**Problem/Opportunity:** Provide effective and compelling campus connections for non-traditional students.

**Childcare:**
Although NIU has a daycare center, its hours and child care openings are limited. The need here is for a childcare center that would be open all of the hours that classes are in session with more childcare openings that are affordable to students and that would accept a child for a short periods for example, only on the days and while the parent was in class, but not for the whole day every day.

**Academic/Student Service Concerns**
Better understanding from faculty and staff that nontraditional students are older and have many responsibilities they are trying to balance (work, children/family) along with their classes, and are often more serious students than traditional ones.
- Career services for nontraditional students and internship availability.
- The need for more online classes. This would make education more accessible for more non-traditional students. There are many campus parents and working students that would benefit from being able to take classes online. It would reduce/avoid a lot of scheduling conflicts, and if a child is sick the parent could take of the child and not miss classwork.
- An Orientation Program for non-traditional students or separate non-traditional student sessions at Orientation. “Hearing about ‘being away from home for the first time’ doesn’t apply to someone who has been on their own and in the workforce for almost 15 years.”
- Some flexibility in program requirements, perhaps “life experience” credit could be considered, or allowing non-traditional students to email an assignment when unable to attend class, or classes for just nontraditional students.
- Rigid attendance policies and refusals to give make-up tests make classes difficult for parents, especially single parents. If a child is sick, the daycare will not take them. Consideration should be given by professors to grant make up work with a note from a daycare center.

**Financial**
Trying to balance paying for school (taking out loans/working part-time) and completing school in an efficient manner is difficult. Certain forms of financial aid are not practical e.g., work study for someone that cannot live closer to campus and has young children. Better assistance in applying for scholarships, current process can be overwhelming.

**Support System**
A support system that can address their needs - making them feel encouraged and supported. There are resources for students that are parents, transfers, veterans, and non-traditional students in general, but they aren't connected very well. They need to be grouped together better and share information, "talk to each other", in order to help students with different issues.

**Parking, lounge area, etc.**
- Improving the commuter parking situation: “Having to fight for a parking space every day is discouraging, and makes me feel that NIU doesn’t value the students who live off-campus.”
- Having a place to sit in between classes and study and/or relax with lockers to leave some books or items so they don't need to be carried around all day.
- More housing options for transfer students

**On the positive side:** Where some students found Helpful Non-Traditional Support
Military Student Services, Non-traditional student services, Women’s Resource Center, Career services, Academic advisors, Dream Action Organization, and the Latino Resource Center. “The instructors I have had so far are encouraging and kind.” “Many professors have thoughtfully advised me.”

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