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University of Kentucky Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Task Force: Findings and Recommendations

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UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

*Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI)
Task Force*

Findings and Recommendations

REPORT TO PROVOST KUMBLE R. SUBBASWAMY

May 8, 2009

see blue.™

Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Task Force **Findings and Recommendations**

REPORT TO THE PROVOST

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Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Task Force **Findings and Recommendations**

REPORT TO THE PROVOST

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Task Force began work in July 2008 in response to Provost Kumble R. Subbaswamy's call for more creative approaches to serving the needs of the UK undergraduate student population and to participate in the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) Kentucky Adult Learner Initiative. With the University's ongoing "War on Attrition" and the state's expansion of the Project Graduate initiative, the University of Kentucky should consider directing more attention to attracting and retaining adult learners. Not only would enhanced support of local adults who want a UK degree help further Kentucky's educational attainment goals but it would also help to meet the University's enrollment targets. The Task Force saw their work as a chance to focus in on some core questions, including:

1. What are we doing with adult learners that is working and how to continue to improve?
2. What are we doing that by no measure is having any impact and stop doing it?

The task force found that the adult learner population is small at least partially because courses, full degree programs, and services are not as available to this group as they need to be. According to the data gleaned from the ALFI Toolkit from the Council on Adult & Experiential Education, the University of Kentucky is not what CAEL would identify as an "adult friendly" campus. Administrators acknowledge that there is little explicit attention given to adult learners (or recognition of their life conditions) in the stated policies or procedures of the University. UK could be more "adult friendly" with minimal expense above and beyond the current investments in recruitment and retention efforts.

The task force herewith presents (and in no particular order of priority) recommendations to the Provost for improving recruitment and retention of adult learners as well as developing an institutional plan to submit to the CPE for additional funding.

- Offer more evening/weekend, summer, independent student and distance learning content – both individual courses that faculty want to offer and those specifically targeted by departments to allow students to complete full programs in the sequence they need;
- Improve the recruitment and enrollment process for adult students;
- Create a leave of absence category for undergraduate students;
- Assess regularly the effectiveness of adult student services and track enrollment/retention/graduation; and
- Provide additional, centralized resources for the Project Graduate initiative.

Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Task Force **Findings and Recommendations**

REPORT TO THE PROVOST

OVERVIEW

In April 2008, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) called for letters of intent to increase the educational attainment of the state's adult population and to participate in the Kentucky Adult Learner Initiative (KALI – see the CPE website on this effort at www.cpe.ky.gov/committees/ky_adult_learner_initiative). Provost Kumble R. Subbaswamy conferred with staff and faculty leadership who advised that the University should consider directing more attention to attracting adult learners – there were only 1,558 adult learner undergraduates seeking a bachelor's degree in fall 2007. The population is small at least partially because courses, full degree programs, and services are not as available to this group as they need to be. Not only would enhanced support of local adults who want a UK degree help further Kentucky's educational attainment goals but it would also help to meet the University's enrollment targets. The Provost agreed and sent a letter of intent to study the issue of whether the University of Kentucky is an "adult friendly" campus. By June, the CPE sent to UK the Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Toolkit from the Council on Adult & Experiential Education (www.cael.org/alfi/tools.html) and the accompanying \$20,000 stipend to support the development of an institutional plan based on the ALFI results.

A task force convened in July 2008 to undertake the effort to

- (1) study and better understand recruitment, enrollment, retention and graduation rates of first-year, transfer and returning adults at the University of Kentucky; and,
- (2) recommend changes to policies and procedures that would provide a more intentional – more strategic – collaboration across multiple units and colleges to address the specific needs of the newly recruited undergraduate adult students from Project Graduate and other outreach efforts.

The UK ALFI task force consisted of:

- Randolph Hollingsworth
Assistant Provost, Office of Undergraduate Education (ALFI task force chair)
- Ray Archer
Transfer Advisor, Central Advising Service and Transfer Center
- Connie Baird
Director, Distance Learning Programs (and CPE KALI institutional representative)
- Phil Greasley
Associate Provost, University Engagement

- Cecile McKinney
Director, Adult Student Services; and, Director, Evening and Weekend Programs
(and Project Graduate contact)
- Morris Sammons
Director, Independent Studies Program
- Roger Sugarman
Director, Office of Institutional Research

The other Kentucky institutions participating in the use of the ALFI Toolkit were Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky State University, Morehead State University, Northern Kentucky University, University of Louisville and Western Kentucky University. The CPE sponsored a conference call in October 2008 to allow the representatives from these universities talk together about the best use of the ALFI toolkit and their interactions with CAEL staff in analyzing the results.

In addition, the combined results of the ALFI Toolkit were used by CAEL to compare the Kentucky institutions and eleven other postsecondary institutions to each other, crafting “benchmark” scores for each CAEL principle. These “benchmarks” have little to do with the University of Kentucky’s strategic efforts nor do they include the University’s list of aspiration benchmark institutions. Since the concept of “benchmarking” relies on both institutional type and characteristics of student population – both of which are not associated with the list of “comparison” institutions used in the CAEL analysis – the ranking and comparison data across institutions has been excised from the summaries presented in this report.

SCOPE OF INFORMATION GATHERING ACTIVITIES

The task force met in July 2008 and during the meetings that fall gathered general information about the status of adult learners nationally and in Kentucky, then organized the next steps for gathering information about the status of adult learners at UK. The task force members agreed that the ALFI Toolkit needed to be deployed in conjunction with focus group sessions of UK faculty, staff and students. In addition, the group developed a survey for the Office of Institutional Research to send out to UK adult learners who recently dropped out before getting their degree. The task force members regretted that the information gathering reached out only to those now enrolled and those who enrolled recently but left. The work entailed in this report did not include information from those potential students who chose NOT to be admitted and enroll because UK did not offer what they needed when they needed it.

Overall Status of Adult Learners and Kentucky Higher Education

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) has created reports using data from state and national resources (e.g., “Adult Learning in Focus: National and State-by-State Data” and

“State Policies to Bring Adult Learning into Focus”) detailing the scope and potential of adult education, the barriers, and the impacts on individuals, their families, their colleges, their states, and their nation. Primarily, CAEL defines adult students as those who are age 25 or older, and encourages institutions to identify these learners using several criteria during recruitment processes and enrollment. These criteria include age, delayed postsecondary enrollment, part-time attendance, financial independence from parents, full-time work while enrolled, active military duty, veterans, having dependents other than spouse, being a single parent, and/or lacking a standard high school diploma.

According to CAEL, adult postsecondary participation depends on three main issues: affordability, accessibility, and aspiration. Financial aid and employee incentive programs are best utilized by successful adult learners when portable and flexible. Access to higher education can be improved with high quality, flexible delivery of academic courses, programs and services at times and in formats that accommodate external conditions unique to adult students. Examples include a greater number of evening, weekend and distance learning courses and fully accessible degree programs as well as intentionally crafted adult student support services such as those offered on weekends and evenings (or in various delivery formats) for academic advising, counseling, financial aid and referral. Adult aspirations, especially among those with no or poor prior college experience, are critical issues for postsecondary institutions. CAEL characterizes adult learners at risk whose undergraduate education experiences are impacted by feelings of low self-esteem and fear of failure; additionally, the adult student often lacks knowledge of available programs and how to access them.

CAEL has released the following statistics for Kentucky adults in relation to higher education and the resulting impoverishment of our state in general is startling:

- 72.3% of adults age 25-64 hold jobs (4th lowest state in the nation) - 2005
- 23.2% increase is expected (2002–2012) in occupations requiring some postsecondary education
- Bachelor degree recipients on average earn \$16,050 annually more high school graduates - 2006
- if Kentucky relies only on high school students transitioning straight into college, without any increase in the enrollment of adult learners, then Kentucky will see by 2025 a shortfall of 159,725 degrees
- 35.4% of adults 25-64 have a high school diploma and no college (8th highest in the nation); and 19.6% of adults 24-64 have some college but no degree - 2006

UK's Benchmark Institutions' Strategies for Addressing the Needs of Adult Learners

The majority of UK's 19 benchmark institutions have specific organizational structures with accompanying procedures and practices in place for dealing with adult and non-traditional students. In several cases, these structures are component parts of a statewide system of institutions, e.g., North Carolina, Penn State, Minnesota, Texas A&M, UCLA, and Wisconsin, in which courses and degree programs are offered to adults and nontraditional students through specific offices within the system. In other cases, there are specific entry and degree paths

from community colleges, e.g., Michigan State, Purdue, Florida, and Illinois. In several cases, there are also complete, nontraditional paths leading all the way from entry to degrees, e.g., Penn State (The World Campus), Maryland (University College), Washington (Evening Degree Program), and Wisconsin (Wisconsin-Extension). At all of these institutions, nontraditional online courses and classes scheduled in varying formats are offered at the institutions themselves. At statewide system institutions and centers, and at partner community colleges, the course offerings and programs are coordinated with degree requirements.

Project Graduate and the Kentucky Adult Learner Initiative

Project Graduate is a statewide program which is a partnership between UK and the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) and supported by the Lumina Foundation. Its mission is to bring Kentucky adults back to college who left UK without completing their bachelor's degree. Cecile McKinney, the UK contact for Project Graduate, reported on this initiative which currently focuses on re-recruiting adult students with 90 or more earned credit hours but who have not earned a bachelor's degree. The University contacted 926 eligible students via letters and postcards; 351 replied that are eligible for the program. During the past year at UK, 18 Project Graduate students graduated in May or August, while eight others are on track to complete their degrees later this month. Fifty-five (55) students are currently enrolled at UK because of Project Graduate, while a total of 305 students have been contacted and informed that they are eligible for the program.

The University of Kentucky offers to those students identified in Project Graduate the following incentives for re-enrolling:

- A degree audit program (before they apply for admission) showing the student exactly which courses are needed to complete a degree in the initial field of study or in another discipline
- A simplified application for readmission (PDF) and waiver of the usual application fee
- Early admission and registration
- Special academic advisers trained to assist Project Graduate students with course scheduling and to explain requirements and university procedures
- An adult resource center, Adult Student Services, providing information, assistance, scholarships and support to UK students 25 and over – all contact and services are primarily available by phone, fax, email, online or mail – coming to campus is secondary if a participant wishes to do so
- Coordinated support via Financial Aid, Student Billing Services, Academic Enhancement's peer tutoring in "The Study" and career counseling in the Stuckert Career Center

See more about Project Graduate at the website for the Center for Adult Student Services, <http://www.uky.edu/AdultSS/graduate.htm>.

BCTCblue+ Dual Enrollment and Transfer Program

The BCTCblue+ Program came into being after a year-long study by a large task force composed of student support staff and faculty from UK and Bluegrass Community and Technical College. In October 2008, Presidents Todd and Julian signed a Memorandum of Agreement that explains the general principles and policies agreed upon by both institutions. This program is designed for new students enrolling in an Associate in Arts (AA) or Associate in Sciences (AS) degree at Bluegrass Community and Technical College. Students will be advised by BCTC faculty and the UK transfer advisor housed at BCTC to complete the AA or AS degree from BCTC before transferring full-time to UK. Those who earn an AA or AS degree will transfer to UK as General Education certified. Students in the BCTC Blue+ program may take up to 12 UK credit hours (no more than 4 courses) at the current BCTC tuition rate, plus associated part-time UK fees per credit hour and any course fees as applicable. If the credit hours being taken concurrently at BCTC and UK in a given semester total twelve (12) or more credit hours, the student will be considered full-time at BCTC. One hundred thirty-five (135) students have signed up as of March 2009, of whom 15 are first year students – about half of the enrollees are planning to enroll at UK this fall. Ray Archer, Transfer Advisor in the Central Advising Service and Transfer Center unit of the UK Office of Undergraduate Education, handles the primary advising of these students. Students must officially enroll in the BCTC Blue+ program in order to receive any of the benefits of the program. See the online application at:

http://www.bluegrass.kctcs.edu/sa/transfercenter/bctc/how_can_i_join_bctc_blue/bctc_blue_application.

ALFI Toolkit (offered by CAEL and financed by CPE grant funding)

The ALFI Toolkit is described at <http://www.cael.org/alfi/tools.html>: "The ISAS delivers benchmarks that compare your institutional responses with other colleges and universities. With the ALI, you can benchmark your adult learner responses with those of other adult learners nationwide. Used together, the Institutional Self-Assessment Survey and the Adult Learner Inventory compare your own faculty and administration's view of existing programs with the actual perceptions of adult learners." The student survey was launched on February 19, the first reminder when out February 26, the second reminder on March 5 and on March 12, the survey closed. Results from the student survey were received March 22 and shared with the task force. The ISAS results were submitted on February 19th and results (including comparison data) returned to UK on April 20. More details are provided in the Appendix.

Faculty Discussion Groups

Faculty forums to discuss adult learners and undergraduate education occurred on March 25 and April 27. Attendees included the task force and invited guests: Tim Sineath (School of Library and Information Science), Pat Burkhart (College of Nursing), Gina Lowry (College of Nursing), Kwaku Addo (Nutrition and Food Science), David Randall (Physiology, also Faculty Senate Chair), Jim Hoagland (Sociology), Susan Carvalho (Hispanic Studies, also International Affairs) and Jeannine Blackwell (German, also Interim Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education). Discussion notes are provided in the Appendix.

Student Discussion Group

Under the auspices of the Office of Adult Student Services, the task force met with the Non-Traditional Students Organization on March 26 at 7 p.m. Attendees included members of the ALFI task force; Jerry Price, Adult Student Services and NTSO staff advisor; Howard Glauert, faculty advisor; John Lindsey, NTSO president; Lynn Lindle, NTSO vice president, and four NTSO student members. The students represented the following majors: business management, accounting, fine arts, family studies and engineering. In addition, the NTSO deployed a survey to its members asking for key needs to be identified in order for UK to be more “adult learner friendly.” Discussion notes are provided in the Appendix.

Student Support Staff Survey and Discussion Group

During the UK Advising Network retreat on April 24th, a group of student support staff met to discuss the issues involved in making the University more “nontraditional student friendly.” Discussion attendees included: Jacquie Hager (Student Records), Jerry Price (staff advisor to UK’s Nontraditional Student Organization), Shannon Tumblin (staff advisor to the UK’s Military Veterans of America Organization), Lydia Wims (Student Support Services), Cecile McKinney (ALFI Task Force member), and academic advisors represented the following colleges -- arts and sciences, social work, education, engineering, and social work. The group acknowledged that the University needs to accommodate all population groups, recognize life conditions and pay attention to the unique needs of nontraditional learners in policies of the university. Discussion focused on issues and needs of nontraditional students including improving communication; assessment and tracking; culture shift for faculty and administration; increasing the number of courses and programs; and, support services including advising, tutoring and career planning offered in evening, weekend, and in online and telephone formats, special absence policies, child care, location of tutoring services, adult appropriate advising conference/orientation and funding for adult appropriate events and social activities, and availability of a general or integrated studies program delivered in a flexible format.

An email was sent April 27th to the University-wide listserv hosted by the UK Advising Network asking academic advising and student services support staff about how they felt their units currently serve undergraduate students who are 25 years or older. A diverse group replied, including teaching staff, directors of programs for non-traditional and traditionally underserved students, assistant deans and associate deans. The responses are provided verbatim in the Appendix.

Telephone Survey of Former UK Undergraduate Students 25 Years and Older

The task force crafted a survey for the UK Survey Research Center to conduct with UK undergraduate students aged 25 and older who were enrolled in 2007-08 (all statuses though not including those who were suspended) and did not return for 2008-09. Of the 1558 degree-seeking students meeting the criteria of adult learners not suspended, 719 did not come back in

the Fall of 2008 – and over half of those graduated, leaving only 341 degree-seeking undergraduates in the target population. The task force agreed to include students who had attended Spring and Fall '08 but not Spring 2009 and included some students who would be 25 if they enrolled at UK in Fall 2009. This changed the target population for the telephone survey to 957 students. Telephone calls began April 10, 2009, and interviews were completed with 212 of the 669 adult students with correct phone numbers in the sample. The adjusted response rate was 83.8%, based on interviews completed with students who were eventually reached by the SRC.

Students were asked to give the most important reason why they had not returned to UK to pursue their education. The most common reasons given for not returning to UK were:

- Difficulty balancing work, college, and family life (27.4%)
- Difficulty paying for my college education (27.8%)
- The sequence of courses I needed was not offered (10.8%)
- Difficulty finding adequate childcare/difficulty caring for children or adult dependents (5.2% - combined 2 related categories)
- Change of major to one not offered at UK (3.9%)
- Problems at home (3.9%)
- Couldn't find help, e.g., tutoring and support services (2.4%)

Nearly 2/3 respondents disagreed with the statement that “UK offers a variety of distance learning online courses.” However, only a little more than half agreed that UK’s traditional courses offered in evening and weekends were sufficient to meet adult students’ needs. A general feeling of positiveness about UK comes from the respondents – and the majority’s memories of academic advising while on campus were positive. For detailed information, see the summary in the Appendix.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES

The task force examined the data resulting from multiple sources:

- The ALFI Toolkit (ALI and ISAS surveys plus the crosswalk between the two)
- Faculty Groups and Students Group Discussions
- Student Support Staff survey
- Telephone survey of undergraduate adult learners who were enrolled between 2007 and 2008 but left the University before graduating

The Adult Learner Focused Institution (ALFI) Toolkit

ALFI Toolkit: Adult Learner Inventory (ALI)

The Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) was developed by Noel-Levitz and CAEL (the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning) as a tool to help institutions examine the special priorities of adult

learners. CAEL’s “Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners” serve as the basis for the Inventory’s construction. The questionnaire asks students to rate 47 items pertaining to programs, services and possible areas of concern in terms of their perceived importance and level of satisfaction.

The ALI was launched at UK on February 19, 2009. Emailed invitations from Dr. Jeannine Blackwell, Interim Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, were sent to 1,755 currently enrolled undergraduate students who were 25 years of age or older. Two reminder emails from Cecile McKinney, Director of the Center for Adult Student Services, were sent during the three-week survey window. The response rate, 44.6 percent, is excellent for an online survey. The unusually high response rate suggests responders have definite views and are eager for their views to be heard.

The 47 items on the ALI measure eight ALFI Principles of Effectiveness for addressing the needs of adult students. The chart below lists UK’s scale scores for the ALFI Principles indexed on a scale of 1 to 100. UK students’ rankings of each Principle’s importance and satisfaction also are indicated. Potential strengths and challenges are identified by subtracting students’ satisfaction ratings from their importance ratings. When the “performance gap” between satisfaction and importance scores is great, it suggests the institution may not be adequately addressing adult students’ needs.

ADULT LEARNER INVENTORY RESULTS SUMMARY

ALFI Principle	Rank in Importance	Rank in Satisfaction	<i>Performance Gap</i>
Outreach: overcoming barriers of time, place and tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities	1 (90.7)	3 (71.3)	19.4
Life/Career Planning: addressing adult learners’ life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align capacities to help learners to reach their goals	2 (89.1)	8 (65.4)	23.7
Financing: promoting choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility	3 (87.4)	6 (67.9)	19.6
Assessment: defining and assessing the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experiences in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor	8 (83.7)	5 (68.3)	15.4
Teaching and Learning Process: using multiple methods of instruction by faculty (including experiential and problem-based methods) in order to connect curricular concepts to knowledge and skills useful for adult learners	4 (87.1)	2 (75.0)	12.1
Student Support Systems: using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance adult learners’ capabilities to become self-directed, lifelong learners	7 (84.6)	7 (66.1)	18.4

Technology: using information technology to provide relevant and timely information to enhance the learning experience	6 (85.9)	1 (75.4)	10.4
Transitions: using guided pathways leading into and from its programs and services in order to assure adult students' learning will apply to successful achievement of their educational and career goals	5 (86.4)	4 (70.3)	16.1

Adult learners are most satisfied with the way the University provides information and learning via technology. Compared to the remaining seven ALFI Principles, *Technology* reveals the smallest performance gap between students' importance and satisfaction ratings. In addition, students' responses show relatively high levels of satisfaction with the *Teaching and Learning Process*, as related to critical aspects of the classroom experience, interactions with faculty, and feedback.

The largest performance gap appears on the *Life and Career Planning* index. Students are less satisfied with the number of available course offerings within their majors and the help needed to develop an education plan. The item with the lowest satisfaction rating and the greatest gap involves receiving credit for learning derived from life and work experiences (see the ALI Report table listed in the Appendix). *Financing* and *Outreach* are two other ALFI Principles with relatively high performance gaps. Not surprisingly, adult learners are concerned about how they will pay for their educations and overcome logistical problems with time and space while they juggle families and careers. The task force members interpret this finding as evidence that our students want the University to offer courses and services at times and in formats that better accommodate their adult lives. Since technology ranks high in satisfaction, it is clear that the emphasis is more about how courses and services could be offered more in the evenings and weekends. For more detailed information about the students' responses, see the ALI Report in the Appendix.

ALFI Toolkit: Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS)

The Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) was developed by the National Center for Higher Education Management systems (NCHEMS) for CAEL to assist institutions in evaluating their services to adult learners. According to the CAEL ALFI Toolkit report, the Self-Assessment Survey is designed to achieve two purposes:

1. Provide a template for an institution to honestly and reflectively examine its resources, structures, and practices in the light of the Principles – especially if part of a wider effort to identify particular areas of strength and challenge for purposes of continuous improvement; and,
2. Identify “best practices” for benchmarking purposes on a national basis. As a result, the ISAS contains numerous items that request further information or additional evidence of good practice.

The ISAS is divided into nine sections: institutional background; mission, leadership and organizational structure; recruitment and orientation; tuition and financial aid; teaching and learning; faculty recruitment and development; student services; key constituencies; and, transitions. Some questions refer only to adult learners rather than all students while other questions refer to all students.

The chart below lists UK’s summary index scores for each of the nine ALFI Principles. Many individual items on the ISAS instrument contributed to each score and some items contributed to more than one principle. The statistic reported is the score for all of the ISAS questions associated with each ALFI Principle, standardized and indexed on a scale of 1 to 100.

**INSTITUTIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT INVENTORY
RESULTS SUMMARY**

ALFI Principle	Ranking	Score
Outreach: overcoming barriers of time, place and tradition in order to create lifelong access to educational opportunities	5	38.5
Life/Career Planning: addressing adult learners’ life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align capacities to help learners to reach their goals	1	53.0
Financing: promoting choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility	2	50.0
Assessment: defining and assessing the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experiences in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor	7	31.5
Teaching and Learning Process: using multiple methods of instruction by faculty (including experiential and problem-based methods) in order to connect curricular concepts to knowledge and skills useful for adult learners	8	30.9
Student Support Systems: using comprehensive academic and student support systems in order to enhance adult learners’ capabilities to become self-directed, lifelong learners	6	33.9
Technology: using information technology to provide relevant and timely information to enhance the learning experience	3	49.0
Transitions: using guided pathways leading into and from its programs and services in order to assure adult students’ learning will apply to successful achievement of their educational and career goals	4	43.0
Strategic Partnerships: engaging in strategic relationships, partnerships and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners	9	12.7

Perceptions of the institution’s performance on Strategic Partnerships are very low. Only one of the rankings for the ALFI Principles – Life/Career Planning – ranks in the upper half of the results. The next highest ranking is achieved by Financing and Technology. Administrators acknowledge that there is little

explicit attention given to adult learners (or recognition of their life conditions) in the stated policies or procedures of the University. And most notably, perceptions of administrators at the University of Kentucky place the Partnership Principle at the lowest. More positively, the low scores awarded by experienced UK personnel indicate that they see avenues for University improvement across the spectrum assessed. For more detailed information about the responses by the University's administrators, see the ISAS Report in the Appendix.

ALFI Toolkit: ALI and ISAS Combined Results

When comparing the data from the survey responses of adult undergraduate students at the University of Kentucky and that from University administrators, the ALI results correspond overall to the ISAS data. Both groups, students and administrators, are critical of the University's performance on the ALFI Principles and see room for improvement.

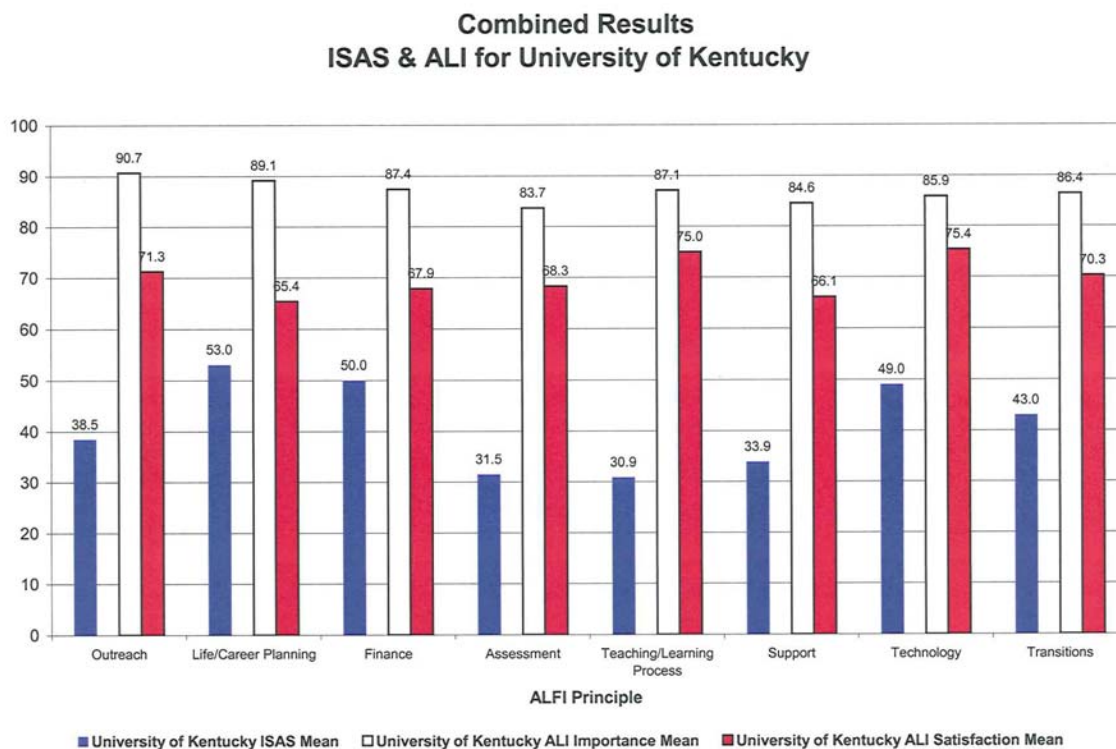
When compared to one another, both survey groups rank the university's performance on the Principle of Technology highly. Clearly, there is agreement that the University of Kentucky uses information technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience. The two groups also agree that the University's performance on the Transitions Principle ranks in the upper half.

However, the two groups show a major discrepancy on their rankings in three Principles. The largest gap in perceptions of performance by the University is with the Life/Career Planning Principle. Administrators perceive performance here as superior and ranked it at #1 of all the ALFI Principles, while adult learners perceive this as ranking at #8. Another principle where there is discrepancy in perception is with Financing. Although administrators rank it #2, students rank it #7. Interestingly, our students ranked the University faculty's performances in instruction highly (#2) under the Teaching/Learning Process Principle, while the ranking by administrators is #8. Perhaps echoes of the discussions from the General Education Reform raised the University's academic leadership's expectations for multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) that can be used to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills -- however, our adult learners are not as aware of these possibilities.

In general, programs and services for adult students have no explicit presence in the institutional culture of the university. The important questions the task force asks the University leadership to consider are:

- a) Is this absence of an integrated approach to serving adult learners a carefully considered and planned state or did it just happen?
- b) Are there unintended consequences for this that the University needs to address?

The bar chart below shows the University’s rating on the Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) for each ALFI Principle compared to its performance on the Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) with respect to “Importance” and “Satisfaction.”



Faculty and Student Discussion Groups Summary

The discussions tended to focus on the chief criticism that the University operates as if all undergraduates are between 18-21 years old – that the University needs to recognize that adult learners are very different. It was not clear to either the faculty or students that adult students are provided with adequate information when first enrolling and that there seems to be little or no follow-up organizationally for meeting adult student needs.

Both groups also addressed perceptions of cultural attitudes toward and among adult learners. Strong sentiments were expressed by students that there should be more state and institutional opportunities for financial aid for adult and non-traditional students. Some students observed that tutoring support currently is offered primarily in “a dorm.” (NOTE: Academic Enhancement offers evening hours for peer tutoring but *The Study* is situated in the Kirwan Hall complex in order to be nearby the area where nearly all our traditionally aged first-year students reside on campus.) Students felt that peer tutoring services and organized study groups would best be located in a more adult-friendly area such as Young Library. Child/dependent care was another issue raised by students and the UK student government association (SGA) has been in discussion with the UK Work-Life Office in response to an inquiry

from an adult learner enrolled in the second-degree BSN program. The SGA is willing to bring this issue forward to the student body as a whole for further discussions this coming year.

Faculty commented that adult learners often bring a “consumer” mentality to what they consider the value of what they’re going to get when they come to UK, and that they often view college as job training rather than a liberal arts education. The faculty acknowledged that there is a wide variety of accommodations for the adult full-time worker depending on the degree program – with some colleges offering professional degree programs with a strong awareness of their target audiences’ schedules (e.g., library media certification program, nursing summer practicums) and yet most programs are almost impossible to complete while working a full-time job.

Faculty showed their awareness of the adult learners’ typical characteristics of over-commitment in their personal lives and what one faculty member called a “nervousness” about their ability to succeed. Faculty surmised that the adult learners’ concrete commitment to degree completion (and awareness of the high cost of education) led to their “impatience” in the classroom with traditional aged students or content that seemed unrelated to their preconceived goals. One faculty group stressed the importance of all professors understanding the difference it makes, especially for the adult learner, if they explain up front the estimated response time for answering emails or phone calls. And, in a related discussion, the students showed their impatience with course content provided by instructors who used examples and assignments that seemed geared toward traditional college students who have much less life experience. The best instructors from these students’ perspective were those who talked about real life situations, and these tended to be adjunct professors “brought in from the outside.” The question arose during the discussion with students about the need for more partnerships with local businesses and companies to provide learning opportunities for adult students.

Faculty seemed mixed on whether the University should take stronger measures to allocate shrinking resources to new services for this student population. One on hand, faculty felt that a doctoral/research institution might not be the best match for the returning adult student. In both faculty forums, the question was raised as to whether the UK Strategic Plan would accommodate new efforts to reach adult learners – and if yes, would this new effort be a primary or secondary goal for individual colleges and units? On the other hand, faculty felt that as the flagship institution of Kentucky, the University has an obligation to make a greater effort to accommodate all non-traditional students, especially our returning veterans who want a UK degree. Ultimately there would have to be “buy in” from faculty and college leadership to make any new policies or procedures work.

Feedback from both groups show that there is, in the words of one student, “a clash of cultures between what is emphasized by the university and what is important to adult learners.” Since continuing national trends show higher education moving toward more nontraditional enrollment patterns (part-time or lower number of credit hours taken per semester, increased

time to degree, and frequent “stop-outs”), any University steps taken to address needs of all students enrolling nontraditionally will ultimately position the University better for the future.

Student Support Staff Survey Results

On Monday, April 27th, Randolph Hollingsworth sent out four questions to advising and other student support staff via the UK Advising Network listserv. Responses from a wide variety of staff from sixteen units came back within the time period requested: Academic Enhancement, CARES, Central Advising Service and Transfer Center, College of Arts & Sciences General Chemistry Lab, College of Business and Economics Undergraduate Resource Center, College of Communications Office of Student Services, College of Education Academic Services and Teacher Certification, College of Fine Arts Student Affairs Office, Counseling & Testing Center, Dean of Students, Disability Resource Center, New Students and New Parents Programs, Office of the Registrar, Student Support Services (TRIO), and the Writing Initiative. Ten of the sixteen (more than half of the units represented in the responses) indicated that they offer evening hours for services “considered most critical to student academic progress” by utilizing staff flex time or hiring staff dedicated to working during non-traditional business hours. Only three of those units also offer weekend hours. All the others keep to a traditional business hours schedule, but offer multiple ways for students to leave messages online and via voice mail.

Positive contributions by these units to the adult learners’ experience of the University’s technology efforts are numerous. All the units offer email addresses and voice mail for key contact personnel, and nearly all use webforms that help systematize and streamline processes for questions submitted online. Several have newly crafted online entryways to their websites that are student-centered. The use of websites for more self-service content has increased, e.g., academic curriculum, mental health tips, online screenings, program registration, and appointment schedulers. Technology resources tend to be available onsite at the support centers or in the classrooms with personalized orientations/support by staff and faculty. New energy is placed in collaborations across units to support the returning veteran students. Three units emphasized personal goal planning as part of their orientation/intake procedures. For one unit, parking is readily available for students with or without parking permits, day or night. One unit collaborates regularly with library staff to provide personalized academic support for its target audience.

The most pressing needs for units to serve adult learners more effectively (including Project Graduate recruits) are listed below in order most frequently noted:

1. additional staff/resources (or staggered scheduling of current employees) to handle flexible office hours, restricted enrollment into courses targeting adult learners, re-entry and analysis of past work for returning students, child/dependent care, outreach activities/programming targeting adults, conversion of content for high quality online experiences
2. clarification of UK strategic planning so as to support all campus units allocating scarce resources to accommodate this small population, e.g., bolster culture on campus to

provide services at non-traditional hours (one unit tried to offer evening hours but “no one came”); evening classes are difficult to schedule in some programs due to required outside activities (rehearsals, performances, athletic team practice schedules, etc.); attendance policies in some classes do not accommodate adult learners’ absences (e.g., as parents or as veterans required to attend an official meeting) differently than the absences of a traditional age learner

3. flexibility with USP requirements and more opportunities for credit for life experiences in professional schools – especially those under pressure from accreditation agencies to keep graduates’ skills/knowledge up to date
4. provide stronger intervention centrally upon re-enrollment of adult learners so that where it is clear that the student’s background or time away from the program would disallow them to re-enter a particular college, they are not just shuffled between colleges after the semester begins
5. staff training on the unique needs of adult learners
6. flexibility in financial aid so that students in the middle ranges of GPA are supported in some way (not just those with GPA of 3.5 and above)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT ADULT LEARNERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Offer more evening/weekend, summer, independent study and distance learning content – both individual courses that faculty want to offer and those specifically targeted by departments to allow students to complete full programs in the sequence they need: Adult students pursuing their first degree, second degree or degree-enhancement need access to a variety of courses to complete degrees.

Problems:

- Faculty are usually incentivized to teaching in evening/weekend/summer or online by overload payment, if scheduled – the schedules are not crafted with access by working adults in mind but at the convenience of the faculty volunteering to teach this way.
- Colleges are incentivized to have the cheapest faculty with the largest classes in the summer schedule instead of offering classes in sequence most needed by their students.
- Students and faculty feel that senior faculty are not available or incentivized to teach courses or offer full-degree programs that are most accessible for adult learners.
- Returning adult learners often cannot fulfill the graduation writing requirements in an efficient or meaningful way – taking any course that will fulfill the requirement instead of enhancing their writing over time and within the major.

Recommendations:

- The Provost and college leadership should examine the current funding structure of Evening/Weekend, Summer, Independent Study and Distance Learning Programs, and

realign to incentivize specifically targeted areas of study (to better serve targeted populations of adult learners).

- College leadership could use data gathered by central resources to decide academic niche for programs targeting adult students and accommodate their needs. The existence of coherent, planned degree programs for adult students and those enrolling nontraditionally would lower university costs and increase income because students would know when needed courses will be offered and enroll in them when offered on a predetermined schedule. The current system, on the other hand, in most instances offers random offerings not tied to planned sequences for degree completion. This lowers enrollment and income in specific course offerings and in the degree programs and leads to inefficient offering of courses and use of faculty.
- Efficient and innovative use of existing space through scheduling options with expanding delivery of courses scheduled in the evening, on the weekend, and in the summer in cooperation with colleges will maximize access to University courses and degree programs.
- College leadership take a more active role in working regularly with the Evening/Weekend Program's staff to provide faculty for sections as identified by the E/W Growth Plan.
- Leverage the use of technology to improve outreach, especially in distance learning.
- There should be a way for returning adults to put together a portfolio or work writing that could satisfy the Graduation Writing Requirement in alternative ways.
- Encourage colleges and departments to provide better in-house bridge/transition programs for exploratory adult learners; and to create better educational pathways through articulation agreements among higher education institutions.

Improve the recruitment and enrollment process for adult students: Reducing the cost of postsecondary education for adults will go a long way in encouraging them to take the extra steps necessary to finish their degrees while working fulltime, on active military duty or caring for children and other dependents.

Problems:

- The perceptions of faculty and administrators are that UK lacks strategic partnerships with local business and industry that support local workforce development efforts; in addition, the various community engagement activities currently in place at UK are not organized in a way to appeal to adults seeking to return to UK for a degree.
- The UK See Blue campaign materials do not include targeting adult populations (though Project Graduate campaigns from the state continue to yield good results for UK).
- The UK online application is too complicated and not conducive to information gathering from an adult learner; an easier application/re-application process is needed (e.g., the Project Graduate currently utilizes a shortened, simpler application form but it is handled manually).
- The UK Schedule of Classes is difficult to navigate for adult learners searching for the most up-to-date information on evening, weekend or online course offerings.

- The students and faculty feel that the website for the Office of Adult Student Services could contain more up-to-date information about the availability and requirements for kinds of courses that offer flexible programming and provide more information on degree programs – whether or not the non-traditional student is able to finish a program in a timely fashion.
- Financial support is not available for assistance with individual educational and career planning prior to and during enrollment.
- There are few and insufficient financial resources for part-time and/or independent study students.
- Neither UK nor UK Hospital offers a child/dependent care facility on campus with adequate availability at the low cost most needed for the adult learner with dependents - yet numerous studies over the years (including most recently the President's Commission on UK Work-Life) show that UK benchmark institutions with higher retention and student success for both undergraduate and graduate students support these services. When UK Work-Life sent out an RFP for additional child care centers in 2007, vendors replied that they would require some financial investments from the University - the monetary sum would be negotiable, but the University would have to provide start-up money and negotiate some type of ongoing support, whether it be property maintenance or child care tuition subsidies.

Recommendations:

- Plan a strategy to develop additional relationships, partnerships and collaborations with employers and other organizations to recruit and appropriately transition adult populations into specific courses and degree options that are mutually considered valuable for degree-seeking adults.
- Expand the Project Graduate marketing by adapting the See Blue campaign materials in ways that pay close attention to niche programs particularly useful for adult learners (using prepared educational plans similar to the BCTCblue+ Transfer Pathway Guides).
- Revise the way that the schedule of classes is accessed so that those programs and courses with the most flexible time/day/delivery options are easily found and searched by adult learners. Include programming that would allow for this information to be displayed real-time on the website for the Office of Adult Student Services and/or separately, the websites for Office of Evening/Weekend Programs, Distance Learning Programs and Independent Studies Program.
- Find ways to make fees more accommodating for students who drop in/out of system.
- Ensure sufficient resources for part-time students.
- Offer payment plans to Independent Study Program learners the same as for regular course payments.
- Find ways to evaluate more efficiently and give college credit for college-level learning that takes place outside a formal classroom environment, e.g., service learning.
- Convene focus groups of students, faculty and administrators to address financial aid issues; articulate reasons for each groups' perceptions and brainstorm solutions that address those issues. This work should then lead to the promotion and support of

policies that (a) leverage new sources of funding, (b) offer flexible payment plans and other help in financing adult learning, and (c) encourage employer tuition assistance for workers.

- Support campus-wide discussions about costs and benefits of a student cooperative for an on-campus child/dependent care in collaboration with the Student Government Association, Non-Traditional Student Organization (NTSO), Student Support Services, and the UK Work-Life Office.

Create a leave of absence category for undergraduate students: This new status would help keep track of students who drop out/come back periodically and ensure students remain in good standing.

Problems:

- Currently, many students who drop out tend to withdraw without formally interacting with each of the units on campus that need to process their withdrawal forms and keep them in good standing for re-entry. Many students with a semester filled with course grades of “E” are those who left the University without realizing they needed to withdraw formally. Also, students often use the MyUK portal to withdraw from all their courses and do not realize that they still have one course in their schedule – they leave anyway.
- Another group of students to address are veteran students now being given federal grants for all expenses, however, there is little flexibility in where/when students in active military duty may return in the program.

Recommendations:

- A leave of absence could function as a zero-credit course – this way, the student can make sure the program wants them back (similar to study abroad or EXP courses) and this would keep students from having to re-apply, maintain their catalog year and ease pre-registration processes (and stop the regular recharging of these students every time they sit out a fall or spring semester).

Assess regularly the effectiveness of adult student services and track enrollment, retention and graduation: Current measures focus on first-time, full-time students; better measures would include student achievement of learning goals, persistence patterns, and the percentage of adult learners that achieve their goals regardless of time of entry.

Problems:

- While the use of “Go Higher Kentucky” CAS and UK’s APEX are important steps in the intake and support for adult learners seeking a degree, UK staff and faculty do not regularly utilize a formal career planning (or portfolio) process that is easily portable for adult learners moving through the advising process from centralized intake recruitment and admissions to college and department level interactions with faculty.

- Student support staff dedicated to serving adult learners currently do not use available technologies for tracking their target audiences.
- Intake procedures do not include documented goal-setting exercises/assessments that transition easily to the student's college and academic advising staff.
- The adult learner transferring from a KCTCS or comprehensive KY institution may not have received adequate advising upon enrollment about the match of previous work to the needs for a particular UK major and timely graduation.

Recommendations:

- Convene faculty, administrators and adult learners to address ways that UK can improve in Life/Career Planning using the appropriate ALFI Toolkit results as part of the discussions.
- New metrics delineated by age are needed for adult enrollment, success, and good handling by the colleges as well as the Office of Adult Student Services. Efficiency might be measured by total number of credits taken by adult learners in particular majors. Other/additional measures are needed.
- Use online and other technologies (e.g., Hobsons Connect and/or EMT Retain) to increase accessibility, improve outreach and ease tracking/evaluation processes.
- Develop and implement an assessment plan for continuous improvement of services for adult learners at the University of Kentucky.
- The transfer advisor in Central Advising Service and Transfer Center (CASTC) is housed and primarily works in BCTC to support a more informed recruiting effort. Adding a true Transfer Center to the CASTC unit will provide the data-driven support and consistent procedural interactions with the adult learner transferring into UK, especially those coming from the community colleges.

Provide additional, centralized resources for the Project Graduate initiative: Project Graduate is a statewide effort to raise awareness of the importance and value of higher education to individuals, families, and the society; in a very targeted way, this shows UK is paying attention to the entire lifelong-learning continuum.

Problems:

- There are few enhanced systems for adult learners, including but not limited to flexible time-frames for enrollment, registration, and program participation.
- Few services are offered at UK that address the life circumstances of the adult: child care, support networks, adult-centered orientation and advising.

Recommendations:

- Provide more resources at the central and college levels that are dedicated to
 - encouraging/mentoring recruited (though not yet enrolled) students who regularly start out or return to college unsure of their competitiveness against younger students who have remained consistently enrolled through secondary school and college,

- surveying and consulting with enrolled students about their expectations for degrees offered at UK,
 - consulting with admitted adult students about their past work experience and/or college transcripts and prepare degree audits using APEX,
 - supporting (and overseeing effectiveness of) a formal program for peer mentoring and peer advisement of adult learners,
 - advocating on behalf of individual students for non-traditional degree completion opportunities,
 - gathering data on effectiveness and satisfaction rates of student support services in general (e.g., continuing to use the ALI survey on a regular basis, incorporating adult learner focused questions into University-wide surveys such as Freshman Survey, Graduating Survey and NSSE), and
 - offering non-traditional office hours for support activities and personal consultations with adult students from any college.
- Provide support for and require colleges to serve adult learners at times congruent with their work schedules and in formats that allow for the most effective access to learning.
 - Actively attract adults to UK through unique recruiting efforts such as statewide initiatives, especially those using technology, and regional employer fairs.

APPENDIX

- A. Summary Results for the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) ALFI Toolkit:
 - (1) Noel-Levitz Adult Learner Inventory
 - (2) Noel Levitz Institutional Self Assessment Inventory
 - (3) Basic Report by Judith B. Wertheim, CAEL

- B. Discussion Notes:
 - (1) Faculty Forum, March 25, 2009
 - (2) Student Forum, Non-Traditional Student Organization, March 26, 2009
 - (3) Faculty Forum, April 27, 2009

- C. Student Support Staff Survey Results

- D. Former UK Students' Telephone Survey Results

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY RESULTS FOR THE COUNCIL FOR ADULT AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (CAEL)

ALFI TOOLKIT:

- (1) Noel-Levitz Adult Learner Inventory**
- (2) Noel Levitz Institutional Self-Assessment Inventory**
- (3) Basic Report by Judith B. Wertheim, CAEL**

(1) Noel-Levitz Adult Learner Inventory

The Adult Learner Inventory (ALI), a joint project of the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, University of Kentucky and Noel-Levitz, was launched on February 19, 2009. Emailed invitations to complete the survey were sent to 1,755 adult students who were 25 years of age or older. Two reminders were sent during the three-week survey window. The response rate, 44.6 percent, is excellent for an online survey.

Nearly three of five (58.7%) survey respondents were in the 25-to-34 age range. Half of the students (50.1%) were married, and only one-third (34.7%) of all respondents had dependents. The majority of students were employed, but less than half (42.9%) worked on a full-time basis. One-fourth (25.1%) of the students were the first in their families to attend college, which is comparable to the overall student body. Nearly half (46.3%) of the students indicated that they had completed “more than 3/4 of my program.”

Adult students rate items on the ALI in terms of their degree of importance and their level of satisfaction. All items are rated on seven-point scales, ranging from 1-“not important (satisfied) at all” to 7 “very important (satisfied)”. Noel-Levitz identified 12 items that revealed UK’s strengths for serving adult students (see Table 1). The mean ratings for these items ranged from 5.33 to 5.73. Five of the items (see items 10, 17, 29, 43, and 46) classified as strengths loaded on the “Teaching – Learning Process” scale. These items capture critical aspects of the classroom experience, including interactions with and feedback from instructors. Two other items appeared on the “Outreach” scale (see items 13 and 30) and tapped students’ experiences with enrolling for classes and obtaining critical information.

Table 1: Strengths on the Adult Learner Inventory

Item	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
33. This institution explains what is needed for me to complete my program here.	6.63	5.48	1.15
21. My studies are closely related to my life and work goals.	6.50	5.57	0.93
10. I have a clear understanding of what I'm expected to learn in my classes.	6.45	5.48	0.97
19. I receive timely responses to my requests for help and information.	6.43	5.33	1.10
30. I am able to obtain information I need by phone, fax, e-mail, or online.	6.42	5.73	0.69
17. My instructors provide timely feedback about my academic progress.	6.36	5.38	0.98
46. The learning experiences within my program challenge me to reach beyond what I know already.	6.33	5.52	0.81
13. Processes and procedures for enrolling here are convenient.	6.31	5.33	0.98
32. Technology enables me to get the services I need when I need them.	6.31	5.45	0.86
29. My instructors respect student opinions and ideas that differ from their own.	6.30	5.43	0.87
43. The frequency of interactions with my instructors is satisfactory.	6.24	5.48	0.76
18. This institution uses technology on a regular basis to communicate with me.	5.99	5.89	0.10

The inventory results also suggest that UK faces significant challenges in improving adult students' experiences. Table 2 reveals eight items where the gap between students' importance and satisfaction ratings is noteworthy, ranging from 1.35 to 2.52. The gap between these two ratings suggests that students' needs are not being met in certain critical areas. Three of the eight items (see items 2, 8, and 44) appeared on the "Life and Career Planning scale. Students do not believe that sufficient course offerings within their majors are available or that UK is providing them with the help needed to develop an education plan. The item with the lowest satisfaction rating and the greatest gap involves receiving credit for learning derived from life and work experiences.

Table 2: Challenges on the Adult Learner Inventory

Item	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
2. Sufficient course offerings within my program of study are available each term.	6.55	4.48	2.07
26. I am able to choose course delivery that fits my life circumstances.	6.39	4.28	2.11
40. I receive the help I need to make decisions about courses and programs that interest me.	6.38	5.02	1.36
1. My program allows me to pace my studies to fit my life and work schedules.	6.36	4.49	1.87
8. This institution provides students with the help they need to develop an education plan.	6.24	4.89	1.35
9. I receive adequate information about sources of financial assistance available to me.	6.21	4.50	1.71
25. I'm evaluated on the knowledge and skills I'll need in my life and career.	6.19	4.78	1.41
44. I can receive credit for learning derived from my previous life and work experiences.	6.13	3.61	2.52

(2) Noel Levitz Institutional Self-Assessment Inventory

The Institutional Self-Assessment Inventory (ISAS), the second part of the ALFI Toolkit offered by CAEL, was parceled out among the task force members during the Fall 2008 semester to find the appropriate stakeholders for the information requested and to gather the most appropriate answers. The following categories of the ISAS included answers supplied by consulting the following University staff and faculty (including task force members):

- **Institutional Background:** Jeannine Blackwell, Randolph Hollingsworth, Angie Martin, Cecile McKinney, Connie Ray, Roger Sugarman, Bill Swinford, Don Witt
- **Mission, Leadership and Organizational Structure:** Heidi Anderson, Jeannine Blackwell, Victor Hazard, Angie Martin, Cecile McKinney, Connie Ray, Roger Sugarman, Bill Swinford, Don Witt
- **Recruitment and Orientation:** Cecile McKinney, Don Witt
- **Tuition and Financial Aid:** Angie Martin, Linda George, Morris Sammons
- **Teaching and Learning:** Heidi Anderson, Ray Archer, Connie Baird, Jeannine Blackwell, Bill Burke, Susan Carvalho, Phil Kraemer, Angie Martin, Connie Ray, Roger Sugarman
- **Faculty Recruitment and Development:** Jeannine Blackwell, Heidi Anderson, Ray Archer, Connie Baird, Bill Burke, Phil Kraemer, Connie Ray, Roger Sugarman
- **Student Services:** Jeannine Blackwell, Richard Greissman, Victor Hazard, Randolph Hollingsworth, Morris Sammons, Don Witt
- **Key Constituencies:** Phil Greasley, Randolph Hollingsworth

By February 13, 2009, the last draft of answers were sent to all of the above individuals and Provost Subbaswamy for final approval. The finished set of answers was submitted online to Noel Levitz on February 19th.

In considering the answers to the ISAS, special care was given to the University's new efforts at student retention and graduation rates, the changing nature of the Office of Undergraduate Education, the new focus on General Education requirements and the University's strategic plan. Given that the University of Kentucky's adult student population is relatively low (less than 10%) and attention to the non-traditional student has for the last few years been a high priority for the University, the answers tended to be very mixed and unusual compared to the other institutions submitting answers to the ISAS at this time. The result was low scores assigned by CAEL to the combination of answers pertinent to the ALFI Principles.

The most positive answers from University administrators in considering adult-focused experiences centered on these principles (in order of ranking among the top three):

1. Life/Career Planning: addressing adult learners' life and career goals before or at the onset of enrollment in order to assess and align capacities to help learners to reach their goals
2. Financing: promoting choice using an array of payment options for adult learners in order to expand equity and financial flexibility
3. Technology: using information technology to provide relevant and timely information to enhance the learning experience

The most negative answers from University administrators centered on these principles (lowest ranking first):

1. Strategic Partnerships: engaging in strategic relationships, partnerships and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners
2. Teaching and Learning Process: using multiple methods of instruction by faculty (including experiential and problem-based methods) in order to connect curricular concepts to knowledge and skills useful for adult learners
3. Assessment: defining and assessing the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by adult learners both from the curriculum and from life/work experiences in order to assign credit and confer degrees with rigor

(3) Summary of the ALFI Toolkit Basic Report

By Judith B. Wertheim, Vice President, Higher Education Services
Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, Chicago, IL
April 2009

The ALFI Toolkit Basic Report is an analysis by Judy Wertheim of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) based on the two Noel-Levitz surveys deployed by the University of Kentucky in February 2009:

- Adult Learner Inventory (ALI) by currently enrolled UK adult students; and,
- Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) by faculty, administrators and staff.

Together the two surveys comprised the Adult Learning Focused Institution (ALFI) Toolkit. The report addresses the perceptions of each group on the ALFI Principles of Effectiveness in Serving Adult Learners:

1. Outreach
2. Life and Career Planning
3. Financing
4. Assessment of Learning Outcomes
5. The Teaching-Learning Process
6. Student Support Systems
7. Technology
8. Transitions
9. Strategic Partnerships (addressed only by faculty and administrators)

The ALFI data reveals *perceptions* of performance on the nine principles. The analysis compared the results from the two groups at the University of Kentucky using a “crosswalk” of the questions on each instrument - examining how the questions for students match up with those for faculty and administrators.

	ISAS	ALI
1	Life/Career Planning	Technology
2	Finance	Teaching/Learning Process
3	Technology	Assessment
4	Transitions	Transitions
5	Outreach	Support
6	Support	Outreach
7	Assessment	Finance
8	Teaching/Learning Process	Life/Career Planning
9	Partnerships	

The report also recommended some “next steps” at the University of Kentucky.

Key Comparisons between ISAS and ALI Results

The Institutional Self-Assessment Survey (ISAS) data show that faculty and administrators at the University of Kentucky are quite critical in their perceptions of how the institution is serving its adult learners. Indeed, only one of the rankings, for the ALFI Principle Life/Career Planning, ranks in the upper half of the results. The next highest ranking is achieved by Technology. And most notably, perceptions of the faculty and administrators at the University of Kentucky place the Partnership Principle at the lowest. Clearly, those who completed the ISAS believe that there is much room for improvement if the institution is to serve adult learners more effectively.

And when compared to the data from the adult students at the University of Kentucky, the ALI results correspond to the ISAS data. Adult students, too, are critical of the university's performance on the ALFI Principles and see much room for improvement. Their perceptions, for example, rank Technology highest and the lowest attained by Outreach.

When compared to one another, both survey groups rank the university's performance on the Principle of Technology highly. Clearly, there is agreement that the University of Kentucky uses information technology to provide relevant and timely information and to enhance the learning experience. Given this agreement, CAEL recommends that you capitalize on this congruence and use your strength in Technology in your marketing campaigns.

The two groups also agree that your institution's performance on the Transitions Principle ranks in the upper half. Here, too, CAEL recommends that marketing materials include reference to the university's support of guided pathways that lead into and from the institution's programs and services in order to ensure that students' learning will apply usefully to achieving their educational and career goals.

On the other hand, the major discrepancy on the rankings for the Life/Career Planning Principle is impressive. Whereas faculty and administrators perceive performance here as superior, with a ranking of #1, adult learners perceive this as #8, with the largest performance gap. It is only infrequently that such major differences in perceptions occur. What are the reasons for the diametrically opposed perceptions of Life/Career Planning at the University of Kentucky? In order to answer this question – and then begin to move forward to make the groups' perceptions more congruent – CAEL recommends that a priority be convening focus groups of both faculty and administrators and adult learners to discuss current approaches to Life/Career Planning at the university. These groups could use as a framework the questions identified in the Crosswalk, as well as in the attached Benchmark Contributions Summary. The Summary indicates how questions on the ISAS contribute to each Principle of Effectiveness.

A second priority for action is Finance. Although faculty and administrators rank it #2, students rank it #7. Clearly, there is a discrepancy in perceptions, too. Perhaps information about financial aid is available, but students do not know how to access it. Perhaps faculty and administrators do not understand the financial needs of students. Or perhaps the institution

does not provide creative financial aid policies. In order to understand the reasons for the differing perceptions and begin to move toward resolving them, CAEL recommends that the institution convene additional focus groups, comprised of students, faculty and administrators, to address financial aid matters, articulate the reasons for each group's perceptions, and brainstorm about solutions.

Another Principle on which there is disagreement between the groups is the Teaching/Learning Process. Students' perceptions of the university's performance yield a ranking of #2, while the ranking for faculty and administrators is #8. This discrepancy may arise from the students' limited familiarity with multiple methods of instruction (including experiential and problem-based methods) that can be used to connect curricular concepts to useful knowledge and skills. In any case, CAEL recommends that the university focus on analyzing the reasons for the perceptions of faculty and administrators first. Articulating the reasons for the low ranking of the Teaching/Learning Process will provide new approaches for moving forward to engage adult learners in the educational process.

Finally, CAEL recommends that faculty and administrators at the University of Kentucky work to improve Strategic Partnerships. Even though students are not asked to respond to this scale, among faculty and administrators, perceptions of the institution's performance on Strategic Partnerships are very low. CAEL strongly recommends that you plan a strategy to develop additional relationships, partnerships, and collaborations with employers and other organizations in order to develop and improve educational opportunities for adult learners.

Analyzing the internal rankings on the ALFI surveys, then, gives us information that can be used for marketing strengths at The University of Kentucky, as well as for planning next steps with regard to Life/Career Planning, Finance, the Teaching/Learning Process, and Strategic Partnerships. CAEL's recommendations in this report are not exhaustive. Yet they provide a starting place for acting on the ALFI data as well as for formulating strategic plans that will recognize and enhance the institution's performance on the Principles that are so essential to serving adult learners.

APPENDIX B

Faculty Forum Wednesday, March 25, 2009 Discussion Notes

Attendees:

Faculty: Tim Sineath (School of Library and Information Science), Pat Burkhart (College of Nursing), Gina Lowry (College of Nursing), Kwaku Addo (Nutrition and Food Science); and, Jeannine Blackwell (interim Associate Provost)

ALFI Taskforce Members: Ray Archer, Connie Baird, Phil Greasley, Randolph Hollingsworth, Cecile McKinney, Morris Sammons, and Roger Sugarman

Discussion: Randolph Hollingsworth opened with self-introductions. Then she gave a brief introduction about the mission of the taskforce in assessing the status of the adult learner at UK. She explained the current project underway with funds from CPE (student survey, institutional assessment, phone survey and final report to Provost and CPE). She gave the institutional definition of “adult learner” as: an undergraduate, degree-seeking student 25 years of age or older. To initiate discussion, she asked what problems/hurdles did faculty see for adult learners here at UK; physical space (parking, getting around on campus); interface with university personnel, etc.

Dr. Sineath stated that there is a conflict between traditional undergraduate and the older student; the University assumption is that all undergraduates are 18-24 is not working; the infrastructure has not changed to adapt to different undergraduate student populations. The University needs to accommodate both and recognize they are very different groups.

Question: where are the problems?

Answer: rules/regulations are primary issues that need to be reviewed; office hours need to be reviewed/adjusted (both administrative and professorial)

Question: are K-week activities focused primarily on traditional students?

Answer: the non-traditional student organization does participate in K-week; nothing else outside of classroom that addresses adult students

comment: GI Bill is a key point mentioned at CPE

Dr. Burkhart stated that the College of Nursing has staff dedicated to facilitating their adult students’ experiences. Dr. Lowry noted that students have a pre-conceived notion of what they’re going to get out of the process (first course they take is writing intensive—there are lots of complaints; they often do not read the objectives but rather focus on what they think they’re going to get from a class).

Dr. Sineath commented that a consumer-notion mentality is prevalent among adult learners; they consider the value of what they’re going to get when they come to UK.

Dean Blackwell added that students often view college as job training rather than liberal arts education. Career/job orientation is greater for adult students.

Question: How does the College of Nursing handle adult students when scheduling practicums, etc.?

Answer: There are some practicums that are scheduled for one day per week; they are scheduled with adequate notice (6-8 weeks ahead) to allow students to make adjustments to their works schedules. Summer practicums are 120 hours and usually flexibly scheduled throughout the summer. The four-year program is almost impossible to complete while working a full-time job (16 hours or less of work is recommended).

Comment: Dr. Sineath added that the School of Library and Information Science has a library media certification program that is directed toward school teachers. When scheduling classes, etc., they try to match class/school terms with teacher schedules.

Course availability was mentioned as a problem; there is a lack of advanced courses available in the summer. It was suggested that summer teaching needs to be incentivized in order to get colleges to offer those courses during the summer. There is also difficulty in getting USP courses; they are often not available evenings or summer. Independent Study courses are not always an option due to financing and lack of payment plan. It was suggested that perhaps general education courses specifically should be scheduled evening/weekend/online to accommodate adult students.

The nine-month faculty schedule assumes the traditional 18 to 24 year-old student. Other options that may be considered included: modular scheduling, trimesters, quarter system, team teaching, weekend classes (Nursing already has classes that meet on Saturdays—accessibility to campus is greatly improved then); reconsider entire calendar toward accessibility (professional schools already do this/undergraduate does not). The highly structured programs sometimes work better for adult students and flexible scheduling than interdisciplinary (where there is less control over curriculum).

It was stated that while the adult learner is a growing population, it is not the University's primary focus. Should there be more marketing/promotion to adult/part-time students?

Question: What about office hours/resources for adult students?

Answer: The College of Nursing office hours for their student coordinator are 24/7; they have all phone numbers (although she does request that students not call after 10 p.m.). They see the coordinator's primary role as encourager and to do that, students need access. School of Library and Information Science has a listserv that everyone is required participate in; official notices are posted there. Traditional research-based faculty usually have very large classes (ex., College of Arts and Sciences majors); students are pretty much relegated to self-service due to numbers.

The School of Library and Information Science culture is that professors must have office hours when students are available, professors need answer emails.

The group stressed the importance of answering emails; that professors should provide students with estimated response time at beginning of semester. Connie Baird noted that email response is especially important for distance learning courses. She also reported the distance learning courses have now added Help Desk for evening/weekend courses. There will also be an upgrade to Blackboard in June; along with online Blackboard training for faculty.

UK is not actually targeting adult learners; if that were to happen, there would need to be a plan to make USP courses available to adult students (could be done, especially with online courses) and need to have/get advisors available when students could meet.

Dr. Burkhart stressed the importance of reviewing the Strategic Plan. Is it part of UK's plan to reach adult learner? If yes, what does the plan say, and how do we make it work. Is it a primary or secondary goal? It was noted that ECU is currently advertising heavily to adult students. However, that may be inappropriate for UK to do—to make it work the culture here would have to change. There would have to be “buy-in” by faculty to make anything work; and certainly we should not disrupt things that are already working well. Perhaps UK could look at partnership with BCTC; make the BCTCblue+ program better known to adult students. (Note: The College of Nursing has some problems with accepting lower TOEFL scores and need to continue to work with BCTC to work that out.)

Question: How will nationalization of campus affect adult learners?

Answer: would probably focus more on graduate level; there are more restrictions with VISAs. The College of Nursing is already working toward developing partnerships with other countries to develop courses, etc. Dr. Sineath suggested that success will have to start at bottom and work up—program by program—starting with the easier programs.

Cecile will develop a core list of USP courses available each semester and post to their website (including distance learning, independent studies, and other courses typically useful to adult learners).

A statement needs to be suggested/submitted to the 2009-14 Strategic Plan that is currently being finalized.

Student Forum
Non-Traditional Student Organization (NTSO)
March 26, 2009
Discussion Notes

Attendees:

John Lindsey, NTSO president, Lynn Lindle (vice president), four additional students; Jerry Price, staff advisor; Dr. Howard Glauert, faculty advisor. The student majors represented: business management, accounting, fine arts, family studies and engineering.

ALFI Task Force members: Connie Baird, Randolph Hollingsworth, Cecile McKinney, Morris Sammons and Roger Sugarman.

Discussion: John opened the meeting by welcoming the task force. Randolph gave a brief introduction to why the task force was at the meeting. John then gave a PowerPoint presentation on some of the issues that the NTSO had previously discussed/identified.

- defining “adult student”
- difficulty of scheduling for classes
 - inconvenient times
 - process not streamlined
 - information that doesn’t apply to non-traditional students
 - no parking/access to campus
- advertising courses/programs not available
- non-traditional students pay same tuition, but do not receive same treatment
- non-traditional students accept sub-par education
- no PhD faculty available for night courses
- no way to complete degree in night program...closer you get to graduation; courses not available
 - every course available during the day should be available at night
- culture problem/no communication
- examples in classes more related to younger, traditional students
- scholarships
 - majority targeted to women currently
 - opportunity for federal funds for displace workers, non-traditional students?
- Saturday/weekend accelerated classes would be a good option
- Dedicated parking for non-traditional students
- Administration doesn’t consider the non-monetary cost of education
- Knowing expectations ahead of time
 - Given expectations by colleges that they can complete degree when not possible based on course availability
- Mechanism to evaluate current programs offered as they apply to non-traditional students
- Need to compile data about issues

- NTSO sent out their own survey—7 respondents so far (only one person at meeting responded to ALFI survey)
- NTSO will provide task force with copy of the survey and results; they would like to get results of ALFI survey
- Need adult student retention office/program
- Existing resource that work well need to be enhanced
- More internet classes
- UK has image problem even with traditional students
- Don't market programs until needs can be met
 - Won't work without more evening/weekend degree programs
 - Night courses that aren't available
- Providing course options at capstone level (3rd-4th year options)
 - Via internet
 - Distance Learning options
 - Evening/weekend courses
- Culture problem with faculty understanding the adult learner
- Tutoring services
 - Many services have moved to dorms
 - Location intimidating/inconvenient
 - Library is a great location
 - Incentivize peer tutoring aimed to non-traditional students (non-traditional students helping other non-traditional students)
 - Space on networking sites
 - MathSkellar closes at 5 p.m.
- Need resources/information directed at non-traditional students
- NTSO has developed/is conducting its own student survey
 - Only a few respondents to date
 - Sent to graduate and undergraduate students
 - Most urgent problems include
 - Class availability
 - Tuition costs
 - Less urgent problems include
 - Child/dependent care
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Medical needs
 - Tutoring
 - Will work on getting additional responses from survey
- Advising Issues
 - Evening hours are not available
 - Attitude/lack of professional presentation
- Expectations are key
 - Family/social sciences good about working with adult learners
 - Additional adult students during the day with increase of displaced workers
 - Flexible delivery of courses

- College culture
- More staff in Evening/Weekend College Office
- More visibility as organization (NTSO)
- Advising in Fine Arts is excellent (program is flexible)
- Need coordination of effort to get information to/from adult learners
 - Augment rather than duplicate efforts
- Define the value for adult learner
- Non-traditional students add diversity to the classroom; bring different experience to classroom
- Colleges say they don't have/cannot get faculty to teach at night
 - Recommend adjunct faculty—some of the best teachers are from the field
 - They're good and available at night
- Internships/career counseling
- Losing alumni dollars because of poor treatment/process of graduating from UK
 - How do non-traditional students feel about the University
- University saying one thing; colleges each treat non-traditional students differently

ADDENDUM

Benjamin Duncan, Student Government Association Chief of Staff, forwarded to the ALFI Task Force an email sent to them that has sparked discussions with UK Student Involvement and the UK Work-Life Office that will be taken up as a campus-wide initiative this coming year in collaboration with the NTSO:

... I am a 32-year-old UK student enrolled in the 2nd Degree BSN at the College of Nursing. I will complete the program in December, 2010. I moved to Lexington with my husband, 2 kids, and our pets (horses, dogs, cats) last year from Oregon. We had no jobs and no home when we arrived here but that all fell into place. I had already been accepted to UK prior to our move. We moved to Kentucky for the simple reason of just wanting to experience life in a different part of the country. We have no family here. I guess you could say we're on an adventure. Now we've settled in to our daily routines of raising kids, working, and going to school. It's not easy but I have no doubt that my decision to change careers and go into nursing was the right one.

My children will be 4 and 2 in May. One of them attends a pre-school program at a child/dependent care center. The other attends an in-home child/dependent care. We pay just over \$1,000 per month for child/dependent care. I was wondering why UK or UK Hospital does not have a child/dependent care facility. I'm not suggesting that students/employees get free child/dependent care. However, having a child/dependent care resource on campus would be a tremendous asset for so many people. I attended college in southern California and in Oregon. The campuses I've been on have all had a child/dependent care center. They are run by trained staff just like any other child/dependent care center. However, they also provide a valuable learning tool to students who major in things like child development or education. Students will observe and/or interact with these children as part of a clinical experience. Of course parents could opt out of having their child involved in such activities but for the most part, I don't think parents mind because it's mostly about observation. From my

experience thus far at UK, I haven't sensed that there is a large population of non-traditional students like myself. But we are out there and we look for resources that would make our busy lives a little bit easier. I also know there are many employees who have young families and would probably find greater peace-of-mind in having their children so close while they work and/or attend classes. Having a childcare center on campus would not only be convenient (and hopefully affordable) for students/staff, it would also provide more job opportunities for students (with proper certification) as they could work there between classes. Finally, as I've mentioned before, it would provide a tremendous learning environment for students who study behavior in young people. I also feel that it would be a great recruiting tool for future non-traditional students who are juggling the responsibilities of family, work, and school.

UK recommends parents take their kids to KinderCare. KinderCare is one of the highest priced facilities in the region. Even with a UK discount, it's still more costly than many of the more expensive centers in Lexington. I just think having a facility on campus would really be a win-win for everyone involved."

Comment from one survey respondent (forwarded to us from Noel-Levitz):

... I am an adult student in the Interior Design Program at The University of Kentucky. I have completed and submitted the Adult Learner Inventory distributed by Noel-Levitz, but feel that some areas of concern and dissatisfaction were not captured in my survey responses. My experience has been that the Interior Design Program has fallen far short of my expectations in aiding in the unique challenges of being an adult student.

For example, I was shocked to see in the survey that it is possible to evaluate job experience and apply related academic credit. This has never been given to me as an option, and I even specifically asked. I have a BS in Applied Math from a Top-25 institution and have had a successful 10-year career in Finance and Marketing. Upon admission to the Design Program, I was made to sit through an entry-level marketing course. Believe me when I say that after 10 years in the Financial Services and Energy Trading industries the Marketing class was a ridiculous waste of my time and money.

Largely, there has been a "can't do" attitude in the Program with respect to adult learning issues, particularly from my advisor and the admission and guidance office. After my seeking it out, the Dean has made herself available and has been more helpful than the staff. My individual instructors have been understanding on the infrequent occasion of my having to take care of my family's needs during class time. However, to complete this program as an adult learner seems at times like an impossibility, and likely it is without more support from the Administration.

If as a part of this survey process focus groups or phone interviews with students are planned, I would like to make myself available to participate. I am a big believer in life-long learning and would be honored to have a positive impact on the University's growth in this area.

I hope this survey process will be a valuable learning tool for the University to better serve adult learners in their community.

Faculty Forum
Monday, April 27, 2009
Discussion Notes

Attendees:

Faculty: Susan Carvalho (Hispanic Studies), James Hougland (Sociology) , David Randall (Physiology)

ALFI Taskforce Members: Randolph Hollingsworth, Cecile McKinney, Morris Sammons, and Roger Sugarman.

Discussion: Randolph Hollingsworth opened with self-introductions. Then she gave a brief introduction about the mission of the taskforce in assessing the status of the adult learner at UK. She explained the current project underway with funds from CPE (student survey, institutional assessment, phone survey and final report to Provost and CPE). She gave the institutional definition of “adult learner” as: an undergraduate, degree-seeking student 25 years of age or older. To initiate discussion, she asked what problems/hurdles did faculty see for adult learners here at UK; physical space (parking, getting around on campus); interface with university personnel, etc.

Dr. Hougland commented about adult learner characteristics of over-commitment, “nervousness” about their ability to succeed, and a weak/uneven academic background and general difficulty with “theoretic concepts.”

Dr. Carvalho noted that sometimes adult learners exhibit impatience with abstract/other students who “waste” class time. Adult learners usually are looking for the shortest path to the goal. While adult learners add to the class, they require a different type of management. Dr. Randall strongly agreed and emphasized that the University has an obligation to serve the returning veteran who wants a UK degree.

Question: Roger asked if the faculty thought the adult learners’ overriding job/career focus makes them less interested in theory?

Comments: Dr. Carvalho stated that adult learners sometimes see themselves as facilitators—determine how they think the discussion should proceed; they show their annoyance when they think other students take over the discussion from the professor. Dr. Hougland said he sees adult learners’ impatience when they see a younger student with less experience get the same or better grades. Dr. Carvalho agreed and cited that adult learners often express impatience through facial expressions, etc., when younger students give class presentations.

Perhaps that impatience is related to the fact that the majority of adult learners are paying for their own education. Cecile noted that adult learners often see classes as a repeat of information given their life experience; adult learners cannot afford to waste time. The Study Abroad program is a prime example of programs that adult learners are not able to participate in given family/life circumstances.

Randolph commented on the population and pedagogical change at UK following World War II; specific examples of change include the introduction of big lecture halls and new relationships between faculty, staff and students.

Question: Does UK want to change classroom styles to meet needs?

Comments: The traditional student is dealing with their feelings of being away from home for the first time while the adult learner typically is “on the job” and needs concrete results from his/her time in the classroom. Perhaps a doctoral/research institution is not the best match for the adult learner...need to be welcoming, but perhaps it is just not the best option. Overall, there are a relatively small number of adult learners at UK.

Some institutions are not interested in discussing articulation agreements with UK.

There is no PR campaign to recruit adult learners at UK like at other institutions; also the weekends and evenings are poorly staffed. Given the decline of birthrate, wars/new GI bills, and economic times...all could increase the potential adult learner population and thus raise expectations for resources at UK.

Dr. Randall commented that the Kentucky Coalition of Senate and Faculty Leaders has discussed the issue of returning veterans and is interested in learning how UK might emphasize the need for specific resources for this population.

Question: is maintaining the adult learner PR market share important to UK?

Comments: There may be better services; institutions other than UK that provide better services and are a better fit for adult learners. Marketing/recruiting adult learners may depend on programs available at UK. UK shouldn't market a program until something is developed and in place. Evening classes are very limited. (asked/answered: currently no tracking on what classes adult learners are taking)

Cecile stated that the Evening/Weekend office has an Evening Weekend Growth Plan which offers incentives to faculty; still have trouble getting faculty to teach evenings (especially weekends). Online degrees are popular, but often traditional students fill those classes. There is a Transfer Coordinator and Transfer Advisor available to adult learners coming in from other institutions. Unfortunately, we sometimes recruit the students here, but then ask them to do things here that they cannot do (given scheduling options, etc.).

Randolph talked a bit about the CPE's Postsecondary Education Centers which are located throughout the state where community colleges are not located. However, UK's purpose is solidified by the way the funds flow from CPE – Top 20 Research. Based on meetings that Randolph and Connie Ray attended last year with CPE, the idea of collaborating in programs offered by KCTCS and the comprehensive universities in off-campus sites – UK is not at the top of the list for any new collaborative partnerships needed in those regional

areas (as determined by the comprehensive universities currently running them). UK has developed a transfer agreement with BCTC called “BCTCblue+” and transfer pathway guides have been developed for about 50 majors (this works better than the 2+2 plan). Randolph will send the URL to Dr. Hougland regarding the Pathway Guides.

Question: Does UK Graduate School want UK undergraduates in their programs?

Comments: Dr. Hougland said that Sociology welcomes UK baccalaureates into their masters program; however, they usually encourage doctorate students to go elsewhere if they have completed both their baccalaureate and their masters degrees at UK. It sometimes depends on the college/program; professional schools use it as an opportunity to feed graduates into state.

Randolph will send draft of findings and recommendations to Drs. Carvalho, Randall and Hougland for their review. Dr. Randall also indicated that he would like to include in the Faculty Senate retreat this summer the issue of how UK might better accommodate the needs of adult learners.

APPENDIX C

Student Support Staff Survey

Sent: Monday, April 27, 2009 12:38 PM

To: UKADVNET@LSV.UKY.EDU

Subject: Advising and other student services in your college - are your services accessible to the adult learner?

Dear Advising Network members,

As part of the Provost's War on Attrition and in response to statewide efforts to address the needs of adult learners, a task group has been working on issues particular to the University of Kentucky, gathering data and preparing recommendations to the Provost. The Council on Postsecondary Education has emphasized that in order to meet Kentucky's goal to "Double the Numbers" of college graduates by 2020, higher ed will need to increase adult college participation rates -- that is, increasing the enrollment and retention of adults who started but never completed a bachelor's degree, adults with an associate's degree who want to complete a bachelor's degree, and high school graduates (or GED completers) with no college experience (see more on this CPE initiative at http://www.cpe.ky.gov/policies/academicinit/adult_learner.htm). The task force members have learned about the great work you are already doing with the state's Project Graduate initiative, and we are wondering if there are ways that we could enhance this effort in order to become a more "adult friendly" campus (see the principles of effectiveness for serving adult learners at the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning's website, <http://www.cael.org/alfi/principle.html>).

We would appreciate hearing from you as academic advising and student services support staff about how your unit currently serves undergraduate students who are 25 years or older. Please do not reply to the listserv but forward your comments to me or Terri directly - no later than Tuesday.

1. Does your unit offer evening or weekend hours for those services considered most critical to student academic progress? If no, why not? If yes, how are these services delivered?
2. From the task force's survey to adult learners this spring, we learned that the University's technology efforts are ranked high in importance and in satisfaction rates for adult learners - technology used both for education and services. What role does your unit play in providing support via technology? Do you perceive that there may be barriers to the continued success of this aspect of University services?
3. What, in your view, is the ONE most pressing need in order for your unit to serve adult learners (especially returning to school or transferring from community colleges) more effectively?
4. The CPE appears to be ready to push the Project Graduate effort further down in credit hours completed. How might the University better support the work you do with Project Graduate recruits and enrollees?

Thank you for your time in answering these questions and providing any additional feedback you may wish to provide on the issues regarding adult learners at UK. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Randolph

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Randolph Hollingsworth, Ph.D.  
Assistant Provost  
University of Kentucky

\*\*\*\*\* RESPONSES \*\*\*\*\*

**GENERAL CHEMISTRY LAB**

The primary comment I hear with respect to adult students is one of scheduling. We do not offer any of our general chemistry labs (CHE 111, 113) in the evening, primarily due to safety, stockroom, and staffing issues. I currently coordinate the ChemExcel program (CHE 195 and 197) which uses a peer-led team learning model to assist students in the corresponding lecture course (CHE 105 and 107). Currently, our latest section begins at 4:00 pm. If there was demand, additional funding (\$600 per leader for 8 students) would allow us to add a later section. While most of the sections of these two courses are open enrollment, we do offer restricted sections for AMSTEMM, College of Ag, and Multicultural Affairs. The sections are restricted to their students and they pay the leader. If there was interest and someone willing to pay the leader, we could offer a later section of ChemExcel that is restricted to adult learners. There would need to be a contact person to give overrides to the appropriate students.

Allison Soutl, Ph.D.  
General Chemistry Lab Supervisor  
Department of Chemistry, CP-19  
859-257-7067 (phone) 859-323-1069 (fax) [soutl@uky.edu](mailto:soutl@uky.edu)

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**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (TRIO)**

1. Student Support Services does offer evening services for counseling and tutoring needs for all our students. This began to address those students were non-traditional and those with children. We are open four days late (7pm) with professional staff flexing their hours on their designated late day.
2. We provide limited computer services and printing for our students. Many adult learners have a difficult time accessing and/or have a fear of technology. Staff provide as much assistance as possible, to help alleviate their fear. We also use Kate Black in library to assist our students who have difficulty with research. Due too many having children, childcare is also a concern.
3. More offices across campus with flexible hours to accommodate those students; many adult learners also work and have difficulty with those offices that are strictly an 8- (4:30) or 5 operation.
4. Just recently learning about all they do so I cannot reply on this one.

Please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Lydia Wims, Director  
Student Support Services  
(859) 257-9797 O (859) 257-2960 F

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**COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES**

- 1) Our college offers several classes in the evenings. However, there are others that are offered only in the daytime—never at night, never in the summer. None of our college’s courses are taught via the internet, nor can they be due to the nature of the courses. While our premajor advising office is open til 5pm, we work with adult students to advise them via email or by phone to accommodate their needs.

- 2) Our courses, especially in the School of Journalism & Telecommunications, are heavy in the use of technology. However, this technology is used in the classroom—it doesn't make things more convenient for adult learners (like internet courses would). After this spring semester is ended, I will be working with TASC to get the premajor advising hooked up to the online appointment scheduler. That should help non-traditional as well as traditional students, since right now they have to call or come in to make an appt.
- 3) Historically, the University has decided to put its focus on serving the needs of traditional students. Therefore, there are next-to-no degree programs that can be completed via all-evening classes, or online, or via other distance learning modalities. As we cannot be all things to all people, the University needs to decide what its main mission is and allocate the already-scarce resources to support it.
- 4) No problems with Project Graduate as it is now...

Cathy S. Hunt, Director  
 Office of Student Services  
 College of Communications & Information Studies  
 PH: 859-257-4839 FAX: 859-323-9879

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**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR**

Randolph: There is a new initiative on campus to identify ways in which we can better serve and transition our veteran students. The word on the streets is that the benefits available under the new GI Bill will encourage many veterans to return to school or begin their educational career when they have completed their tour of duty. The group is looking at issues such as helping these students transition from the military environment to a campus environment, the offering of classes such as UK 101 that are restricted to veterans only that will serve not only to provide orientation to UK but as a way to provide support through common interests and experiences. We are supporting the continuing growth of a Veteran Student Organization that has great leadership here on campus. We are exploring the establishment of a location where these students can gather between classes, get a cup of coffee, talk with each other and have access to veteran services such as the VA representative to be here on campus at least one day a week. We are working with faculty to help them understand the unique issues these students face such as appointments at the VA Medical Center that are scheduled for them and cannot be changed – thus they might have to miss class, for which some faculty penalize students.

Jacquie Hager, Associate Registrar

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**Center for Academic Resources & Enrichment Services (CARES)**

1. Yes, we have extended hours. From Monday - Wednesday we are open from 8:00am - 7:00pm. Study groups and individual tutoring sessions meet during this time. Additionally, counselors have academic progress sessions with students who cannot meet during the day. Students can also use the computer lab.
2. We have a University computer lab in our office. Until the 2009 spring semester, it was staffed by student assistants through Student Computing Services. This position was eliminated as a result of the budget cuts.
3. Training on their needs.

4. Our office has not been directly involved with this program. On a personal level, I have told former students about the program.

Toni Thomas, CARES

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## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ACADEMIC SERVICES**

1. Does your unit offer evening or weekend hours for those services considered most critical to student academic progress? If no, why not? If yes, how are these services delivered?
  - a. The Academic Services and Teacher Certification unit does not routinely offer evening and weekend hours.
  - b. We have three staff members, two and ¼ advisors, and an enrollment management specialist. Each staff member has very specific duties, and it would be difficult to keep them all after hours at designated times, while also maintaining regular hours.
  - c. Advisors will meet with students after hours if needed.
  - d. Adult students entering the College of Education have already decided either that they wish a career in public school teaching, or to complete a professional program in Kinesiology. UK's initial preparation programs in these areas are not oriented toward on-line and evening courses.
2. What role does your unit play in providing support via technology? Do you perceive that there may be barriers to the continued success of this aspect of University services?
  - a. We have a "contact the college of education" on the website. Mail from the link comes directly to Academic Services and we respond quickly. We will participate in the NetworkBlue initiative as it comes on line. We are developing a student portal for the college that will provide students an opportunity to gain information, contact advisors and staff, and maintain their profile information... this will be oriented towards the specific requirements of teacher education. Our office is redoing the services website to more clearly provide students with information, access to forms and applications, and links to key sites of important to education students.
  - b. The only barriers are time and personnel resources, given that development has to be done by existing staff with existing resources.
3. What, in your view, is the ONE most pressing need in order for your unit to serve adult learners (especially returning to school or transferring from community colleges) more effectively?
  - a. There isn't any one most important thing required to more effectively serve older students seeking to earn a bachelors degree in the College of Education.
  - b. Our goal is to be as welcoming and responsive as we can be. We hope that our website, our email responses, and or phone conversations serve to accurately assess each student's needs and provide that student with the information they have to have in order to make good personal academic plans.
4. How might the University better support the work you do with Project Graduate recruits and enrollees?
  - a. Currently the College of Education's Enrollment Management Specialist is the person that contacts all identified Project Graduate candidates. She not only contacts each candidate, but also does an audit of their current work, so that accurate, timely advice can be given.

- b. The problem often is that students who wish to complete a degree that was begin much earlier in their lives are going to have a difficult, if not impossible task to complete a College of Education program. Often what is needed is to help the student change programs to one which has a greater likelihood of actually finishing.
- c. It would be helpful if there was a coordinated program from Central Campus to help students choose a program that would allow them to graduate with a degree.

Gary G. Schroeder, Director  
 Academic Services and Teacher Certification  
 College of Education  
 phone: 859-257-8691 FAX: 859-323-3887 gschr1@uky.edu

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**COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE**

- 1) No \$\$ in budget to hire additional staffing for offices and/or PTIs/TAs to teach additional evening classes. Evening classes are also difficult to schedule due to rehearsals and performances.
- 2) Lack of smart classrooms in FA Bldg hampers efforts to teach additional classes requiring technology. (FA Bldg is now wireless, which is a big improvement.) Many arts classes are difficult to teach via technology (e.g. stagecraft or ensemble playing). Some that could be taught via technology would be expensive/labor intensive to develop due to necessary aural or visual requirements.
- 3) Need more financial aid/departmental scholarships available for returning students with good gpas, but not in the highest echelon (3.5 and up). Many of these students must work to support themselves and their families and the budget constraints of tuition and books are too much for them to handle.
- 4) PG takes an incredible amount of time to research requirements, work up plans for students (often requiring multiple plans since the students want to know the “quickest” way to a degree), research possible transfer work or ways for students to finish away from UK, and after all this many times the students decide that it’s not going to be possible to finish. It’s great when they do finish—we have had two complete degrees thus far, and have a couple more who should graduate by December 09. But that’s just a tiny portion of the ones I’ve researched. I don’t know of any way around this problem, but it may be something to voice anyway. I try to put PG students at the top of the pile, thinking that if they’ve worked up the nerve/incentive to inquire about finishing they deserve a quick answer before they get disillusioned with the red tape we so often offer students, but sometimes it’s not possible to give them a fast answer. More flexibility with USP requirements and being able to give credit for “life experience” would also help.

Jane H. Johnson, Director of Student Affairs  
 College of Fine Arts  
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**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS, UNDERGRADUATE RESOURCE CENTER**

- 1. We tried offering evening hours and it didn’t work. We had advisors work evenings. No one came.
- 2. We are fine providing advising over the phone and email. However, we do not have classes offered online. That seems to be what the students want.

3. ONE most pressing need? Class availability. We also need all of the prior work in SAP and equated.
4. How might the University better support the work you do with Project Graduate recruits and enrollees? All prior work entered into SAP and ultimately Apex before they are sent to college.

Nancy Johnson, Associate Dean

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**DEAN OF STUDENTS  
COUNSELING AND TESTING CENTER  
NEW STUDENTS AND PARENTS PROGRAM  
DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER**

1. Does your unit offer evening or weekend hours for those services considered most critical to student academic progress? If no, why not? If yes, how are these services delivered?

Counseling and Testing Center: C&T does many outreach programs in the evenings and some on the weekends. Most are geared toward traditional-aged undergraduates, but some have been attended by 25+ year olds, including some special programs for single parents. Before establishment of the AEP/Study, C&T offered the “Master Student” program on weekends and had a number of adult learners enrolled. C&T has not offered direct individual services outside of 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. but has considered offering therapy groups in the evening, which might be helpful to students who work full-time. This would require some shifting of staff time from services during the day, since we would need several clinicians available in case of emergency and for safety reasons.

K Week: Many K Week activities and sessions are on the weekend or in the evening. K Week staff members are currently working with the VA Student Association to offer a separate K Team (new students are divided into small groups with a student leader/K Crew) for new students who are veterans. Another event—such as a cookout—is also being planned.

UK 101: For fall 2010, we are planning on offering an evening UK 101 section geared toward veterans and possibly another for adult learners.

Disability Resource Center: DRC provides exam proctoring services for students who have evening classes; offer appointments from 5 to 5:30 p.m. for students who cannot come during 8 a.m.-5 p.m. hours.

2. What role does your unit play in providing support via technology? Do you perceive that there may be barriers to the continued success of this aspect of University services?

Counseling and Testing Center: On the C&T website, we provide information about mental health, coping with various stressors, links to many resources, and anonymous on-line screenings [for depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorders, etc]. I expect this effort to continue to be successful.

K Week: The K Week staff plan on working with Chela to utilize the Hobson’s program to invite new adult students to K Week events specifically designed for them.

UK 101: Plans are underway for providing UK 101 content (e.g., academic integrity) on the web for any student to access.

Disability Resource Center: The Center staff educate students about accessible technology.

3. What, in your view, is the ONE most pressing need in order for your unit to serve adult learners (especially returning to school or transferring from community colleges) more effectively?

Counseling and Testing Center: Additional staff to provide both direct clinical service and also outreach programming. We already are gearing up to appropriately serve veterans returning from military service [a 'new' population in terms of demand at UK], so more focus on the Project Graduate initiative would certainly require more staff resources.

UK 101 and K Week: Reaching this population to offer these opportunities. Hobson's should help with that problem.

Disability Resource Center: The DRC needs current disability documentation from students, so adult students need to be aware of this requirement.

Rebecca Jordan, Associate Dean of Students  
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#### **WRITING CENTER and THE WRITING INITIATIVE**

The Writing Center offers evening and weekend hours (Su, M, T, R 6-9 pm) and serves students one-on-one, whatever their needs. We generally have consultants across a range of age groups from the very young to the more seasoned. Clients often request particular consultants.

There is a specific need for adult learners to be considered: there is nothing in place that would allow returning adult students to satisfy the Graduation Writing Requirement in alternative ways. For example, UK Undergraduate Education might want to consider that there be a way for returning adults to put together a portfolio or work writing that could make them exempt from this requirement.

Janet Eldred, Director  
The Writing Initiative  
105 Bowman Hall 859-257-4831

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#### **ACADEMIC ENHANCEMENT**

1. Does your unit offer evening or weekend hours for those services considered most critical to student academic progress? Yes. Academic Enhancement has individual academic consultations by appointment available during both daytime and evening hours and the hours of the Peer Tutoring Program are evenings (M-Th 3-9pm and Sundays 6-9pm). These hours of availability fit perfectly with the needs of students ages 25+ because the availability of our services allows for someone with a day job or taking night classes to still be able to access our resources. The Peer Tutoring Program has served many non-traditional students over the years. One particular middle-aged man who



returned to UK to complete his degree came to Peer Tutoring almost every week. As a gesture of gratitude at the end of the semester, he bought the whole Peer Tutoring staff Donato's pizza!

During training, Peer Tutors receive additional instruction on how to understand the unique needs of adult learners and how to interact most effectively with non-traditional students to make them feel welcome in The Study. Academic Enhancement (AE) employs Peer Tutors who are actually non-traditional students themselves (true peers)! AE's diversity and welcoming environment is conducive to supporting non-traditional students as well as traditional students. AE serves any and all students.

Academic Enhancement offers individual academic consultations with trained learning specialists who provide individual attention and learning strategies tailored to the needs of the student. For someone returning to school after a period of time this service is a great refresher for study skills such as time management, note taking, or test taking, as well as identifying learning styles and strategies for balancing life and school. Academic Enhancement has provided many consultations for adult students, especially those returning to school after being out for quite some time. Our model of consultation is very effective in assisting adult students since we are able to help them adjust to modern learning techniques and contemporary modes of instructional delivery. If someone is transferring from a community college this service helps acclimate a student who is used to one environment to functioning more efficiently and comfortably in a new, large university setting. Academic Enhancement also helps students navigate university software and programs, which can be daunting to a non-traditional student who is not familiar with new technology.

Academic Enhancement provides personalized services. Parking is readily available for students with or without parking permits, day or night.

2. What role does your unit play in providing support via technology? Do you perceive that there may be barriers to the continued success of this aspect of University services? 30% of the students in the GRE and GMAT prep classes offered by Academic Enhancement are adult students. Academic Enhancement's GRE and GMAT prep classes utilize technology and prepare students to take the computer-based tests. All registration for prep classes is on line, facilitating convenient enrollment. Academic Enhancement uses an on line self-scheduling system so students may schedule appointments at their convenience.
3. What, in your view, is the ONE most pressing need in order for your unit to serve adult learners (especially returning to school or transferring from community colleges) more effectively? The most pressing need is reliable, consistent funding so that Academic Enhancement (AE) would be able to expand services uniquely tailored to meet adult learners' needs. With consistent reliable funding, AE would provide on line remote access to the Peer Tutoring Program, a convenient way for adult students to access our service from home. We have already worked with UK IT and the technology is in place, but without sufficient reliable funding, we do not have the resources to implement the on line access service at this time.
4. How might the University better support the work you do with Project Graduate recruits and enrollees? When registering, enrolling and orienting Project Graduate participants, provide Academic Enhancement's website [www.uky.edu/ugs/study](http://www.uky.edu/ugs/study) and encourage them to utilize our services. Since the state and university anticipate budget cuts, perhaps the university could explore external grant funding or offer a grant opportunity for those providing services to Project Graduate students to apply to for the purpose of developing or expanding services in support of the adult learners. AE would certainly apply for such a grant as a means to implement on line access to our services.

Karin Ann Lewis, Director  
Academic Enhancement; *The Study* 306c Complex Commons  
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## COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES UNDERGRADUATE AFFAIRS

1. Does your unit offer evening or weekend hours for those services considered most critical to student academic progress? If no, why not? If yes, how are these services delivered?

Yes, if you consider the time spent to update and maintain APEX degree audits for all A&S majors and minors. All emails sent to advisors or through a general contact button on the A&S main web page are answered promptly. Advisors will make arrangements for email advising, phone or in-person appointments after 5p.m. I will talk with faculty about classes for students that are unable to come to campus or have difficulty reaching the faculty.

2. What role does your unit play in providing support via technology?

See answer #1 above. APEX and promptly answering email and phone messages are both a top priority along with responding to PG students in a timely manner with specific degree needs.

Do you perceive that there may be barriers to the continued success of this aspect of University services?

Except for evening and weekend or correspondence courses plus the office of adult's students in Funkhouser, I'm not sure there are any other options for them. The biggest barrier is when the courses are offered and the reality of when they can actually enroll in them. Many traditional-age students are competing for courses and if the adult student can only consider a particular section or day of the week that limits their opportunity to finish on time; and in some cases, to ever be in a position to enroll in the course. Until core or required courses are offered in the evening, online or correspondence, PG and adult students will not be able to complete the degree. The USP and College requirements are usually more flexible and offer more options.

3. What, in your view, is the ONE most pressing need in order for your unit to serve adult learners (especially returning to school or transferring from community colleges) more effectively?

I believe a review of the core course offerings required for our majors, i.e., 300-500 level needs to be performed. How many of the core courses required for the major, i.e., those that cannot be substituted by any other course are offered at a time other than during the day? If the departments could find the instructors to teach more in the evenings, correspondence and online, how can they afford to do so?

4. How might the University better support the work you do with Project Graduate recruits and enrollees?

1. Realize that it does take additional human resources to better support PG recruits. It is one thing to advertise and quite another to entertain an onslaught of over 200 requests for information in a timely manner when the information needs to be found, processed, reviewed under older requirements and by the same individuals that were hired to handle all graduation aspects for currently enrolled students. These students are not in "the system." The work is done manually. We have the PG office delivering good news and passing it over to us to provide the audit in a timely manner in an unrealistic

timeframe. Many times course work needs to be evaluated before the audit can be performed. The record should be “clean” before we audit it, i.e., missing grades, unevaluated transfer work, I grades etc.

2. I love the idea of inviting PG students the opportunity of finishing their degrees but I hate delivering information to them when it seems unlikely they can pass a requirement where they completed the prerequisites ten years ago. We are not expected to change the requirements but perhaps the university could ask Colleges to review these requests in a different light such as how applicable are these current requirements to this older individual. Is the current requirement truly going to give this individual the best of what the major has to offer or is there a reasonable exception? Our College is trying to be flexible and we are having students from other Colleges ask if we can assist them in graduating in any of our degrees.

3. Take a realistic picture of the classes offered on campus by major and see how likely it is that any of them are offered via distance learning, correspondence or in the evening. If you find programs that can be accomplished this way, then list and advertise them. Make sure that support programs are in place to properly advise students. Secondly, work with a few undergraduate and graduate programs who might be interested in scheduling combinations of courses in order to complete a degree. Invest in a flexible option that a College or two, a major or two might be willing to sponsor. Look at this web site at Kent State University:

<http://dept.kent.edu/adultstudentcenter/KSUPrograms.asp#UndergraduatePrograms>

a. “The idea came up of increasing the number of adult students at UK by offering a range of MA degrees (MA “lite”, to be exact). This thought is premised on the fact that an unusually large percentage of the population in Fayette County and surroundings has B.A.s. Some of these individuals might be interested in slowly earning a MA in subjects that tickle their fancy, e.g., current affairs, film studies, sustainability and green revolution... I don’t know what barriers exist to instituting MA lite degrees, for instance, at the CPE. But getting more adult students to campus might work better at the MA level than at the BA one. I know that this sort of thing has been very successful at other campuses.”

b. Perhaps the College of Arts and Sciences should resurrect the BGS and allow entry into the program again but with parameters that make it available only for students who have been out of the University for ten years. Or, perhaps a committee of faculty and advisors should be formed to determine who is eligible for a general degree at the University level. Or, check out this program:

[http://womensprograms.belmont.edu/uc/liberal\\_studies\\_program/index.html](http://womensprograms.belmont.edu/uc/liberal_studies_program/index.html)

“The **Liberal Studies Program** allows you to self-design more than half of your **degree requirements**. This program offers creative scheduling and flexibility. In addition to having access to all of the hundreds of traditional courses offered at Belmont, Liberal Studies students enjoy courses creatively designed especially for them.”

c. If you read the document at the link provided, you know what the adult learner needs in terms of access and support and it is a mixture of educational options and support services. Do any of our benchmarks offer credit for experience and work-based learning already obtained? Additionally, has the University asked businesses within Lexington and surrounding counties what the needs of their employees are with regard to earning a degree?

d. The University could develop an evening UK 101 type of course for 3 credit hours that answers many questions from the adult students and gets them prepared for completing the degree.

e. A&S has an example of one alum who received a very prestigious award for “Best Practices for online distance learning programming.” Why don’t we invite our alums to be resources?

Adrienne McMahan  
Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Affairs  
College of Arts and Sciences

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## **CENTRAL ADVISING SERVICE AND TRANSFER CENTER**

1. No, but offers Undergraduate Studies students an online webform: "Ask An Advisor": When a student sends an "ask an advisor" email, it goes directly to an administrative assistant's personal email address (Kelley West) who then forwards the email to the advisor on call. The advisor on call (AOC) will respond to the email during their shift. Each person's shift is two hours long and no one's shift is assigned outside regular business hours. However, AOC shifts do cover the entire work day, and the advisor on call first thing in the morning responds to any "ask an advisor" emails that were received the previous evening or on the week-end. The Advisor on Call is also responsible for checking the telephone Voicemail for messages at the beginning of each shift, and responding to any messages that might have been left while the office was closed.

2. Recently updated website to include student-centered portal design, online appointment scheduler, use of online curriculum for academic recovery program, use of Facebook, online transfer pathway guides

3. The establishment of a Transfer Center on campus is a pressing need to serve all transfer students, many of whom are adult students. The CASTC web site includes a Transfer Web Site which has a wealth of information and links to resources that many adult learners would find helpful, those who are currently enrolled as well as adults who are considering attending UK. This web site was created and is regularly updated by Ray Archer, the BCTC Transfer Advisor, and if it could be a web site for an actual Transfer Center located on the UK campus, the number and quality of services that we provide for adult undergraduate transfer students would be greatly expanded.

Back to School Workshops. Although CASTC does not offer evening or weekend hours for adult undergraduate students, our unit always participates in the Back to School Workshops for Adults that are presented each semester by Adult Student Services. This is an evening event and some CASTC staff is responsible for talking with all the participants who are considering returning to school at UK as undergraduates. Our presentation covers a variety of topics including choosing a major, NSE, advising conferences, the role of academic advisors and the importance of academic advising on campus, including Pre-professional advising in which a number of the adults are always interested.

4. Currently, the only Project Graduate students who are referred to CASTC are the ones who cannot decide what major to pursue, because, given the number of hours they have already earned, none of them is eligible for Undergraduate Studies (60 hour rule). Obviously this would change should the CPE reduce the number of credit hours the student must have earned in order to be eligible for the program. One way in which the University could support the work we do now and will be doing in the future with Project Graduate students would be to offer a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) degree. Central Advising advisors with their wide knowledge of all majors offered by UK would be the ideal staff to work with students interested in such a degree, and our experience over the years talking with adult students returning to school who cannot decide on a major supports the argument for UK to offer a BIS

## APPENDIX D

### Telephone Survey of Former UK Undergraduate Students 25 Years and Older

The task force collaborated with the Survey Research Center (SRC) on a telephone survey of undergraduates age 25 and older who were enrolled during the 2007-08 academic year, but did not subsequently return to UK. Interviews were completed with 212 of the 669 adult students in the sample. The adjusted response rate was 83.8%, based on interviews completed with students who were eventually reached by the SRC.

Students were asked to give the most important reason why they had not returned to UK to pursue their education. The most common reasons given for not returning to UK were:

- Difficulty balancing work, college, and family life (27.4%)
- Difficulty paying for my college education (27.8%)
- The sequence of courses I needed was not offered (10.8%)
- Difficulty finding adequate childcare/difficulty caring for children or adult dependents (5.2% - combined 2 related categories)
- Change of major to one not offered at UK (3.9%)
- Problems at home (3.9%)
- Couldn't find help, e.g., tutoring and support services (2.4%)

The last of the above findings are interesting because the percentages are so low. There is little doubt that adult students around the country have problems finding adequate childcare, but this does not seem to be a major explanation for why our students don't return to UK. Also, adult students don't appear to be dropping/stopping out because tutoring and support services are poor or nonexistent. The first three reasons given above appear to be the major factors students don't return.

Students were asked to agree or disagree with statements about the University's support services, instructional technology, and course scheduling. The results reveal that many non-returning adult students believe that UK does not offer services that would improve their chances of success.

- One-third (33.5%) *strongly or somewhat agreed* "UK offered a variety of distance learning-online courses."
- Over one-third (36.9%) *strongly or somewhat agreed* UK was responsive to the special needs of adult students trying to work and earn a college degree.
- Less than half (44.0%) *strongly or somewhat agreed* "UK offered support services I needed, such as tutoring and childcare, at convenient times."
- Half (50.9%) *strongly or somewhat agreed* UK provided special assistance in helping adult students use computer technology.
- A little over half (55.7%) *strongly or somewhat agreed* "UK scheduled some courses on evenings and weekends to meet adult students' needs."

- More than half (55.9%) *strongly or somewhat agreed* “Courses were offered at a variety of times.”

Students were slightly more positive in their appraisal of the quality of advising. More than half (56.2%) *strongly or somewhat agreed* “My advisor was knowledgeable about support services to help adult students cope with the demands of work, college and family life.” A similar proportion of students (59.3%) rated the overall quality of advising as *good or excellent*.

When asked, “Is there anything else that could have been done to encourage you to stay enrolled at UK?” the following percent of the sample mentioned these reason:

- More financial aid/provided more scholarship money/lower cost of attending – 13.2% (combined 3 related categories)
- More times for classes – 8.0%

Telephone interviewers asked students, “What are you going to do next fall?” The results are presented in Figure 1. Two of five (38.9%) adults reported they would be working full- or part-time next fall. One-third (32.7%) indicated they would be working and going to school. Roughly one of ten (13.5%) thought they would be resuming their studies at UK. Interestingly, when asked whether they would ever return to UK, two-thirds (66.9%) of the survey respondents indicated they would *definitely or probably* return to UK.

