Bold Futures – Non-Traditional Students

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We interviewed nine NIU students.

Key Points:

• Most people didn’t know they were “non-traditional” or about the Off-Campus and Non Traditional Student Services office.
• Name changed from SWAN, staff doesn’t know what it’s called.
• One student that did go to UNIVERSITY 102, felt it helped him.
• Students valued alumni presentations – success stories.
• Students that engaged with their majors earlier felt more connected.
  – Get hands-on experiences earlier.
• They feel uncomfortable engaging with traditional aged students.
  – Professors don’t acknowledge the age differences
  – Felt like outsiders
• Class time offerings are too limited - evening vs. daytime classes.
  – Not enough online classes.
• GAs/TAs teach too much instead of professors.

Recommendations:

• Clubs that are aligned with academic programs allow students to get hands on experience in a less formal environment.
• Expedite undergraduate curricula reform.
• Provide more mentoring opportunities.
  – Seek out students to mentor rather than relying on students to seek out mentoring.
• Create more on-campus jobs/internships related to their major.
  – Keeps them focused and disciplined.
• Keep all web sites and information up to date.
• Offer more affordable housing.