4/16</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>-310</td>
<td>-13.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/11/16</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>1573</td>
<td>-369</td>
<td>-19.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/18/16</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>-378</td>
<td>-24.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/25/16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>-356</td>
<td>-29.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>-52</td>
<td>-6.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-189 (-82.17%)</th>
<th>-714 (-84.40%)</th>
<th>-419 (-86.21%)</th>
<th>-470 (-84.84%)</th>
<th>-602 (-79.31%)</th>
<th>-1619 (-85.66%)</th>
<th>-301 (-89.58%)</th>
<th>-4314 (-84.57%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Spring 2015 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-167 (-75.57%)</th>
<th>-629 (-85.23%)</th>
<th>-372 (-80.69%)</th>
<th>-382 (-77.02%)</th>
<th>-421 (-88.68%)</th>
<th>-1318 (-81.01%)</th>
<th>-254 (-84.95%)</th>
<th>-3543 (-79.53%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
2014-2015 OUTCOMES

GPA

According to 2015 Fall Transition Survey data, there are five factors that correlate to relationship to persistence and five factors that correlate to fall term GPA in new students at NIU. These factors are:

Persistence:
1. Commitment to the institution
2. Homesickness
3. Financial means
4. Social Integration
5. Academic Integration

Fall Term GPA:
1. Basic academic behaviors
2. Academic Resiliency
3. Academic Integration
4. Time Management
5. Academic Self-Efficacy
The Mapworks risk indicator incorporates specific factors at NIU that contribute to student success. In working with Testing Services, NIU identified two factors that have a significant impact in identifying student success, Math placement scores and Average High School ACT scores. Currently, 32% of NIU students are classified as being at-risk.

The Mapworks risk indicator is dynamic and changes throughout the year as we gain more information on our students. We are also able to incorporate other intervention program data to strengthen the risk. Early Alert data was entered by using data from the E.A.R.S (Early Alert and Referral System) program where faculty and staff identify students who are struggling in their courses. After students complete a survey, their risk indicator can be impacted by the information that they report. At the end of the semester, end-term data is also added to strengthen the indicators. Mapworks allows NIU faculty, staff, and administrators to see, in real time, students who need assistance.

Faculty and staff have been using the Mapworks system to identifying students who need to be connected to resources or need additional assistance.
**CURRENT RISK DISTRIBUTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mapworks Risk Indicator</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>41.18% (1513)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>26.81% (985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>13.12% (482)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red2</td>
<td>18.86% (963)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (3674)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERRAL ACTIVITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Referrals Issued</th>
<th>224</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referral Categories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Academic Concerns 25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Personal Issues 65.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Financial Issues 8.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other 0.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACCORDING TO THE FALL TRANSITION SURVEY:**

Top 5 Issues

Who Are Our Students?

- 19.8% with Dependents
- 94.8% planed on returning to NIU in the spring; 90.4% plan on returning to NIU next year
- 88.8% committed to getting a degree at NIU
- 42.3% Interested in Research with a Faculty Member
- 47.6% Interested in Studying Abroad
- 35.7% Interested in Mentoring Students
BRAND SURVEY UPDATE

Background: In the fall of 2015, University Marketing fielded the first-ever comprehensive brand perception study for the university, testing the perceptions of 10 different constituencies as they pertain to their college search process, and more specifically, NIU’s perceptions among these audiences. The item presented today offers a summary of eight key insights gained from the study, implications thereof and suggested actions for university communicators to make the best use out of the study results.

Benchmark Survey Research Insights: Implications and Action Steps

Insight 1—There is substantial misalignment between those attributes NIU is best known for and perceived favorably and those attributes that are important to first-time freshman prospects.

Implications

- The university has a fragmented brand voice.
- Our messaging to prospective students needs to be more consistent and compelling.
- We need to enhance our emphasis on academic rigor and program excellence.

Actions

- Centralize and automate all prospective student communications from departments and colleges through the Office of Admissions. – In progress: Admissions
- Work with each department and college to create their narratives that are consistent with the university narrative. – In progress: University Marketing
- Enhance communications about staff and faculty accomplishments. – In progress: University Marketing
- Move toward full compliance with the Marketing clearinghouse.

Insight 2 – Currently enrolled undergraduate students rank us more highly on more dimensions than do first-time prospective undergraduate students.

Implications

- Opportunity to use peer-to-peer communications to enhance prospective student perceptions. – in progress: Admissions
- Need to focus communications on the NIU experience, using student testimonials that reflect their experience with our value proposition.

Actions

- Direct potential students toward social media channels for “student voice.”
- Include more student-driven content (quotes, videos and photos) throughout academic pages, housing pages, etc.
• Consider shifting focus of mobile site from daily NIU news to academics and student life.
• Raise the prominence of and increase content in campus-oriented channels, such the HuskiesTales and Huskies of NIU Instagram feed. – In progress: University Marketing
• Create student ambassador communications team and mobilize. – In progress: University Marketing
• Match peer alumni from specific high schools to enhance outreach to those schools. – in progress: Admissions

Insight 3 – NIU is known for different attributes by different stakeholders, which are not aligned with the decision drivers for each audience.

Implications
• Need to focus on "bellwether" programs that have national reputations, to create a halo effect on overall academic reputation.
• Need to achieve better alignment between our messaging and key decision drivers.

Actions
• Heavy-up editorial coverage of and media outreach for bellwether programs.
• Accelerate development of digital marketing campaigns for specific programs. – In progress: University Marketing
• Increase outreach to first line communicators with prospective students to build their proof points on important topics. – In progress: University Marketing

Insight 4 – Parents are far more concerned about non-academic factors like safety, affordability and financial support than academics and have little or no knowledge of key NIU attributes.

Implications
• Build reassurance messaging for parents about safety, and ensure we speak with consistency about it.
• Need to step up paid media in traditional channels (e.g., drive time radio, print and billboards) to enhance parent awareness of key university strengths, as budget allows.
• Opportunity to engage parents in their role as influencers and “gate keepers” in the decision-making process.

Actions
• Create key "reassurance" messaging about safety for use by recruiters and across campus. – In progress: University Marketing
• Access media targeted to interests and concerns of parents and families. – In progress: University Marketing
• Revise information on the parent-specific page of the Admissions site and drive traffic there with paid media
• Continue effort to engage parents and give them a “voice” connecting them to campus.
Insight 5 — Word of mouth is more important to prospective students in their research about NIU than with other universities and is rated more important by transfer prospects than first-time freshmen prospects.

Implications

- Need to improve communications with “influencers,” most notably parents, alumni and guidance counselors. — in progress: Admissions
- Need to enhance peer-to-peer communications and mobilize current students more fully in communications to prospective students. — in progress: Admissions

Actions

- Develop and implement an influencers campaign with segments for high school and community college counselors, as well as parents/families.
- Reinforce with current students their role as brand ambassadors, and work with them on their online communications.
- Better engage NIU’s staff and faculty to enlist them in the brand ambassador effort.
- Celebrate staff and faculty impact on student lives.

Insight 6 — Faculty and Staff have the least favorable impression of NIU of any stakeholder group surveyed, while current undergraduate student perceptions are the most favorable.

Implications:

- Need to continue to ramp up campus communications focusing on strategy as well as celebration of faculty.
- Faculty and staff are still delivering a high-quality experience, even if their own perceptions are problematic.
- Assuming a correlation between faculty/staff attitudes and student attitude, improving faculty/staff scores could have a significant impact on current and prospective student perception.

Actions:

- Build a campus communications strategy that will:
  - inform on issues relative to the largest gaps here,
  - Incorporate “feel good” stories to be shared across multiple channels.
  - Provide consistent and timely information.
- Better leverage “Applaud a colleague” and “Ask Me, I can help” on campus.
- Conduct focus groups with faculty and students to dig deeper into key issues.
- Drive more current student involvement to the student quote database, Huskie Tales and Huskies of NIU, and more prospective student traffic to those areas as well.
- Continue to build on communications to campus “first line,” e.g. first line supervisors, department chairs, presidential professors.
Insight 7 —NIU’s attributes were ranked stronger or weaker by prospects at different stages in the enrollment funnel.

Implications

• Communication, nurture to apply, recruitment information is lacking.
• Communication, nurture to enroll, recruitment information could be improved.

Actions

• Centralize all recruitment communication streams to ensure consistency in messaging and tone. – In progress: Admissions and University Marketing
• Revamp the admitted student package. – In progress: Admissions
• Create more precision in our communications, calibrating our messaging to the appropriate phase of the enrollment funnel. – in progress: Admissions
• Round out admitted student communications to encourage them to enroll. – in progress: Admissions and University Marketing

Insight 8 – Undergraduate alumni perceptions of NIU lagged current undergrad student perceptions, and were less favorable in younger alumni cohorts. However, graduate alumni had more favorable perceptions than current graduate students.

Implications:

• Undergraduate alumni are unaware of the current student opportunities, especially as it relates to experiential learning opportunities, support services and opportunities for high-achieving students.
• Younger undergraduate alumni who have graduated into a challenging job market may be reflecting on their challenging experience to date.
• Given potential of alumni as influencers and parents/families of potential students, there is a critical need to raise key attribute scores.

Actions:

• Work with Alumni Relations to educate current alumni base on lagging attributes.
• Work with Alumni Relations to pair current grad students with grad alumni for networking purposes.
• Host alumni focus groups with Career Services to assess what they’re seeing from current graduates, and how we can improve their job possibilities as well as the reputation of the institution and the students.
• Build employer communications program that demonstrates positive employer experiences with NIU grads.