Questions from Regional Campus Town Hall: Feb. 23, 2024

Thank you to all who attended the Town Hall Teams Live on Feb. 23. In an effort to answer your questions, Kent State University leadership involved in this session have provided written responses to unanswered questions that were not addressed due to time limitations (as well as typed responses to some that were addressed during the session). Should you have additional questions, please email regionals@kent.edu and your question will be directed to the appropriate individual for the most comprehensive response.

Questions related to specific programs and faculty hiring/staffing of courses

Q: When faculty leave, not all are replaced. Why weren't faculty replaced for some majors that had large groups of students? An example is criminal justice.

A: There have been declines occurring in the number of declared majors, as well as the number of students taught within most disciplines for quite some time now. There are very few disciplines that are growing in the Regional Campus System. Criminal justice, in particular, is an example of a major that has declined significantly over the last five years, yet the number of faculty has not declined at the same rate. When we are not replacing people who leave, it is because the ratio of students to faculty has declined.

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Q: Some programs that are based in the regional system are stable or growing. I am concerned that programs seeing growth will have their momentum and student experience negatively affected and have their growth halted.

A: There are a few programs for which enrollment is growing, and others with fairly stable enrollment in the last several years. We do absolutely want to look at all programs and focus our efforts on those that are in the greatest demand by students, families, employers, and communities. It is important to align our portfolio of offerings with both the breadth and depth of need. We can do that using multiple modalities for classes and degrees to help ensure that we meet those needs.

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Q: IF we have to close a regional campus, what will happen to the TT faculty?

A: There are no plans to close a regional campus. Efforts are focused on keeping the Regional Campus System fully intact with all current locations. If all such efforts are not successful, and one or more campuses must be closed, then the guidelines laid out in the Collective Bargaining Agreement would be followed.

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Q: Will there be a push to reduce the number of upper-division courses and four-year programs at the RC system level?

A: Rather than a reduction in the number of upper-division courses and four-year programs, an increase in access to those programs is likely if we can take advantage of online completion options. So rather than RC students being restricted only to degrees approved to be offered fully via the RC system, if we can provide very strong support for online completion (in collaboration with departments/schools/colleges based at the Kent Campus), we should be able to provide access to more degrees than we are doing now. Online learner support centers at our campuses is one important strategy for increasing the options. We may not need to do as many "by ourselves" but can do more in collaboration.

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Q: Will a TT faculty take courses from NTT faculty? For example, if a TT faculty person has a course with low enrollment which is cancelled, would they bump an NTT faculty member from an assigned course?

A: The processes for class assignment will follow any rules laid out in the Collective Bargaining Agreements. Then assignments are made based on faculty specialization and experience as well as other factors such as class location or modality. Courses with low enrollment will be avoided unless there is a student need for that course that cannot be addressed in another way.

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Q: How will larger sizes in some course sections support the positive student experience that aligns with the pedagogy of RC faculty?

A: The best course caps are a decision that should be driven based on pedagogical research and data, to be discussed and determined at the level of the faculty in each discipline. Looking at data about how to provide positive student experiences in different-sized classes can be a valuable exercise for faculty in each department/school /college and across disciplines.

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Q: When can faculty expect to know Fall 2024 workload assignments?

A: First drafts of Fall 2024 schedules should be completed fairly soon, if not already done. Those give an indication of courses on the schedule. The discussion of workload for each faculty member is done between the individual faculty member and the campus dean. Those assignments are often adjusted right up to the beginning of a term depending on enrollment patterns.

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Q: What are the high-quality degrees you referenced in the presentations?

A: We try to provide high quality in all that we do. High quality means that we are providing a strong, challenging educational experience that will help the student gain both breadth and depth of knowledge. It includes direct teaching of higher-level thinking skills that can be applied in multiple situations throughout a person's life, but also includes specific knowledge and skills that can open the door to a good career. It includes clear learning outcomes that are robustly measured, with results of that assessment used for continuous improvement. It also includes curriculum and modalities for courses that are aligned to both student learning desires and to needs that they may not recognize at the time. Finally, it includes learning experiences that meet the students where they are and supports them in getting to where they need to be.

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Q: Are we trying to copy the Brazil AA to other countries?

A: We are working with Office of Global Education to identify and secure global partners.

Questions related to enrollment and enrollment trends

Q: We should be compared to the early 2000s and thanked for serving our students during the 2008 market collapse. The peak enrollment 10+ years ago was bolstered heavily by students coming to the RCs to change careers. How do numbers compare to a time prior to the market collapse?

A: The farthest back we have been able to gather data on student enrollment is 2000. At that time — a time when the Regional Campus System was more unified as a system — enrollment was about 30% higher than it is right now. There was a rise to a peak around 2010, and then declines after that. The number of faculty and staff in the Regional Campus System is higher now than it was in 2000, when the enrollment was higher than it is at present.

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Q: Isn't enrollment up both for fall and spring at some of the regionals?

A: Enrollment in the Regional Campus System flattened this year for the fall term, with a slight rise for the spring term over the previous year. We expect the enrollment to remain stable for another year, or even have a very slight rise, but the data on high school graduates predicts further declines after that. It is important to try to stabilize enrollment as much as possible through increased retention/completion, recruiting additional students (particularly adult students), making sure that we have programs that are in demand by students and employers, *etc.* We also need to stabilize expenses to handle the fact that costs per student are rising at a rate faster than revenue per student.

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Q: From your perspective what can we on the regionals do to enhance enrollment?

A: Increasing retention (and therefore completion) is probably the greatest impact item for enrollment. We can also consider how to be as supportive as possible of part-time students and adult students to increase those numbers. We can also work closely with employers to ensure that the education we provide leads to the employees they want to hire, and that they will therefore encourage current and future employees to earn a degree via Kent State.

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Q: Why are the 2023 data numbers not included?

A: Numbers shown in the slides during the Town Hall on 2/23 were the most recent full data available — through Fall 2023. Since the slides were comparing fall terms to fall terms to be consistent, spring term numbers were not included so that comparisons could be made as accurately as possible.

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Q: How do we propose to increase marketing to attract students as they leave other educational institutions?

A: We do not plan to directly target students who are currently attending another institution to draw them away, but when we learn that students may need to make a shift, we will be reaching out via social media and/or direct advertising. Sometimes relationships between advisors or recruiters across institutions are also helpful in providing us with information on the timing for such messages and the potentially affected students.

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Q: Where did the 70% enrollment stat come from? Time frame? Did this campus still have a budget surplus?

A: I think you may be referring to the percentage drop in first-year enrollment shown on one of the slides. That was a percentage change in first-year students calculated across higher education institutions in Ohio by the Enrollment Management Office based on state reported data from 2013 and 2021 (the last year available from the state at the time this was calculated in the fall of 2023). KSU first-year student admitted class sizes had reduced by percentages ranging from 7% (Kent Campus) to over 70% (one of the regional campuses) during that time period. Kent State balances its budget, and the Regional Campus System balances its budget(s) every year. The methods of achieving that have varied some each year, and sometimes result in a surplus that goes into the allocated fund to be used for things like long-term maintenance of buildings and change initiatives.

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Q: Re: the “North Star of Completion.” Given that we are open enrollment, many of us have students who struggle academically when they first begin college. Are they expectations to pass students if they are not achieving the learning outcomes of a course?

A: We are open enrollment for those who hold a high school diploma or GED. We work to meet our students where they are and provide the best possible learning experiences. We support them through remedial work when needed. We facilitate and support their learning with the goal of helping each one achieve the learning outcomes associated with each course and each program of study. Faculty set the appropriate standards for demonstrating that the learning outcomes have been achieved.

Questions related to particular expense items

Q: Why if you want to reduce building use would you shift Dr. Shadduck’s Kent-based staff into the Lincoln Building with added expenses?

A: There is no additional expense to the university by shifting people reporting under the three major areas Dr. Shadduck is in charge of into the Lincoln Building. The building brings together the 3.5 positions based in Kent that serve the full Regional Campus System, the 1 position based in Kent that serves CATS, and the 9 positions based in Kent that support various aspects of Lifelong Learning (corporate professional education, continuing education, micro-credentialing) into one building. Spaces used in other buildings on the Kent Campus for those people are now allowing for consolidation, which could lead to the mothballing or demolition of a building at the Kent Campus in the future.

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Q: Are the use of adjuncts a net gain in revenue due to lower employee costs than for full-time faculty? If that is true will the number of adjunct positions increase?

A: Many factors must be considered when answering a question like this. Yes, each adjunct is paid less per class than a full-time faculty member. However, full-time faculty are also responsible for the overall approach and quality of academic programs. They also serve many other roles for the university, such as advising on academically related issues, guiding the work of advisors, modifying curriculum to keep up with changing needs, helping with things like student organizations, working on retention efforts, *etc.* So, it is important that we take advantage of the commitment that full-time faculty have on top of the high-quality teaching done for each course section. Many adjuncts bring great passion and skill to their classes, but it is important to also have full-time faculty.

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Q: If our strategic priorities include meeting local needs and forming community partnerships, how can the campuses meet these very specific site-based goals if the campus deans are supporting two campuses? Will joint responsibilities keep deans from working closely with local businesses, industry, and high schools?

A: Feedback from Faculty Councils and others has indicated that the interim deans handling more than one location have done quite well at being deeply engaged in the communities served by their campuses. Although not able to attend all events, they certainly attend a high number. Assistance from others on the campuses (faculty, administrators, staff) can help to maintain a strong presence at events and working with local partners. The decision to go with four campus dean/CAO positions with each handling two locations was made in response to the direct recommendation from the joint response of the campus faculty councils.

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Q: Is there acknowledgement that certain things cannot be unified or shared; for example, scholarships are location based. We are not identical, so a one-size-fits-all approach isn't going to produce the most favorable outcomes for all functions.

A: Yes, there is realization that some processes are location specific. A good example is building and grounds care. Some scholarships are restricted by donors to students enrolled in a certain number of hours listed under one campus. Since student behavior often does not align with that restriction (students often take courses listed on the schedule for other campuses), that practice can result in a student losing scholarship funds. Campus deans and others who work directly with donors are working hard to align donor goals with student needs. There are some unique features in each community that we serve, and many common features. For example, all regional campuses work with a higher percentage of low income, first generation, and/or lower-GPA high schoolers than at the Kent Campus. We all also have a high percentage of employed students and part-time students. These commonalities can be addressed well by working together to support those students in the strongest ways possible. There will certainly be some things that need to be modified to meet particular needs associated with one county or campus. An example might be heading students into clinical or internship experiences that are provided by local employers.

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Q: Could you break down the $815,000 projected savings for us? How does it account for the salary of the new AVP assigned by the Provost to assist the regional campus system?

A: That estimate comes from what we originally had in a fiscal year 2025 budget, but then making changes as follows:

- Eliminate two campus dean positions
- Add four support staff positions

- Eliminate two campus assistant dean positions
- Add one lead scheduling administrator position
- Eliminate two budget/facility manager positions
- Eliminate six campus senior budget manager positions
- Add one regional system budget manager position
- Add two regional system senior business manager positions

All estimates include benefits (approximately 39% of salary). Exact numbers will depend on who goes into each revised position. The AVP's salary is covered by the Provost's Office for two years as an investment in helping the Regional Campus System. No decisions beyond two years will be made at this time.

Questions related to employee positions and benefits

Q: Are part-time employees "safer" because they don't have benefits package? If so, can some people become part time vs cut?

A: We try to maximize the use of full-time faculty and staff whenever possible. We do have some part-time staff positions and use adjunct faculty when the commitment needed is part-time. There are no plans to push full-time people to part-time positions in order to eliminate their benefits.

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Q: The org chart structure provided by Dr. Shadduck lists RC Senior Administrator position lined up with the Regional Campus deans. I do not see this position posted on the website. Why is this newly created position necessary and why isn't it posted on the jobs site with all the other new positions?

A: A senior administrator position was shifted to the Regional Campus System from the Provost's Office for a period of two years. That expense is not being incurred by the RC System budgets, but instead is part of the effort from the university as a whole to help with the work to move the regional system forward in a positive way.

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Q: How many faculty need to be "dislocated," NTT or TT, to meet our budgetary needs on RCs and Kent Campus?

A: The solution to stabilizing Regional Campus System enrollment and revenue while ensuring that we have the right number of faculty in the right disciplines to meet the needs for the sustainability of the Regional Campus System is not as simple as just eliminating a certain number of faculty. It requires that we work together to examine the student, employer, and community needs now and predicted for the future. We also need to establish a structure that can be adaptable enough to always be looking toward the future and adjusting as conditions change.

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Q: Faculty, systemwide, have representation, Kent Campus classified staff have representation. Who is looking out for staff at the “administrative level” and regional campus classified staff who are not represented by a union?

A: The Division of People, Culture and Belonging provides direction and policies for all employees of the university. In addition, each person has a supervisor who oversees their work and any associated concerns.

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Q: Why are administrative salaries so much higher than faculty? NTT faculty are paid the same as in the 1980s when tuition was $3,000 per year.

A: Salaries are determined by the market and researched by experienced human resources professionals within the Division of People, Culture and Belonging. Salary increases for faculty are negotiated by the parties through the collective bargaining process. The statement that faculty salary has not increased since the 1980s is inaccurate.

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Q: Has the thought of reductions in salaries for those at the high end of the pay spectrum been considered?

A: The administration is examining many ways to respond to the financial challenges facing the University.

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Q: Who gets to decide who will be hired to the new Vice Dean positions and the new financial positions?

A: As with all searches for staff positions at the university, search committees are doing the initial screening and interviewing of applicants. Recommendations from the search committees for the finalists are then shared with the people to whom the people report, which, in this case, is the VP and the campus deans. Those individuals make the final decisions.

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Q: What is the transition timeline as new positions replace current ones in some areas? If a campus assistant dean is my direct supervisor, how will that affect my reporting? Will people who shift to new positions transition immediately? Will affected people get a 90-day notice?

A: As transition occurs, officially on July 1, 2024, for the realignments of two functional areas, the campus deans/CAOs will be working on any changes in the direct responsibility assignments of the assistant deans (academic vice deans), who report to them. They will guide the transitions of all areas reporting to those individuals. Any notices are considered to be private conversations between the Division of People, Belonging and Culture and affected individuals, so we will not comment on that here.

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Q: Could you expand on the job description for the Vice Dean positions?

A: The assistant deans (academic vice deans) are managers who will report to the campus deans/CAOs. They support the deans by helping with student, faculty, and academic issues that may arise on a campus, as well as any other issues assigned by that dean/CAO. They may oversee particular functions, such as tutoring, ensuring students are aware of complaint processes, making sure that retention efforts are implemented well, *etc.*

Questions related to budgetary processes

Q: What is an E and G budget?

A: The E stands for Educational and the G stands for General. This terminology refers to parts of the budget that cover expenses that go beyond particular units. These would be things that a college-level budget or Regional Campus System budget does not cover. For example, the support for submission and implementation of grants by faculty is handled at the university level and is funded through E&G money. The legal counsel for the university, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Banner system, and many other things are covered by this fund. Basically, this is the money that can be allocated by the university leadership to meet needs across the university.

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Q: If a regional campus has had a budget deficit in the past, is that a reflection of poor leadership on the part of the dean of that campus?

A: Expenses associated with the Regional Campus System have become increasingly intertwined across the system as more and more students take courses online. Therefore, the revenue and expense lines of the budget are not well aligned at the level of each individual campus. All leaders are working together to stabilize both revenue and expenses while serving the students in the most effective and efficient way possible. There are no indications that a leader is not doing that work well.

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Q: Why don't you mention that the campuses with reduced enrollment do not run a deficit?

A: Kent State does not run budget deficits. We balance the budget each year. Each of the campuses within our system takes full advantage of the support and resources of the RC system as a whole and of the university as a whole. No campus in our RC system would balance its budget without being a part of the whole university and RC system.

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Q: Could the shared Columbiana Campuses model be used as an example of how to maintain a budget surplus with the ups and downs of enrollment? It demonstrates the importance of having support at the regional campus level to meet needs. I am not sure that a unified model for the Regional Campus System can support student and faculty needs effectively.

A: No campus in our RC system would balance its budget without being a part of the whole university and RC system, including the Columbiana Campuses. There are aspects of individual campus and shared processes that are highly beneficial to the full RC system, and we will use those best practices as we work together in a more collaborative way. The benefits of a collaborative model are demonstrated by the smoothing of the impact of ups and downs in local enrollment when shared functions are in place.

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Q: I understand streamlining and I appreciate the work being done. However, I do not understand how shifting business directors and managers from individual campuses to the regional campus system is a smart thing to do. Please explain.

A: By streamlining and coordinating the Regional Campus System budgetary processes, we avoid having multiple different approaches and methods to budgeting, which has led to difficulty in clearly seeing data and setting priorities for spending. It will allow for consistency in budgeting, spending, and tracking of that spending through aligned processes. The budgets will continue to be overseen by the leadership team, with campus level spending under the direction of the campus deans, as has been the practice for many years. Daily implementation of campus level spending and its associated paperwork will continue to happen at every campus, with coordination by business managers who can support that work.

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Q: What are the assumptions of the 5-year budget model? How do you make adjustments when it seems that the assumptions are inaccurate?

A: The assumptions for the 5-year budget models, both for the Kent Campus and for the Regional Campuses, include information on enrollment (*i.e.,* how many new students we should expect right out of high school, how many transfer students, how many adult students). It also includes the best information we have on tuition charges and changes in those charges, on state share of instruction, on number of employees, on benefits for those employees, on costs for services such as information technology and library resources and security. In other words, it uses a combination of information about the economy, revenue sources, and costs — both current and future — to predict revenue and expenses. Adjustments are made each time new information affects one of the variables. These are dynamic prediction models used to help us plan based on the best information available at the time. People who provide input to the assumptions and models include the offices of Finance and Administration, Enrollment Management, Government Relations, PCB (People, Culture and Belonging). Assumptions are reviewed by a variety of people, including the President, Provost, Vice Presidents, College Deans, and Campus Deans.

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Q: Can you show us actual spending numbers rather than budgeted expenses?

A: Yes. We can create a graph showing total revenues and expenditures over time for the Regional Campus System. The university budget process does not allow us to ever go over the budgeted amount, so the expenditures will always be at or less than the budgeted amount.

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Q: We are already operating with a skeleton crew. How can we possibly cut more without significantly diminishing the quality of education and facilities?

A: Correct. Cutting using the same methods as used in the past is no longer viable. We have done just about all we can with campus-level adjustments. Therefore, adjusting by changing organizational structure so that we are realigning processes and people is the savings approach needed to handle continued gaps between predicted revenue and predicted expenses. At the same time, we need to stabilize enrollment (particularly by focusing on retention and completion) and work toward some opportunities for small, but sustainable, enrollment increases.

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Q: Is there a prohibition in raising tuition at the Regionals to match Kent's tuition?

A: The lower tuition cost in the Regional Campus System is part of the access mission of Kent State. By providing access to education at a lower cost, we open the door for some students who feel that the higher tuition at the Kent Campus is prohibitive to have the opportunity to study at the university. To adjust for providing education at a lower cost, we provide more limited offerings than the Kent Campus, but at the same Kent State quality. On a side note, we cannot raise the tuition beyond the limits set by the state legislature.

Questions about class scheduling

Q: Once the scheduling team is in place, will we be thoughtful about giving the changes made? Right now, many changes are happening. How will we know what worked, say two years from now?

A: The class scheduling process will include all of the steps needed to develop a good schedule — gathering information on trends and students needs within a discipline, gathering information on program roadmaps, gathering information on numbers of students who are “off the map,” considering how many courses are needed in each core area, looking at approved course modalities and caps, *etc*. It will include input from faculty within and across disciplines, advisors, recruiters, administrators, department chairs, *etc*. It will definitely be a careful and thoughtful process, with metrics regularly studies, including things like course pass rates, retention rates, and completion rates broken down by discipline, modality, and student demographics.

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Q: What qualifications does the AVP who will oversee scheduling bring to this work?

A: Dr. Bartell has many years of experience in higher education with a focus on student success. She has worked with programming for first-year students, with faculty across many disciplines who are aligning the learning experience with retention and completion efforts, ensuring that curriculum, policies and processes associated with educational delivery meet the needs of students. She understands the vital role of faculty in increasing student success; her strong focus on student and faculty success uniquely qualifies her to bring a student-centered point of view to the scheduling process. She spent 16 years as a faculty member on a regional campus, so has a good feel for the special considerations of students we serve through these systems.

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Q: My understanding is for degrees that are housed at the Kent Campus, the departmental chair will submit recommended schedules to the scheduling team. Correct? I do not believe I have heard this stated in this forum.

A: Incorrect. Recommended schedules of classes for the Regional Campus System are developed by the Regional Campus System. Input from departments/schools/colleges based at the Kent Campus is one factor in the development of a recommended schedule along with many others mentioned above.

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Q: Will the actual days/times that a faculty member teaches classes be determined by their campus dean, in conversation with the faculty member? In the past, local coordinators and deans have always taken into consideration personal factors *(e.g.,* family, commute) for setting class times. Even if classes are set by a central scheduler, the actual teaching time is also important for many.

A: The number one driver of a class schedule is student need/demand. Once the schedule is developed and we are ready to assign faculty to particular course sections, key issues include the specialty areas of available faculty, locations and modalities of courses as compared to faculty primary campus assignments, *etc*. If there is sufficient opportunity to work around a personal need, the campus dean (still the final determiner of faculty load) can certainly take that into consideration.

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Q: Will load distributed through coordinator positions, outlined in campus faculty handbooks, be honored in this new central scheduling system?

A: Centralized scheduling cannot supersede the Collective Bargaining Agreement, so campus handbooks will be honored on the amount of load when an assignment of responsibility is made by the campus dean.

Questions related to culture

Q: Some people in the regional campus system do not trust people in the university higher administration. The consultation process included cancelled meetings, short time frames, and hiring for position(s) prior to it being presented. Are there cuts being made at the level of regional campus system and university leadership? How can more trust be established?

A: We assume you are referring to rescheduled meetings as we awaited feedback from the Faculty Councils from consultation done in the fall term. That did require that some planned meetings be pushed back, allowing time to change approach in response to the feedback from the Faculty Councils, and therefore shortening time frames for coming back with further considerations for the Faculty Councils. The need to fit as closely as possible to the university budget development schedule compressed on the other end. No positions have been hired prior to presentation to potentially affected individuals, presentation for consultation, and response to the feedback from the consultation. Cuts made at the administrative level include reduction of two campus dean/CAO positions at the recommendation of the Faculty Councils. There is a single provost position and a single VP position. The VP for Regional Campuses is already combined with a college dean job and an additional unit leader position, which reduces the number of administrators. The best way for those who do not feel trust with administrators to gain that trust is to actively participate in the change process alongside the administrators and to continue to share good ideas and feedback, which has (and will continue to) alter(ed) approaches to handling the challenges faced by the regional campus system and the university as a whole.

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Q: In all of these update meetings, I have not heard anything that is focused on the student experience. One of the benefits for students in the Regional Campus System is the availability of support staff services (advising, financial aid, testing and tutoring, the library staff, *etc.*). Students who transition to the Kent Campus oftentimes seek out the Regional staff because the experience and service at the Regional Campus is student-centered. We are available to our students, they know us, and they aren't treated like a number. How are these changes, primarily centralization, benefiting our students?

A: The focus is very much on the students, which is why we repeatedly speak of the North Star of Completion. As the number of students declines, and therefore available funds decline, it is getting harder and harder for each individual campus to provide all of the support we wish to provide for our students. By joining forces in collaborative efforts, we can be more effective in doing that. For example, if advisors across the Regional Campus System join forces, then we can make sure that students who want in-person appointments get them, students who want the fastest appointment possible get that, and students who need to make an appointment remotely on the weekend because of work and family conflicts have that option, too. Small staff at one campus cannot do that nearly as effectively as a combined effort that now involves a larger group taking turns with different schedules and modalities. We will continue to be student-centered.

Other questions

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Q: Could you please address staff concerns? The session held on February 23 included more on faculty concerns than staff concerns.

A: Yes, an additional session just for staff has been scheduled for Friday, March 8.

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Q: Why are none of our ideas to increase revenue being put into practice?

A: Many ideas to increase revenue are being worked on, with several already in place. For example, there is a full process in place for credit micro-credential approval and implementation with the support of the Lifelong Learning Unit, as well as lots of work on non-credit micro-credentials. Several options for new student pathways are being considered via the College of Applied and Technical Studies. A pilot project for welcoming adult learners via Credit for Prior Learning is underway. The Belonging Champions program, which has history of a strong effect on retention, is actively at work. Partnerships to share space with community members have been added. Funding to attract students into high-demand degree programs is being used to supplement marketing and scholarship students. There are many more examples of your good ideas at work. Additional ideas are always welcome!

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Q: What measures will be used to track if the organizational changes benefit student degree completion, belongingness, and success?

A: Measures include things like changes in how many students return after one semester, persist to their second year, and complete a degree. We would also look at how many people we are serving and how we are serving them. Additionally, whenever we can get the information, knowing about their experiences after they leave us is a very valuable piece of information. The university is working on better ways to get that information.

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Q: What is the timeline for FY26, and which administrative units will we look at combining next?

A: Fiscal year 2026 begins on July 1, 2025, and lasts through June 30, 2026. We will continue to look at all processes in the Regional Campus System to determine if we can effectively meet the needs in a more streamlined fashion through collaborative approaches. There are good discussions underway by several groups already who are working on recommendations. Advising is one example of such a group.

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Q: The President said that over the last five years, roughly 200 administrators have accepted the buyout. I am wondering how many of those positions were re-hired. Further, how many new administrative positions have been created?

A: This question has been sent to HR. It is important to note that in many cases, if individuals select buyouts/retirement incentives and the positions they previously held are readvertised, the new salary is normally considerably less.

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Q: Are you working with, or will you ever work with a consulting firm on the reduction and realignment of the University?

A: We are not currently working with a consulting firm.

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Q: Given the concerns faculty have expressed, what is the rationale behind why non-voting NTT faculty were prevented from even being in the room when this information was discussed?

A: The parties have agreed through Collective Bargaining the parameters of faculty governance. Neither party has the express right to alter the terms of the agreement unilaterally. The administration has provided other venues for NTT faculty to engage in information sharing and the development of ideas and strategies to respond to matters impacting the Regional Campus System.

Additional questions answered during Teams Live session

Q: What are the revenue generation ideas as we move forward? We cannot continue cutting and expect that will be enough to maintain a balanced budget.

A: Revenue generating ideas include renting space and resources to local partners, adding educations programs that could attract new learners (*i.e.,* select micro credentials in demand by local employers or degree pathways that are in high need), increasing retention of students, ensuring that adult learners get the kind of schedule and access that works for them, considering ways to recruit new adult learners *(i.e*., looking at prior learning portfolio assessment), increasing the matriculation of CCP and Tech Prep students to regional campuses, and more! Keep the ideas coming.

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Q: If we are looking to continue reducing expenses, why are there currently 76 positions at the KC on the HR website to be hired?

A: There are always openings in a large organization as people make changes in their lives. A hiring freeze (stopping any replacements after people leave) is one strategy for reducing expenses but is not a priority-focused strategy; instead, it is based more on chance.

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Q: The President said that "we aren't doing more with less, but doing it differently," however, when you look at the ratio of faculty/staff to students the numbers have decreased dramatically (which is detrimental to the student experience). Can you please speak to how this is not doing more with less?

A: An analysis of data from 2000 for the Regional Campus System, as compared to 2023, shows that the Regional Campus System as a whole had more employees (both faculty and staff) in the Fall of 2023 than in the Fall of 2000. Student enrollment in Fall of 2000 was approximately 30% higher than it is now. A more unified/centralized approach was used a couple of decades ago, so it is possible that individuals were feeling less stretched because they worked in more collaborative ways. There are, of course, many factors that have changed in two decades, though, so it is important not to over-simplify the interpretation of data like these. But reorganizing is about doing things differently rather than continuing identical processes with fewer resources.

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Q. Why does the administration say that the RC reorganization was a "model" of shared faculty governance?

A. Every effort has been made to follow the rules of faculty consultation and governance as laid out in the Collective Bargaining Agreements. As noted during the information session on 2/23, this has not been perfect, but whenever we learn that we missed a step or overlooked a process, we have attempted to remedy that as quickly as possible. Communication has been in good faith, giving the information available. We continue to gather and analyze more data, sharing that as we get it, and will continue to do so.

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Q: Why do we see cuts at the individual campuses, but not at the VP of RC level? We have seen a large increase in the budget for the RC system administrative group, with more positions (the centralized coordinator and the position Denise Bartell will occupy) coming. How is having more admin/management improving efficiencies and delivering a good student experience?

A: The Regional Campus System administration consists of a vice president, a project manager, an enrollment management and student services associate VP (50% paid by the regional system), and an administrative specialist. A new associate vice president has been added to that group at no expense to the Regional Campus System. Other groups that serve the full Regional Campus System (*i.e.,* Marketing and Communications, Veterans Benefit Processing, Instructional Design, Recruiting) are now covered via the combined system index, but there are no additional costs to the system for those collaborative processes; those are monetary shifts in which budget index is handling the accounting that help to streamline work by reducing repeated transfers of funds between multiple indexes.

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Q: As long as our ability to offer online courses is determined by our Kent Campus-based Departments/Schools, how can we expect any programs that are not in CATS to maintain enrollment, let alone grow? Are any conversations ongoing at the upper administrative level that will help us reduce competition amongst ourselves?

A: Decisions about which course modalities are appropriate for which courses are made at the level of the academic unit — a department/school/college — by the faculty within that unit. All Regional Campus System faculty members are a part of one of those units, so they are a part of those decisions. Regional Campuses implement curriculum in approved modalities to meet the needs of Regional Campus System students. If administrators can help facilitate those discussions, we are delighted to do so.