



Melody Tankersley

Interim Senior Vice President and Provost

December 1, 2020

Randy Gardner, Chancellor
Ohio Department of Higher Education
25 South Front Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chancellor Gardner:

Pursuant to the requirements of House Bill 59, I humbly submit the updated Kent State University Complete College Ohio Campus Completion Plan and resolution as approved by the Board of Trustees on December 1, 2020.

Kent State University remains committed to improving student success while keeping true to our mission for accessible education for the citizens of Ohio and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melody Tankersley".

Melody Tankersley, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President and Provost

c: Dr. Todd A. Diacon, President
Dr. Charlene Reed, Vice President and University Secretary

Interim Senior Vice President and Provost

**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
December 1, 2020**

Resolution

**APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
COMPLETE COLLEGE OHIO CAMPUS COMPLETION PLAN**

WHEREAS, the State of Ohio joined the Complete College America Alliance of States in 2013, creating Complete College Ohio; and

WHEREAS, the state legislature passed the Complete College Ohio Act with the primary goal to increase dramatically the number of college degrees awarded in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, the 130th Ohio General Assembly passed Amended Substitute House Bill 59 that required the university to adopt a strategic completion plan that was approved by the Board of Trustees and submitted to the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents; and

WHEREAS, the board of trustees of each institution of higher education is required to update its plan at least once every two years and to provide a copy to the Chancellor upon adoption; and

WHEREAS, the university seeks approval of the Board of Trustees to submit this next required updated plan to the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education by December 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Kent State University remains committed to improving student success while keeping true to its mission of providing accessible education for the citizens of Ohio and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the university supports and expands the state's educational and workforce development initiatives in the broadest and most meaningful sense; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Kent State University Board of Trustees hereby approves the updated Kent State University Complete College Ohio Campus Completion Plan, and the submission of the plan to the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education by the December 1, 2020, deadline.

**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
December 1, 2020**

Background

**APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
COMPLETE COLLEGE OHIO CAMPUS COMPLETION PLAN**

General Information

Complete College America is a national nonprofit organization established in 2009 with the mission to work with states to increase significantly the number of Americans with college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations. To join Complete College America, a state's governor, in partnership with its colleges and universities, pledges to make college completion a top priority. Furthermore, governors and legislators commit to setting completion goals and using consistent data. By joining Complete College America, state governments also commit to implementing aggressive campus-level action plans to boost student success. In 2013 Ohio joined the Alliance of States, creating Complete College Ohio.

The primary goal of the Complete College Ohio Act, passed by the state legislature in 2013, is to increase dramatically the number of college degrees awarded in Ohio. In Fall 2012, then-Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Jim Petro released the Complete College Ohio Task Force Report and Recommendations. The report included a core, centerpiece recommendation of a statewide requirement for all public institutions of higher learning in Ohio to develop and implement institution-specific campus completion plans.

Subsequently, the 130th Ohio General Assembly passed Amended Substitute House Bill 59 requiring that the board of trustees of each institution of higher education adopt an institution-specific strategic completion plan designed to increase the number of degrees and certificates awarded to students and provide a copy of the plan to the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents by June 30, 2014, and every two years thereafter. The plan shall be consistent with the mission and strategic priorities of the institution, include measurable student completion goals, and align with the state's workforce development priorities.

On May 28, 2014, the Kent State University Board of Trustees approved the initial Campus Completion Plan and submitted the plan to the Ohio Board of Regents. On June 6, 2018, the Board of Trustees approved the updated plan, which was submitted to the Chancellor by June 30, 2018. As required, the university has updated its completion plan and seeks Board approval to submit the plan to the Chancellor by December 1, 2020.

The 2020 Campus Completion Plan provides an update on the progress made toward goals established in 2014 (including related completion strategies) and identifies the university's

goals to increase retention and persistence over the next two years (July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022). New completion goals align with Kent State University's *Strategic Roadmap for a Distinctive Kent State*, as approved by the Board of Trustees on December 8, 2015. Kent State University has made significant progress toward goals established in 2014, 2016, and 2018, including:

- The retention rate on the Kent campus increased to 81.6 percent, up from the 77.6 percent benchmark noted in the 2012 initial Campus Completion Plan.
- The Regional Campuses retention rate increased by 4 percent from 56.1 percent (Fall 2012) to 60.1 percent (Fall 2020)
- The six-year graduation rate for all first-time, full-time students on the Kent campus reached a record high of **65.5 percent**.

Completion goals established for the upcoming biennium align with the university's Strategic Roadmap and the *Students First* priority and university-level initiatives. These goals include:

- Establish a strategic enrollment management plan to align Kent State system-wide enrollment, retention, and completion efforts with our institutional mission, vision, and values;
- Expand the university's living-learning community participation with the understanding that research demonstrates that participation in living-learning communities has long-lasting benefits for student success;
- Redesign the first-year experience course focusing on helping students transition to the Kent State community;
- Implement a micro-credentialing program to provide education on critical industry and student success topics for current and new students, which will contribute to the workforce development of employed individuals seeking additional qualifications for career advancement;
- Establish an anti-racism task force that will examine and make recommendations to remove institutional barriers to student success and completion;
- Expand student employment opportunities because on-campus employment increases the likelihood that students will have faculty or staff mentorship to advocate students' needs; and
- Expand support for mental health and basic needs.

Alternatives and Consequences

Failure to approve the updated Kent State University Complete College Ohio Campus Completion Plan would leave the university out of compliance with the Ohio Department of Higher Education and the State of Ohio.

Specific Recommendation

It is recommended that the Kent State University Board of Trustees approve the Kent State University Complete College Ohio Campus Completion Plan Update at its meeting on December 1, 2020.

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS COMPLETION PLAN UPDATE

Executive Summary

Kent State University combines its historic mission of access with a commitment to the highest level of teaching and research. We are focusing significant efforts on student success to provide even more Ohioans with a top-notch college education and entry into meaningful employment. We have significantly increased our graduation and retention rates through many completion strategies since the submission of our first Campus Completion Plan in 2014. Through our University Level Initiatives (ULIs), we have achieved an 81.6 percent retention of students from freshman to sophomore and a 65.5 percent graduation rate. This 2020 Kent State University Completion Plan outlines our progress to date and highlights our most recent efforts around the University Priority "Students First."

1. University Mission

Kent State Vision: *To be a community of change agents whose collective commitment to learning sparks epic thinking, meaningful voice and invaluable outcomes to better our society.*

Kent State Mission: *We transform lives and communities through the power of discovery, learning and creative expression in an inclusive environment.*

Kent State Core Values: *We value ...*

- A distinctive blend of teaching, research and creative excellence;
- Active inquiry and discovery that expand knowledge and human understanding;
- Life-changing educational experiences for students with wide-ranging talents and aspirations;
- A living-learning environment that creates a genuine sense of place;
- Engagement that inspires positive change;
- Diversity of culture, beliefs, identity and thought;
- Freedom of expression and the free exchange of ideas;
- A collaborative community; and
- Respect, kindness and purpose in all we do.

Student Body Profile:

The Fall 2020 unduplicated headcount on the Kent Campus is 25,948 and 10,316 on our regional campuses, with a total enrollment of 36,264 for all eight Kent State University campuses. Forty-two percent of the Kent State student body are first in their family to attend college and 30.6 percent of Kent Campus and 46.8 percent of regional campus students are awarded a Federal Pell grant.

Kent State University remains focused on student retention, persistence, and graduation and as a result, continues to experience gains on the Kent and regional campuses. On the Kent campus, retention increased to 81.6 percent up from the 77.6 percent 2012 benchmark noted in the initial Campus Completion Plan. Retention on the regional

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

campuses increased from 56.1 percent (Fall 2012) to 60.1 percent (Fall 2020). The Kent campus six-year graduation rate reached a record high of 65.5 percent. The regional campuses' graduation rate also increased from 17.7 percent (2011 cohort) to 26 percent (2014 cohort), an 8 percent increase.

Highlights from Fall 2020 enrollment data also include:

- The entering class set an all-time high with an average high-school grade-point-average (GPA) of 3.49.
- The percentage of racially diverse students in the fall 2020 cohort increased to 17.2 percent and the percentage of first-generation students increased to 32.4 percent.

The following tables outline retention, persistence, and graduation rates discussed in this document.

Retention rates

	Retention	
TERM	Kent Campus	Regionals
2012F	77.6%	59.0%
2013F	81.7%	60.2%
2014F	81.2%	61.3%
2015F	82.2%	62.2%
2016F	80.1%	61.1%
2017F	80.8%	60.8%
2018F	81.2%	59.7%
2019F	81.6%	60.1%

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

Retention, Persistence and Graduation Rates

Table 1: Kent Campus

	FR-SO Retention*		SO-JR Persistence**		6-Yr Graduation	
	2018	2019	2017	2018	2013	2014
Cohort Beginning	2018	2019	2017	2018	2013	2014
Total Cohort	81.2%	81.6%	74.5%	73.5%	62.6%	65.5%
URS	79.0%	77.8%	68.6%	70.5%	52.2%	54.4%
Exploratory	76.7%	77.9%	65.9%	67.4%	55.2%	59.6%
International	81.4%	85.4%	76.3%	62.8%	57.0%	59.8%

Table 2: Regional Campuses

	FR-SO Retention*		SO-JR Persistence**		6-Yr Graduation	
	2018	2019	2017	2018	2013	2014
Cohort Beginning	2018	2019	2017	2018	2013	2014
Total Cohort	59.7%	60.1%	46.3%	45.9%	24.4%	26.0%
URS	48.2%	47.2%	35.8%	37.5%	12.2%	17.7%
Exploratory	54.1%	53.8%	44.7%	41.2%	19.3%	22.3%
International***	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

* FR-SO (Freshman to Sophomore)

** SO-JR (Sophomore to Junior)

*** 5 or fewer international students per year in Regional Campus cohorts

2. Barriers to Persistence and Completion

A. The Kent State system serves a significant number of first-generation students (42 percent) who experience greater difficulty navigating university processes and structures than students coming from families whose parents went to college.

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

- B. Students and their families struggle to meet many financial obligations given that 30.6 percent of our Kent campus students, and 46.8 percent of our regional campus students, receive Pell Grants (an indicator of extreme economic need).
- C. The impact of COVID-19 is not fully known at this point but is likely to present barriers to persistence and completion. New student orientation and academic support were moved to an online format to prioritize the community's health. Additionally, fewer students chose to live on campus and more students are enrolled in remote courses. While all programs and courses are being delivered with the utmost attention to quality, students are learning to navigate a very different enrollment and educational experience.

3. Progress towards goals established in the previous completion plans

- A. **ULI GOAL 1.2: Adopt a student engagement strategy that enhances learning through increased participation in high-impact experiences.** Research supports the idea that individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of student success. This initiative aims to intentionally develop the whole student through high-impact experiences that lead to student success and achievement of educational and personal goals.

Progress: Kent State has expanded student engagement in evidence-based high-impact practices such as leadership development, employment experiences, and undergraduate research. In addition to establishing the Kent State Leadership Center, there has been an 11 percent enrollment increase in the University's leadership course. Enrollment in the leadership course leads to student engagement and employment in various peer-led academic support experiences that assist new and continuing students alike. Nearly 8,000 students held on-campus positions with a mean hourly wage of \$11.70. Additionally, since our last submission, 17,776 students participated in a paid or unpaid internship, cooperative education program, practicum, clinical, or field experience, up by 51 percent. Annually, the Office of Student Research (OSR) sponsors programs that engage approximately 700 students in undergraduate research. OSR outreach and programming further support under-resourced students (pell-eligible, racially diverse, and first-generation). This outreach and programming have resulted in steady increases in the participation of under-resourced students. Approximately \$50,000 is awarded annually to remove financial barriers to students engaging in research-related travel.

- B. **ULI GOAL 1.3: Align the undergraduate educational requirements to focus on purposeful and essential learning outcomes.** This initiative focuses on essential learning outcomes that address purposeful values the faculty deem essential for all Kent State graduates to possess, beginning with the alignment of the 36-credit hour general education curriculum. For example, essential learning outcomes may include creative and critical thinking, ethical reasoning, social inquiry, intercultural competence, problem-solving, civic knowledge and engagement, communication effectiveness, quantitative reasoning, teamwork, or scientific analysis. Discipline-

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

specific or interdisciplinary courses would be organized by their learning outcomes rather than the academic field they represent. This approach allows faculty to emphasize what students need to know and how they can use what they know to better our society.

Progress: A University-wide initiative is underway to revise the Kent Core, the general education program for all undergraduates. Included in this work is testing new assessment tools and refocusing our essential learning outcomes to reach the broad goals of general education while providing students with pathways to discipline or career-specific courses. To date, the faculty senate has approved new assessment tools and procedures for revising our learning outcomes. Assessment pilot studies are underway during the academic year 2020-2021.

- C. **ULI GOAL 1.4: Strengthen diversity and the cultural competence of students, faculty, and staff system-wide.** Students succeed when they can live, learn, and engage in an inclusive, respectful environment that is fostered through culturally competent, equity-minded faculty and staff. It is vital to strengthen our core value of diversity to ensure the Kent State community shapes an institutional culture reflective of the variety of backgrounds, voices, ideas, and perspectives that are essential ingredients for academic success and excellence. A significant component of this initiative includes the recruitment and retention of more students and faculty of color. In addition to representation, enhancement of campus climate is being assessed and programs implemented to ensure adherence to the University's core value of diversity of culture, beliefs, identity, and thought. We believe that this promotes a stronger sense of belonging for many of our students and can increase retention, persistence and graduation rates.

Progress: Across all campus demographics, we assessed diversity programs and initiatives and continued to increase the availability of workshops and training on various diversity and equity-related topics, including cultural competency, anti-racism and inclusive teaching. Additionally, Kent State University will strengthen its core value of diversity by hiring ten faculty of color over the next year, maintain partnerships with several Historically Black Colleges and Universities and provide diversity and culturally competent professional development opportunities for all faculty, staff and students.

4. Updated Completion Goals for 2020-2022

- A. **Establish a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan:** Establish a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan to align our system-wide enrollment, retention, and completion efforts with our institutional mission, vision, and values. This plan will include updated five-year retention, persistence, and completion goals and will be reviewed and voted on by the Board of Trustees by July 2021.
- B. **Expand Living-Learning Community Participation:** Research demonstrates that participation in a living-learning community for just one year has long-lasting benefits for student success. Kent State has invested in living-learning communities

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

- for over 30 years. A recent review of existing living-learning communities determined opportunities to increase students' sense of belonging by expanding engagement in interest-based living-learning environments. Upon enrollment, new living-learning options based on student identified interest areas will be available. These interest-based living-learning environments will encourage the development of smaller communities where students can interact with peers, staff, and faculty.
- C. **Redesign First Year Experience Course:** Kent State's commitment to access and completion begins during the enrollment process, focusing on helping students transition successfully to the Kent State community. A critical aspect of that transition experience includes the first-year experience. A redesign of the first-year experience course across all eight campuses using qualitative and quantitative data from a climate survey. Included in the redesign process will be Kent State faculty, staff, students, and parents.
 - D. **Implement Micro-Credentialing Education Program:** Implementation of a micro-credentialing program will provide education on critical industry and student success topics for current and new Kent State students. Students who complete these short courses will gain new knowledge and skills to enhance their workforce preparation. Students who complete these courses will be eligible for badges that could lead to the completion of certificates on specific topics. This program will contribute to the workforce development of employed individuals seeking additional qualifications for career advancement.
 - E. **Establish Anti-Racism Task Force:** The Task Force was charged to examine and make recommendations to remove institutional barriers to student success and completion. This Task Force aligns with Kent State's core values of respect and kindness in all we do and the freedom of expression.
 - F. **Expand Student Employment Opportunities:** Kent State data indicate that students who engage in on-campus employment persist and graduate at higher rates than their peers. On-campus employment increases the likelihood that students will have a faculty or staff mentor who can help them navigate the University and advocate for their needs. Expanding opportunities for on-campus employment, specifically for students who face significant financial challenges, will provide additional support for our most under-resourced students.
 - G. **Expand Support for Mental Health and Basic Needs:** Mental health is a leading factor in student success. Increased need and utilization of mental health resources nationally and at Kent State require action to impact student completion. In response to this growing need, Kent State has dedicated \$1.6 million to enhance mental health support, to include establishing a center focused on increasing mental health resources throughout the Kent State system. The center has also been charged with connecting students to resources to address food, housing, and financial insecurity.

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

H. **Review Academic Advising:** See 5.I.D

5. Completion Strategies

I. Current Completion Strategies

A. One Stop for Student Services

On June 5, 2017, the One Stop for Student Services opened. Conveniently located on the first floor of the Library in the center of campus, it is the one place where most students go to resolve myriad issues related to payment, financial aid, and registration. One Stop counselors are cross-trained to answer registrar, financial aid, and bursar questions and are trained in the Disney method of exemplary customer service. The One Stop works collaboratively on retention, persistence, and graduation issues.

B. Dynamic Education and Engagement of Diverse Students (DEEDS)

The Dynamic Education and Engagement of Diverse Students (DEEDS) strategy continues to guide university efforts to institutionalize policies and practices aimed at persistence, retention, and graduation of underrepresented students. These efforts include just-in-time academic, financial, and social supports that keep students enrolled and on track to graduate and engaged in high-impact practices, which increase retention, such as research, internships, and service-learning. DEEDS strategy has resulted in a persistence rate of 70.5%, a retention rate of 77.8 percent, and a 4-year graduation rate of 54.5 percent. KeyBank awarded Kent State University a 4-year, \$1 million grant to support closing the persistence and graduation gap between non-underrepresented and underrepresented students in 2017.

C. Early Alert Update

The Early Alert system serves as an invaluable tool for faculty and staff to provide early and immediate feedback and support to students identified as needing additional support. Specifically, the Early Alert tool was developed at Kent State to give faculty a way to identify and support students who may be at risk academically. In the 2018-2019 academic year, 1,110 Early Alerts were submitted, and every alert received an individualized response. Similarly, in 2019-2020 there were 1,472 Early Alerts submitted and addressed. This tool creates direct pathways and individualized support connection points for every student entered into the Early Alert system. The ultimate purpose of the Early Alert tool and process is to ensure students are academically successful. However, this tool also provides the space for wholistic support as academic struggle can be contributed, in some cases, to more than the lack of academic effort.

D. Required Academic Advising

Kent State implemented required academic advising for all undergraduate students in 2012. Students are required to meet with their advisor once per semester and cannot register for courses until that meeting occurs. Required academic advising has significantly contributed to Kent State's increase in

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

retention, persistence, and completion. Since implementation in 2012, increased enrollment has resulted in reduced access to advising in high-demand areas. Academic advising is currently under review to identify models that will increase access to this critical resource.

E. Academic Peer Coaching

The Kent State University Retention Task Force surveyed faculty and students to understand success barriers. Both groups reported the lack of study skills as the primary factor in academic difficulties. In response to these survey results, an academic coaching pilot program was implemented to determine the impact of providing skills development support to student learning and success.

F. The University Degree Completion Program

The University Degree Completion Program began in May 2014. The goal is to encourage senior-level students to return and finish their degrees. Eligible students are those who have earned 90 or more credit hours, have a 2.0 or higher GPA, and have stopped attending for two or more years. This program provides hands-on, high-touch experiences for these students. The program streamlines the admissions, registrar, advising, and registration processes to support students' desire to complete their degree. Overall, this initiative has enabled students to have a "one-stop shop" approach to obtaining most of their academic needs. To date, 385 students have obtained their bachelor's degree due to this program's outreach and advising efforts. In 2017, this program received recognition as the Outstanding Advising Program by NACADA.

<https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Programs/Awards/Association-Awards/Award-Winners/2017-Award-Winners.aspx>

II. Enhanced Completion Strategies

A. Need-based financial aid

Enrollment Management completed a review of financial aid and scholarship awarding. As a result of that review, Kent State increased need-based financial aid by \$2.6 million, resulting in increased retention, persistence, and completion for students facing significant financial challenges.

B. Academic Policies

Faculty at Kent State implemented short-term changes to academic policies governing grading and academic dismissal to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. To date, 5,658 students benefited from these provisional changes leading to maintained enrollment and progress toward degree completion.

C. Emergency Grants

Safety-net funds are awarded to students who demonstrate financial need and require additional assistance to cover the amount they owe to the University for tuition, fees, housing, meals, and books. During the combined 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years, more than \$2.7 million in safety net funding was

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

awarded to 1,195 unique students by the Student Financial Aid Office. These funds came from institutional funding (\$2.3 m) and the Kent State Foundation (\$412,912).

During spring 2020, an additional \$6,254,700 was awarded to 5,582 students experiencing financial difficulty due to the COVID-19 crisis. Funding received as part of the HEERF CARES Act accounted for \$5,595,600 of that total. The remaining \$659,100 was funded by donations made to the Kent State Foundation.

D. Faculty Development

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provides small group sessions, individual support, and workshops to help faculty transform the classroom so all students can learn and succeed. Annually, the CTL engages over 700 faculty to achieve this goal. Faculty utilizing the CTL learn about topics such as student success, inclusive pedagogy, and technology. To support increased online teaching in response to COVID-19, CTL in partnership with the Office of Continuing and Distance Education, provided support and assistance to 1,193 faculty during the spring and summer of 2020.

E. Assisting Students in Identifying a Major

In 2010, Kent State University implemented a policy requiring students to select a major before earning 45 credit hours. Parallel to this requirement, the University provided a multi-step program including coursework and career counseling to help students select a major. With the 45-hour policy implementation and the associated multi-step program, students select and declare a major and stay on track for graduation. This policy change, and the resultant student behavior change, is a primary reason for the increased retention rate of 13.3 percent between the 2010 and 2019 cohort. Since 2018, the Exploration Plan component “Major Action Plan” (MAP) was updated to include an Exploratory program-MAP Start to Finish providing first-year students with the opportunity to connect and engage with resources across campus. Students learned about the MAP in their First-Year Experience course before the event and identified one to two resources. Students engaged with the resources at the Start to Finish program and identified major action plan action items. Over the past three academic years (Fall 2018, Fall 2019 and Fall 2020), over 82 percent of the students engaged in the program and selected an action item.

Additionally, retention from the first year to the second continues to improve. The Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 exploratory cohort data, reflects 76.7 percent and 77.9 percent retention rate respectfully compared to the Fall 2010 exploratory cohort of 68.2 percent retention rate. Persistence to junior year has also increased year-over-year, Fall 2017 exploratory cohort and Fall 2018: 65.9 percent and 67.4 percent respectfully, compared to the Fall 2010 cohort of 57.3 percent. The six-year graduation rate is now 59.6 percent and has also shown steady growth compared to the Fall 2010 cohort rate of 43.9 percent.

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

In Fall 2015, the Exploration Plan received two honors for commitment to student success. The 2015 Institutional Excellence for Students in Transition Award by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, and *University Business* magazine, recognized the plan for assisting Exploratory students' shift to a degree-granting program and encouraging student success.

F. Transfer Kent State

Transfer Kent State (TKS) is a comprehensive orientation program for new transfer students. In the Fall of 2019, Kent State transitioned to requiring all incoming transfer students to attend the Transfer Kent State orientation program. Previously, only new transfer students with 30 or fewer credit hours were required to attend. The transition was made to ensure that all transfer students were getting connected to important information and resources that aid in their transition to Kent State. In addition to the in-person orientation program, all new transfer students are enrolled in online orientation modules that provide vital Kent State information. Specifically, the modules help transfer students to learn more about their new institution and provide the foundation for their continued persistence to graduation. Each of the modules is completed before the start of the student's enrolled semester. The Transfer Kent State program has proven to provide a valuable transition tool for Kent State transfer students. In 2019, 97 percent of students, based on a 58 percent response rate, said that as a result of attending the TKS program that they felt "more prepared to start at KSU" and that after attending TKS that they "felt more connected to KSU."

G. Adult Students

The Center for Adult and Veteran Services (CAVS) engages the adult learner population (N=5700) across the eight-campus system through various programs and services. The in-person and online programs and services provide meaningful out-of-class experiences that connect adult students and campus resources. Using an online portal, adult and military-connected students can access online resources at the most convenient time. Adult students accessing the online resources complete 89 percent of attempted credit hours, are an average age of 30, and 20 percent represent racially diverse populations.

CAVS also sponsors a Parenting Student Taskforce that has worked for three years to build targeted programs, services, and accommodations for parenting students. Programming includes family-friendly study hours in locations that engage students and their dependents. Programming focuses on health and wellness programming, such as stress management and life balance. As a further demonstration of excellence, the CAVS office was recognized in February 2020 as an Outstanding Undergraduate Program for adult learners from the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

H. Academic Support

The Academic Success Center consistently serves nearly 4,000 students annually, including approximately 40 percent of the new first-year students each year.

After a new first-year utilization rate of 26 percent in the 2016-17 academic year, freshman utilization rates reached 40 percent and 37 percent, respectively, in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years.

To encourage utilization, the Academic Success Center (ASC) implemented self-scheduling for services, making services more accessible to students and decreasing students' wait time for an appointment by up to two weeks.

Through targeted outreach, the ASC increased the engagement of under-resourced students. The engagement of racially diverse students increased from 18 percent to 20 percent since 2016. Engagement of those new first-year students with a high school GPA below 2.8 increased from 23 percent to 25-28 percent since 2016.

The impact on the first-year retention has remained consistent or increased since 2016. For new freshmen students with the lowest high school GPA range, retention to the second year was 33.2 percent higher for frequent users of academic support services than their peers who did not utilize services in the 2016-17 academic year. In the 2018-19 academic year, this rate difference increased to 42 percent.

In the 2018-19 academic year, for first-generation students and racially diverse students, the first-year retention rate was 16.2 percent and 14.2 percent higher, respectively, for those who used ASC services frequently compared to their first-generation and under-resourced peers who did not use these services. The first-year retention rate for racially diverse students was 18.9 percent higher for those who used ASC services frequently than their racially diverse peers who did not use these services. The mean difference in retention rates between all frequent users and all nonusers of academic support services was 13.4 percent, indicating that regular use of academic support services throughout the first year has a higher impact on these groups than the overall new freshmen population. In the 2018-19 academic year, the mean first-year cumulative GPA for new first-year students was 0.37 GPA points (one letter grade) higher for frequent ASC services users than nonusers. These outcomes are consistent with impact in the 2016-17 academic year, where the difference between frequent and nonusers was 0.32 GPA points. When looking specifically at new first-year students with a high school GPA below 2.8, the difference was 0.56 GPA points (nearly two letter grades) higher for those who were frequent users of ASC services versus their peers who did not use services. In the 2016-17 academic year, this difference was 0.43 GPA points (one letter grade).

New programming to assist students in the transition from high school to college, including a learning skills workshop series and academic coaching, has been

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

implemented in 2020 to expand services and further meet the ASC mission, including the development of independent learners.

Additionally, in 2016, Kent State University won the Frank L. Christ Outstanding Learning Center Award from the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) for the innovative approach to academic support. This award is only given to one college nationally each year.

I. Career Exploration and Development

Career Exploration and Development (CED) leads the charge to highlight student employment as a high impact practice, connecting students to these meaningful on-campus work experiences. Beyond their ability to generate income for students, on-campus work experiences also help students create connections and develop a sense of belonging, which correlates to increased retention and higher graduation rates. Since we began tracking in 2014, FR students who work in on-campus positions demonstrate a retention rate that is markedly higher than their peers who do not. Likewise, both the four and five-year graduation rates of student employees are higher than those who have not worked on campus.

Table 1: Retention (2014F-2018F KC Cohorts)

Cohort	Count of Enrolled Students			Retention		
	New FR Non Student Employees	New FR Student Employees	Total Cohort	New FR Non Student Employees	New FR Student Employees	Total Cohort
2014F	3775	469	4244	80.7%	85.5%	81.3%
2015F	3815	479	4294	81.4%	88.5%	82.2%
2016F	3833	501	4334	79.2%	87.0%	80.1%
2017F	3606	657	4263	80.0%	85.7%	80.8%
2018F	4087	276	4363	80.6%	89.9%	81.2%

Table 2: Graduation Rates (2014F-2015F KC Cohorts)

Cohort	Count of Enrolled Students			Graduation Rates					
	New FR Non Student Employees	New FR Student Employees	Total Cohort	4-Year Rate Non Student Employees	4-Year Rate Student Employees	4-Year Rate Cohort Total	5-Year Rate Non Student Employees	5-Year Rate Student Employees	5-Year Rate Cohort Total
2014F	3775	469	4244	46.6%	52.5%	47.3%	61.5%	66.5%	62.0%
2015F	3815	479	4294	50.0%	57.0%	50.8%			

Further, CED works with students to connect their interests and skills to majors and careers, helps them polish and update their resume, practice interviewing, and discover internships and co-ops. With CED coordinating and partnering on more than 15 annual career fairs and networking events each year, employer engagements on campus during these events have increased from 402 employers during the 2018- 2019 academic year to 500 employers in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

In 2018, Career Exploration and Development launched an additional expansion of targeted career education initiatives for racially diverse students. These included:

- Career programming for Summer Advantage participants, including support from an Executive in Residence and internship awards to eligible students in unpaid internships.
- Launch of Unpaid Internship Scholarship to support eligible students in unpaid internships
 - The average award is \$940.00.
 - Past awardees are 42 percent First Generation; 26 percent racially diverse; 47 percent Pell Eligible and 32 percent represented multiple categories.
- Partnered with Community Engaged Learning to provide funding to high and moderate need students for Alternative Spring Breaks yielding a 300 percent increase in racially diverse student participants.
- Delivered outreach to employers to share strategies and information for diverse recruitment and equitable hiring practices:
 - <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/employers/3-hiring-practices-that-disadvantage-black-students/>
 - <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/employers/diversity-and-inclusion-7-essential-early-talent-recruiting-strategies/>
 - <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/employers/how-to-reduce-hiring-bias-from-the-recruiting-process/>
 - <https://learn.joinhandshake.com/employers/want-more-latinx-candidates-try-these-3-hiring-strategies/>
- Established equitable access requirements (lowering GPA requirement) to enroll in COOP course, which disparately impacted racially diverse students - <http://catalog.kent.edu/colleges/uc/cooperative-education-program/>
- Partnered with student organizations to host revamped GoPro! Event (2019) centered on connecting employers and students around organizational goals and actions for diversity.

6. Workforce Development Priorities

In 2012, Kent State University became the first Ohio public university to require experiential learning credits (ELR) for graduation. Given that students must complete this requirement with undergraduate research, an internship, or service-learning, we believe this requirement makes Kent State graduates better prepared to obtain that first job or enroll in graduate school. All colleges and campuses and the following departments contribute to the workforce development of Kent State University students.

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

A. **The Office of Community Engaged Learning** (formerly the Office of Experiential Education and Civic Engagement)

The Office of Community Engaged Learning (CEL) promotes a culture of active and engaged learners by integrating opportunities for students to apply theories and knowledge through real-world experiences. CEL's vision is that all Kent State University graduates are civic-minded agents of change in their careers and communities.

Experiences sponsored by CEL are reciprocal in that they encourage students to reflect on their own unique skill sets, passions, and interests and to leverage these to advance the work of non-profit agencies and other organizations, leading to healthier, safer, and more equitable communities.

CEL offerings include:

- Facilitate the Experiential Learning Requirement and assist academic departments with obtaining course designation;
- Provide community-based learning opportunities including one-time and ongoing service experiences and immersion trips such as alternative spring breaks;
- Assist KSU faculty with creating curricular service-learning projects as a pedagogy;
- Offer off-campus Federal Work Study paid positions with local non-profits;
- Coordinate a volunteer program with university residence halls to engage residential students in service with local organizations.

B. **Career Exploration and Development**

Career Exploration and Development leverages a career community advising model to connect students with employers and alumni to participate in career experiences like site visits, networking events, internships.

- In the 2019-2020 academic year, there were more than 99,000 job/internship opportunities annually, totaling at least \$742,500,000.00 in potential annual earnings for students;
- In the 2018-2019 academic year, there were more than 67,000 job/internship opportunities annually, totaling at least \$502,500,000.00 in potential annual earnings for students;
- Students with career experiences like those noted above are 72 percent more likely to receive a full-time job offer before or upon graduation.

Individual Colleges and Departments have Career Centers or Career Advisors/Placement Officers, for example:

- The College of Business Administration through its Careers Services Office connects students to internships through weekly, tailored career community newsletters, as well as requires a 1-credit introduction to professional development course to help students explore and prepare;

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

- The College of Education Health and Human Services partners with school districts and educational agencies to place students in fieldwork, practicums, and student teaching experiences;
- The College of Nursing places its students in practicums at local hospitals and provides direct health-related career resources;
- The College of Aeronautics and Engineering utilizes a career development course in partnership with an external relations professional staff member to share tailored experiences and opportunities with their students, including specialized rotational co-ops in Mechatronics and industry-specific career fairs;
- The College of Public Health utilizes a career ambassador model, connecting its students with retired public health professionals to create social capital and connections and hosting a public health career fair event twice per year;
- The regional campus career advisors meet monthly to strategize, in partnership with CED, around local connections to employers for their students, including regional career fairs and training employers on Handshake;
- The Stark Campus has its Career and Internship Office that links students with local employers.

C. Training Opportunities

Kent State University continues to excel in providing training opportunities in several specific areas of:

1. **Advanced Manufacturing:** The work of researchers and scientists in the Advanced Materials and Liquid Crystal Institute, established at Kent State in 1965, has resulted in such technological advances and new applications as display tablets, optical shutters, variable transmission windows, projection display devices and flexible displays. Multiple start-ups and spin-off companies include AlphaMicron, Crystal Diagnostics, Hana Technologies, Kent Displays and Kent Optronics. These companies have created more than 1,000 jobs in Ohio and the United States. Multiple industry leaders, including Apple, Samsung, LG, 3M, Corning, Motorola and Kodak, have worked closely with the institute to provide research and internship opportunities for students.
2. **Aerospace and Aviation:** The College of Aeronautics and Engineering recently began offering a master's degree in aviation management and logistics in response to the significant current and projected growth in the air transport of people and goods. The Boeing Company predicts that air cargo traffic will more than double over the next 20 years, fueled by an annual increase of 4.2 percent growth per year. These increases will support 80 million jobs worldwide. In addition, the college's bachelor's degree in aeronautics is the only one in Ohio to be approved by the FAA and designated as an Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative Program, providing future pilots to combat a global pilot shortage facing the airline industry.
3. **Policing and Protective Services:** The Kent State Basic Police Academy has been in operation since 2006, graduating more than 1,100 cadets who

Kent State University Campus Completion Plan Update

December 1, 2020

immediately secure law enforcement positions. There has been an increased emphasis on higher educational standards in law enforcement in recent years, with many police departments now requiring job candidates to have college credentials. In response, Kent State has established a Peace Officers Training Academy for-credit certificate program to allow police cadets to earn college credit, with a seamless transfer pathway into the University's associate and bachelor's degrees in criminology and justice studies.

4. **Health Care**: Kent State University offers numerous accredited programs—at the associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels—for students to directly enter healthcare occupations at graduation. These programs include nursing, nutrition, counseling, public health, physical therapy, podiatric medicine, respiratory therapy, diagnostic imaging and occupational therapy.
5. **Accounting and Financial Services**: Students are trained to directly enter the insurance industry through bachelor's degrees in accounting, insurance studies (fully online) and actuarial mathematics. In addition, the College of Business Administration offers a financial services curriculum at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels.
6. **Information Technology and Services**: Today's IT landscape requires specialized professionals, which Kent State provides in such varied undergraduate and graduate degree programs as business analytics, health informatics, computer engineering, cybersecurity engineering and user experience design. The University will begin offering additional cybersecurity programs, data science, artificial intelligence, and animation game design in the coming year.
7. **Teacher Education**: The foundation of Kent State University was built on training future educators and educator administrators and innovators. With more than 40 accredited education degree programs, Kent State prepares licensed teachers for pre-kindergarten to high school, educators for special needs populations and college faculty in specific disciplines.