EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Academic Programming Working Group was charged with identifying key priorities from the NIU Great Journeys Strategic Plan for improving the academic climate and experience of our students, and identifying measures of these priorities. Measures that were to be considered included: global experience, honors experience, distributed learning, engaged learning, baccalaureate review outcomes, and curricular strength. Once the working group was assembled it met five times between mid January and early April 2011. In the initial meetings working group members were asked to identify “indicators” that they believed would potentially be useful to demonstrate university improvement. The working group was then divided into two groups, one focusing on developing a primary indicator(s) related to the global experience, honors experience, and engaged learning and the other group focusing on indicators related to distributed learning, baccalaureate review outcomes, and curricular strength. The working group felt it was important to identify indicators that could define and measure aspects of a quality student experience at Northern.

The working group identified four issues related to academic programming. Three of the four are ways to describe the “value-added” associated with completing the baccalaureate experience at NIU. These three also are related to useful “student-related outcome measures of success” as characterized by NIU’s new baccalaureate goals and student learning outcomes. The fourth issue focuses on the development and increased use of distributed learning modes as a way to enhance instructional efforts across university programs. For each of these topics, the working group developed specific measurable indicators. These indicators certainly oversimplify the complexities of measuring something so elusive as the value added by an undergraduate education, but in the group’s judgment, they do give measurable means of tracking our progress in these areas against our peers, and against ourselves.

The working group was able to identify benchmark values and comparison data from comparative institutions in some cases, however, we believe that for those indicators where no external data exists, there is important value in examining whether the internal measures of the indicator continue to improve over time. In addition, as performance measures are adopted and reported at the state and national levels, there will be new opportunities to compare our values against
those of other institutions. Some of the indicators require examining existing campus policies, some will require new resources, and others will require a shift in the “campus culture” if real change is to be experienced. We believe that the university should embrace some, if not all, of these indicators as they specifically address important issues related to the educational experience of students attending NIU.

Specific benchmark goals were established as follows:

**ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

One priority set by the working group was to enhance student exposure to NIU’s baccalaureate student learning outcomes through academic enrichment programs. The indicators chosen were the percentage of NIU students having completed one or more academic enrichment programs, including honors, study abroad, and “certified” engaged learning course or co-curricular academically-oriented activity (e.g., internship, undergraduate research, service-learning, themed-living-learning environment, etc.).

By 2020, the goal is to grow the number of students graduating with honors by 50% and the number of students studying abroad by 25%. The largest increases are expected in percentage of students who participate in engaged learning courses and experiential co-curricular activities. At this time, a thorough count of students participating in these courses and academically-oriented activities has yet to be completed. The working group predicts that the number of NIU students participating in engaged-learning experiences (i.e., courses and activities) will rise quickly as a universal definition for such activities is developed on campus and a process for counting these experiences is implemented. The overall goal for the campus is that by 2020 nearly 100% of all students who can or wish to participate will have participated in one or more academic enrichment programs.

**STUDENT LEARNING**

The working group also believed that it was imperative to begin to measure, and if necessary, improve, NIU’s success in developing critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication among our undergraduates. The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) exam was determined to be the best available measure for these student learning outcomes. In particular, the working group hopes to see an increase in the percentage of students improving critical thinking and communication skills measured from when they enter NIU as a freshman to when they graduate. Because the CLA has not yet been administered on campus, no benchmarks exist. Goals will be established after the implementation of the first exit survey in spring 2012.
CAREER PREPARATION

Addressing NIU’s success in preparing its undergraduate students for careers was another issue on which the working group focused. The indicator chosen was the percentage of alumni who report (after 1, 5, or 9 years) that their education prepared them “well” or “very well” for their careers. The goal set by the working group was to raise the percentage from roughly 60% to 80% by 2020.

DISTRIBUTED LEARNING MEDIA

Finally, the working group sought to increase NIU’s overall instructional effort through the use of distributed learning instructional models. The working group sees this as a potential area of growth for NIU and one in which the university lags behind its competitors. A goal was set to increase the number of student credit hours (SCH) generated through distributed learning modes tenfold (from 17,500 SCH to 175,000 SCH).

MEMBERSHIP

- David Changnon, Acting Associate Vice Provost, Co-Chair
- Chris McCord, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Co-Chair
- Valerie Berg, honors student
- Terry Bishop, Associate Professor, Management
- Rebecca Butler, Professor, Educational Technology, Research and Assessment
- Carolinda Douglass, Director, Assessment Services
- Daniel Kempton, Honors Director
- Ed Klonoski, Associate Professor, Music
- Melissa Lenczewski, Associate Professor, Geology and Environmental Geosciences
- Greg Long, Professor, Allied Health and Communicative Disorders
- Deborah Pierce, Associate Provost, International Programs
- Anne Seitzinger, Study Abroad Director, International Programs
- Julia Spears, Engaged Learning Coordinator
ISSUE
Enhance student exposure to NIU’s baccalaureate student learning outcomes through academic enrichment programs

INDICATOR
The percentage of NIU students prior to graduation having completed one or more academic enrichment programs:

- honors program
- study abroad
- “certified” engaged learning course or co-curricular academically-oriented activity (e.g., internship, undergraduate research, service-learning, themed-living-learning environment, etc.)

“Engaged learning” involves an activity in which the student is an active participant, that occurs outside of the normal classroom lecture setting, that has a disciplinary content, and that actively calls upon the student to connect the experience to their classroom learning. NIU’s newly developed Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning (OSEEL) monitors undergraduate research, service-learning, themed-learning communities, and other high impact practices. As an outgrowth of the Curricular Innovations strategic plan, OSEEL works collaboratively with members of the NIU community to create sustainable, relevant, student-centered programming that utilizes experiential learning, both in and out of the classroom (i.e., student-to-faculty, student-to-student, and student-to-external stakeholder) to promote and sustain student academic success. These activities align directly with NIU’s eight student learning outcomes to enhance the cognitive and academic skills of our students and to prepare them to be lifelong learners and responsible citizens in our ever-changing, global society.

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
HONORS PROGRAM: See Table 1.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIU</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1
STUDYING ABROAD (AY09) – NIU VS. COMPETITORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>% of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Illinois</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball State</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Michigan</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent State</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois – Edwardsville</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.2%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Chicago</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Illinois</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data not available for Southern Illinois – Carbondale</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2

THEMED LEARNING COMMUNITIES – NIU VS. COMPETITORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>2,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temple</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Michigan</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH – NIU VS. COMPETITORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miami (OH)</td>
<td>650+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Michigan</td>
<td>200+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois State</td>
<td>200+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>200+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Illinois</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>180+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NIU</strong></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois – Chicago</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling Green State</td>
<td>100+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron</td>
<td>80+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.3

STUDY ABROAD: See Table 1.2.

ENGAGED LEARNING COURSES: See Table 1.3. It was unclear from some institutions exactly how many students participated in themed-learning communities. However, all institutions for which data was available had more students participating than NIU. At Miami (OH), 60% of all freshmen participate in themed-learning communities. Kent State has 10 to 75 students participate in 13 different communities. At Akron, roughly 20 percent of all students participate.

For many engaged learning courses, the data either does not exist or is incomplete. For example, 600 NIU students participated in internship courses for credit during the 2009/2010 academic year. The working group was not able to obtain data from our competitors, so it is unknown how NIU fares.
Additionally, the working group was not able to obtain the number of students participating in service-learning courses, either for NIU or its competitors.

ENGAGED LEARNING CO-CURRICULAR ACADEMICALLY-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

There are many engaged learning opportunities outside of the classroom, however data is sparse or unknown. We do not know how many NIU students participated in service-learning projects or internships not for credit.

Regarding undergraduate research, in 2010 31 students completed a USOAR and 21 students participated in a URAP. Additionally, 1,600 students lived in living-learning communities (SET House, FLRP, etc.) during the fall 2010 semester. The working group was not able to obtain information on similar measures from comparison institutions.

GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET:
- Honors Program—0.9%
- Study Abroad—1.3%
- Engaged Learning Courses—20%
- Engaged Learning Co-Curricular Academically-Oriented Activities—10%

5-YEAR TARGET:
- Honors Program—1.0%
- Study Abroad—1.4%
- Engaged Learning Courses—30%
- Engaged Learning Co-Curricular Academically-Oriented Activities—15%

BY 2020:
- Honors Program—1.2%
- Study Abroad—1.5%
- Engaged Learning Courses—50%
- Engaged Learning Co-Curricular Academically-Oriented Activities—30%

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL

NIU recently adopted three goals (i.e., critical thinking, communication, and creativity) and eight baccalaureate student-learning outcomes. Although most undergraduate students will develop and potentially master skills associated with the new outcomes through coursework within the general education program and their majors, many will be exposed to these outcomes through various academic
academic programming. Many of these programs are associated with course credit, however, if an activity has faculty involvement and could merit credit, it should be counted as “academic enrichment,” whether credit is actually awarded. By increasing the number of students who participate in these “high impact” academic enrichment programs NIU can further demonstrate the “value-added” the institution and its faculty/staff provide to the educational experience of its students.

For Honors, the goal is to increase the percentage of students graduating with honors by 50% (0.8 to 1.2%) over the decade. Increases in the number of honors students will require increasing recruiting internally (identifying and communicating with students on campus) and externally (providing larger scholarships to those high achieving high school students). It is our intention to grow the Honors Program while keeping the same admissions requirements. For Study Abroad, the goal is a 25% increase. This lower percentage increase is more related to the mix of students that attend NIU (issues beyond our control). The largest increases are expected in percentage of students who participate in engaged learning courses and experiential co-curricular activities. At this time a thorough count of students participating in these courses and academically-oriented activities has yet to be completed. Any estimate of student participation in engaged-learning activities is most likely an undercount of the true number as many of these activities go unreported by faculty or staff members. The working group predicts that the number of NIU students participating in engaged-learning experiences (i.e., courses and activities) will rise quickly as a universal definition for such activities is developed on campus and a process for counting these experiences is implemented. Our overall goal for the campus is that by 2020 nearly 100% of all students will have participated in one or more academic enrichment programs.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

For NIU to meet these lofty goals it will require that the campus community (students, staff, faculty, and administrators) embrace the idea that participation in such activities is important and beneficial, especially as we highlight student achievement of NIU’s three baccalaureate goals and eight student learning outcomes. As such NIU must allocate resources in academic enrichment programs to increase participation by students. For Honors, the working group suggests that the institution increase the number and dollar amount associated with scholarships offered to high-achieving high school students. Increasing scholarship funds will lure better students to the campus. The group also suggests that more effort be placed in marketing all academic enrichment program efforts (i.e., honors, study abroad, and engaged learning activities) during orientation and advising.
Frequent campus activities (both curricular and co-curricular) should point to the advantages of student participation in these programs (i.e., relate back to the achievement of NIU’s student-learning outcomes). Although student participation in these activities is usually voluntary, NIU can help students better understand why their participation in the activities will enhance their educational experience. To fully understand the benefits of participation we need to ask students, at the end of the activity, to reflect on their experience and how it provided greater insight into NIU’s student learning outcomes. This self-assessment could be used to further strengthen these activities as well as demonstrate to various stakeholders both on and off campus how academic enrichment programs improve the overall quality of the undergraduate experience at NIU. For all program areas to not only survive but thrive, additional support from the university for curricular and co-curricular efforts will be required. Campus resources would not only go toward support of these programs, but also to efforts to maintain a database documenting student participation and the impacts these programs have on student learning.

Determining the number of students who participate in honors and study abroad programs is straightforward, however, the lack of a consistent and accepted university definition of “engaged learning” makes it more difficult to develop an official count of those students who participate in these curricular or co-curricular activities. Once that universal definition is accepted across the university, departments, colleges, and other units (academic and student affairs) can develop a means of tracking and cataloguing academic enrichment activities.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

After evaluating available campus data the working group acknowledges that it is undercounting activities related to this indicator, because there are data on student participation information for a limited number of programs. However, the working group suggests that, with better definitions and better tracking of engaged learning activities (both curricular and co-curricular), the institution may have a more accurate picture of the level of student participation on campus, and may then be able to redefine the goals upward, perhaps by a significant amount. At the same time, with definitions of engaged learning and academic enrichment becoming clearer on campus, the university needs to make efforts, where possible, to identify ways to incorporate non-credit academically-oriented activities as “for-credit.”

To document levels of student participation the working group proposes that an “engaged learning” infrastructure is developed where courses and co-curricular academically-oriented activities are “certified” as “engaged learning” experiences. Students would fill out and submit a form (i.e., used universally across campus) indicating what type of academic enrichment activities (curricular or co-curricular)
they were participating in. Upon completion of an activity, a student would then be asked to complete a reflective statement addressing the student learning outcomes associated with the activity. This information would become part of a database developed and housed in OSEEL.

Student participation in academic enrichment programs should be acknowledged and honored. Academic incentives should be placed on these activities (i.e., they show up on transcripts, associated coursework) so that both external and internal stakeholders understand the efforts of students who participate in them and how these activities are related to NIU's student-learning outcomes. To promote participation of faculty and staff in academic enrichment programs, such participation has to be embedded into the university’s reward and regard structures, including the promotion and tenure and the annual merit processes.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

Academic enrichment activities are, by their very nature, time- and labor-intensive. Units responsible for delivering such activities, whether centralized units, such as the Honors Program, or decentralized units, such as departments engaging their students in faculty research, need adequate resources, particularly adequate staffing, to deliver such programming. Some resources should be provided to OSEEL to develop and maintain a university-wide database of those students and faculty who participate in these programs. There should be some form of incentive for faculty to either participate in or develop academic-enrichment programs. Without revision to the university promotion and tenure processes, faculty are unlikely to focus on these activities without some other form of incentive.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

Issues related to academic enrichment programs were discussed at great length in the final report of the Curricular Innovations Task Force (i.e., part of the 2007-08 Strategic Planning Initiative). Further discussion of these issues also occurred in the Foundations of Excellence first-year experience review that occurred in 2008-2010 (see final report and recommendations).

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- The offices of the Provost and Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
- Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
- The Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning
- The Honors Programs
- The Office of International Programs
ISSUE
Student learning

INDICATOR
Performance scores of NIU undergraduate students on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) measuring critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication.

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
The CLA will be implemented in 2011-2012. No current scores are available for NIU. When data become available, the working group recommends the following table to compare NIU and its competitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Mean Freshman Score*</th>
<th>Mean Senior Score*</th>
<th>Value-Added Score</th>
<th>Value-Added Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIU</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitor 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitor 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4
Scores are reported as composites of the three areas of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication

GOAL

3-YEAR, 5-YEAR & 2020 TARGETS:
Target will need to be set once baseline benchmark is established in 2011-2012.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
Positive performance on the CLA has several implications:

• Reflects on the value-added learning that occurs among undergraduate students at NIU in the areas of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication

• Reflects on the abilities of graduating seniors at NIU in the areas of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication

• Reflects on the quality and curricular strength of NIU degree programs

• Reflects on the quality and curricular strength of NIU’s General Education Program

• Increases reputation of NIU
SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

• Establish NIU’s baseline benchmark in 2011-2012.

• Monitor improvements in student performance in the areas of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication.

• Increase NIU’s faculty and staff abilities to engage students more rigorously in the areas of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication.

• Ensure assessment practices at the course and program level reflect these goals.

• Increase writing across the curriculum practices at NIU.

• Ensure appropriate resources are dedicated to the University Writing Center, ACCESS, CHANCE and other tutoring services.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED

• Students will need to be exposed to increased academic rigor in the areas of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and written communication.

• The reward and regard systems for faculty and instructors should reflect these values; providing positive reinforcement for instructional faculty to address these issues.

• Students should be required or strongly encouraged to engage in more writing-intensive courses, more problem-based learning activities, and more analytical reasoning tasks in and out of class.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

• As the development of these skills is a fundamental activity of the educational environment, there is a basic need to ensure that NIU has the appropriate faculty strength to provide high-quality instruction to our students.

• Examine the development of a “master teacher” program that allows faculty to have a limited amount of release time to develop their instructional skills.

• Additional resources will be needed for the support bodies listed below (list is not exhaustive)
  • University Writing Center
  • Writing Across the Curriculum
  • First Year Composition Program
  • ACCESS, CHANCE, and other tutoring services
  • Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center
PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE

- Addresses two of NIU’s Planning Imperatives
  - Preserve, Strengthen and Extend NIU’s Teaching and Learning Environment
  - Make NIU an institution of “First Choice” for Faculty, Students, and Staff
- Presidential Task Force on Curricular Innovation
  - Strategy 3.2: Develop and Implement Enhanced General Education Program
- Presidential Task Force on Student Success
  - Overarching Goal 1: Increase Student Retention and Academic Success at NIU
- Baccalaureate Review Task Force
  - Baccalaureate Goals – Critical Thinking, Communication, and Creativity

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL

- Overseen by the Provost and Vice Provost
- Supported by
  - University Writing Center
  - Writing Across the Curriculum
  - First Year Composition Program
  - ACCESS, CHANCE, and other tutoring services
  - Faculty Development and Instructional Design
ISSUE
Career preparation

INDICATOR
Percentage of NIU baccalaureate alumni who believe their bachelor’s degree prepared them “well” or “very well” for their future career path.

As part of annual reporting to the IBHE, all Illinois public universities survey their undergraduate alumni on a variety of issues. On a three-year cycle, alumni are surveyed one year after graduation, five years after graduation and nine years after graduation. They are asked how well their institution prepared them for their career path. Note that preparation for career paths is very different than preparation for a job. While this is an attitudinal survey, it nevertheless represents a real statement on the impact we have on our students’ lives.

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
Currently about 60% of alumni believe their NIU bachelor’s degree prepared them “well” or “very well” for their future career path at one, five and nine years out after graduation.

We do not have responses from other individual institutions, but we can compare NIU’s outcomes to the statewide averages. When those who feel “well prepared” or “very well prepared” are combined, the statewide averages have been 61%, 58%, 59% and 65%, respectively.

NIU’s outcomes are very comparable to state averages, ranging from 1.3% below average to 5.5% above average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Year</th>
<th>Class of...</th>
<th>State Avg.</th>
<th>NIU</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>+5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.5

GOAL

3-YEAR TARGET: 65% of alumni will believe their NIU bachelor’s degree prepared them “well” or “very well” for their future career path at one, five and nine years out after graduation.

5-YEAR TARGET: 70% of alumni will believe their NIU bachelor’s degree prepared
them “well” or “very well” for their future career path at one, five and nine years out after graduation.

By 2020: 80% of alumni will believe their NIU bachelor’s degree prepared them “well” or “very well” for their future career path at one, five and nine years out after graduation.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
An increase in satisfaction with how well NIU prepares graduates for their career path has several implications:

• Reflects on the quality and curricular strength of NIU degree programs
• Increases reputation of NIU degrees
• Increases employment opportunities for NIU alumni
• Increases opportunities for future fundraising among satisfied NIU alumni
• Increases opportunities for future returns of alumni for graduate degrees and/or referrals for others to NIU

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL

• Increased communication between academic programs and individuals in each program’s field (e.g., employers, alumni)
• Increased coordination between academic departments and Career Services
• Increased opportunities for internships, clinical experiences, service-learning and other engaged learning experiences
• Increase NIU’s faculty and staff engagement in the regional community through partnerships and collaborative efforts in teaching, research, and service

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED
Students may be required or strongly encouraged to participate in a variety of activities prior to graduating from NIU. Such activities may include career counseling and/or testing, engaged learning activities outside of the classroom, mandatory advising sessions, and job application training.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS
Additional resources will be needed for the coordinating bodies listed below:
• Departments and Colleges
• The P-20 Center
• The Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning
• Career Services
• Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
• Academic Advising Center

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE
• Addresses two of NIU’s Planning Imperatives
  • Strengthen and Extend NIU’s Global/Regional Impact
  • Make NIU an institution of “First Choice” for Faculty, Students, and Staff
• Presidential Task Force on Curricular Innovation
  • Strategy 3.1: Increase Engaged Learning
• Presidential Task Force on Student Success
  • Overarching Goal 2: Increase the Positive Culture of NIU
• Enrollment Management Strategic Planning Task Force
  • Undergraduate Admissions (ppt), identification of “getting good jobs” as one reason students select a university

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL
• Overseen by the Provost and Vice Provost
• Coordinated by
  • Departments and Colleges
  • The P-20 Center
  • The Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning
  • Career Services
  • Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
  • Academic Advising Center
• Contacts and curricular changes made at departmental level
 ISSUE
Distributed learning (DL) media

INDICATOR
The generation of student credit hours via DL media. Since it is student credit hour (SCH) production that generates tuition revenue, increasing SCH is the most direct measure of impact of distributed learning efforts.

NIU’S BENCHMARK AND COMPARISON TO COMPETITORS
While the data on this indicator are pretty ragged, it appears that NIU currently generates approximately 17,500 SCH per year through distributed learning instructional modes. This amount is approximately 3% of NIU’s total credit hour generation, with 1% each coming from graduate, on-campus undergraduate, and off-campus undergraduate courses. The vast majority come from either fully online courses or predominantly online courses (i.e. courses with some face-to-face instruction, but at least 75% of instruction presented online). Some of these credit hours are generated through other distance technologies, such as real-time videoconferencing.

We have not yet identified good data on SCH production via distributed learning modes at peer institutions.

GOAL
3-YEAR TARGET: By 2013, generate at least 35,000 SCH through distributed learning media. This would represent a doubling of the distributed learning SCH production.

• Grow off-campus DL delivery threefold to approximately 25,000. This would be primarily through the development of certificate and degree programs that would be fully available through distributed learning.

• Grow on-campus DL delivery by half to approximately 10,000. This would be led by the expansion of individual course offerings available through distributed learning modes.

5-YEAR TARGET: By 2015, generate at least 85,000 SCH through distributed learning media. This would represent a fivefold increase in distributed learning SCH production.

• Grow off-campus DL delivery sixfold to approximately 67,500. This would be primarily through the development of certificate and degree programs that would be fully available through distributed learning.
• Grow on-campus DL delivery threefold to approximately 17,500. This would be led by the expansion of individual course offerings available through distributed learning modes, but could include some complete programs.

BY 2020: Generate at least 175,000 SCH through distributed learning media. This would represent a tenfold increase in distributed learning SCH production.

• Grow off-campus DL delivery twelvefold to approximately 145,000. This would be primarily through the development of certificate and degree programs that would be fully available through distributed learning.

• Grow on-campus DL delivery fivefold to approximately 30,000. This would be led by the expansion of individual course offerings available through distributed learning modes, but could include some complete programs.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE GOAL
There is a twofold rationale for increasing our presence in distributed learning. First, in a changing educational environment, students increasingly seek a broad diversity of learning modes and flexibility in time and place of learning. Second, to meet its enrollment and SCH goals for the coming years, the university will almost certainly require significant growth in distributed learning modes, to reach students who would not otherwise be part of NIU. Given the changing demographics of the region, the greatest opportunities lie with adult students, including those pursuing a first degree, degree completion or graduate studies. This market is large and one that NIU has little presence in currently, and that is particularly amenable to distributed learning modes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW NIU MEETS THE GOAL
The distributed learning task force is developing recommendations to this end, and will issue a report within the next few months. The task force is exploring four areas: infrastructure and technology; funding and sustainability; markets and demand; and academic issues.

ORGANIZATIONAL OR POLICY CHANGES REQUIRED
The distributed learning task force is examining these issues, looking at academic issues and infrastructure and support issues.
BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS
A new funding model for distributed learning is under discussion. The goal of the new funding model will be to provide incentives for growth in distributed learning SCH while mitigating against possible loss of on-campus SCH production.

PLANNING DOCUMENTS THAT ADDRESS THE ISSUE
Forthcoming report of the distributed learning task force.

GROUP(S) IN CHARGE OF APPROVING OR IMPLEMENTING THE GOAL
• Academic Affairs
• Outreach, Engagement, and Information Technologies