

Ad Hoc Committee Report Investigating the Establishment of a Community College

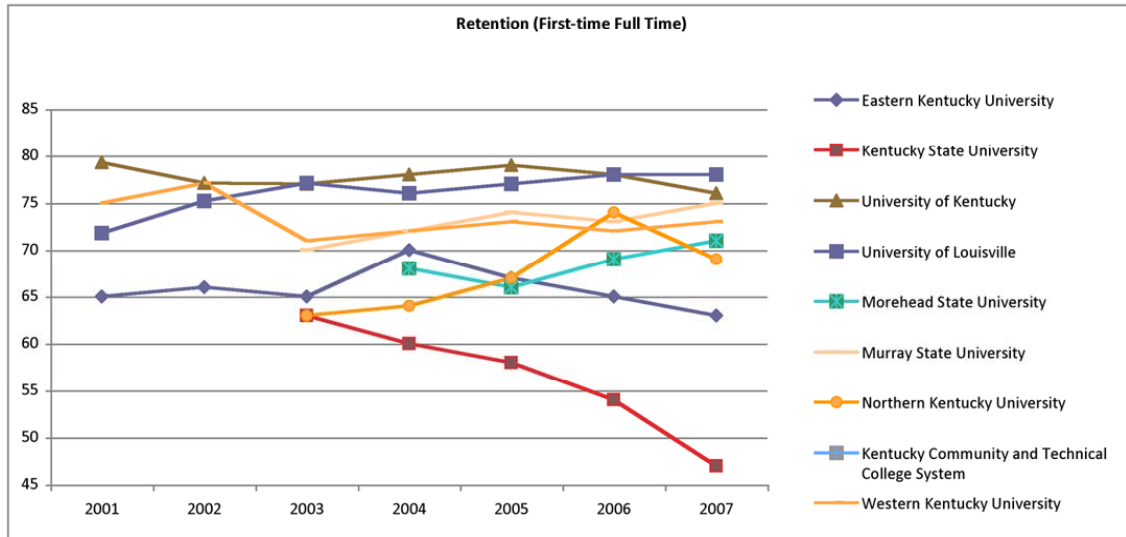
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Background:

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) accepts many students who are not adequately prepared for the demands of university level course work. ECU has in place initiatives to assist students who are not adequately prepared and are at risk of failure. However, the matriculation rate of students who have not met college readiness standards is a major concern for ECU. The failure of these students to obtain degrees is both a personal and a financial loss to the individual; the failure of the students is also a financial and professional status loss to the university.

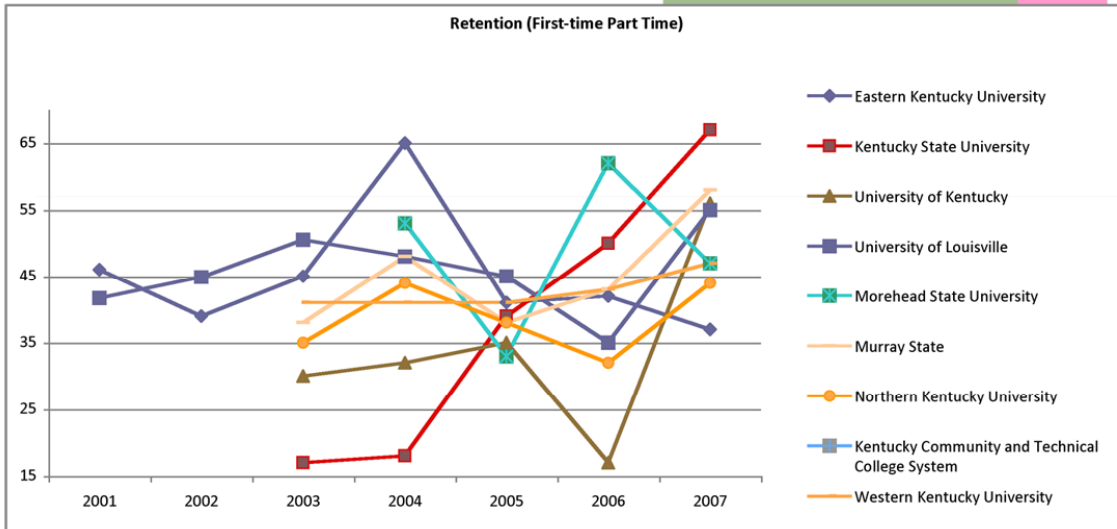
Kentucky’s Retention and Progression Rates for state universities is as follows:

Retention (First-time Full Time)							
Institution	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Eastern Kentucky University	65	66	65	70	67	65	63
Kentucky State University			63	60	58	54	47
University of Kentucky	79	77	77	78	79	78	76
University of Louisville	72	75	77	76	77	78	78
Morehead State University				68	66	69	71
Murray State University			70	72	74	73	75
Northern Kentucky University			63	64	67	74	69
Kentucky Community and Technical College System							
Western Kentucky University	75	77	71	72	73	72	73



Retention (First-time Part Time)

Institution	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Eastern Kentucky University	46	39	45	65	41	42	37
Kentucky State University			17	18	39	50	67
University of Kentucky			30	32	35	17	56
University of Louisville	42	45	51	48	45	35	55
Morehead State University			53	33	62	47	
Murray State			38	48	38	43	58
Northern Kentucky University			35	44	38	32	44
Kentucky Community and Technical College System							
Western Kentucky University			41	41	41	43	47



Source:

- IPEDS Peer Analysis Data
- IPEDS Executive Peer Tool
- IR Calculations
- University Website

We are not seeing student progress at the level desired. EKU has taken steps to help students who have not met college readiness standards and continues to look for new and better ways to assist those at risk of failure, but EKU has not taken steps to find ways to more accurately reflect the progress made by students who came to the university prepared for university level course work. A solution that would help both students at risk of failure and the university more accurately reflect its retention efforts is being sought. One suggested solution that would meet the dual requirements was the establishment of a community college. As a result of the Faculty Senate’s concern, an investigation was started.

Purposes for Investigation:

There were two purposes for the investigation of establishing a community college at Eastern Kentucky University:

1. to find ways for students at risk of failure to be successful;
2. to find an identification system of student retention numbers at EKU that allows for a more comparable system of enrollment to other Kentucky universities.

Steps in the Investigation:

The ad hoc committee met with Dr. Jack Luy and Dr. Kenneth Clawson, who were former directors of Richmond Community College. The committee also perused information on the Bowling Green Community College, a part of the Western Kentucky University system. Individual committee members spoke with Director of Admissions Stephen Byrn, Director of Academic Advising & Retention Benton Shirey, and Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness Edward Keely; reviewed a proposal for an Associate Degree in General Studies prepared by Director of Transition and University Services Dr. Sue Cain; and reviewed the Graduation and Retention Task Force Report.

Key points that emerged:

1. The current admission policy results in the admission of students who are not adequately prepared for university level course work.
2. It is important for a university to support all of its students, including the non-traditional students and those students who may not be well prepared for college.
3. Meeting the needs of students at risk of failure has been addressed in several ways in the past; some of the programs or initiatives have achieved limited success.
4. Although a community college could provide an environment of support for students who are at risk of failure, the economic and political environment make this unlikely to occur.
5. An associate degree could provide an initial level of success for students at risk of failure; this is working successfully at other regional institutions in Kentucky.

Possible solutions:

Suggestions of possible solutions come from the Ad Hoc Committee for Investigating the Establishment of a Community College as well as the Retention and Graduation Task Force.

1. Develop an admissions policy (i.e. full admission, admission with condition, limited/provisional admission, special admission) that would allow a better representation of EKU's retention efforts.
 - Full admission/admission with condition-- students may select to pursue bachelor or associate degree
 - Limited/provisional admission/special admission – students would be put in holding pattern and must opt to pursue associate degree until deficiencies are removed
2. Reinstate the Associate Degree in General Studies.
3. Increase the number of associate degrees offered by EKU.
4. Require all students who are identified as at risk for failure to initially declare an associate degree major.
5. Maintain high academic expectations for all EKU students, and provide the appropriate support necessary to ensure success.

6. Ensure that student retention and graduation goals are high priorities for the University, including being an agenda item for a standing committee on EKU's Board of Regents.
7. Publish the retention and graduation data for each college, holding the colleges accountable for individual unit and program goals for retention and graduation.
8. Ask colleges to add student retention and graduation goals to their strategic action plans.
9. Ensure the colleges have the necessary resources, tools (including professional development), and data to successfully retain and graduate students.
10. Identify and meet the special needs of student groups who are marginally at risk (e.g., students who have ACT composite scores between 18 - 20; commuter students, and part-time students).

Conclusion:

A stratified admissions policy would immediately result in a reporting system that would more accurately reflect EKU's retention efforts. However, it alone would not be the best alternative for students who are at risk of failure. A community college would be the best solution for both, but it would not be the most cost effective. Because budget constraints are paramount, the addition of a community college is not possible. It is the committee's opinion that the reinstatement of an Associate Degree in General Studies would be the preferable immediate solution and students who are at risk of failure should be required to declare an associate degree major.