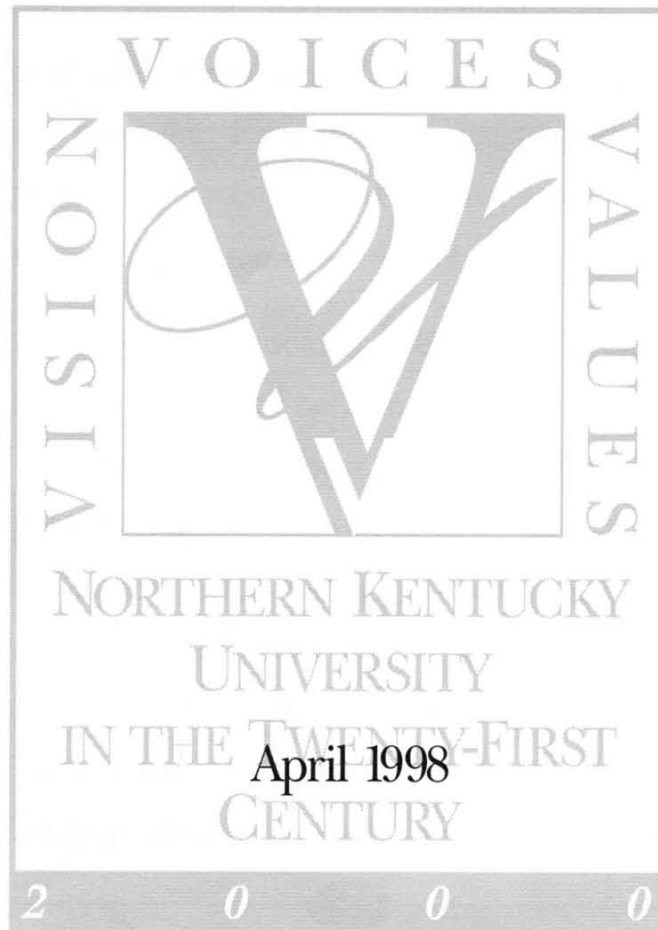




Defining Our Future

Northern Kentucky University's Five-Year Strategic Agenda





Defining Our Future

Northern Kentucky University's Five-Year Strategic Agenda

*I*n what many refer to as the Knowledge Age, access to advanced learning has become more important to society than ever before and postsecondary education is being challenged to lead. Nowhere is this more true than in Kentucky where the landmark Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997 asserts the central role that colleges and universities must play in advancing the future of the Commonwealth and its citizens.

This is a time of enormous challenge and opportunity for Northern Kentucky University. It is a time when we must think anew about our mission, our core values, who we serve, and how we serve them. It is a time for renewal, for realignment, and for recommitment to our fundamental purpose. It is a time for us to rediscover ourselves and the special relationship that we share with the public that we serve.

Recognizing that it stands on the threshold of an exciting new era in its development, in the fall of 1997 the University embarked on a strategic planning process designed to define its future and a strategy for achieving it. In a process labeled "Vision, Values, and Voices," a presidential panel comprising faculty, staff, students, and community members conducted over 30 conversations across the campus and throughout the University's service region. The conversations centered on more clearly defining and focusing the future of the University. Out of those interactions with nearly 500 people representing every constituency of the campus and the community that we serve came the institutional vision, values, and strategic priorities described in this document.

Our Vision

Northern Kentucky University's response to the challenge of the Knowledge Age will be framed by our relationship with the metropolitan region that we serve. We are, first and foremost, a metropolitan university which, far more than simply a descriptor of geographic location, suggests a set of beliefs concerning the social role of the university in modern life. Those beliefs emphasize the instrumental role of Northern Kentucky University in fostering the intellectual, social, economic, and civic vitality of the metropolitan region.

Northern Kentucky University is not simply located in a metropolitan area; it is an integral part of metropolitan life. It sees the metropolitan region as representing not just learning needs to be served but also as a powerful source of knowledge and experience that can strengthen, enhance, and enrich every dimension of its mission to discover, transmit, apply, and preserve knowledge. In partnership with the metropolitan region, Northern Kentucky University has the opportunity to offer its students an array of advanced learning opportunities that are unique among Kentucky's regional universities. The University's vision, which is strongly aligned with the special relationship it enjoys with its learners and the metropolitan region it serves, is expressed as follows:

Northern Kentucky University will become a preeminent, learner-centered, metropolitan university recognized for its contributions to the intellectual, social, economic, cultural, and civic vitality of its region and of the Commonwealth.

Our Unique Strengths

- The University occupies an ideal location at a junction of major interstate highways within a metropolitan region of nearly two million people known for the dynamism and stability of its economy.
- The University offers a responsive, secure environment for learning enhanced by immediate access to urban advantages and opportunities that support scholarship.
- The University charges affordable in-state tuition and regionally competitive out-of-state tuition.
- The University through reciprocal agreements provides educational opportunities at in-state tuition to eligible Ohio and Indiana students.
- The University maintains a tradition of providing individual attention to students within small classes as it continues to build a tradition of undergraduate research and community-based learning.
- The University emphasizes undergraduate education while maintaining high quality graduate and professional programs, including those at the Chase College of Law.

Our Core Values

As we work to achieve our vision, we will be guided by a set of core values that inform our actions and bind us together as an academic community.

Learner-Centered

We are committed to placing the learner at the center of all that we do. We will serve the learner through our core mission to discover, interpret, apply, and transmit knowledge. As a university, we are a community of learners capable of adaptation and improvement based on new knowledge and insights.

Excellence

We are committed to the highest standards of excellence in everything that we do—as judged not only by ourselves but also by those we serve—and to a process of continuous quality improvement based on a culture of evidence.

Access with the Opportunity to Succeed

We are committed to lifelong public access to education and expert knowledge and to ensuring that learners enrolled in the University have the preparation required to succeed. We measure our success by the accomplishments, the commitments, and the satisfaction of our graduates.

Public Engagement

We are committed to treating the metropolitan region as an extension of our campus. We will build partnerships throughout the region that both serve the learning needs of the public and enhance the learning opportunities available to our faculty, staff, and students.

Intellectual and Creative Freedom

We are committed to intellectual and creative freedom and to the open expression of ideas in a way that supports scholarship and the advanced learning process.

Multiculturalism

We are committed to advancing multicultural understanding within both the University and the community as an educational and civic priority.

Innovation and Creativity

We are committed to innovative approaches for achieving our vision and will create a campus environment that encourages and rewards creativity and innovation.

Collegiality and Collaboration

We are committed to building a University community characterized by open communication and shared responsibility for decisions. We will build a culture of collegiality and collaboration within and between the University and the public we serve.

Our Guiding Assumptions

- Public demand for access to advanced learning will continue to increase. This demand will come from learners across the life span and will focus on access to not only traditional undergraduate and graduate degree programs but also to credit and non-credit courses and programs designed to meet specific learning needs.
- Competition for commuter and residential students in the greater metropolitan region will increase greatly because of more aggressive recruitment by institutions located in the region, an increasing number of out-of-state institutions offering programs in the area (many via expanding technology), and a gradual erosion of the boundaries currently observed by the Kentucky regional universities.
- As competition increases, colleges and universities offering programs in the region will become much more “user friendly” in terms of convenient access to programs, courses, and services. Selection of a university will be influenced by the degree of convenience and by the nature and quality of the curriculum and the learning experience.
- State allocations to postsecondary education will continue to increase with the advantage going to those institutions that can measure and demonstrate a direct relationship between their programs and services and (a) the major challenges confronting Kentucky and (b) the priorities defined by the Council on Postsecondary Education.
- The public will continue to demand greater accountability from its universities, which could manifest itself in the application of more extensive performance measures, data reporting, and a more assertive demand for post-tenure review.

Our Strategic Priorities

The following strategic priorities describe the steps that we will take to achieve our vision to become a preeminent, learner-centered metropolitan university.

Strengthen the Curriculum

- We will create a distinctive undergraduate curriculum linking a unique, coherent General Education offering with thoughtfully sequenced majors in pursuit of explicit learning objectives, and we will measure our effectiveness with sound assessment tools.
- We will appreciate and respond through our curriculum and campus environment to the needs of a diverse student body.
- We will define the NKU Baccalaureate in terms of broad intellectual and social outcomes and measure our effectiveness with sound assessment tools.

- We will strengthen the Honors Program in order to attract and retain highly qualified students.
- We will maintain more systematically the University's five-year plan for the development of new academic programs: associate, baccalaureate, and graduate.
- We will identify, develop, and support current and prospective programs of excellence through the use of trust funds and other resources.
- We will commit in mission-specific ways to participate in the statewide "virtual university" and develop other course delivery options appropriate to our students' circumstances.

Support Faculty Excellence

- We will build and retain a highly qualified and diverse full-time and part-time faculty through targeted hiring and competitive compensation.
- We will create a more appropriate balance between part-time and full-time faculty in those disciplines where an imbalance exists.
- We will examine and monitor the deployment of full-time and part-time faculty so as to serve students more effectively.
- We will provide appropriate technology and other forms of support for instruction.
- We will expand professional development opportunities that support the University's commitment to more effective and productive discovery, integration, application, and teaching of knowledge.
- We will ensure a close alignment among institutional priorities, individual and unit-level performance relative to expectations, assessment standards, incentives, and rewards.

Enhance Student Recruitment and Retention

- We will see University enrollment grow to 14,000 students by 2002 through more aggressive recruitment and retention strategies.
- As we continue to build the University as an institution of choice and to broaden access for all qualified students, we will develop a more comprehensive and competitive plan for the recruitment of:
 - the region's most capable high school graduates
 - minorities and other under-served populations
 - adult learners
- We will develop a more aggressive and comprehensive strategy for marketing the University to raise public awareness of our strengths and advantages.
- We will provide a learning environment that fosters the intellectual, cultural, physical, and personal development of students.
- We will compete more effectively for part-time and fully-employed learners through a wider range of enrollment options (innovative scheduling, expedited learning, etc.).

- We will increase student satisfaction and retention through a combination of initiatives and commitments to include:
 - Developing a more effective response to the needs of under-prepared students in order to enhance the quality of instruction at all levels.
 - Offering highly supportive first-year programs (for both undergraduate and professional programs), including University 101 and Chase orientation courses, learning communities, and “early-warning” procedures.
 - Improving advising, both pre-major and within the major, by providing a knowledgeable, supportive, and adequately staffed advising office and by reviewing all procedures that should support the learning process.
 - Providing student support services attuned to the needs of a predominantly commuter campus.

Strengthen Public Engagement

- We will establish an intellectual foundation for outreach that extends the University’s mission to discover, integrate, apply, and transmit knowledge throughout the metropolitan region.
- We will forge a strong entrepreneurial, client-centered commitment to work force development in consultation with the corporate community, other community partners, and institutions engaged in other forms of post-secondary education.
- We will expand existing pathways for communication and interaction between NKU and the external community and develop new ones.
- We will address lifelong learning needs by strengthening our capacity to broker NKU and world-wide intellectual resources.
- We will enhance the cultural life of our region by sharing the resources of the University more broadly and creatively.
- We will build a lifelong relationship with our alumni.
- We will identify a limited number of issues central to the future of the metropolitan region and engage the scholarly resources of the campus to address these in ways that serve the public interest and support the University’s mission.

Improve Campus Facilities and Environment

- We will create a distinctive, responsive, and welcoming campus by improving services to students and the community (e.g., expanded office hours, electronic access to services and information, improved on-campus signage, etc.)
- We will provide clean, well-maintained, appealing, and accommodating spaces for University activities and social life.
- We will ensure that the staffing, operating hours, collections, and technological resources of Steely Library and the Chase Law Library meet student and community needs.
- We will review and update the Master Plan to ensure that land use, facilities, roadways, landscape design, and other elements of the campus remain consistent with the planned future of the University.

- We will create a unified technology plan that maintains and enhances the University's technical capacities so as to anticipate and support instructional and administrative needs.

Promote Staff Effectiveness and Satisfaction

- We will maintain a qualified and diverse full-time and part-time staff through targeted hiring, competitive compensation, a distinctive benefits package, and opportunities for professional development and advancement.
- We will create and sustain a culture of communication and decision-making that reflects the values of an organization committed to learning.
- We will articulate the roles of staff in supporting the learning process and seek additional ways to support and evaluate such roles.
- We will examine the deployment of staff members to ensure increased efficiency and job satisfaction.

Investing In Our Vision

We will create a Budget Strategy Group to develop strategies to enhance both resource availability and the process by which those resources are allocated. The Budget Strategy Group will:

- Develop a short-, medium-, and long-range institutional strategy for investing in the University's strategic priorities.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for resource enhancement that addresses:
 - expansion of state support
 - managed institutional growth
 - internal reallocation
 - fees
 - re-engineering
 - private fund-raising
 - expanded grant and contract activity
 - entrepreneurship consistent with our mission
 - local and regional support of targeted initiatives
- Create a Strategic Fund for investment in new and expanded programs and services.
- Improve campus financial efficiency by controlling the "drivers" of cost
- Develop an annual planning and budget process emphasizing:
 - The consultative identification of priorities according to a widely acknowledged calendar
 - Tight, visible links joining planning and budgeting
 - Higher standards of accountability aligning resources and performance through a comprehensive ("all-funds") approach

Northern Kentucky University
Nunn Drive
Highland Heights, Kentucky 41099