

**CHARTING A NEW COURSE:
HIGHER EDUCATION IN
OWENSBORO AND DAVIESS COUNTY,
KENTUCKY**

**A REPORT TO THE
OWENSBORO CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

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William Chance



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STUDY PURPOSES AND SCOPE

ABOUT THE STUDY

The Owensboro Citizens Committee on Education [OCCE] sponsored the research program leading to this report. Its initial Request for Proposals called for assistance with the development of a strategic higher education study for the community and Daviess County. The focus was on an assessment of the need and prospects for additional higher education services—a “professional, credible, objective” effort focused on community interests. In the words of the RFP, the “study will seek ways to complement existing institutional interests even as it seeks to identify collaborative opportunities, perspectives, and actions that enhance the entire community’s interests.”

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In addition to the stress on community interests, other emphases were on economic growth and improved quality of life through higher education. The research would examine higher education needs, the extent to which existing institutions may be positioned to provide opportunities and meet such needs, and the degree to which they may be doing so. The study would lead to recommendations for alternative and practical ways of filling any gaps identified through the research.

THE QUESTIONS OF INTEREST

The RFP presented a number of questions of interest to the OCCE; several others arose during the course of the study. They include the following:

- What are the higher education needs and opportunities in the Owensboro-Daviess County area?
- How can existing institutions meet these needs and opportunities?
- What do members of the community want or need with respect to higher education in Owensboro?
- What do employers want or need with respect to higher education in the city?
- How well are existing institutions positioned to meet these needs and opportunities?

- Are there problems with the higher education resources available in the Owensboro community? If so, what are these, specifically with respect to each sector (two-year, public four-year, independent four-year, etc.)?
- What are residents' opinions on such statements as the following?
 - "Owensboro needs more higher education services."
 - "Owensboro needs a public four-year institution located in the community."
 - "Owensboro needs more on-site bachelor programs from Kentucky public institutions."
 - "There needs to be more effective ways to increase access to the institutions presently serving the community."
 - "Owensboro needs more graduate programs, especially master's programs."
- To what extent do the available higher education institutions and programs position the community to attract the jobs of the future?
- How can the local colleges and universities attract more students from outside the community? What is an ambitious yet attainable community enrollment goal?
- How can the community develop educational processes and products to expand the economy and enhance the quality of life of its residents?
- Are there specialty areas (e.g., biotechnology) that the community and the institutions have not acknowledged or maximized?
- What can institutions do individually and what can they do collaboratively to make the community a more appealing place to go to college or to a technical school? How can Owensboro become more of a "college town" in terms of atmosphere and amenities?
- What would residents like to have included in a strategic higher education plan for the Owensboro/Daviess County area? To what extent can a community's strategic plan for higher education transcend and integrate the plans of local institutions?

OTHER STUDY THEMES

The OCCE's interest in education and advancing the human capital of the area accords with the central themes of other local organizations and interests, including the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation, as represented in its economic development program, which includes workforce development in the mix. It also aligns with the statewide Kentucky Task Force on Postsecondary Education's 1997 Report, *Postsecondary Education in Kentucky: An Assessment*, which seeks "To ensure that Kentucky's postsecondary education and technical education systems are positioned to provide the human capital needed to allow the Commonwealth to be a leader in the global economy of the 21st Century."

The OCCE's emphasis on *community* interests is instructive in other ways. It is interpreted as a call for a study that takes institutional interests into consideration but as subordinate for the moment to larger local or community needs. The issue at this point is less one of institution than community aspirations. The accent, in other words, is on the educational, cultural, and economic needs and aspirations of the residents of Owensboro and Daviess County.

The study also would need to take into account several special considerations such as:

- Special opportunities (agriculture technology, regional healthcare, transportation distribution center);
- The ground work that has been accomplished (e.g., OCCE interests and research);
- New avenues and structures for communications (e.g., maximize computer networking, enhancement of lifelong learning); and
- New flexibilities and administrative authorities (e.g., a new authority to increase collaboration, promote access and partnerships, etc.)

THE RESEARCH APPROACH

All of these affected the research approach. Thus, the report's development involved data collection, analyses of labor market needs and trends, review of historic, geographic, demographic, financial, political, education, social, and cultural data and considerations, state policies with respect to regional, rural, and urban economic development, education improvement efforts, policy documents from state organizations (such as the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education—KCPE), plans and program inventories, comparative evidence of higher education participation and attainment, alternative models and approaches, and consideration of the experiences of other localities that have dealt with similar issues.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESEARCH

Qualitative and quantitative survey research methods were employed throughout the study. These included contact interviews in the community, telephone conversations with local officials, legislators, and others in the Capital and elsewhere, and large and small group meetings in Owensboro and on the local campuses.

The opinions of community and regional employers were sampled through two mail surveys – one directed to large companies (50 and more employees) and the other to smaller and medium firms (less than 50 employees). Community residents' attitudes were sampled through a survey disseminated with the assistance and good offices of the

The Citizen Committee's emphasis on community interests is interpreted as a call for a study that takes institutional interests into consideration but as subordinate to larger local or community needs.

Owensboro *Messenger-Inquirer*. Community forums in Owensboro capped the survey phase of the research effort and set the stage for this document.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Owensboro is a wonderful community situated in a lovely setting. It is a place with resplendent amenities, and it is easy to understand why people want to live, work, and raise their children there. It also is easy to yield to the ambience of the surroundings.

There is some evidence of this as one goes behind the physical attributes and considers comparative indicators of performance. Many of the numbers provide reasons for concern. They describe relatively slow and possibly stable population and economic growth, and less-than-expected college participation rates and education attainment levels.

If any assessment is to have value, it must be based on a reasonably clear understanding of the extant circumstances that affect and help to define the community. When viewed comparatively with its peers – for the most but not the only part the seven other most populated counties of Kentucky – the numbers tell an important story: Some may find it unsettling, but Daviess County does not always compare well statistically with its peer counties.

Many of the statistics provide reasons for concern. They describe relatively slow, possibly stable, population and economic growth, and less than expected college participation rates and education attainment levels among those who live there.

- Daviess County ranked fifth in its Year 2000 population among the most populated counties. Steady but slight growth is projected through 2030, but by this time Daviess is expected to slip to last place in the group.
- The age composition of Daviess County's population is changing – the population is aging, or, more specifically, middle aging. As in the state as a whole, in Daviess County the portion of the population most amenable to college is contracting.
- The County displays the lowest net in-migration rate of the group of eight most populous counties, a condition that many attribute to the absence of comprehensive public higher education services in the community.
- In most cases higher education participation rates and education attainment levels rank it below the state average figures and at the bottom of the peer county rankings.
- Daviess ranks below the statewide average and seventh among the eight large counties in percent of adults with a bachelor's degree.

- It ranks both below the state average and last among the peer counties in percent of adults with a graduate or professional degree.
- Opportunities for jobs are limited in part because job turnover rates are relatively static and in part because the economy has shifted to an emphasis on the service sector.
- Some employers report that their greatest employment needs are for people with community college level technical and work skill preparation, a condition that fits the mission of Owensboro Community and Technical College very well, and which it elegantly pursues.
- Opportunities for people with baccalaureate preparation are more limited in the larger companies, which tend to routinely recruit nationally or regionally.
- There is considerable interest in opportunities for master's degrees among all types of employers and throughout the community.

There is ample evidence of community need for additional higher education services and great opportunities in Owensboro for colleges and universities in both the public and private sectors.

These are some of the things the study addresses in the pages that follow. It deduces that there is ample evidence of community need for additional higher education services and great opportunities in Owensboro for colleges and universities in both the public and private sectors. It concludes with a set of goals and a series of recommendations designed to lead to their accomplishment.

In summary form the major recommendations are the following:

- An Owensboro higher education advocacy association should be created to direct a long-term campaign to increase higher education participation and attainment rates among community residents and to provide a coordinating framework for the initiatives and actions that will be necessary to accomplish and sustain the goals.
- Higher education participation rate and attainment level goals equivalent to those of Fayette County in the Year 2000 Census should be adopted. These participation rate and attainment levels should be reached by the year 2020.
- Authority and funding for contractual relationships between the Commonwealth of Kentucky and accredited independent colleges and universities should be sought for the purpose of acquiring enrollment spaces in programs that accord with the community or the state's strategic plan.

- The higher education advocacy association should work with WKU and other institutions to bring needed programs in the Technical, Science, Engineering, Agriculture, and Health areas, among others, to Owensboro.
- Special attention should be directed to accomplishing a conjoint Bachelor of Applied Technology program that articulates with OCTC's Associate of Applied Science and other associate programs by bringing WKU's program to the OCTC campus.
- The WKU Extended Campus program should be elevated to a full-fledged Branch through which a more comprehensive public four-year institution program inventory could be pursued. This will require action both on the home campus in Bowling Green and by the Council for Postsecondary Education and, possibly, the Legislature in Frankfort.
- A community operated higher education facility should be established under the auspices of the community higher education association. It should be a place in which the interested local institutions may offer courses and share facilities cooperatively and collaboratively and in which there could be cross-registration, a shared library, and programs offered by individual institutions.

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THE SETTING

COMMENTS ON THE NATURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION NEED

Needs for higher education services can be organized along a spectrum. Some are educational, reflecting the human quests for understanding and pushing back the frontiers of knowledge. Others are economically based, often concerning people seeking certification for job entry and employed adults seeking career advancement. Some represent the needs of local employers for an educated work force and the professional and research support that locally available higher education faculties can provide. Still others stem from community improvement goals and the quality of life, economic benefits, and ambience a local institution of higher learning can lend.

ECONOMIC COMPETITION

Economics is at the base of many of these interests in the form of affordable college experiences, the financial benefits of career advancement, and the enrichment an institution payroll can bring to a community and its economic development aspirations.

Economic competitiveness, particularly in the context of the new global economy and the shift in emphasis from one sector of the economy to another—from manufacturing to services, for example – is an essential consideration. This entails both competition among states for new industries, and competition among communities within a state. The presence of comprehensive higher education services in a city will add much to its potential in the inter-urban competition, and it will detract from its appeal if it is not so blessed.

Economic competitiveness in the context of the new global economy and the shift in emphasis from one sector of the economy to another is a vital consideration.

Much of the rhetoric on the new economy can be stipulated in the interest of space. But the implications for postsecondary education cannot be ignored. Not many years ago, the skills of a high school graduate were adequate for the work place, but as production and commercial processes became more refined and advanced, the emphasis on worker qualifications changed from relatively low entry skill requirements for work in traditional shops and factories to much higher skill levels for work in more sophisticated settings. The expression, “Preparing people for the jobs of the future,” fits well here.

THE ‘NEW’ STUDENTS

The responses to such needs vary with changes in society. Whereas attendance at a residential institution of higher learning away from home at one time symbolized the college expectations of most students, usually a narrower and wealthier segment of the general population than most students represent today, this option now meets the preferred needs of a much smaller proportion. In Owensboro it may not even meet the needs of many of the “traditional college-age students,” as families faced with the expense of sending several

Students who must work while attending school and working adults seeking career advancement affect decisions about institutional locations and the establishment of satellite campuses. These students need courses during the evenings and on weekends, a requirement that renders life in a distant college dorm or lengthy commute out of the question.

children away to college find these costs disquieting and join the ranks of residents petitioning for the provision of services within a more reasonable commuting radius.

The necessity for students to work while attending school and the presence of working adults who want additional education for career advancement now affects decisions about

institutional locations and the establishment of satellite campuses, considerations that contrast with the bucolic landscapes that drew the attention of institutional architects a few generations ago. Now, many of those demanding services are people not much enamored of the advantages of a college education on a resident and distant campus (as valuable and attractive as these remain). These new students tend to be older, over age 25-years, disproportionately female, employed either full- or part-time, and very frequently the primary household provider. Many plan to continue their education into graduate school.

These new students tend to be older, over age 25-years, disproportionately female, employed either full- or part-time, and very frequently the primary household provider.

Business, Computer Science, Engineering, Health, Agriculture, and technical fields often represent the preferred programs, with Education, Social Sciences, and the Arts not far behind. Many plan to re-enter college at some point to complete a program and qualify for a different job or for career-advancement. As working adults, they may need courses during the evenings and on weekends, a requirement that renders life in a distant college dorm or a lengthy commute out of the question. They need opportunities close to home and their places of work, and this is the reality that increasingly affects decisions about the location, and by extension, the type of higher education facilities planners consider.

A strong argument in favor of the creation of community colleges 35 years ago, and probably behind the more recent creation of OCTC, centered on the dislocation and costs

associated with attendance at a resident campus away from home. By allowing the student to live and work at home and attend a lower cost community college during the first two years following high school graduation, it was thought that the costs of a baccalaureate degree would be substantially reduced, as students would have to spend only the more costly upper-division years on the four-year campus.

The argument also applied in localities with private colleges and universities: Owensboro for example. In this case the student could substantially reduce the costs of a college education by living in the home community for the full four or five years of the higher education experience. In this event, the total cost of community college during the first two years and the private college tuition during the upper-division years would still be less than the costs of spending four years on the local four-year college campus or on another residential campus located miles from home.

This part of the idea behind local community college opportunities was sound, but, human nature being what it is, the second stage did not always take. Many students enrolled in and completed community college programs but did not move on to another institution, becoming professionally place-bound when their preferred careers or avocations required higher degrees. Others, following a “stop-in/stop-out” pattern of college attendance, became similarly place-bound as employed adults with families but with no practical means to continue and complete their education.

Their earlier education experiences often whetted their appetites for more education, but these were most often for programs within spatial reach—upper-division programs in the communities in which these people lived and worked. A similar phenomenon attends baccalaureate holders who seek a master’s degree for career advancement but who reside in places where this option is not readily available or is not present in a sufficient or appropriate variety of fields. In time a more highly developed system of distance education (Internet) will help, although most students, as shown later in this report, will be likely to prefer a combination of new and more traditional delivery arrangements.

It is program considerations such as these, along with the support services and appropriate organizational structures to house and provide them, that describe the interests of many in Owensboro-Daviess County.

OWENSBORO-DAVIESS COUNTY POPULATION

Owensboro, Kentucky is located in Daviess County in the Northwestern section of the state on the southern bank of the Ohio River adjacent to the Indiana Border, and about 40 miles from Evansville.

With a population of 54,000, Owensboro is the third largest city in the state. According to the July 1, 2003 U.S. Census estimate,¹ Daviess County’s population

¹Table 1: Annual Estimates of the Population for Counties of Kentucky: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003 (CO-EST2003-01-21) Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Release Date April 9, 2004.

accounts for about 2.25 percent of the state total. Daviess County’s population is 92,540, ranking it seventh among the state’s 120 counties. The three largest Kentucky Counties – Jefferson, Fayette, and Kenton—comprise more than 27 percent among them. In effect, Daviess is in the second tier of counties, along with Hardin, Warren, Boone, and Campbell, each of which is of comparable size (c. 90,000).

There is a considerable gap between this group of eight most populous counties and those that follow them in the population rankings. Thus, these eight counties, along with the average for the state as a whole, represent a set of peers that can be useful for understanding Daviess County’s comparative position and future, and this group of eight is used for this purpose throughout the study.² The eight counties and their 2003

population totals are represented on Table 1.

Table 1.
Kentucky’s Eight Most Populated Counties
Ranked by 2003 Population Estimates

County	2003 Population Estimate
Jefferson	699,017
Fayette	266,798
Kenton	152,287
Boone	97,139
Hardin	96,052
Warren	95,778
Daviess	92,540
Campbell	87,970
 Kentucky	 4,117,827

Source: Census Bureau, April 9, 2004 data release

POPULATION TRENDS

Population trends in the eight counties have been positive in recent years, as shown on the next table. In terms of 1990-2000 population growth, Daviess ranks seventh among the eight, but it trailed the average growth rate for the state as a whole. The only county in the group with a lesser growth rate (percent change) than Daviess (5.0 percent) was Jefferson (4.3 percent), which is the largest county in the state, and for which a 4.3 percent change on its 1990 base constituted a 28,667 person addition, nearly nine times the gain experienced by Daviess County (Table 2.)

With respect to projected population growth, the population of Daviess County is expected to increase 8.62 percent over the 20 years between 2000 and 2020 and 12.19 percent between 2000 and 2030. This is less than the state average in both cases, and, among the eight largest counties, it is less than all but Jefferson (again with its much greater population base) and Kenton (Kentucky’s third most populated county). By 2020, the populations of Boone, Campbell, and Warren Counties, each smaller than Daviess in the year 2000, are expected to surpass Daviess’ population.

² The use of all of Kentucky’s counties as the comparison group would blur the differences described in these pages. The Kentucky state average keeps the analysis on track in terms of Kentucky’s other counties, and this is used as a surrogate for the full county list of figures.

Table 2.
Population Change 1990 – 2000
Eight Most Populated Kentucky Counties and State Average
2000 Census

	2000 Population	Change From 1990	% Change
Boone	85,991	28,402	49.3
Warren	92,522	15,849	20.7
Fayette	260,512	35,146	15.6
Kentucky	4,041,769	356,473	9.7
Kenton	151,464	9,433	6.6
Campbell	88,616	4,750	5.7
Hardin	94,174	4,934	5.5
Daviess	91,545	4,356	5.0
Jefferson	693,604	28,667	4.3

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

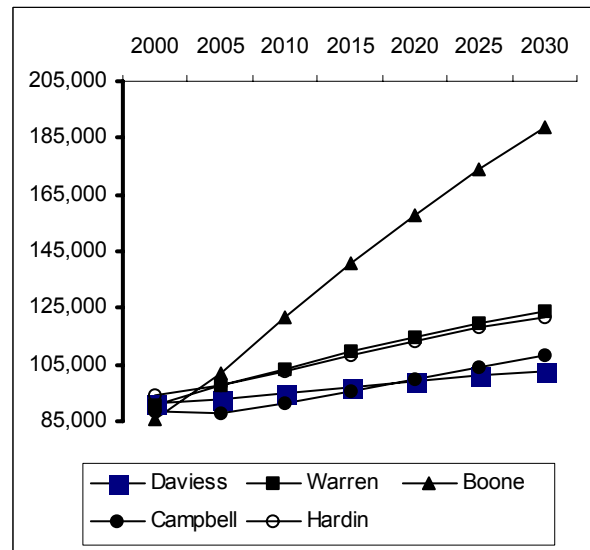
The projected figures are arrayed on Table 3, and the growth curves for the five smaller counties of the large county group -- Daviess, Warren, Boone, Campbell, and Hardin—are graphically displayed on the subsequent chart (Figure 1). Daviess County, which in 2000 was third from the bottom of the group in population, by 2030 drops to last place, even though all of the large counties display positive growth.

Table 3.
Current and Projected Population Kentucky and Eight Largest Counties
Percent of Change 2000-2020 and 2000-2030

	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	% Chg.	2025	2030	% Chg.
KY (000)	4,041.8	4,165.8	4,326.5	4,502.6	4,660.7	15.30	4,799.4	4,912.6	21.50
Boone	85,991	102,197	121,919	140,577	158,013	83.75	174,084	188,652	119.38
Campbell	88,616	87,518	91,130	95,828	100,167	13.03	104,251	108,024	21.90
Daviess	91,545	92,754	94,567	97,166	99,438	8.62	101,420	102,708	12.19
Fayette	260,212	269,333	281,613	296,647	310,262	19.23	322,194	331,212	27.28
Hardin	94,174	97,956	102,848	108,505	113,497	15.86	117,911	121,847	29.38
Jefferson	693,604	699,869	710,120	724,447	738,732	5.55	752,184	763,393	9.07
Kenton	151,464	152,240	154,572	158,966	163,014	7.07	165,579	169,402	11.84
Warren	90,522	97,787	103,655	109,558	114,955	26.99	119,785	123,931	36.96

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Figure 1.
Population Change Between 2000 and 2030
In the Five Smaller of the Eight Large Peer County Group



Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

As is the case with Kentucky and the rest of the country, the age composition of Daviess County’s population is changing – the average age is increasing. The percentages shown on the following table for Kentucky and the eight most populated counties reflect the profiles for 1990 and 2000 and tell the story. The state and these eight most populated counties experienced a decline in the below age 19 group. All but Fayette and Warren Counties experienced declines in the age 20-24 group. Declines for all of the peer counties continued through the age 44 group. The state and most of these counties experienced increases in the age 45-64 category, and all but Daviess, Fayette, Hardin, and Jefferson Counties experienced declines in the age 65 and older group. Daviess County generally mirrored the statewide pattern.

The point is, Kentucky and Daviess’ County’s populations are “middle aging,” and, like the state as a whole, in Daviess County the portion of the population most amenable to college has shrunk. (Table 4.)

Table 4.
Population Age Composition, Kentucky and Eight Most Populated Counties 1990 and 2000
2000 Census

	1990	2000	% Chg.	1990	2000	% Chg.	1990	2000	% Chg.	1990	2000	% Chg.	1990	2000	% Chg.
Age Group	<19	<19		20-24	20-24		25-44	25-44		45-64	45-64		65+	65+	
Kentucky	29.2	27.6	-1.6	7.5	7	-0.5	31.5	30	-1.5	19.1	23.1	4	12.7	12.5	-0.2
Boone	32.2	31.3	-0.9	6.6	5.08	-1.52	35	33.5	-1.5	17.9	21.3	3.4	8.4	8.2	-0.2
Campbell	28.6	25.28	-3.32	7.4	6.8	-0.6	31.5	30.6	-0.9	18.5	17.3	-1.2	12.9	12.6	-0.3
Daviess	30.2	28.7	-1.5	6.6	6.1	-0.5	30.6	28.4	-2.2	19.6	22.9	3.3	12.9	13.8	0.9
Fayette	26.4	25	-1.4	10.6	10.9	0.3	36.2	33.2	-3	16.9	20.8	3.9	9.9	10	0.1

Hardin	33.5	31	-2.5	11.1	7.2	-3.9	32.3	31.5	-0.8	15.4	20.7	5.3	7.7	9.6	1.9
Jefferson	27.3	26.8	-0.5	6.8	6.3	-0.5	32.8	30.4	-2.4	19.6	22.8	3.2	13.4	13.6	0.2
Kenton	30.3	28.9	-1.4	7.3	6.6	-0.7	33.3	32	-1.3	17.5	21.4	3.9	11.5	11	-0.5
Warren	29.5	28.1	-1.4	10.5	11.2	0.7	30.8	29.2	-1.6	18.1	21.1	3	11.1	10.5	-0.6

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

NET DOMESTIC MIGRATION

The two major drivers of population change are natural increase (births minus deaths) and net migration. The latter is of most direct interest here.

This is often followed with an expressed belief that a local public four-year institution (or at least more comprehensive four-year program services) would help to keep these young adults at home, and upon graduation many would seek employment in the community.

There is no perfect way to estimate the extent of this phenomenon, but census data on domestic migration provide a clue. The following percentage figures from the 2000 Census reflect the rate of change because of migration between 1995 and 2000. Table 5 includes the figures for the state, the eight most populated Kentucky counties, and the host counties of Kentucky public four-year institutions; some of these host counties also are among Kentucky's most populated. The public four-year institution host counties are marked with an asterisk. Their presence on the table permits exploration of a possible correlation between a public four-year institution and in-migration.

With the lowest net migration rate among the group except for Jefferson and Hardin, and without a local public four-year institution, Daviess County ranks near the bottom. For its part, the Commonwealth of Kentucky is both a net importer and a net importer of college-age students. Its ratio of student imports to exports is 1.36, a figure derived by dividing the number leaving by the number coming in. Nearly 30,000 Kentucky college students enroll in other states' colleges and universities. Kentucky ranks 21st among the states in net imports of college-going students.³

Many in Owensboro insist that the absence of a comprehensive public four-year institution in the community is a factor in the decisions of high school graduates to leave for college elsewhere, many of whom never return.

³ The National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis, www.higheredinfo.org. Year 2000 figures.

Table 5.
Migration of Kentucky Residents 1995-2000
Net Domestic Migration Rates for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Eight Most Populated
Counties and the Host Counties of Kentucky Public Four-Year Institutions
2000 Census⁴
(* Denotes Host Counties of Public Four-Year Institutions)

Boone	10.52
Fayette*	10.5
Madison*	10.5
Kentucky	8.4
Rowan*	6.9
Calloway*	5.55
Warren*	5.1
Franklin*	3.25
Kenton	-0.036
Campbell*	-1.62
Daviess	-2.76
Jefferson*	-2.9
Hardin	-5.47

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Net migration is influenced by several considerations, not the least of which is the presence of a public higher education campus.

During this period Daviess was a net export county, population-wise (more left than came). It is near the bottom of this group of large and host counties, and below the state average.

Net migration is influenced by several considerations, not the least of which is the presence of a public higher education institution campus. In the present case, all the counties are urban counties (another factor), one (Boone) is a major suburban growth county for the Cincinnati

Metropolitan Statistical Area; migration is from the Ohio portion into the Kentucky suburbs (still another factor). Another is near an important military base (Ft. Knox, a factor that correlates with migration there).⁵ Net migration also is influenced by a comprehensive public university campus.

⁴ Rates derived from data in the Kentucky Population Research and Kentucky State Data Center Research Report, "Kentucky Migration: Consequences for State Population and Labor Force," February 2004.

⁵ Vernon Smith at the Kentucky State Data Center offered these observations in an email communication. Mr. Smith also provided extremely helpful data summaries and advice on where to locate others.

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

This report is about education, particularly higher education. And this is a good place to review some comparative education indicators.

HIGH SCHOOL ATTAINMENT

Among all Kentucky counties, Daviess County ranks ninth in the percent of adults (18-24 year olds) with a high school diploma, somewhat below its rank as seventh in population.⁶ The reference is to the highest education credential held.⁷ The Year 2000 Census figure for the County in this regard, people with a high school diploma, is 76.0 percent, which is above the statewide average of 74.9 percent. Daviess has declined in terms of this indicator since 1990, when the figure for the County was 78.7 percent. Its high school attainment standing among the members of the tier of eight largest counties is shown on Table 6. While still above the statewide average, it is below all of the large counties except Jefferson, ranking it seventh in the group.

Table 6.
Percent 18-34 year-olds with a High School Diploma

Warren	85.6
Fayette	84.8
Hardin	79.4
Kenton	78.9
Campbell	78.5
Boone	76.9
Daviess	76
Kentucky	74.9
Jefferson	74.8

Data Source: www.higheredinfo.org

COLLEGE-LEVEL ATTAINMENT

Daviess County's year 2000 share of adults (age 25-34) with a bachelor's degree or higher was 18.6 percent, an increase of three percent from the 1990 Census.⁸ Nevertheless, Daviess places eighteenth on this measure among the counties of the state, and it ranks below all of the other large counties except Hardin in this regard. It also ranks below the statewide average. The respective percentage figures for the tier of large population counties and the statewide average are shown on Table 7.

⁶ These figures, from the year 2000 Census, appear on the NCHEMS higherinfo.org site.

⁷ In many other states, higher education participation by county is an important analytical standard. In Kentucky, however, the Council on Postsecondary Education does not calculate college participation rates for individual counties, only for the state as a whole and for the 68 that are designated as target counties by the state. These are counties with high unemployment and low participation and attainment rates. Daviess County is not on the target county list.

⁸ Again, this and the immediately following tables are based on Census data from Higherinfo.org, *op. cit.* It is important to note that the age group is age 25-34, which is the age group preferred in this college-age oriented data file. If total population over age 25 is used, the percentages change but not dramatically so, and the rankings remain about the same. In this case the state average is 8.2%. The eight largest counties in order are Fayette, 18.5%; Kenton, 11.4%; Warren 11.2%; Boone, 9.7%; Campbell, 9.57%; Daviess, 8.4%; Hardin, 7.52%. Similar differences may be assumed to apply to the other degree levels.

Table 7.
Percent of 25-34 year-olds
With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher
2000 Census
Eight Largest Counties and State Average

Fayette	42.4
Jefferson	30.7
Campbell	30
Boone	29.2
Warren	28.5
Kenton	27.9
Kentucky	20.8
Daviess	18.6
Hardin	16.4

Data Source: www.higheredinfor.org

This picture does not improve when the subject turns to the share of 25-34 year-olds with a graduate or professional degree. The figures for Daviess and the seven other large counties, along with the statewide average, are shown on Table 8.

Daviess ranks eighteenth among the counties of Kentucky in percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree.

Table 8.
Percent 25-34 year-olds with
a Graduate or Professional Degree
2000 Census

Fayette	12.6
Jefferson	8.3
Warren	7.8
Campbell	7.5
Kenton	6.4
Boone	5.9
Kentucky	5.6
Hardin	4.5
Daviess	3.4

Data Source: www.higheredinfo.org

Table 9.
Percent 25-34 year-olds With an
Associates Degree
2000 Census
Seven largest Counties and State
Average

Daviess	9.1
Hardin	8.2
Fayette	7.3
Jefferson	6.5
Kentucky	6.5
Boone	6.3
Kenton	6.0
Campbell	5.8
Warren	5.4

Data Source: www.higheredinfo.org

In this case Daviess also scores well below the seven other large counties and the statewide average.

Daviess County does better when the subject is the percentage of adults (25-34 year-olds) with an associate degree. The presence of OCTC in the community is an obvious factor in this. The percentages for the large counties and the state are shown on Table 9.

Daviess County leads the large county group and exceeds the state average on this measure, i.e., share of adults with an associate degree.

These figures imply that the presence of college and university campuses in the community is a variable that influences standings on such matters as attainment, particularly when the local institution is a public college or university.⁹

PUBLIC INSTITUTION HOST COUNTIES

The evidence is reinforced when the numbers are looked at another way: comparing Daviess County bachelor degree figures with those of the eight host counties of Kentucky’s public four-year institutions. In this case similar patterns obtain. Daviess scores below all of the eight, and below the statewide average. Some of the host counties—Campbell, Fayette, Jefferson, and Warren – also are among the largest population county group (Table 10).

Daviess County ranks last among the peer counties in percentage of adults with a graduate or professional degree.

Table 10.
Percent of 25-34 year-olds
With a Bachelor’s Degree
2000 Census
Public Four-Year Institution Host Counties and State Average

Fayette	42.4	UK
Calloway	30.8	MSU
Jefferson	30.7	U of L
Campbell	30.0	NKU
Warren	28.5	WKU
Madison	26.1	EKU
Rowan	25.6	Morehead
Franklin	23.3	KSU

Data Source: www.higheredinfo.org

And so it also is when the topic is graduate and professional degree holders among county residents: the same patterns appear (Table 11). Again comparing Daviess with the public four-year institution host counties: it comes in last.

⁹ Owensboro has two locally-based independent institutions – Brescia University and Kentucky Wesleyan College. The reference to the possibility of correlations between education attainment and a public institution implies no disrespect for the programs and services of these institutions. Rather, it acknowledges the different missions that typically distinguish private colleges and universities from those that are publicly governed.

Table 11.
Percent of 25-34 year-olds
With a Graduate or Professional Degree
2000 Census
Public Four-Year Institution Host Counties and State Average

Fayette	12.6	UK
Calloway	9.0	MSU
Jefferson	8.3	U of L
Warren	7.8	WKU
Campbell	7.5	NKU
Rowan	7.2	Morehead
Madison	6.2	EKU
Kentucky	5.6	
Franklin	4.9	KSU
Daviess	3.4	

Data Source: www.higheredinfo.org

The figures for associate degrees for these counties and the state create a pattern that is the opposite. Again, and notably, Daviess County has an indigenous public community/technical college. In this case Daviess County's figure leads the host county set and the state average (Table 12).

Table 12.
Percent of 25-34 year-olds
With an Associate Degree
2000 Census
Public Four-Year Institution Host Counties and State Average

Daviess	9.1	
Fayette	7.3	UK
Jefferson	6.5	U of L
Rowan	6.5	Morehead
Kentucky	6.5	
Madison	6.1	EKU
Campbell	5.8	NKU
Warren	5.4	WKU
Calloway	4.9	MSU
Franklin	4.2	KSU

Data Source: www.higheredinfo.org

Other variables may be influencing these numbers, but it would be difficult to ignore a hypothesis that education attainment figures correlate with a comprehensive public institution presence, and, conversely, a possibility that the effect on opportunities for access that absence creates contributes to comparatively depressed figures for Daviess County.

HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

Education attainment levels are a function of the presence of people educated locally and the numbers of people who have moved into the county from other areas. Education attainment, in others words, concerns academic accomplishments, but in itself it says nothing about where the accomplishments occurred. Because of this, the higher education participation rate, the share of a county’s population enrolled in higher education, is an important comparative measure of effort.

The 2000 Census offers helpful clues about higher education participation with its statistics on education enrollment. These can be fairly easily converted into higher education participation rates for individual counties. Since the full range of Census data options (enrollments in Grades K, 1,2,3, etc.) does not directly apply here, only the figures involving enrollments in “undergraduate colleges” (public and private—note that this encompasses both major types of undergraduate institutions, 2- and 4-year) and enrollments in graduate and

Other variables may be influencing these numbers, but it would be difficult to ignore a hypothesis that education attainment figures correlate with a comprehensive public institution presence, and, conversely, a possibility that the effect on opportunities for access that absence creates contributes to comparatively depressed figures for Daviess County.

professional schools” (public and private) are used.

Table 13.
Undergraduate College Enrollment
Among Large Population County
Residents
2000 Census
(Percent)

Warren	11.35
Fayette	9.85
Campbell	5.50
Hardin	4.52
Kentucky	4.47
Jefferson	4.40
Kenton	3.92
Daviess	3.89
Boone	3.82

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

The Census data on education enrollment also apply to the full county population age 3 and above, rather than age 25-34 years, the age group to which the preceding education attainment figures apply.¹⁰ The figures on the following tables represent the percentages enrolled at the respective levels.

Looking first at the comparative percentages of residents enrolled in college, *per se*, among the eight most populated Kentucky counties and for the state as a whole, the 2000 Census higher education

participation figures are displayed on Table 13.

¹⁰ Note also that the main data source now is the Kentucky State Data Center rather than www.higheredinfo.org.

Daviess County ranks below the state average and all of the counties in the large county group except for Boone County, a suburban community in the Cincinnati area.

When the college enrollment is separated into public and private institutions, the rankings on Table 14 form. Daviess' participation in public institutions continues to rank below the state average; in this case, however, it drops to the bottom of the large population county ranking.

Daviess County has two native private four-year institutions, so it helps to look at resident participation in private undergraduate colleges. The presence of these institutions does affect the pattern. In the case of *private* college enrollments, Daviess leads the eight county grouping and rises above the state average. The rankings for the large counties on this measure are shown on Table 15. These continue to suggest the importance of local higher education access.

There is strong interest in graduate program opportunities in the area, as will be shown later. The Census data for total graduate-professional program enrollment may help explain this.

Table 16.
Public Graduate/Professional School Enrollment
Among Large Population County Residents
2000 Census
(Percent)

Fayette	2.43
Jefferson	0.88
Warren	0.85
Hardin	0.75
Campbell	0.67
Kentucky	0.65
Kenton	0.50
Daviess	0.45
Boone	0.35

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Table 14.
Public Undergraduate College Enrollment
Among Large Population County Residents
2000 Census
(Percent)

Warren	10.87
Fayette	8.79
Campbell	4.71
Kentucky	3.86
Hardin	3.79
Jefferson	3.42
Boone	3.19
Kenton	3.05
Daviess	2.53

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Table 15
Private Undergraduate College Enrollment
Among Large Population County Residents
2000 Census
(Percent)

Daviess	1.35
Fayette	1.06
Jefferson	0.97
Kenton	0.86
Kentucky	0.80
Hardin	0.73
Boone	0.63
Campbell	0.58
Warren	0.47

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Daviess ranks at the bottom of the peer county group and well below the state average.

Tables 16 and 17 represent enrollment patterns in public and private graduate/professional programs, respectively, among residents of the eight counties.

As might be expected in view of Owensboro's local private institutions, the county does rise in the rankings on the second table (Table 17), although not very much, and

in both cases (public and private) it ranks below the state average and places next to last on each of the two tables.

At this point it would be difficult to dismiss the possibility of a relationship between participation and attainment on the one hand and the presence of comprehensive public institutions on the other.

Table 17.
Private Graduate/Professional School
Enrollment
Among Large Population County
Residents
2000 Census
(Percent)

Jefferson	0.41
Kenton	0.28
Fayette	0.25
Boone	0.20
Campbell	0.17
Hardin	0.12
Daviess	0.08
Warren	0.06

At this point it would be difficult to dismiss the possibility of a relationship between participation and attainment on the one hand and the presence of comprehensive public institutions on the other.

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

The next few tables continue to look at the participation percentages, this time in host counties with public comprehensive four-year institutions, in comparison with Daviess County's numbers

Table 18.
Total College Enrollment
Host Counties of Public Four-Year Institutions,
Daviess County, and State Average
2000 Census
(Percent)

Rowan	19.21
Calloway	17.26
Madison	13.80
Warren	11.35
Fayette	9.85
Campbell	5.30
Franklin	4.92
Kentucky	4.47
Jefferson	4.40
Daviess	3.92

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Daviess County again ranks at the bottom of the group. The same pattern persists when the subject is enrollment in public undergraduate institutions, rather than total enrollment in all institutions, in Daviess and the host counties (Table 19).

Table 19.
Public College Enrollment Among County Residents
Host Counties of Public Four-Year Institutions and Daviess County
2000 Census
(Percent)

Rowan	18.88
Calloway	16.50
Madison	11.85
Warren	10.87
Fayette	8.79
Campbell	4.71
Franklin	4.39
Kentucky	3.66
Jefferson	3.42
Daviess	2.53

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

As may be expected, Daviess, again as the host county for two private institutions, improves its standing when the issue is enrollment in private undergraduate institutions. In this case it ranks second among the host group counties (Table 20).

Table 20.
Private College Enrollment
Host Counties of Public Four-Year Institutions and Daviess County
2000 Census
(Percent)

Madison	1.99
Daviess	1.35
Fayette	1.06
Jefferson	0.97
Kentucky	0.80
Calloway	0.76
Campbell	0.58
Franklin	0.53
Warren	0.47
Rowan	0.32

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Total enrollment in graduate and professional programs among residents of these counties constitutes the percentages shown on the Table 21. Daviess County is at the bottom of the rankings.

Table 21.
Total Graduate/Professional Program Enrollment Among County Residents
Host Counties of Public Four-Year Institutions and Daviess County
2000 Census
(Percent)

Fayette	2.69
Calloway	2.4
Rowan	1.95
Jefferson	1.29
Madison	1.13
Warren	0.92
Campbell	0.85
Kentucky	0.84
Franklin	0.83
Daviess	0.53

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

The next two tables (Table 22 and 23) show the rates of enrollments in graduate/professional programs of public and private institutions, respectively.

Table 22.
Public Institution Graduate/Professional Program Enrollment Among County Residents
Host Counties of Public Four-Year Institutions and Daviess County
2000 Census
(Percent)

Fayette	2.43
Calloway	2.29
Rowan	1.86
Madison	1.07
Jefferson	0.88
Warren	0.85
Campbell	0.67
Kentucky	0.65
Franklin	0.62
Daviess	0.45

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Table 23.
Private Institution Graduate/Professional Program Enrollment Among County Residents
Host Counties of Public Four-Year Institutions and Daviess County
2000 Census
(Percent)

Jefferson	0.41
Fayette	0.25
Franklin	0.20
Kentucky	0.18
Campbell	0.17
Warren	0.16
Calloway	0.12
Rowan	0.08
Daviess	0.08
Madison	0.06

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

The effect of the private institution presence on Daviess County is again demonstrated by its rise in the rankings to a tie for second to last place. Private college presence does not appear to affect the order when the subject is public institution enrollment.

County higher education attainment levels and participation rates correlate rather clearly with institution presence.

At this point it seems reasonable to conclude that local higher education attainment levels and higher education participation rates correlate well with institution presence, or, stated differently, higher education access.

They also correlate with institution type – public or private – the distinctions employed by the Census Bureau. In the case of Kentucky, the type of institution attended, and the education attainment rate for counties lacking public four-year institutions is affected negatively. In Daviess County’s case, according to the numbers, the presence of local private colleges and universities is not sufficient to offset or otherwise compensate for the absence of convenient access to comprehensive public four-year programs and services.

Before leaving the attainment/participation arena, it will be helpful to consider these figures briefly one other way: in the context of Kentucky’s Metropolitan Statistical Areas, of which Owensboro is one.

KENTUCKY’S METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS

Metropolitan Statistical Areas are defined by the Census Bureau and used to describe areas containing large population centers and their adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration.

Although the main object is a Census data collection system that reflects the integrated features of a metropolitan area, the MSAs within a state also comprise urban centers of economic importance. In cases of MSA counties located on state borders, the Census data apply to adjacent counties both within the state and in the border states.

During the year 2000 Census, Kentucky had or was part of seven MSAs, only two of which – the Owensboro MSA and the Lexington MSA – were located exclusively in Kentucky. The Owensboro MSA consists of one county, Daviess, the only Kentucky MSA composed of one county.

During the year 2000 Census, Kentucky had or was part of seven MSAs, only two of which – the Owensboro MSA and the Lexington MSA – were located exclusively in Kentucky. All of these MSAs except for Owensboro have one or more comprehensive public four-year colleges sited within the boundary.

The Lexington MSA was made up of Fayette, Madison, Clark, Bourbon, Scott, Woodford, and Jessamine Counties. The other five MSAs were:

- Clarksville-Hopkinsville MSA (which encompassed Christian County Kentucky and Montgomery County, Tennessee);
- Evansville-Henderson MSA (which encompassed Henderson County, Kentucky and Posey, Vanderburgh, and Warrick Counties, Indiana);
- Louisville MSA (which encompassed Jefferson, Bullitt, and Oldham Counties, Kentucky, and Harrison, Floyd, Clark, and Scott Counties, Indiana);
- Cincinnati-Hamilton MSA (which encompassed Grant, Pendleton, Kenton, Boone, and Campbell Counties, Kentucky, and Dearborn, Hamilton, Warren, Clermont, and Brown Counties, Ohio); and
- Huntington-Ashland MSA (which encompassed Greenup, Carter, and Boyd Counties, Kentucky, and Lawrence County, Ohio, and Cabell, and Wayne Counties, West Virginia).

All except for the Owensboro MSA have one or more comprehensive public four-year colleges located within their boundary, although not all of these are Kentucky institutions. For people in Owensboro, the closest public four-year institution is in Evansville, about 40 miles away. This is the longest commute to a public institution for people in the Kentucky population center of any MSA of which Kentucky counties are part.

MSAs define de facto competitive economic districts. Except for Owensboro, all of Kentucky's MSAs have one or more comprehensive public four-year colleges located within their boundary

Although their main purpose is to serve as bases for the collection of metropolitan area census data, MSAs also define de facto competitive economic districts. Owensboro competes economically with other localities, and these are those that are closest to home. These MSAs, in other words, are Owensboro's economic peers.

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT AMONG THE MSAS

There are two ways to view the education attainment rankings for MSAs that include Kentucky counties. One is to look at the rates for only the Kentucky county share of the area; the other is to consider figures for the entire MSA, Kentucky counties and others included.¹¹ Both are reviewed here, starting with only the Kentucky county shares. Table 24 shows how Owensboro/Daviess County aligns with the Kentucky counties of these MSAs on education attainment and higher education participation. In each case the ranking among the group of seven is shown on the table in the "RK" columns.

¹¹ In this case pure Census data, rather than the www.higheredinfo.com college-age related data (which are derived from Census figures), are used. Thus, the population used is adults over age 25 years.

Table 24.
Education Attainment Among the Population Age 25 and over in MSAs that Include Kentucky Counties (Kentucky County Portion Only) 2000 Census (Percent Age 25 and Above)

MSAs KY Co. ED ATTAINMENT		HS		< 1 yr Col.		> 1 yr. Col.		Assoc.		Bacc.		Mast.		Prof.		Doc.
KENTUCKY COUNTIES ONLY	RK		RK		RK		RK		RK		RK		RK		RK	
Owensboro (59,745)	2	37.6	3	7.96	5	12.5	5	5.59	4	10.9	4	4.54	6	1.14	4	0.4
Cincinnati-KY-IN (237,026)	4	34.6	6	7.31	4	13.54	7	5.09	3	13.65	3	5.05	3	1.48	3	0.47
Clarksville-Hopkinsville (40,344)	6	33.4	1	9.11	1	15.2	1	7.05	6	7.71	7	3.39	7	1.09	6	0.26
Lexington (304,749)	5	27	7	5.9	3	14.6	3	5.82	1	17.11	1	7.29	1	2.46	1	1.8
Huntington-KY-OH (77,474)	3	36.6	4	7.65	6	12.23	6	5.44	7	6.8	6	3.76	5	1.21	5	0.29
Evansville-Henderson (29,960)	1	37.8	2	8.05	7	11.75	2	6.88	5	8.12	5	4.2	4	1.26	7	0.16
Louisville (533,957)	7	29.8	5	7.44	2	14.7	4	5.7	2	14.8	2	6.27	2	2.21	2	0.71

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Daviess County does well in the high school and “less than one year of college” columns attainment levels. It slips to fourth to sixth among the seven MSAs in the college-degreed categories, however, with its nadir (sixth place) attained in the master’s degree column. The Lexington and Louisville MSA Kentucky counties persistently outscore Owensboro in these higher-level categories.

Earlier it was noted that Owensboro is the only one of the Kentucky area MSAs that does not have a comprehensive public four-year institution located within the boundaries of the MSA. This fact warrants a brief glance at the education attainment scores for each of these districts, in this case looking at the rankings for all of the counties that make up each MSA, both Kentucky and other counties, as appropriate (Table 25). Again it is worth noting that the Owensboro MSA is composed of one county, Daviess.

Table 25.
Education Attainment Among the Population Age 25 and over in MSAs that Include Kentucky Counties (All Counties) 2000 Census (Percent Age 25 and Above)

ALL COUNTIES IN KY MSAs		HS		C. < 1 yr		C. >1 yr.		Assoc.		Bacc.		Mast.		Prof.		Doc.
	RK		RK		RK		RK		RK		RK		RK		RK	
Owensboro (59,745)	1	37.6	2	7.9	6	12.5	6	5.5	5	10.92	6	4.54	7	1.1	6	0.4
Cincinnati (1,267,807)	4	31.7	6	6.9	5	12.7	3	6	2	16.2	2	6.1	3	1.7	1	2.6
Clarksville-Hopkinsville (120,167)	5	31.4	1	9.3	1	17.2	1	6.9	6	10.9	5	4.16	6	1.2	5	0.54
Lexington (304,749)	7	27	7	5.9	2	14.6	4	5.82	1	17.1	1	7.2	1	2.4	2	1.8
Huntington-KY-OH (212,765)	2	37.3	5	7	7	11.9	7	4.8	7	8.4	7	4.14	5	1.32	7	0.37
Evansville-Henderson (194,380)	3	36.1	3	7.8	4	13.6	2	6.8	4	11.7	5	4.7	4	1.36	4	0.57
Louisville (682,172)	6	31.3	4	7.5	3	14.4	5	5.8	3	13.7	3	5.8	2	1.9	3	0.64

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

Owensboro continues to do well in the high school and some college education categories, placing first and second, respectively. It drops to sixth, or next to last place, however, in the more than one year of college column, and remains there in the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral columns. It places last among the seven peers in the professional degree category.

Owensboro ranks sixth among the seven MSAs in baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral degree attainment levels.

EDUCATION PARTICIPATION AMONG THE MSAs

College participation is the second variable of interest here. The reference is total enrollment in college and graduate school among adults. This includes enrollment in two- and four-year institutions, both local and otherwise. Owensboro does a little better among this group of seven peers in some categories and less well in others. It ranks second in private undergraduate college enrollment, an achievement in no doubt attributable to its local independent institutions – Brescia and Kentucky Wesleyan. In all of the remaining categories – undergraduate and graduate, it ranks fourth, fifth, or sixth.

Table 26.
Education Participation Among the Population Age 3 and over in MSAs that Include Kentucky Counties (Kentucky County Portion Only) 2000 Census (Percent)

	Rank	UG	Rank	Public	Rank	Private	Rank	Grad/Prof	Rank	Public	Rank	Private
Cincinnati-Hamilton (353,662)	4	4	3	3.32	5	0.67	3	0.7	3	0.48	3	0.22
Clarksville-Hopkinsville (67,524)	2	4.6	2	4.19	6	0.43	6	0.34	7	0.29	6	0.04
Lexington (460,660)	1	8.8	1	7.21	1	1.55	1	1.97	1	1.64	2	0.32
Huntington-Ashland (109,663)	5T	3.9	5	3.14	4	0.79	5T	0.42	6	0.31	4	0.11
Evansville-Henderson (43,192)	6	2.8	7	2.5	7	0.25	5T	0.42	5	0.42	7	0
Louisville (768,701)	3	4.2	4	3.29	3	0.94	2	1.21	2	0.82	1	0.38
Owensboro (87,778)	5T	3.9	6	2.53	2	1.35	4	0.53	4	0.45	5	0.08

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

OTHER INDICATORS FOR OWENSBORO AND COMPARABLE PLACES

In a June 7, 2001 presentation to the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corporation on the development of the Owensboro regional economy, Professor Paul Coomes of the University of Louisville analyzed the performance of the local economy during the 1990s “compared to other places like Owensboro.”¹² He identified fast job growth (using the then figure of 100,000 regional jobs), with services, retails, local government, and construction representing the strong sectors for this community. Average annual manufacturing worker pay was \$37,800. Outside of manufacturing, average annual earnings per job were \$22,200. Population

¹² “The Development of the Owensboro Regional Economy,” June 7, 2001, PowerPoint presentation.

growth in the region, estimated at five percent, was considered modest. Manufacturing jobs had increased during the 1990s, from about 6600 to about 7100 jobs but had decreased rather steadily from 8800 jobs in 1970 to 6600 in 1990.

At this point, Professor Coomes' reference to "other places like Owensboro" comes into play. For his purposes these were a group of MSAs each containing between 70,000 and 120,000 residents that were: "not on an Interstate highway, not a college town, and not a state capital." Three "peer" Kentucky counties, Warren, Christian, and McCracken, were added to the group (one of these peer counties, Warren, is a public four-year host county, and another, Christian, is in an MSA with Montgomery County, Tennessee, another host county for a public four-year institution.) In addition to Owensboro, the MSAs were:

- Dubuque, Iowa
- Lewiston-Auburn, Maine
- Elmira, New York
- Kokomo, Indiana
- Danville, Virginia
- Sumter, South Carolina
- Jonesboro, Arkansas
- Pine Bluff, Arkansas
- Victoria, Texas
- Albany, Georgia

Among this group,¹³ the Owensboro MSA did well – third highest in manufacturing job growth during the 1990s and fifth highest in earnings per manufacturing job. It dropped to third lowest place, however, in overall earnings per job. Although it was fourth highest in high school attainment, it was seventh in college attainment.

Professor Coomes' presentation also noted that enrollments in Owensboro area colleges and universities (WKU-Owensboro was not included) had dropped from a high of 4,500 in 1992 to about 3,600 in 1999 (Brescia, KWC, and Owensboro Community College made up the three college group.)

His assessment of strengths and weaknesses in Owensboro's case remains informative. According to Professor Coomes, Owensboro's strengths include:

¹³ The selection suffers from a lack of definition for the expression, "Not a college town." Jonesboro, Arkansas is the home of Arkansas State University. Pine Bluff, Arkansas is the home of the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff. Lewiston, Maine has the University of Maine's Lewiston-Auburn College. And Sumter, South Carolina is the site of the University of South Carolina – Sumter. The reference, "not a college town," apparently is not synonymous with "no public four-year institution."

- Central Midwestern location
- Competitive schools
- Three local colleges
- A good database on the local workforce
- Inexpensive energy
- “BBQ, wet country”

Weaknesses were:

- Interstate highway 40 miles away
- Spotty air service
- Residual adult illiteracy (Coomes estimated at 30%)
- Owensboro is “off the Frankfort radar – it is a self-reliant region in a big government state.”
- Youth flight, little foreign immigration, and an aging population added to the brew.

The identified opportunities included Owensboro’s Internet ties to the world, its regional hospital, its status as a regional retail center, and its potential as a good base for higher value-added agriculture. These are opportunities also worth considering in the context of a higher education strategy.

Returning to the present report, at this point it is safe to say that insofar as education attainment levels and higher education participation levels are concerned, Owensboro does not meet expected performance levels in comparison with its large county, host county, and Kentucky MSA peers.

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

This study is centered on the community interest. Certain potentially special opportunities are of particular concern to the Citizens Committee on Education: e.g., to maximize the area’s potential in agricultural technology, establish a regional healthcare center, become a major distribution center.

These interests accord with Owensboro’s character as the industrial and cultural hub of western Kentucky. A new bridge across the Ohio River will provide a direct link from Owensboro to I-64 in Indiana. The Mid-America Airpark also is a consideration. The economy’s diversity is exemplified by the fact that while 47,000 people are employed in the community, the ten largest private companies account for less than 15 percent of these workers.

Insofar as education attainment levels and higher education participation levels are concerned, Owensboro does not meet expected performance levels in comparison with its large county, host county, and Kentucky MSA peers.

Most of Daviess County's workers are in Retail Trade (c. 9,000) and Services (nearly 15,000). Manufacturing (nearly 7,000) ranks third. Construction and Transportation follow in that order. Wholesale Trade, Finance, and Government round out the prominent sectors, and Agriculture and Mining complete the list.

AVERAGE INCOME

Although the average personal income for residents in Daviess County increased between 1995 and 2000, from \$19,638 to \$25,310 (28.8%), this was less than the rate of increase for Kentucky as a whole (33.7%).

The 2002 figures for Kentucky and the eight most populous counties are arrayed on the following table. Daviess County ranks seventh among the eight.

Table 27.
Per Capita Personal Income for Kentucky and the Eight Most Populous Counties
2002

Jefferson	\$33,466
Fayette	\$32,932
Kenton	\$30,332
Boone	\$29,703
Campbell	\$28,049
Kentucky	\$25,494
Hardin	\$25,468
Daviess	\$25,310
Warren	\$25,183

Data Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

In 2003 the average weekly wage of workers in the area was \$552.04, below the statewide average of \$607.24. Manufacturing (\$730.88) constitutes the high level, and services (\$434.24) the low (excluding "Others, \$400.69). Average Year 2003 wages for the state, Daviess, and the seven other most populous Kentucky counties are ranked on Table 28. Daviess ranks sixth among the eight counties.

Table 28.
Average Weekly Wage
2003

Boone	\$708.55
Jefferson	\$702.33
Fayette	\$659.30
Kenton	\$650.50
Kentucky	\$607.24
Warren	\$571.32
Daviess	\$552.04
Hardin	\$550.64
Campbell	\$549.26

Data Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment rates in Kentucky and each of the eight largest counties increased between 2000 and 2003. The annual average 2003 rates for this group are shown on Table 29. Daviess tied the state average, 6.2 %, and ranked seventh among the group of eight counties.

Table 29.
Unemployment Rates for Kentucky and the Eight Largest Counties
2003

Fayette	3.8
Campbell	4.8
Kenton	4.8
Boone	4.9
Warren	5.3
Jefferson	6.0
Kentucky	6.2
Daviess	6.2
Hardin	6.4

Data Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The pace of change in the unemployment rate between 2000 and 2003, however, has been more gradual for Daviess County than most of the others in this group of peers (Table 30).

Table 30.
Percent Increase in the Unemployment Rate, 2000 to 2003
Kentucky and the Eight Most Populous Counties

Kentucky	51.2
Fayette	11.1
Boone	81.4
Jefferson	71.4
Campbell	45.4
Kenton	45.4
Daviess	40.9
Warren	39.4
Hardin	28.0

Derived from Bureau of Labor Statistics Data

Also to be noted are the recent shorter term (November 2003 – November 2004) Kentucky Labor Force Estimates, which show improvement in the rates for all of the largest counties. During this period the unemployment rate for Daviess County dropped from 5.3 % to 4.3 %. This is the good news. The other news is that Daviess tied with Jefferson for the next to last place. The figures for the eight most populous counties ranked by the November 2004 percentages are displayed on Table 31.

Table 31.
Unemployment Rates
Kentucky Labor Force Estimates
Preliminary November 2004
Eight Most Populous Kentucky Counties

	Nov. 2003	Nov. 2004
Fayette	3.2	2.7
Warren	4.6	2.9
Boone	5.1	3.6
Kenton	4.2	3.9
Campbell	4.4	4.2
Daviess	5.3	4.3
Jefferson	6.2	4.3
Hardin	6.2	4.7

Data Source: Office of Employment and Training

For Kentucky as a whole the number of families in poverty (12.7 %) has been declining. During the decade of the 1990s, the state average decreased 13.9 %. With one exception, this pattern has been manifest also at the local level. According to the year 2000 percentages, Daviess ranked sixth among the eight counties (i.e., percent of families in poverty), but it should be noted that it also experienced the greatest proportional inter-census decline (Table 32).

Table 32.
Poverty Status
Families in Poverty in Kentucky and the Eight Most Populous Counties
1990 and 2000 Census

	% 2000	% Chg 1990-2000
Boone	4.4	3.6
Kenton	7.1	-9.9
Campbell	7.3	-17.1
Fayette	8.2	-10.3
Hardin	8.2	-20.8
Daviess	9.4	-21
Jefferson	9.5	-10.9
Warren	10.8	-4.8
Kentucky	12.7	-13.9

Data Source: Kentucky State Data Center

The averages exemplify an important consideration, and one that presents itself continually: many statistical indicators for the area are below statewide averages. Kentucky itself, however, also frequently ranks below national averages. Thus, in terms of national or multi-state regional indicators, the economic situation may be even more somber than it may appear. Were the national average used as the standard the gaps would be even more noticeable.

There is nothing new in the observation. As the Task Force on Postsecondary Education noted in its 1997 report, "By almost any national measure, Kentucky lags behind other states in the educational level of its citizens; in many instances it is

significantly behind.” The southern border of Indiana, one of Kentucky’s competitor states, borders Owensboro.

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

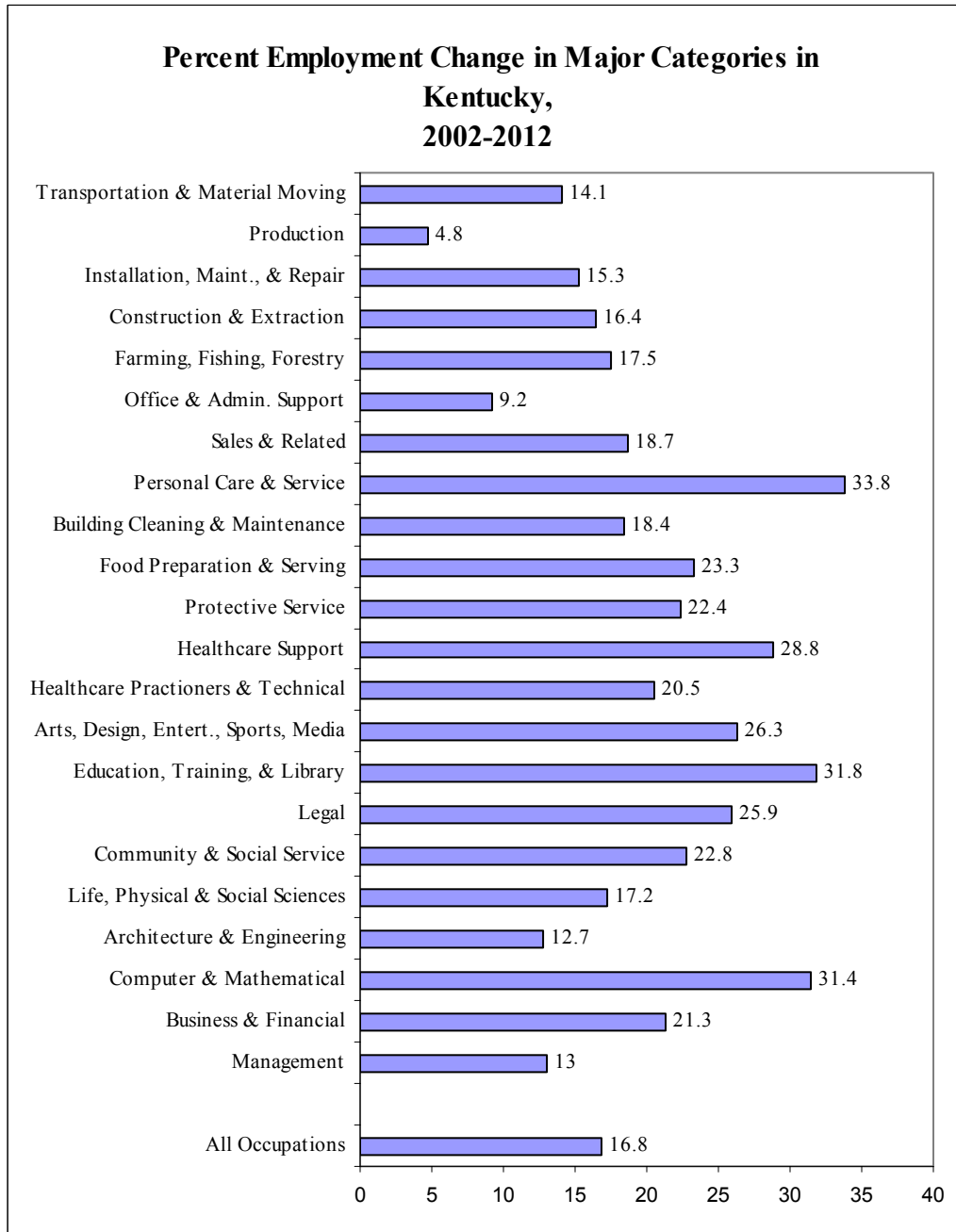
Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster Counties comprise the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training’s Green River area. The details for Daviess County are merged with those of the larger area, but it is worth a pause for a look at the Department’s occupational outlook to 2010 for this area. The following highlights are quoted from this source (figures are rounded):

- Between 2000 and 2010, employment is expected to increase 9.5 %, from 100,000 to 108,600;
- Annual job openings are estimated at 3,400;
- Employment growth will account for about 950 job openings annually;
- About 2,500 openings will result from retirements or transfers to other jobs;
- About 28 percent of the job openings will result from growth; the rest from separations from the labor force;
- The greatest number of job openings will be in the Production Occupations (550 – this category includes Production Supervisors, Assemblers and Fabricators, Food Processing, Metal and Plastics workers, Printers, Textile workers, Woodworkers, Chemical workers, etc.);
- Occupations that will experience the greatest rate of change include Commercial Drivers (86 %), Network and Computer System Administrators (83 %), Social and Human Service Assistants (77 %) and Computer Support Specialists (66 %);
- The largest growth rates are expected to be in Computer and Mathematical Occupations (46 %), Protective Service Occupations (36 %), and Community and Social Service Occupations (36 %).

The occupational outlook for the state as a whole (2002–2012) provides something of a setting with which the estimates for the Green River area can be compared. The statewide outlook is optimistic – the economy will generate over 76,000 jobs annually. Nearly one-third will be in Sales and Related occupations, Food Preparation and Serving, and Education, Training, and Library occupations. Personal Care and Service occupations are expected to increase at twice the average rate for all occupations.

In the Green River area, Computer and Mathematical occupations, particularly Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts are expected to increase 72 percent over the period. Health Service Occupations are expected to increase about 30 percent. The projected rates of change for the major occupations are shown on Figure 2.

Figure 2.



Data Source: Kentucky Office of Employment and Training

The economic transformation associated with globalization has both national and local effects. The bars on the graph demonstrate the proportion devoted to “services,” and, by extension, the shift from manufacturing. If one is trying to understand, however, which components of the service sector are most vulnerable to change, whether positive in terms of job growth or negative in terms of job loss, and, by extension, what will be the jobs of

the future, the category “services” is too broad. Some jobs are more vulnerable than others.

Stephen Cohen and Bradford DeLong were looking at national patterns when they stated the following, but the observation applies to Kentucky and Daviess County as well: “Even at its height [in the U.S.] Manufacturing constituted only 28 percent of all non-farm employment, and large sectors of Manufacturing (food processing, for example) are closely tied to source of supply and thus immovable. Service jobs constitute 83 percent of the non-farm employment in the U.S. economy today, and every job that is (or could be) defined largely by the use of computers and telephones will be vulnerable.”¹⁴

The opposite assumption also holds: those jobs that are defined by local conditions and advantages are likely to be less vulnerable. In the case of Daviess County these would include such fields as agriculture, food processing, biotechnology, management in a variety of production and service fields, engineering, physical sciences, most professional fields, the health sciences and technologies (especially given Owensboro’s status as a regional health center), construction, social services, and transportation, to name a few. The list does continue.

Jobs that are defined by local conditions and advantages are likely to prove less vulnerable to the effects of globalization.

Essentially these are the jobs that emanate from Owensboro’s location, economic and commercial characteristics, and its unique conditions. These are the jobs of the future. But this is only part of the description. Returning for a moment to Messrs. Cohen and DeLong:

“[During the globalization transformation] winners and losers are unlikely to do so cleanly. People of similar background and training may see their fortunes diverge greatly depending on subspecialty or the presence or absence of some idiosyncratic ability that is hard to replicate. But one can make a few predictions. First, the new environment is likely to pit those who are most flexible – most able to shift jobs or careers, most able to absorb unexpected blows, best positioned to benefit from unforeseen opportunities – against those who are less so. . .

“A second (and overlapping) split might open between those who are highly educated and possess complex skills and those that are merely well educated and skilled. . .”¹⁵

Others have said it before: We need “to shift our focus away from old-style stable mass production employment to high-knowledge, high-tech, high-entrepreneurship fields.

¹⁴ “Shaken and Stirred,” *The Atlantic*, January/February 2005, p. 114.

¹⁵ “Shaken and Stirred,” op. cit, p. 116.

Workers. . . should expect to go back to school to learn new skills for new industries.”¹⁶
This may need to occur throughout one’s working years.

Finally, if anyone still doubts the economic worth of a college education, in the report identified above, the Department of Employment Services notes the value of an education for the individual with this statement: “Many factors go into determining one’s success in the future workplace of Kentucky. [Education, however] will continue to be one of the most [crucial] factors in gaining employment in a chosen field. While there are many reasons other than money for selecting a career, traditionally, the more education you have the more money you can earn. In fact, the value of education has increased during the past 20 years. [Table 33] clearly shows the monetary value of education within the state.”

Table 33.
2003 Average Annual Kentucky Wage Estimates by Education and Training Category

2003 Median Wage Estimates for US and KY	Kentucky	United States
Postgraduate	\$47,780	\$54,830
Bachelor’s Degree or Bachelor’s Degree & Work Experience	\$45,080	\$52,340
Associate’s Degree or Postsecondary Training	\$35,095	\$35,960
Work Experience in a Related Occupation or OJT	\$25,500	\$37,000

Source: Office of Employment and Training

If this were not enough, a March 2005 Census Bureau release reported that college graduates earn nearly double the pay of people with only a high school diploma.¹⁷

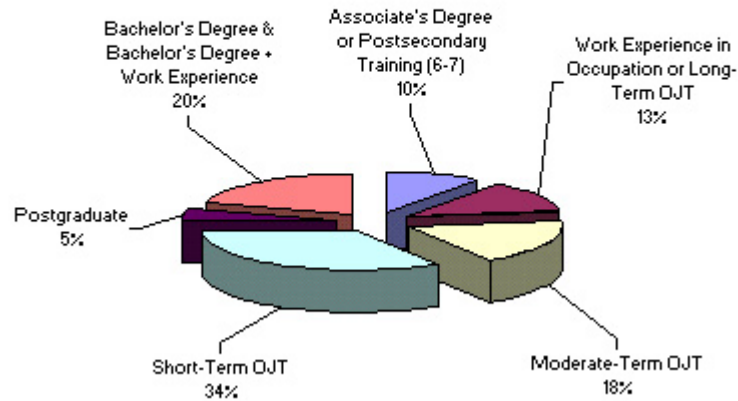
The state Office of Employment and Training projects that the greatest job growth between 2002 and 2012 will be in fields that require a bachelor’s degree or a combination of a bachelor’s degree and work experience. The following graph has been extracted from the Office’s report, “Education Pays.”¹⁸

¹⁶ “Shaken and Stirred, op. cit., p.116. The authors were citing Robert Reich., in *The Work of Nations*, in this passage.

¹⁷ “Census Data Show Value of a College Education,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 29, 2005.

¹⁸ Justin Watterson, April 1, 2005.

Percent of Total Kentucky Job Growth by Education or Training, 2002-2012



The Office of Employment and Training also provides data on hourly wages for occupations requiring a bachelor's degree and work experience within the state.¹⁹

Occupations Generally Requiring a Bachelor's Degree or Bachelor's Degree and Work Experience

Occupational Title	2004 Avg. Hourly Wage
Chief Executives	\$60.35
Health Diagnosing & Treating Practitioners, Other	\$52.29
Natural Sciences Managers	\$42.36
Engineering Managers	\$41.17
Engineers, Other	\$40.46
Education Administrators, Postsecondary	\$38.70
Sales Managers	\$37.40
Computer & Information Systems Managers	\$37.07
Marketing Managers	\$36.69
Chemical Engineers	\$36.08
Personal Financial Advisors	\$34.01
Atmospheric & Space Scientists	\$33.90
Industrial Production Managers	\$33.76
Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	\$33.73
General & Operations Managers	\$33.24
Financial Managers	\$32.99

¹⁹ <http://oet.ky.gov/index.asp>

Occupational Title	2004 Avg. Hourly Wage
Medical & Health Services Managers	\$32.32
Industrial Engineers	\$31.58
Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software	\$31.38
Mining & Geological Engineers, Incl. Mining Safety	\$31.26
Computer Systems Analysts	\$31.01
Art Directors	\$30.72
Human Resources Managers	\$30.67
Construction Managers	\$30.45
Materials Engineers	\$30.34
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	\$30.33
Electrical Engineers	\$30.33
Environmental Engineers	\$30.29
Physician Assistants	\$30.21
Biomedical Engineers	\$29.64

NOTE: The 2004 Average Wage is the *mean* of all the wages earned in that occupation in the state of Kentucky.

These are some of the reasons why Daviess County leaders have made education, workforce development, and improving human capital the center of the economic development program. These Daviess County economic growth goals align well with the statewide goals adopted by the Kentucky Task Force on Postsecondary Education in 1997:

As a result of this structural economic shift [from manufacturing to services], the need for a skilled workforce has become even more important for the Commonwealth’s competitive position. Moreover, an analysis of Kentucky’s competitor states suggests the need for a more responsive and flexible system of postsecondary education ‘in sync’ with the emerging economic realities of the 21st century.”

A number of very strong and not always favorable correlations are apparent in Daviess County’s standings among its peers. Higher education assets are valuable both in their own right and as mitigating factors. The next section of this report considers those located in Owensboro.

CHARTING A NEW COURSE: HIGHER EDUCATION IN OWENSBORO AND DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY

OWENSBORO’S HIGHER EDUCATION ASSETS

THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Owensboro and Daviess County are endowed with several important higher education resources. In the degree-granting category, the city has two four-year institutions, both private (independently governed), an “Extended Campus” of a public regional university, and a comprehensive public community-technical college. A proprietary institution also is located in the community.

The presence of two private four-year institutions prompts this statement: As Owensboro’s two longest-lived local institutions, Brescia University and Kentucky Wesleyan College face the challenge of balancing their principal missions as faith-based institutions with the sometimes more secular needs of their home community. Like most institutions of their type, they have done pretty well. A lot of people who live in Owensboro and Daviess County claim them as *alma maters*, and their presence in the community is an acknowledged attribute among many who live there. They are important community assets and are and will remain crucial partners in any strategic higher education program.²⁰

There are, however, a few realities that require recognition. Neither of the private four-year institutions can accept and fulfill the mission of a comprehensive public regional university for the Owensboro-Daviess County area. Each does some of this, but this is not what either is about. The role stress has ramifications, apparent, for example, in the fact that some in Owensboro consider them a mixed blessing. This is apparent in the common assertion that their very presence may impede accomplishment of a fuller public higher education potential for Owensboro. Because of these institutions, it is argued decision makers in the Capital have been able to pass over Owensboro because it already ‘has’ two baccalaureate institutions. Moreover, while recognizing the two private institutions are important higher education resources to the community, some in Owensboro insist that concerns about maintaining market share may have got in the way

²⁰ The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities paper, “Twelve Facts that May Surprise You,” which is available on-line at its website is a helpful source of information on independent institutions, as is its paper, “Independent Colleges and University: A National Profile,” also available at this site.

of receptivity to a more substantial public higher education presence. The perceived delayed arrival times of OCTC and WKU-Owensboro thusly are attributed to this.

Both OCTC and WKU-O, the two public higher education entities in the city, have missions logically focused on community needs, but OCTC is a “two-year” institution, limited to the offering of programs to the associate degree level. Western has a relatively small presence in the community. The result is a more limited range of programs and higher education services than one might expect for a community of Owensboro’s prominence in Kentucky.

Owensboro displays a more limited range of higher education programs and services than one might expect for a city of its prominence in Kentucky.

Some of the salient characteristics of the local institutions are described in the paragraphs that follow.

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY

Brescia University was founded in Owensboro in 1950. Its enrollment is about 750. It is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the United States Catholic Conference Commission on Certification and Accreditation, the Kentucky Department of Education, and the Council of Social Work Education.

Brescia’s statement of Mission on its web site is this:

“Brescia University is a coeducational Catholic institution founded by the Ursuline Sisters of Mount Saint Joseph. The university offers certificates, associates, baccalaureate and master’s degrees through semester and time-shortened programs of higher education in the Ursuline tradition. Brescia emphasizes the liberal arts and prepares its traditional and non-traditional students for successful careers and for service to others.”

According to its descriptive materials, Brescia’s student-faculty ratio is 14:1, and its staff is composed of over 60 full- and part-time faculty, of whom more than 70 percent have a terminal degree.²¹ It offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Social Work, and Master of Science degrees, English as a Second Language, Weekend, and Pre-Professional programs. Human Relations, Ministry, Business, and Engineering Studies and Technology also are represented on the list. A more complete program inventory is presented in the study Appendix.²²

²¹ The term generally applies to the normally considered highest degree in the field, e.g., a Master of Fine Arts in a Fine Arts program.

²² The study Appendix has been printed separately as a companion document.

Brescia University's five-year strategic plan, "Investing in Humanity: Brescia University's Strategic Plan 2005-2010," was adopted in principle by its governing board in February and was formally adopted by the Board in June 2005.²³ Since implementation costs are being determined, final action on some parts is still pending. Thus, the following description may be subject to amendment.

In terms of institution growth, the plan centers on a 1000-student level, representing about a one-third increase in enrollment. Notably, in the plan, Brescia places its mission focus on "students, faculty and staff, and the *local* and global communities," affirming an institutional commitment to the people of Owensboro. The plan's objectives are organized under these three foci. Each of the objectives bears some relationship to the local community.

Under the objective pertaining to students ("To attract and retain students while inspiring them to learn and providing them with a foundation for their careers, life-long learning, and service to the community.") is a call for expanded summer offerings and enrollment and for "summer programs that bring potential students and the local community to campus."²⁴ The plan also refers to the provision of local, regional, national, and international volunteer service programs and activities. Programmatically, under this objective the plan includes these references to new programs

- Addition of an emphasis in International Business to the Business degree.
- Addition of an emphasis in Addictions Counseling to the Psychology degree.
- Increasing state teacher certification options to include majors in music, a second modern language and Exercise Science.
- Enhancing the Women's Studies minor.
- Adding a Bachelor of Arts in a second modern language.
- A Bachelor of Arts in Music.
- A Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy.
- A Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering.

²³ In an August 9, 2005 e-mail message, Sister Vivian, President of Brescia University, provided this qualification, "The board approved the strategic plan at our June meeting but felt that goals 4 and 5 of the major components need scope and cost estimates using experts to determine if the figures listed are reliable before committing to them. They also requested that a few other items be grouped together. The board recommended that we further investigate specific costs of a few projects before moving forward on them.

"Thus, experts are coming in to make recommendations before the [next] meeting of the board. The Strategic Planning committee will review those recommendations at the October Board meeting."

²⁴ This summary centers on those aspects of the Plan considered of most direct interest to the Owensboro-Daviess County community. There is much more in the Plan than this, and an apology may be appropriate at the outset for any unintended omission.

- A Bachelor of Science in Design and Corporate Communications (that integrates English, Business, and Graphic Design).
- A Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering.
- A Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education.
- A Bachelor of Science in Energy Management.
- A Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science.
- A Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Professional preparation program.

The Plan also calls for exploration of opportunities to offer high quality on-line courses and programs.

New programs related to the University's Catholic, Ursuline mission include:

- A Master's degree in Church Business Administration.
- A Catholic Studies minor.
- A program in Music Ministry.

Under its Community Objective ("To foster mutually beneficial relationships and collaborations with local and global communities, industries, and professions, and with governments and the public in a way that is responsive, inclusive, and encourages new and ongoing involvement.") the Brescia plan calls for "relationships with industry, government, and the community to enhance student opportunities for academic, career, and personal development," which includes internships, practicums,²⁵ and similar opportunities with industries, the professions, and government." Mention also is made of the offering of Brescia University courses at high schools. Greater emphasis is to be placed on activities that strengthen community relations and provide greater exposure of the University, locally and globally.

It is not clear whether all of this is to be accomplished in the five-year life of the Brescia Plan (2005-2010). The components of the objectives do not identify explicit target dates. But it is clear that this is a bold and ambitious program, and its accomplishment will add substantially to the higher education program resources available in the community.

KENTUCKY WESLEYAN COLLEGE

Founded in 1858 in Millersburg, Kentucky Wesleyan College began as a training school for preachers, although according to College materials, "the curriculum expanded

²⁵ On the order of something that probably would not be known if one did not do this sort of work, it was learned that 'practicum' is an American word, appearing in American dictionaries but not in the Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary. Although it is used as a plural here and in the Brescia Plan, even the American dictionaries do not recognize it in this form, defining it only in the singular. If one considers it a Latin word, however, the plural presumably would be 'practici.'

rapidly to include a solid basis of instruction in the liberal arts. Business classes were added when a demand for this instruction was identified. By the 1880s half of the alumni were employed as either teachers or businessmen.” Kentucky Wesleyan moved to Owensboro in 1950.

KWC also presents statements of its mission on-line:

“Kentucky Wesleyan College prepares leaders for the twenty-first century through a coordinated and integrated liberal arts education.”

According to its web site information, KWC offers 25 majors and 10 pre-professional programs. This includes baccalaureate programs in the Humanities, the Natural Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Math, and Physics) and in the Social Sciences, including Business, Computer Information Systems, Criminal Justice, Education, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology, among others. It also offers pre-professional programs in several fields, including Engineering, Environmental Science, and Medicine.

A summary of its program inventory is presented in the Report Appendix. It has an enrollment of 681 and reports a 15:1 student-to-faculty ratio. More than 75 percent of its faculty have a Ph.D. The College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges and Schools of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate and baccalaureate degrees.

Kentucky Wesleyan adopted its new five-year plan, “*2010 – Leaping into the Future*” in Summer 2005. It is organized under five goal statements addressing, respectively: Academic Excellence, Student Life Enrichment, College Vitality, Partnership with the United Methodist Church, and Image.

The focus of the plan is on academics. As a liberal arts college, KWC intends to bring back its Music and Theater majors and add special education and public administration to its degree program list. It plans to consider graduate programs in special education and other areas. The College also intends to impose new general education requirements that reduce the required hours for this component by about 20 percent to allow more time for double majors and minors. It has completed a “block transfer” agreement with the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and plans to establish a degree completion program. It also will develop an accelerated three-year graduation plan. The KWC plan also calls for more flexible scheduling in order to attract more nontraditional students. The president also announced her intention to give annual reports to the community on progress in five specified areas.

Other details of the plan include development of an updated mission statement and incrementally increasing full-time enrollment to 1050 students by 2010. The enrollment increase is to be accomplished via annual increases of 100 students in Years Two through

Five of the plan, with a final boost of 50 students in Year Six²⁶). The College also plans to expand its adult education program.

The plan is wide-ranging, and it identifies a number of other actions, most of which pertain to internal institutional matters. Copies are available on the College website.

OWENSBORO COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE

The city's remaining local degree-granting institution is Owensboro Community and Technical College. A publicly governed institution, the College encompasses three campuses and several off-site locations in Daviess, Ohio, Hancock and McLean counties. A variety of program delivery options are available, including evening, weekend, on-line and KET tele-courses, as well as on-site training courses. According to state community college system data, OCTC had a Fall 2001 enrollment of 4,733, of which 3,374 were in the community college and 1,359 were in the technical college.

Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees are available at OCTC in Agriculture, Business, Engineering, Information Systems and Office Systems Technology, Early Childhood Education, Human Services, Law Enforcement, Nursing, and Radiology.

Programs for adults are available in a range of technical fields at Owensboro Community and Technical College. These include Air Conditioning, Auto Body Repair, Automotive, Carpentry, Child Development, Drafting, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Diesel, Electrical and Electronic Technology, Industrial Maintenance, Machine Tool, Metal Fabrication, Office Systems, Practical Nursing, Surgical Technology, and Welding. A list of OCTC programs is presented in the Appendix. According to the President's statement on the College website, OCTC is "the region's primary provider of postsecondary education, workforce training and lifelong learning opportunities for more than 140,000 citizens of Daviess, Hancock, Ohio and McLean counties. As a result of the achievement, we have become one of the largest community and technical colleges in the Commonwealth." Owensboro Community and Technical College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

OCTC's mission statement is:

"To educate, lead, and serve all citizens who choose to enhance their lives and community as lifelong learners by pursuing: A comprehensive curriculum fulfilling the first two years of a baccalaureate program; A certificate, diploma, and/or associate degree; Customized business and industry training; [and] Educational opportunities through Adult Basic Education, community service, continuing education, and professional development."

The combined higher education enrollment at these three local institutions – OCTC, Brescia, and KWC—is over 6,000.

²⁶ This is titled 'Year Five' in the Plan, but it appears to be Year Six.

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY – OWENSBORO

Western Kentucky University offers undergraduate and graduate programs at an Extended Campus in Owensboro. Daviess County is one of five counties that define WKU's Extended Campus enrollment Region II. Course sites in the region are in Beechmont, Hartford, Owensboro, Powderly, Central City, Calhoun, Greenville, Hawesville, and Horse Branch. Information on the specific enrollment in the five-county region in WKU courses totaled 617 during Fall 2001, of which 244 were undergraduate and 373 were graduate students.

WKU identified almost 800 students from Daviess County on its main campus in Bowling Green in Fall 2001. Most of these were undergraduates; nearly 240 were graduate students. First-time freshmen totaled 53 (i.e., these students arrived from high school that term.)

Programs listed for the Owensboro site include a Bachelor of Science program in Architectural/Manufacturing Science Technology, Business Management, Elementary Education, Middle Grades Education, General Studies, and Nursing, and Bachelor of Arts programs in English and History. Graduate programs are Master of Arts in Education (specializations in Elementary, Middle School, Secondary, School Administrator, School Counselor, and Higher Education), Masters of Arts in History, English, Mental Health Counseling (options in Marriage & Family Therapy, and Certified Professional Counseling), and Learning & Behavior Disorders.

WKU offers a Master of Public Administration, a Master of Business Administration, and a Master of Science in Nursing in Owensboro. Partial programs in Health and Safety, IECE, and Student Personnel Services in Higher Education also are listed, as are courses in Agriculture, Biology, Engineering, Exceptional Education, Geography, Government, Psychology, Sociology, Technology and Organizational Communication. In addition, the WKU-O web site mentions Complete Rank 1 Programs in Elementary, Secondary, Counselor Education, and School Administration (Specialist in Education Counseling, Elementary, Secondary, and School Administration).

In 2005, WKU-O moved from the Longfellow building in downtown Owensboro to the OCTC campus. Classes also are provided via interactive television. Nursing “practicums” are in local hospitals and clinics.

The Mission Statement for the Owensboro Extended Campus is stated on its web site as follows:

“Western Kentucky University provides rigorous academic programs in the liberal arts and sciences, and traditional and emerging professional programs at a reasonable cost.

“Western’s commitment is to ensure value in a holistic learning experience through high standards for student achievement and conduct, strong faculty, technological innovation, personalized attention, broad access, and public accountability for actions and outcomes. Western’s success is reflected in the

success of its graduates who are known for their loyalty, leadership, and adaptability.

“Western Kentucky University recognizes that its mission continues to evolve in response to regional, national, and global changes, and needs for life-long learning.”

With its eight bachelor programs and six master’s programs, Owensboro’s program inventory is roughly comparable to that of the Elizabethtown/Fort Knox site. The Glasgow Extended Campus lists five associate programs, six bachelor programs, and three master’s programs, with a few other degrees, such as a Master’s of Social Work being planned.

None of these can compare, however, with the 170 undergraduate areas of study (majors, minors, associate, certificate, and pre-professional programs and areas of concentration), or the 35 or so master’s program options and the cooperative doctoral program with the University of Louisville available on the Bowling Green campus, a point returned to later.

Virtually all of the major program fields or categories (Agriculture, Architecture, Education, Engineering, Business, etc.) on the program listing in the Appendix are represented in some measure among the programs available on the WKU home campus in Bowling Green. Western is not a doctoral-granting research university, (although it collaborates with the University of Louisville in this respect) but its degree program inventory is comprehensive.

DAYMAR COLLEGE

Daymar College, a proprietary institution, also offers postsecondary education courses in the community. Formerly known as Owensboro Junior College of Business, it changed its name to Daymar in August 2001. The College Board’s *College Handbook* [2001 Edition] places the enrollment at about 280, of which 15 percent, about 40, are considered out-of-state. According to this source, the institution offers associate degrees, primarily in Business. In the words of the description on Daymar College’s web site, “[It] opened its doors as Owensboro Business College in 1963. The main academic focus was on general business studies. In 1970, the College was nationally accredited as a business college by the Accrediting Commission of the Association of Independent Colleges and Schools and was approved by the United States Department of Education to award financial aid to students.”

Daymar (then OBC) was authorized by the Kentucky State Board for Proprietary Education to award associate degrees in 1973. The United States Office of Education awarded the College a Special Services project, making it the first private career college to receive such an honor. The College was chosen (2000) as a Microsoft Authorized Academic Training Program (AATP) member, and became a Prometric Testing Center and a Microsoft Office Specialist test site. The name was changed in August 2001 from Owensboro Business College to Daymar College in anticipation of opening additional

locations outside of Owensboro. The Louisville campus was opened to students in October of 2001.

According to web site information, Daymar offers Billing and Coding Specialist, Medical Assisting-Clinical Track, Medical Assisting-Administrative Track, Business Administration Technology, Paralegal Studies, Pharmacy Technology, Internet Website Designer, and Network Support Administration programs in Owensboro.

Its Mission is “To provide a warm, friendly, nurturing atmosphere where students can learn the skills required to obtain the jobs they need to have the lives they want,” and “To assist graduates in securing meaningful and satisfying entry-level employment through career and job placement services.”

Other institutions that may be considered within commuting distance of Owensboro residents include Henderson Community College (26 miles distant), and the University of Southern Indiana and the University of Evansville, in Evansville (30-40 miles distant).

INSTITUTION MISSIONS

All of the local institution mission statements stress rigor, methods, and values, but none are directed fully to the higher education needs of Owensboro or Daviess County. Brescia University is a partial exception. It refers to Owensboro in one component of its mission statement as follows²⁷:

“Since its founding in Owensboro in 1950, when the Ursuline Sisters began offering classes at the request of the local community, Brescia University has established a history of serving Owensboro and the surrounding region. In keeping with the Ursuline tradition of service with the gospel call to a life of witness and service, Brescia University provides

- workshops, speakers and institutes designed to meet community needs;
- clubs, class activities and majors directed to community service;
- campus resources, including personnel and facilities, to serve the community; and
- support for faculty, staff and student participation in community and professional organizations.”

With respect to the degree-granting institutions, both of Owensboro’s local four-year institutions, Brescia and Kentucky Wesleyan, are independently governed and religiously affiliated, and both of these qualities are represented in their mission statements. Both are essentially “liberal arts” as distinct from “comprehensive regional” institutions. Both are categorized in the Carnegie Commission’s institutional classifications as “Baccalaureate Colleges – General,” defined as: “These institutions are primarily undergraduate colleges with major emphasis on baccalaureate programs.”

Owensboro’s other degree granting institution, Owensboro Community and Technical College, is classified by the Carnegie Commission as an “Associates” institution, defined

²⁷ References to the community also are relatively ample in the institution’s strategic plan.

in these terms, “These institutions offer associate’s degree and certificate programs but, with few exceptions, award no baccalaureate degrees.”

The Carnegie Commission does not separately classify Western Kentucky University’s Extended Campus in Owensboro. The home campus, however, is categorized among the “Master’s Colleges and Universities I,” defined in these terms, “These institutions typically offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs, and they are committed to graduate education through the master’s degree. During the period covered by the Commission, these institutions “awarded 40 or more master’s degrees per year across three or more disciplines.” Again, the definition applies to the Bowling Green campus and not to the Owensboro center.

To some extent each of these institutions and organizations seeks to balance its efforts to respond to community higher education needs with other considerations, some involving values and philosophy. None of the institutions in Owensboro, including those that are publicly governed, is a regional or comprehensive institution in the mission or program scope sense. The results are reflected in the limited nature of the inventory of available programs. With the possible exception of OCTC’s array of certificate and two-year programs, the total does not begin to approach a meaningful level of comprehensiveness for a Kentucky community of Owensboro’s size and aspirations.

Each of the local institutions seeks to balance its efforts to respond to community higher education needs with other considerations, some involving resources, some involving values and philosophy.

The full program inventory for Owensboro is listed in the Appendix on using the US Department of Education’s [USDE] “Classification of Instruction Programs” [CIP]

Degree programs in Owensboro account for less than six percent of the possibilities apparent on the Department of Education’s higher education program taxonomy.

taxonomy. By count there are about 1100 coded programs on the USDE list. Many involve multiple degree levels (associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, doctoral) so technically the possibilities are several times this number.

In Owensboro, degree programs, associates, bachelor’s and master’s, are offered in about 65 fields, amounting to less than six percent of the range of possibilities apparent on the USDE taxonomy. There are multiple program presences in about 20 fields (some in “core curriculum” areas, e.g., English, Biology, Chemistry, Art, History, etc.)

Seven master’s degree programs are listed. As will be seen in the next chapter, master’s degree programs represent one of the areas of greatest perceived need among people in Owensboro. About forty fields are represented at the bachelor’s degree level.

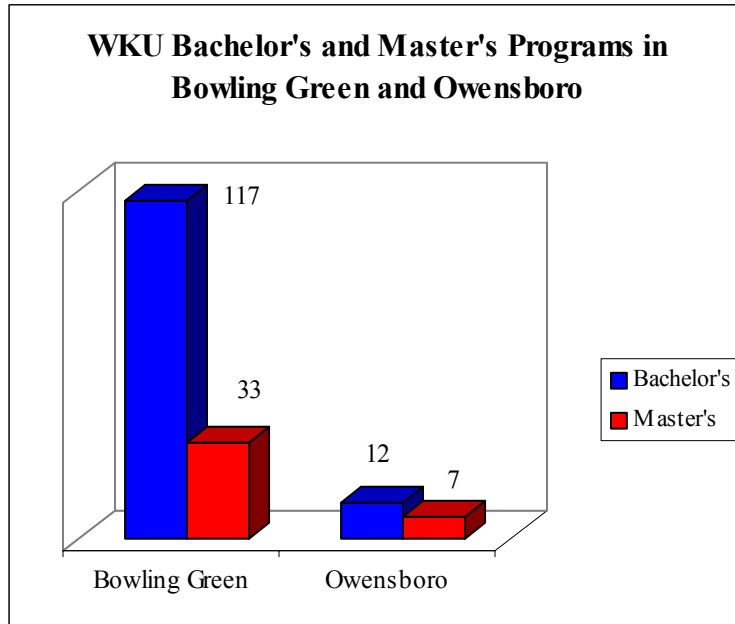
Perhaps of greater interest in a context of strategic thinking are the areas that are not represented in the program inventories of the institutions serving Owensboro. There is a great deal of “white space,” open cells, or missing program fields on the matrix as far as Owensboro is concerned.

- Agriculture is a missing field. OCTC provides an Associate of Science program in Agriculture Technology, but none of the nearly 60 bachelor degree programs in this discipline is represented in Owensboro’s inventory.
- Natural Resources and Conservation, an area of enormous importance to people in Western Kentucky, is only barely represented (KWC offers a pre-Environmental Science major).
- The fields in Architecture are not well represented (WKU offers a BS in Architecture and Manufacturing Science), but City, Urban, and Rural Planning, Landscape Architecture, and Architecture Technology, among others, are not available in the community.
- Area Studies is completely vacant of local programs.
- There is some activity in Computer and Information Sciences (two BS and one AS programs), but most of the majors in this enormously important area are not represented.
- Engineering, except for two AS programs and one pre-Engineering major, is not represented among the community’s options.
- Aside from a BA in Spanish, the entire Foreign Languages field is open.
- Two BS in Biology programs are listed in Owensboro, but the rest of the majors in this field are absent.
- Mathematics and Statistics as a field is completely open.
- Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Studies, except for a Physical Fitness baccalaureate program at KWC, are vacant.
- Two BS programs in Chemistry represent Owensboro’s entire presence in the Physical Sciences.
- The Health Professions area is a very important field for people in Owensboro, and there is a lot of room on the matrix for program expansion there.
- The number of available master’s programs is very small; there are no doctoral programs.

The bullets can continue, but for now it is sufficient to note that there are a lot of options for program development on the list. These comprise the range of opportunities. Since many of these are likely to involve public higher education, Western’s program presence in Owensboro merits a special look.

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY IN BOWLING GREEN AND OWENSBORO

According to Western’s undergraduate and graduate program inventories, about 120 bachelor programs and 35 master’s programs are offered on the home campus in Bowling Green.²⁸ Out of this 155 total, twelve bachelor’s programs and seven master’s programs are offered in Owensboro. The differences are graphically displayed on the following figure.



The tale of Western’s presence in the two cities also is told on the following chart.

Program Field	Bowling Green	Owensboro
Agriculture and Related Sciences	10 Bachelors 1 Masters	None
Natural Resources and Conservation	None	None
Area, Ethnic, and Gender Studies	None	None
Communication, Journalism and Related	6 Bachelors 1 Masters	1 Bachelors
Computer and Information Sciences	3 Bachelors 1 Masters	None
Education	13 Bachelors 7 Masters	4 Bachelors 1 Master
Engineering	6 Bachelors	None
Foreign Languages	3 Bachelors	None
Family and Consumer/Human Services	5 Bachelors	None
Legal Professions and Studies	None	None

²⁸ The catalog program lists have been converted to USDE CIP titles for use in this section. This inevitably involves some interpretation, since institutional titles sometimes involve particular institutional terms. If some have been miscounted or improperly listed, it was unintentional. Although the names may be different, the counts and the titles are considered more than reasonably accurate.

CHARTING A NEW COURSE: HIGHER EDUCATION IN OWENSBORO-DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY

English Language, Literature and Letters	2 Bachelors 1 Masters	1 Bachelors
Liberal Arts and Sciences/General Studies	1 Bachelors	1 Bachelors
Library Science	1 Masters	None
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	8 Bachelors 1 Masters	None
Mathematics and Statistics	1 Bachelors 1 Masters	None
Interdisciplinary Studies	1 Masters	None
Parks, Recreation, Leisure and Fitness	3 Bachelors 2 Masters	None
Philosophy and Religious Studies	2 Bachelors	None
Physical Science	6 Bachelors 2 Masters	None
Psychology	1 Bachelors 1 Masters	1 Masters
Security and Protective Services	None	None
Public Administration and Social Services	3 Bachelors 2 Masters	1 Masters
Social Sciences	7 Bachelors 1 Masters	None
Visual and Performing Arts	18 Bachelors 1 Masters	None
Health Professions and Sciences	8 Bachelors 6 Masters	1 Masters
Business and Marketing	10 Bachelors 1 Masters	3 Bachelors 2 Masters
History	1 Bachelors 2 Masters	1 Bachelors 1 Masters

The specific program details are contained on the second table in the Appendix. Here it can be stated that most of the program fields normally associated with advancement in the global economy that are offered by Western in Bowling Green are not offered by Western in Owensboro. These include Agriculture, Natural Resources, Computer and Information Sciences, Engineering, Foreign Languages, Biology and Biomedical Sciences, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, and, for the most part, the Health Sciences.

Most of the program fields normally associated with advancement in the global economy that are offered by Western in Bowling Green are not offered by Western in Owensboro.

At least a few observations can be offered about Owensboro’s higher education assets.

- First, the independent institutions in Owensboro are filling a number of program needs. They are an important resource.

- Second, there are many important gaps that these institutions will not be able to fill, and the community needs to look to the public higher education sector, notably Western, for assistance in this regard.
- Third, even though Western is considered and classified as a comprehensive university, there are a lot of program gaps in its inventory as well. (These can be demonstrated with a brief comparison of the first and second tables in the Appendix.) Thus, its capacity to respond will be somewhat limited.
- Hence, Owensboro’s strategic higher education aspirations probably cannot be fulfilled completely by Western acting alone. The local independent institutions need to be part of this, as do other Kentucky public universities.

Finally, the Kentucky CPE’s plan stresses a strong stewardship role for the regional universities, of which Western is one. Western is the public university best positioned to help Owensboro. As may be deduced from a glance at the preceding figures and listing, there is a lot more going on higher educationally on Western’s Bowling Green campus than there is on its Owensboro campus.

Some of the effects may be reflected in the choices graduating high school students in the community make. According to the data on high school students going onto college in Owensboro, there is likely to be an interested clientele in an expanded presence in Owensboro.

HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE TRANSITION PATTERNS IN OWENSBORO

The Kentucky Department of Education’s High School Feedback data show that graduates of Owensboro and Daviess County high schools are generally well prepared and do well on ACT and college GPA scores, sometimes better than other region or statewide graduates.²⁹ The data on the Tables 34-37 compare the respective high school GPA, ACT scores, and college GPA averages of Owensboro and Daviess County grads with regional and statewide averages.

Table 34.
High School and College Performance Indicators
Year 2000 *Owensboro High School* Graduates
Source: KDE High School Feedback Report

	Owensboro HS	Region ³⁰	Kentucky
HS GPA	3.09	3.34	3.32
ACT Score	20.8	21.4	21.4
College GPA	2.51	2.71	2.65

²⁹ Beacon Central Alternative School is excluded because of insufficient data.

³⁰ “Region refers to Kentucky’s Education Service Districts, of which there are eight. Daviess County is part of Education Service District Two. The regional data on this and the immediately following tables relate to the counties that are encompassed in this district.

Table 35.
High School and College Performance Indicators
Year 2000 Apollo High School Graduates
Source: KDE High School Feedback Report

	Apollo HS	Region	Kentucky
HS GPA	3.21	3.34	3.32
ACT Score	22.6	21.4	21.4
College GPA	2.75	2.71	2.65

Table 36.
High School and College Performance Indicators
Year 2000 Daviess County High School Graduates
Source: KDE High School Feedback Report

	Daviess County HS	Region	Kentucky
HS GPA	3.24	3.34	3.32
ACT Score	22.6	21.4	21.4
College GPA	2.67	2.71	2.65

Table 37.
High School and College Performance Indicators
Year 2000 Owensboro Catholic High School Graduates
Source: KDE High School Feedback Report

	Owensboro Catholic HS	Region	Kentucky
HS GPA	3.49	N/A	3.32
ACT Score	22.4	N/A	21.4
College GPA	2.81	N/A	2.65

Most of these people should not have much trouble getting into college in Kentucky or doing well once they get there.

The list of college programs available in the community may be one explanation for the college choices of Owensboro and Daviess County high school graduates: aside from OCTC: they tend to go elsewhere.

Again according to Kentucky Department of Education data for the year 2000 graduating class, high school graduates of Owensboro and Daviess County high schools made the following choices (excluding Beacon Central Alternative School, for which data were incomplete). The colleges and universities listed are the most attended postsecondary institutions.³¹

The local college-level program inventory may be one reason Owensboro and Daviess County high school graduates tend to go elsewhere for college.

³¹ KDE, “Max: Kentucky Data Education Warehouse.”

Table 38.
Owensboro/Daviess County Year 2000 High School Graduates Postsecondary Choices
Most Attended Postsecondary Institutions
Kentucky Department of Education High School Feedback Report

	AHS	DC HS	OHS	OCHS
Spring 2000 Graduates	208	288	125	151
OCTC	59	78	24	33
Univ. of KY	27	26	9	10
U of L			8	11
WKU	15	24	9	13
Murray State U	12	14		10
KWC	6	14	9	
Other KY Colleges	21	28	8	25
Out-of-State Insts.	5	36	7	N/A
Total College Bound ³²	145	220	74	N/A
Four-Year Public	59	73	32	47
Two-Year	66	88	24	37
Four-Year Independent	15	23	11	18

Daviess County’s high school graduates attend postsecondary educations in substantial number – 70 percent of Apollo’s grads, 76 percent of Daviess County High School’s, and 60 percent of Owensboro High School. About seven to eight percent of the graduates of the three public high schools attend independent four-year institutions. About 12 percent of the graduates for OCHS apparently do so.

Brescia University is not listed among the most attended in the data for reasons that are not clear, possibly because students did not select it in sufficient number to place it in the ranking. Kentucky Wesleyan College was the choice of 2.8 % of Apollo’s graduates, 4.8 % of Daviess County’s, and about seven percent of OHS’.

About nine percent of Daviess County public high school graduates attend private colleges and universities.

If Brescia and Kentucky Wesleyan account for the universe of graduates who selected four-year independent institutions, 15 percent in Apollo’s case, 23 percent in Daviess County High School’s case, nine percent in OHS’ example, and 12 percent in OCHS’ case, the total share of

³² The “Total College Bound” figures reflect the number of students listed per college attended (i.e., all of those above in the respective columns). They do not agree, however, with the totals for the three rows listed below. The explanation was not available at the time of writing.

community graduates selecting these two local institutions would be 8.7 percent (i.e., based on this assumption, 8.7 % of the graduates chose one or the other of the two local independent four-year institutions.)

Not all Daviess County and Owensboro graduates apparently are interested in studying away from home, at least not initially, as Owensboro Community College was the choice of 28 percent of Apollo's graduates, 27 percent of Daviess County High School's, 19 percent of OHS', and 22 percent of OCHS'. As noted later in the survey research data, "costs," "need to work," and "problems with travel and a commute" are significant considerations in students' choices to study at home or not to continue.

Most of Daviess County's and Owensboro's college-bound graduates, however, do attend out-of-county institutions. At least 40 percent of Apollo High School, 35 percent of Daviess County High School, and 45 percent of Owensboro High School graduates left to study at the University of Kentucky, the University of Louisville, Western, Murray, or out-of-state institutions (the actual percentages are certainly higher but cannot be determined because of definitional constraints). In the case of Owensboro Catholic High School, according to the High School Feedback Data, about 29 percent of the year 2000 graduates attended these institutions.

And so it goes. Anyone interested in learning how well Owensboro is doing with respect to comprehensiveness in higher education at least needs to think about such data and statistics and consider the array of open cells on the program matrix in the Appendix.

There also is a positive side to this. As one considers the sorts of higher education services that are going to be needed to prepare Owensboro students for the jobs of tomorrow, the Appendix matrix can serve as a powerful planning tool.

Attention now turns to the evidence of how people who live and work in Owensboro and Daviess County view their higher education services and needs.

CHARTING A NEW COURSE: HIGHER EDUCATION IN OWENSBORO AND DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF NEED: RESIDENT OPINIONS

INTERVIEWS AND SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

The interviews and small group meetings conducted for the study occurred over the course of several visits to the community. These were expanded with telephone conversations with people who were not available during the site visits or who wished to amplify their remarks, and with officials located out of the area, including institution presidents, state officials, and association directors. The impressions formed during the course of the site interviews were edifying.

- Opinions varied on the strategic virtues of Owensboro's longest established four-year institutions (i.e., Brescia University and Kentucky Wesleyan College).
 - No one questioned their capability or quality. Most recognized these institutions' liberal arts character, although some lamented gaps in the physical sciences and engineering.
 - Some viewed the local institutions as a mixed blessing in the sense that they were unable to provide the range of programs that were needed while their presence seemed to convey a sense of complacency that impeded more comprehensive solutions.
 - Some also felt this was the reason for limitations on either the presence or expansion of public four-year programs in the community.
 - In this respect people cited difficulties they thought the Western Kentucky campus in Owensboro had encountered when it sought, or seeks, to expand program offerings there.
 - Still others felt the presence of private institutions was not the only contributing cause: they believed there also was a natural reluctance on Western's part to move popular and expensive programs, such as Agriculture or Engineering, away from the home campus to Owensboro.
- Employers' opinions varied on estimates of need.
 - People in the larger regional corporate or branch organizations tended to report stable staffing with comparatively low turnover. One manager

of a large regional facility, for example, estimated that his company's staffing needs approximated about five per year, and most of these were production level staff that required good work skills and some technical training; management staff usually were recruited nationally and transferred to and from other regional offices as needed.

- Because of this, large firm interview participants frequently cited the programs of OCTC as most appropriate to their needs because of their emphasis on work skills and technical training (representing certain important aspects of the 'jobs of the future.')
 - Several mentioned need for more partnership arrangements and customized on-site programs that could be, and were, provided by OCTC.
- There were important exceptions. People in Owensboro's health services sector spoke of continuous unmet needs for highly trained staff; these needs applied to both the managerial and technical levels.
 - Employers in Owensboro's mid-range companies, many of which are locally headquartered, did not have extensive unmet staffing needs, but they were interested in people with college (bachelor's) degrees comprising a blend of technical ("substantive majors") and managerial qualifications.
 - Interview participants across the board reported there were needs for more masters' programs, offered at times when people who worked regular business hours could attend them.
 - When asked about the differences between the intensity of employers' perceptions of unmet higher education needs and those of community residents, several attributed these to different perspectives: employers were thinking in terms of staffing needs during the immediate future in a relatively stable economic environment. Residents were thinking in terms of the education opportunities and preparation they would need in order to even compete for jobs or establish their own businesses.
 - A considerable amount of interest in the possibility of a stronger public four-year program presence in Owensboro was expressed often, frequently as the preferred solution.
 - Many also felt, however, that a new public four-year university was not a practical expectation, at least in the short run, in view of other demands on state resources.
 - Thus, for this and other reasons respondents tended to gravitate to presumably less costly solutions, such as increased cooperation and

Employers in the health services sector spoke of continuous needs for highly trained staff.

collaboration among local institutions or an expanded OCTC/WKU-O presence.

- If interpreted, however, as a ‘continuation of the status quo,’ support for this alternative, “more cooperation,” noticeably diminished.
- The prospects of a jointly operated higher education center in which cooperation and collaboration could occur evoked considerable interest among employers and community residents.
- Related to this, participants were interested in some sort of local ‘gate-keeper’ in the community to acquire and coordinate higher education services.

Other opinions also were offered on the nature of the study itself, many directed to the Citizens Committee on Education. The immediately following quotations on this and related subjects are excerpted from notes taken during the interviews:

- “The study needs to gauge where we are, what the future will be, what the new jobs will be like, what education preparation will be needed – the sorts of things that few people are really thinking about.”
- “The goal should be to have one plan for the whole community, a plan that integrates all of the institutional plans—an umbrella document.”
- “The committee [The Citizens Committee on Education] needs to think totally out of the box; how can we go beyond articulation programs into arrangements that really respond to community needs?”
- “This used to be essentially a rural area—family farms, but these are changing. As we shift away from that, educational opportunities need to do so as well.”
- “What sorts of models are here? This needs to be a high-energy, supercharged effort. It may be possible now.”
- “I would like to see Owensboro become a shinier star.”
- “Is there room for all? There are two [private] liberal arts’ and there are two public institutions. They all seem to be after the same students. The conflict tears at the heart of the community. What is the common good?”

“I would like to see Owensboro become a shinier star.”

“We look for employees who understand teamwork and have collaborative and high-flex skills; people who can adjust rapidly to new situations and new approaches.”

With respect to needs:

- “Some employers report that they are getting what they need, but more education is required even for those workers they have: the days of a high school education only are gone.”

- “We look for employees who understand teamwork and have collaborative and high-flex skills; people who can adjust rapidly to new situations and new approaches.”
- “There is no complete inventory of courses and programs in Owensboro. We only have that for the collaborative programs. Why can’t OCCE do this?”
- “Health, management, and education account for about 80 percent of the postsecondary level jobs in Owensboro and many of the higher paying ones.”
- “People in the area need more than liberal arts programming—they need increased public access to baccalaureate opportunities.”

With respect to conclusions and alternatives:

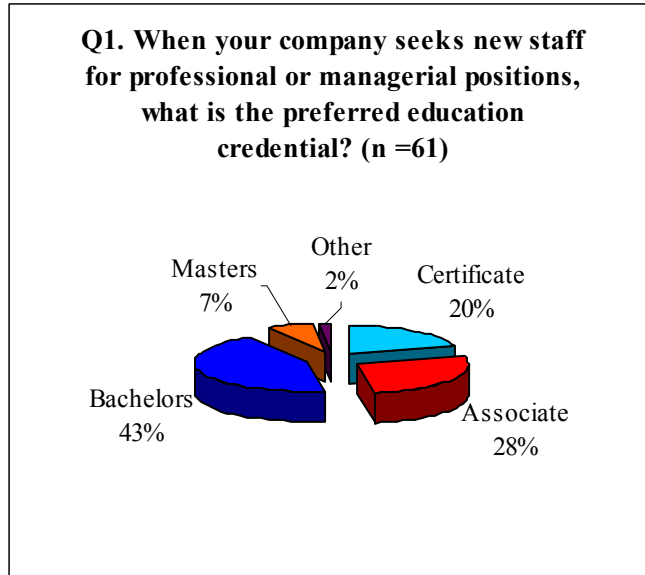
- “Collaboration is the key—doing together the kinds of things that none can do alone.”
- “My vision of Owensboro is as a center for higher education in the region.”
- “The main barrier to the success of Owensboro as an economic entity is the absence of a four-year public university.”
- “More distance education would be terrific. Everyone at this company has access to a computer, and many have them at home.”
- “I would love to see Owensboro become more of a residential education center, where students could stay at home—a magnet rather than a bus station out.”
- “I can’t suggest specific programs but I think [the Committee] should do what is needed – think of a blend of technology and administration in a lot of different areas.”
- “The perception needs to be that Owensboro offers enough [higher education] quality and variety for kids to stay there.”

“Collaboration is the key -- doing together the kinds of things that none can do alone.”

The interviews were followed with surveys, including both employer and community resident assessments conducted during Fall 2004. Both demonstrated significant interest in expanded higher education opportunities in Owensboro.

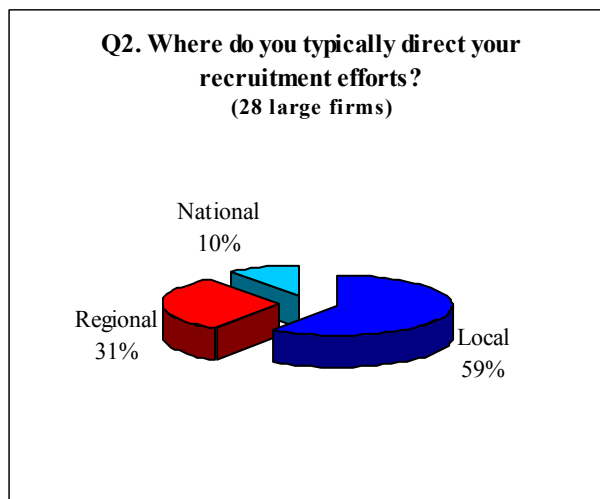
THE EMPLOYER SURVEYS

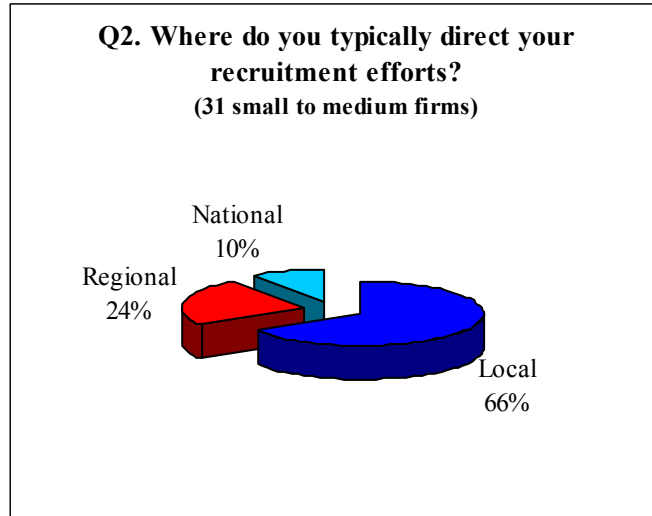
Two mailed employer surveys, one to large firms (50 and over employees) and one to small and medium firms (under 50 employees), were distributed to local organizations randomly selected from lists provided by the Chamber of Commerce. They began with a question about the education credentials necessary for management and professional jobs in the respective firms.



A plurality of the responding firms, 43 percent, seek people with a bachelor’s degree for their professional or managerial positions. Seven percent seek people with master’s degrees. Associate degrees and certificates represent the preferred credential for slightly less than half.

The immediate region represents an important recruiting area for both large (59%) and small and medium firms (66%), as up to two-thirds of each organize their recruitment efforts accordingly (Q2). The following graph depicts the large firm preferences.



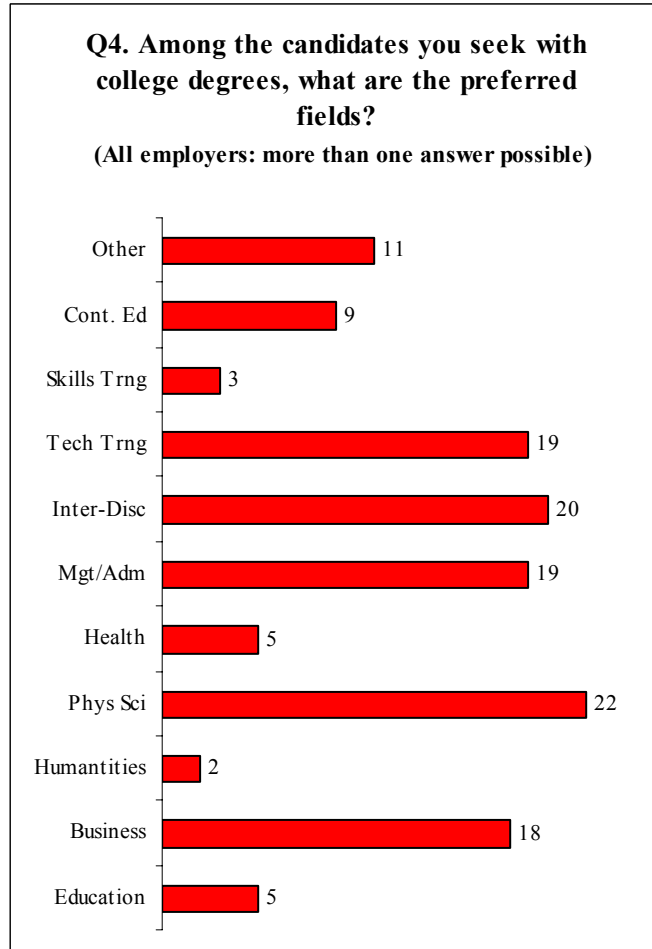


The two classes of firms differ somewhat, however, in the reported difficulty they have finding employees with the desired education credentials locally. For the large firms, 38 percent reported difficulty. The problem is greater for the small and medium firms; 58 percent of these reported difficulty (Q3).



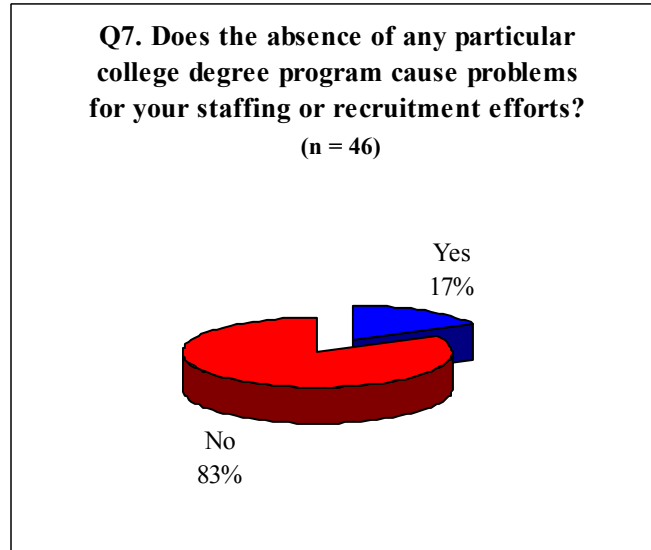
Technical Training, Management and Administrative preparation, Business, and Inter-disciplinary studies represented the most prominent preferred education fields for new employees.

For all employers, Technical Training, Management and Administrative preparation, Business, and Inter-disciplinary studies were the most prominent preferred education fields for new employees (Q4).

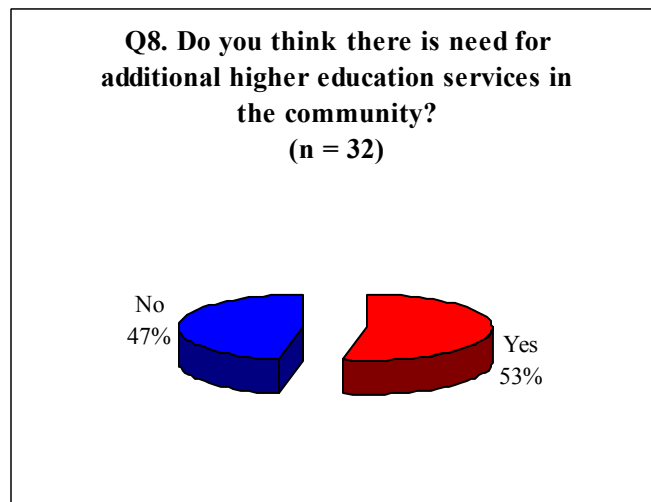


Questions five and six on the survey asked if employers prefer to recruit from particular colleges and universities, and, if so, which ones. Generally their responses to the first were negative – they do not center their recruitment efforts on particular institutions – thereby nullifying Question six, which asked them to name these institutions.

Most employers reported that there were no special recruitment problems for them because of the presence or absence of any particular programs. This generally reflected comments made during the interviews, and it is attributed to the comparative stability of the employment market and the strong competition for jobs with these companies.

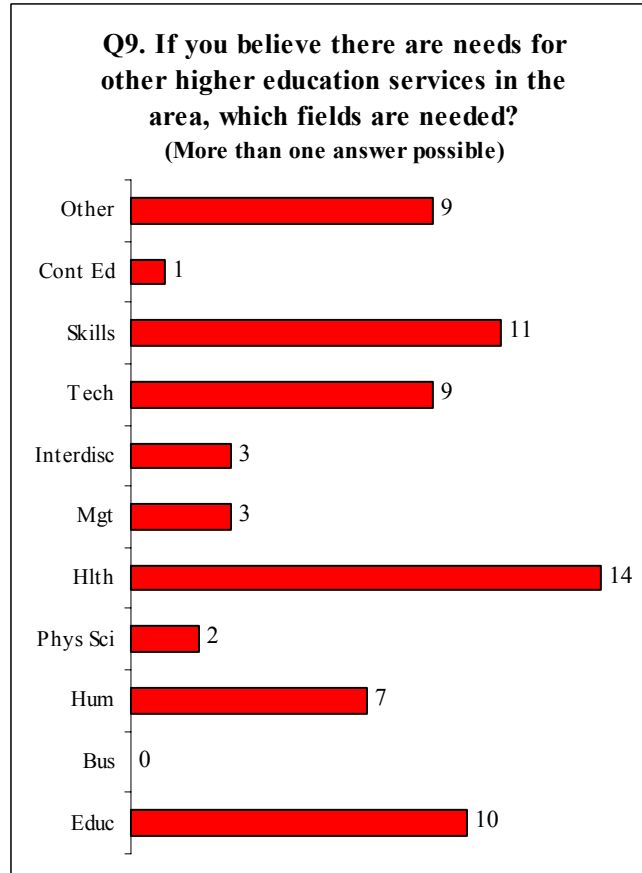


The responses to Q7 notwithstanding, most of the employers also reported that there is unmet need for additional higher education services. The next question (Q8) was directed to that, and more than half of the employers (53 percent) felt there were such needs.

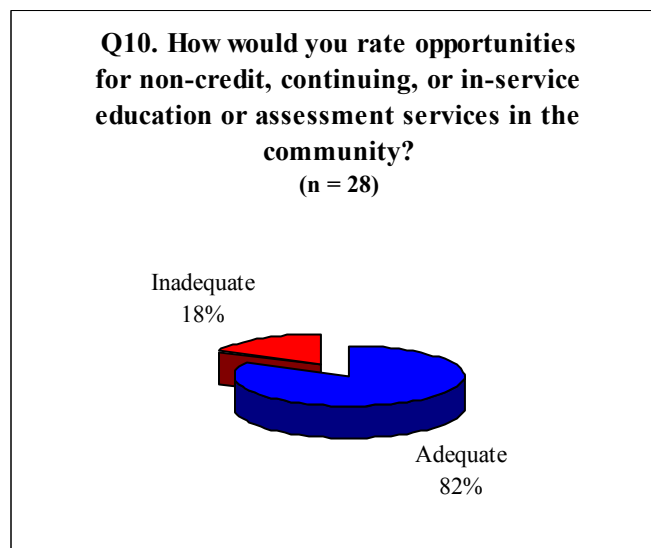


In order of prominence, the top five fields in which employers felt more programs are needed are Health Sciences, Occupational Skills, Education, Technical Fields, and the Humanities. (Q9).

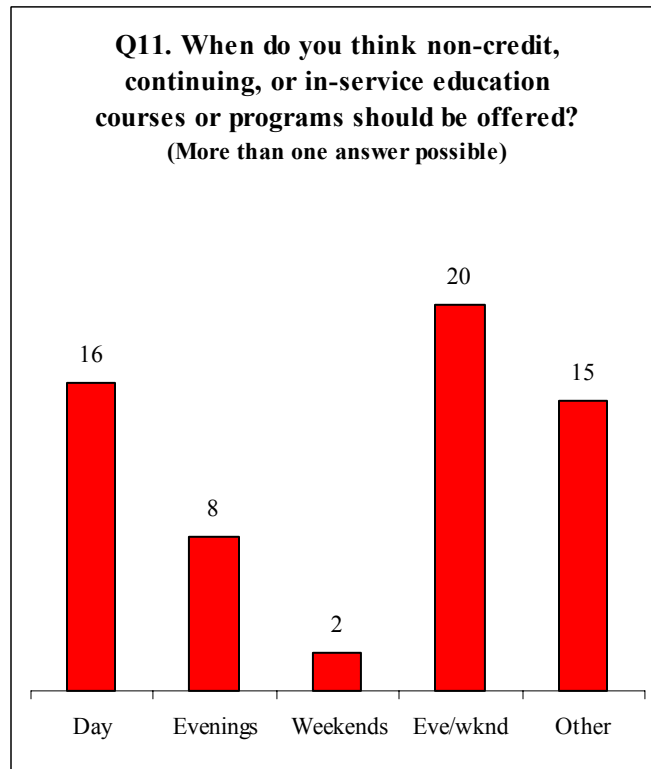
The top fields in which employers felt more programs are needed are Health Sciences, Occupational Skills, Education, Technical Fields, and the Humanities.



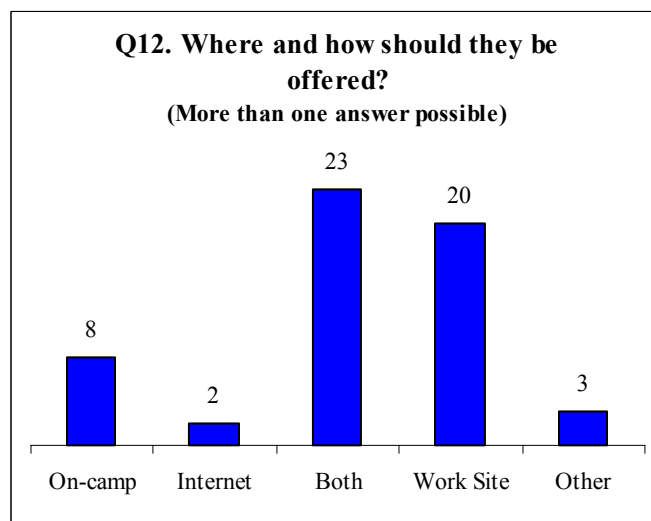
Perceptions of unmet need also rather clearly centered on degree programs as distinct from such non-degree oriented services as non-credit, continuing, or in-service education or assessment services. The majority of the responding employers considered these particular services adequate.



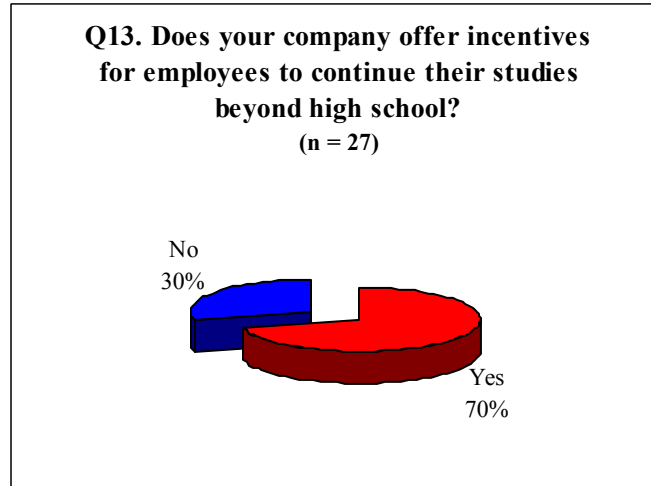
When such services as non-credit, continuing, or in-service education are offered, employers favored the weekends and evenings as the best times to provide them.



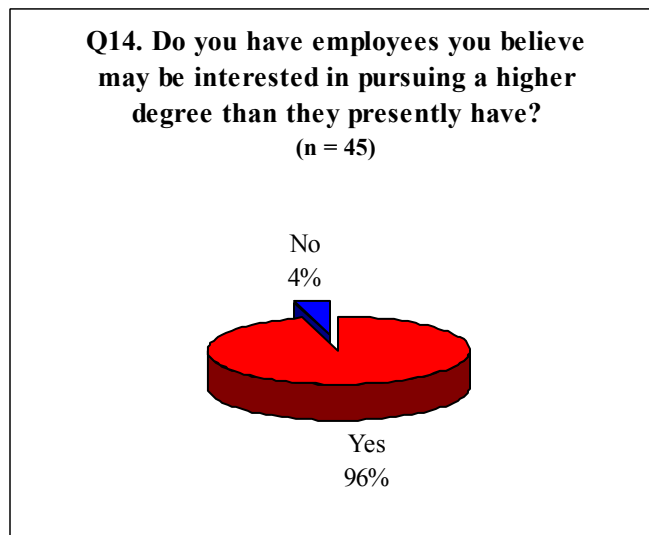
They also favored non-traditional delivery methods, displaying a strong preference for work-site and Internet delivery or a combination of campus and Internet sites and means.



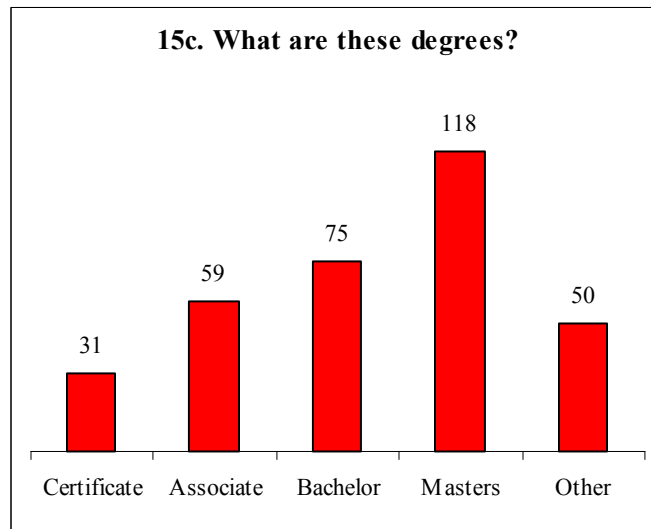
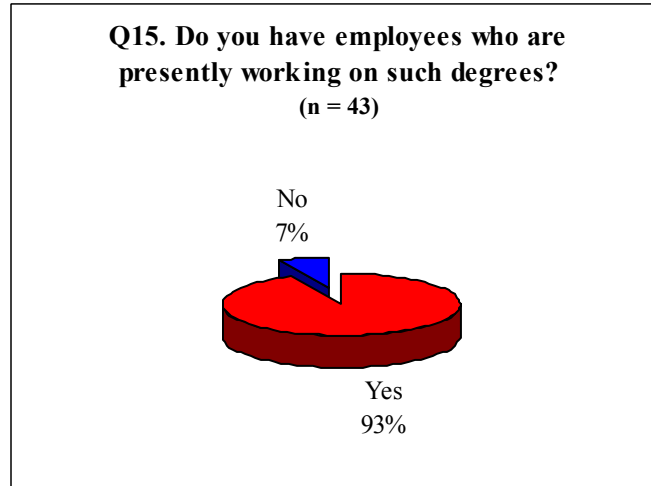
Strong support for higher education opportunities for employees is apparent in the fact that 70 percent of the responding employers reported their companies provide incentives for employees to continue their education beyond high school (Q13).



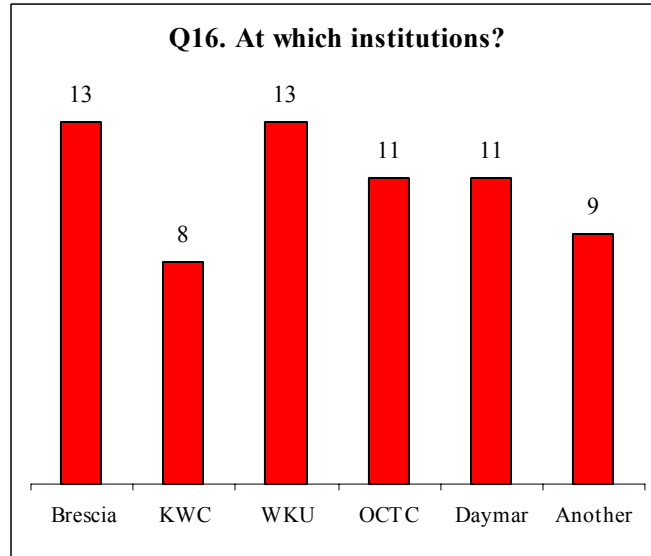
Ninety-six percent have employees they believe are interested in pursuing a higher college degree than they have presently (Q14). And 93 percent reported they have employees who are presently working on such degrees (Q15). The combined total of those who were doing so was 451. Most, 35 percent, are working on master's degrees; bachelor degrees represent the education goals of 23 percent (Q15c).



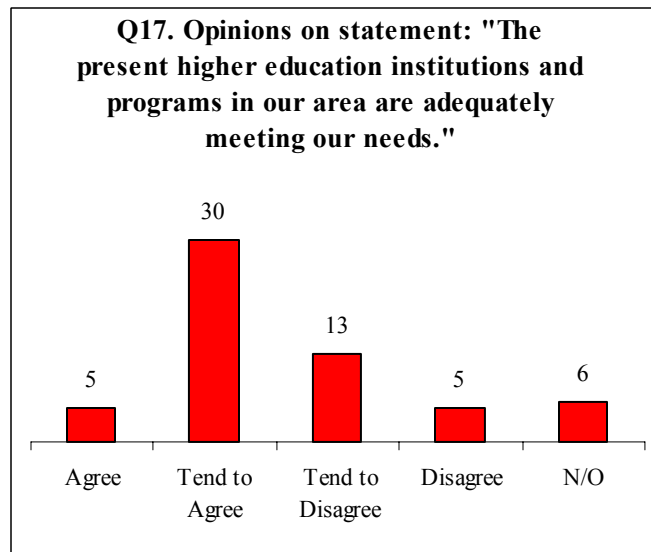
Seventy percent of the responding employers provide incentives for employees to continue their education beyond high school. Ninety-six percent believe they have employees who are interested in pursuing a higher college degree.



When asked which institutions were involved, Brescia was mentioned by 20 percent, Kentucky Wesleyan by 12 percent, Western by 20 percent, OCTC and Daymar each were mentioned by 17 percent, and other institutions received 14 percent of the responses (Q16).

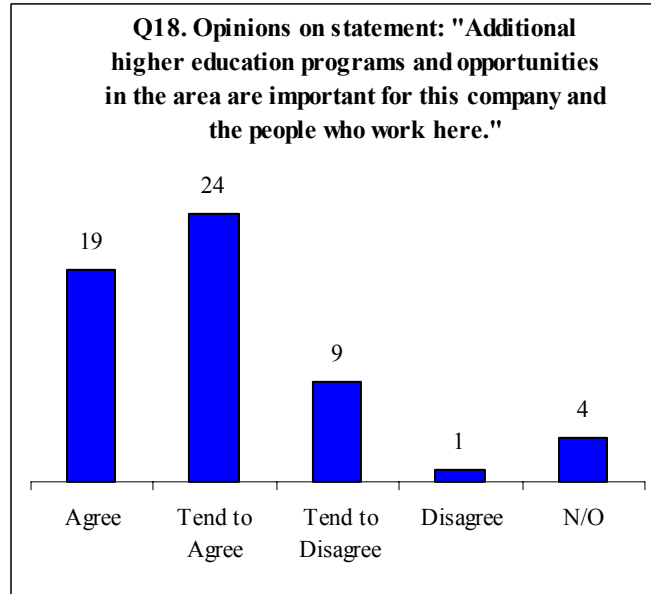


Employer satisfaction with the present local array of programs and institutions was represented in their responses to Q17. Most who answered the question, 60 percent, “Agreed” or “Tended to Agree” with a statement that these were adequate. About 30 percent responded negatively, and ten percent offered no opinion.

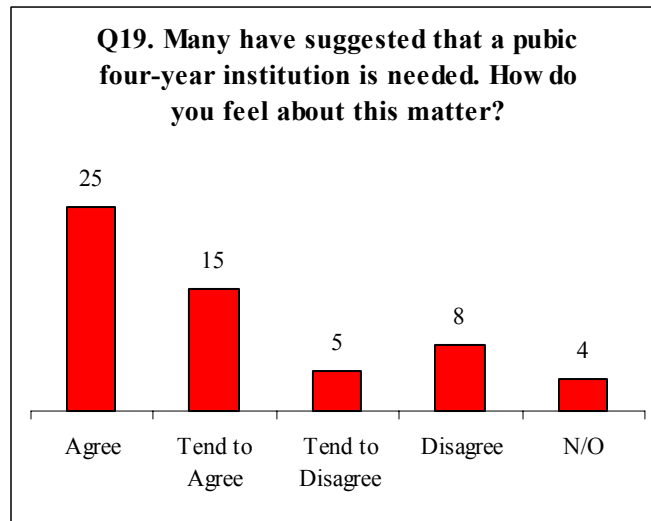


Such impressions of adequacy notwithstanding, 75 percent of the employers agreed or tended to agree with the statement, “Additional higher education programs and opportunities in the area are important for this company and the people who work here” (Q18).

75 percent of the employers agreed or tended to agree with the statement, ‘Additional higher education programs and opportunities in the area are important for this company and the people who work here’



When the subject turned to what was needed, 70 percent agreed or tended to agree that it was a public four-year institution (Q19). Less than 30 percent disagreed or offered no opinion on this alternative.

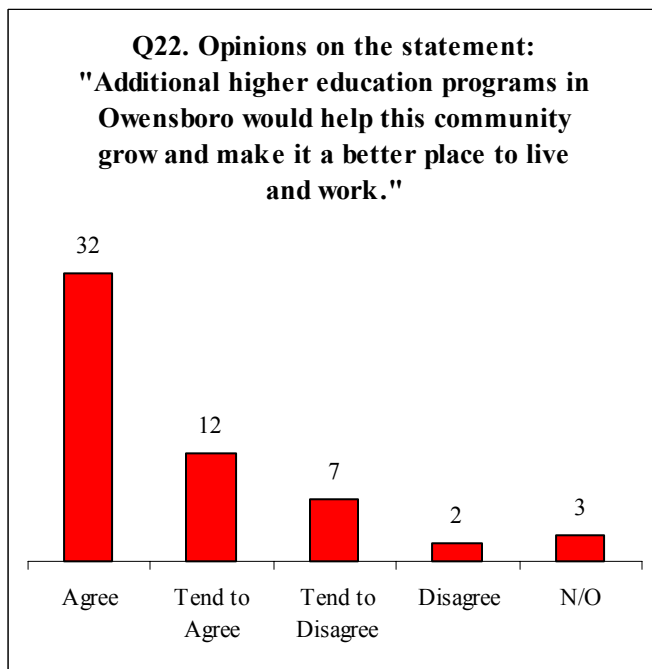


A slightly smaller but significant share – 61 percent—agreed or tended to agree that the need is not so much for a new public four-year institution as for more cooperation and collaboration among those that presently are in Owensboro (Q20).



Question 21 asked those who believed more cooperation and collaboration were the answer to Owensboro’s problems to describe what they meant by these expressions by answering an open-ended question. No responses to this question were received, and it was dropped.

Finally, a very large share – 78 percent—agreed or tended to agree with the statement in the concluding question, “Additional higher education programs in Owensboro would help the community grow and make it a better place to live and work” (Q22).



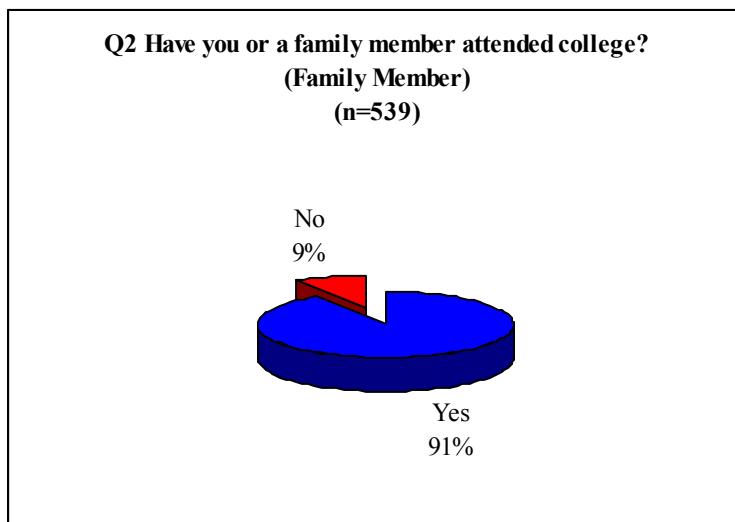
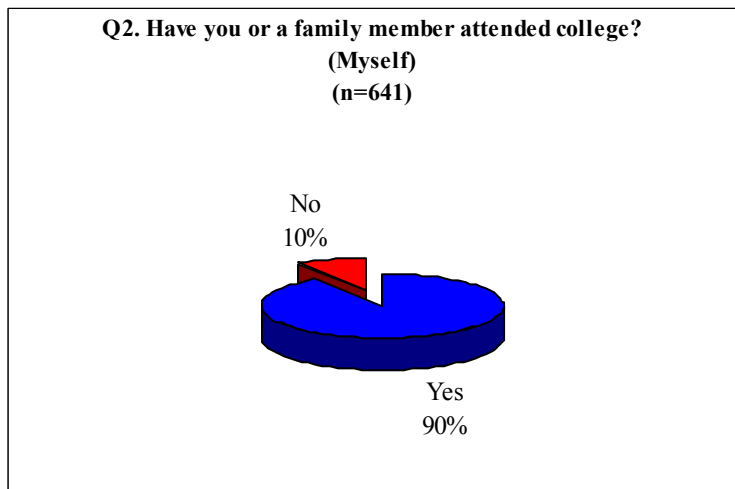
Seventy-eight percent of the employers agreed or tended to agree with the statement, ‘Additional higher education programs in Owensboro would help the community grow and make it a better place to live and work.’

The employer survey ended at this point. Many of these patterns also appeared in the response patterns of the community resident survey, although often with palpably greater force.

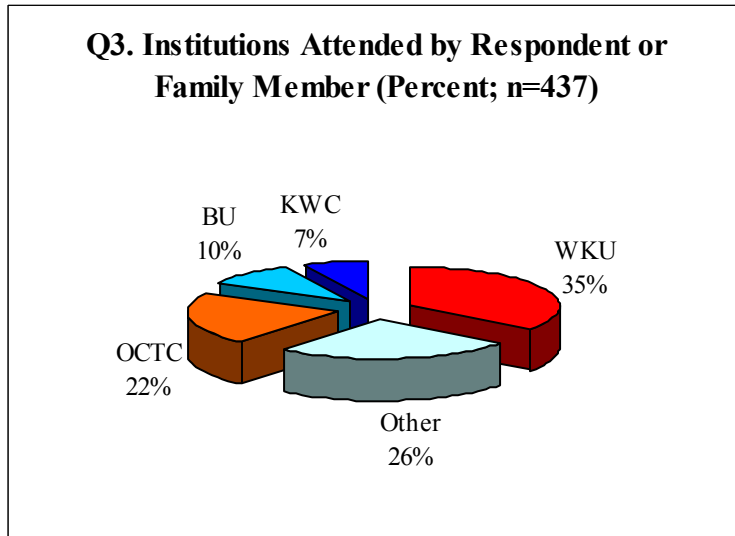
THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

The community survey questionnaire for the study was graciously distributed as a newspaper insert by the Owensboro *Messenger-Inquirer*, which also prepared an article describing the OCCE's strategic planning efforts and notifying readers of the questionnaire's presence in the paper. Readers were invited to complete it, and then fold, secure, stamp, and mail it to the OCCE's post office box. Remarkably, more than 650 did so.

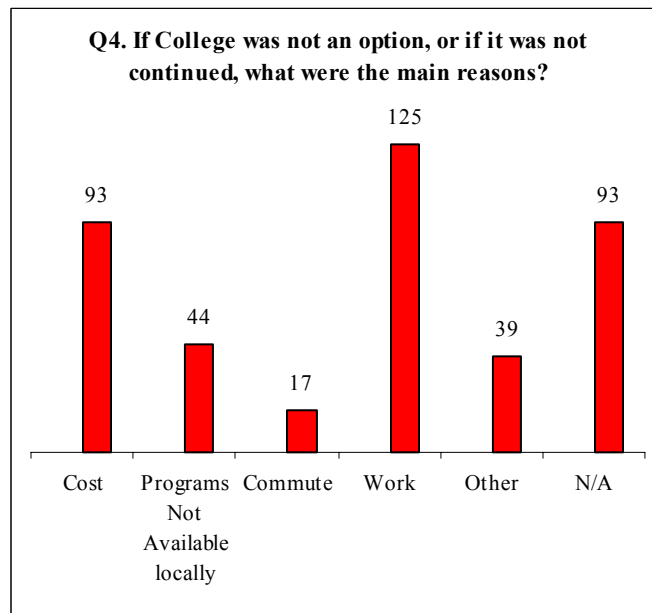
The first question asked how long they had resided in the community. The average was 30.3 years. Question 2 asked if they or a member of their family had attended college. Most, 90 percent, responded that they, the respondent, had. Ninety-one percent indicated that a family member had.



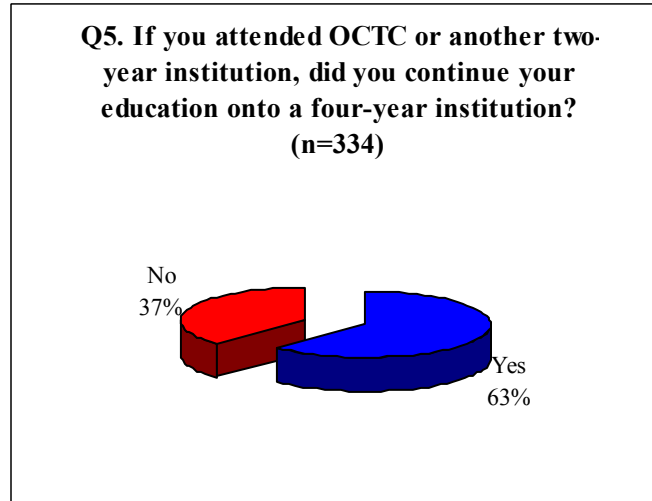
Question 3 asked for the name of the institution attended. Among the 437 references, Western was the leading institution, representing 35 percent. OCTC accounted for 22 percent. Brescia received ten percent of the references, and Kentucky Wesleyan accounted for seven percent. Other institutions than these, together, accounted for 26 percent.



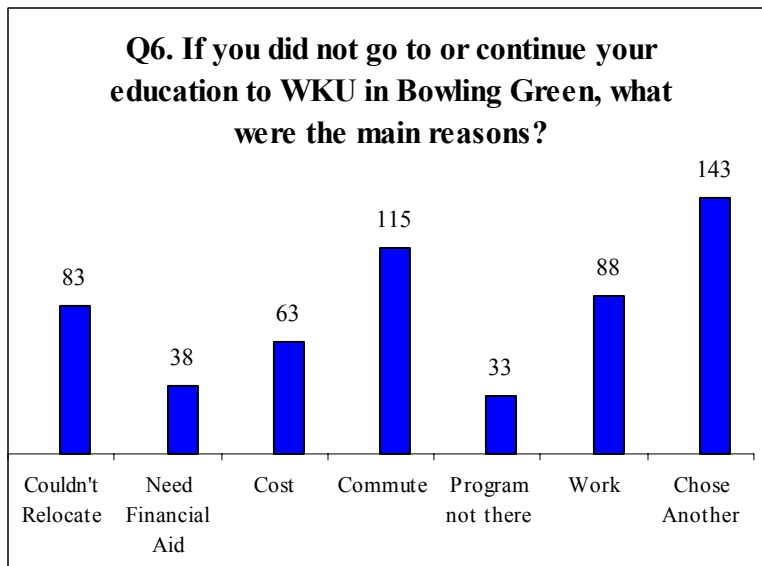
“Cost” (23%) and “Need to Work” (29%) were the main reasons people gave for either not going to college or not continuing their education after a community college experience.



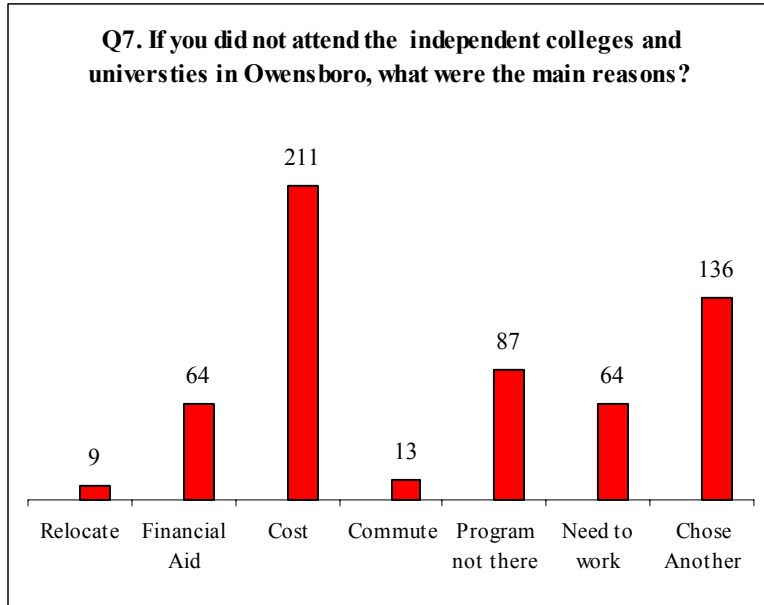
Most of those who went to a community college (63%), however, reported that they did continue their studies into a four-year program.



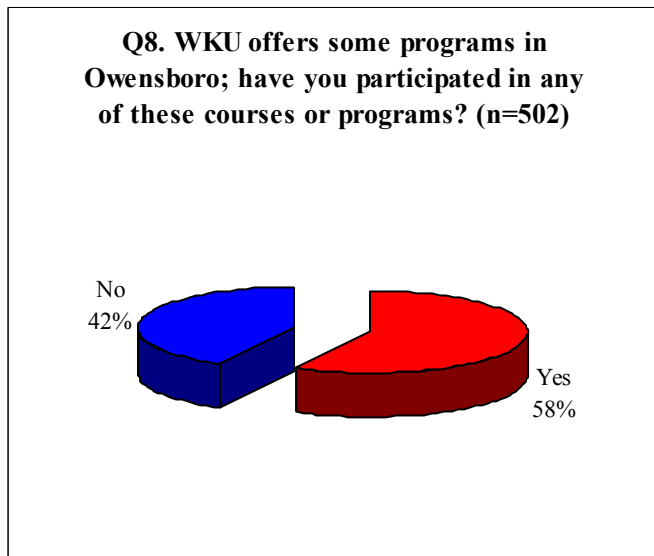
Those who reported that they did not go or transfer to WKU in Bowling Green listed “Other Institutional Choices” as the main reason (25%), followed by the “Need to Commute” (20%), “Work” (16%), and “Inability to Relocate” (15%) as the main reasons. “Cost” (11%), “Need for Financial Aid” (7%), and “Absence of a Desired Program” (5%) were other reasons.



When those who did not attend Owensboro’s independent colleges and universities were asked the reasons why, “Cost” (36%) and “Other Institution Choices” (23%) accounted for nearly 60 percent. The “Need to Work” was cited by 16 percent. “Absence of a needed program,” however, was given as the reason by only six percent.

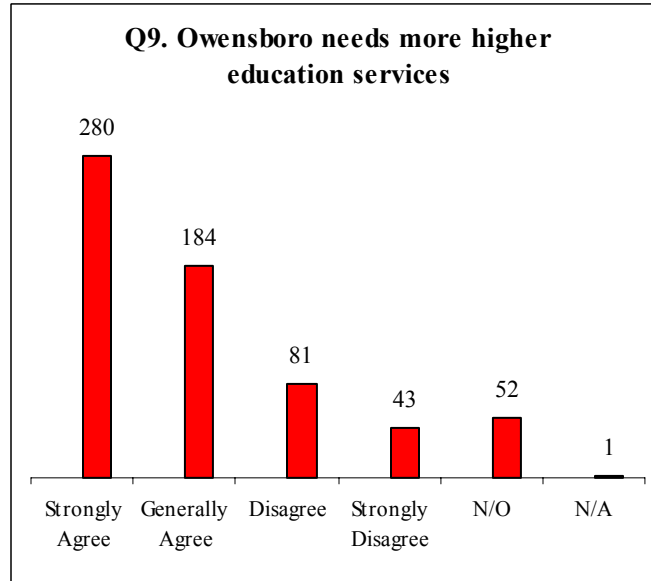


Nearly 60 percent reported that they had participated in WKU programs offered in Owensboro.

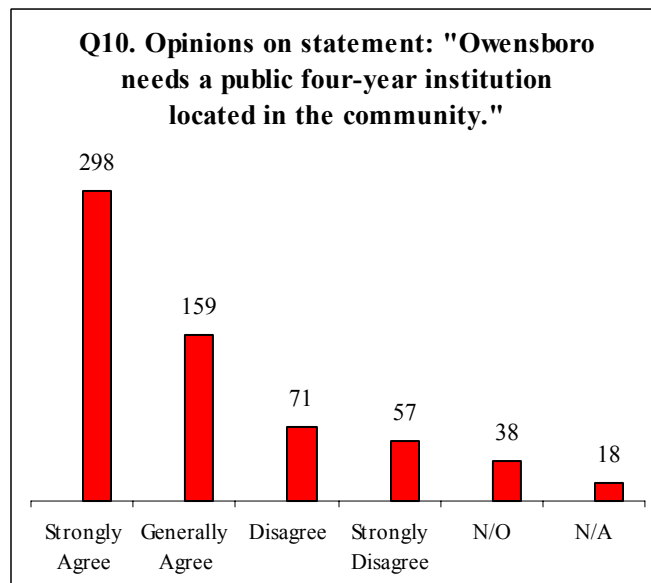


Community respondents clearly would favor higher education services closer to home. Seventy-three percent agreed or tended to agree with the statement that Owensboro needs more higher education services.

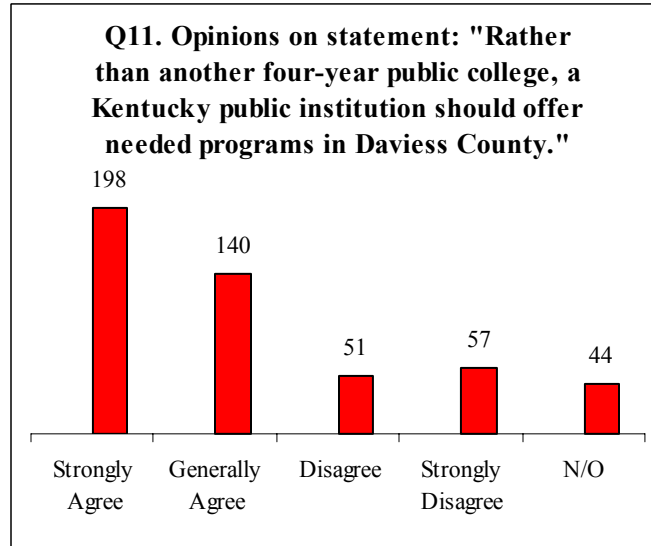
Community respondents clearly would favor higher education services closer to home. Seventy-three percent agreed or tended to agree with the statement that Owensboro needs more higher education services (Q9).



They also would like to have these made available by public sector providers. Seventy-one percent agreed or tended to agree with the statement, “Owensboro needs a public four-year institution located in the community.” (Q10)

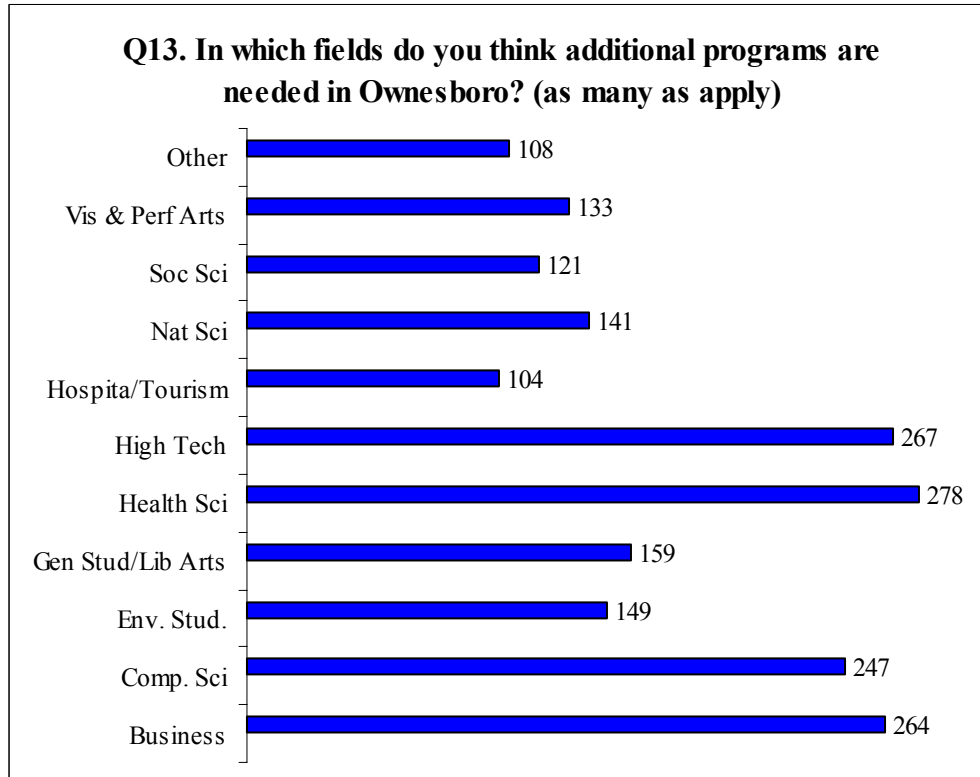


They might be comfortable with another Kentucky public institution offering needed services in the community. Sixty-nine percent agreed or tended to agree with this proposition (Q11), a sentiment that may augur well for WKU in Owensboro.

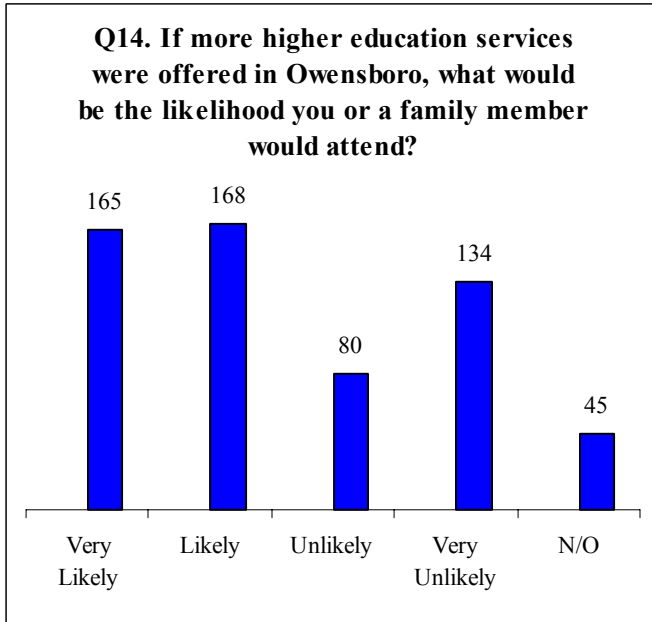


Question 12 sought clarification by asking respondents why they felt this way. The question did not elicit enough responses to merit quantification.

Respondents did express opinions on fields in which they thought additional programs were needed. Health Sciences (16%), High-Tech (14%), Computer Science (13%), and Business (13%) were the most prominent fields identified as needed (Q13). More than one choice was allowed. The response distribution is shown on the following graph.

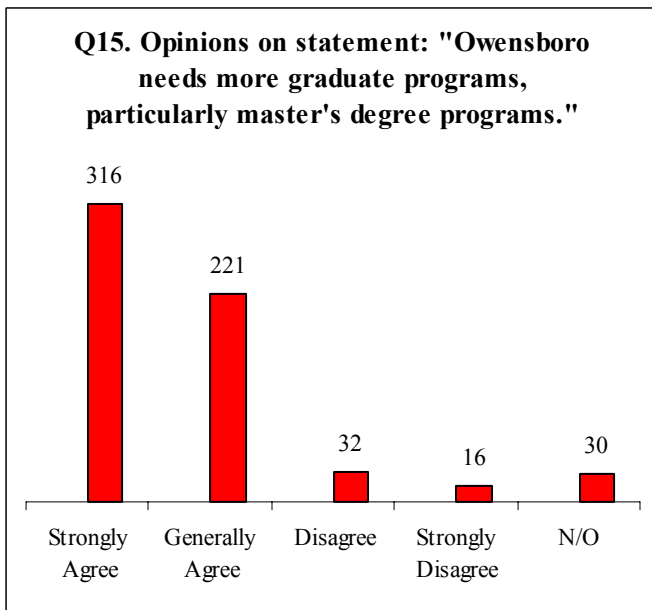


More than half – 56 percent -- considered it very likely or likely that they would attend if such services were provided (Q14).



Respondents thought additional programs were needed in the Health Science (16%), High-Tech (14%), Computer Science (13%), and Business (13%) fields.

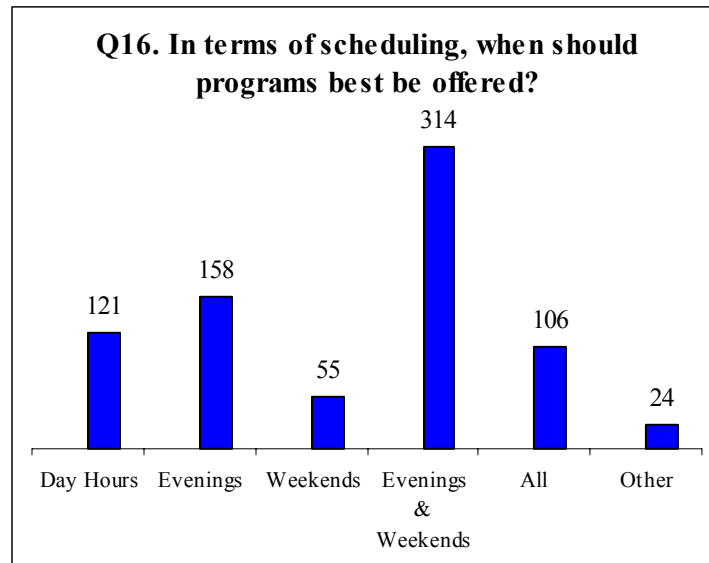
Interest in additional master’s programs was strong in both the interviews and employer surveys of the study, perhaps unexpectedly so. The pattern continued, with even greater intensity, in the community resident survey. A very large share – 88 percent -- agreed or tended to agree that more graduate programs, especially master’s programs, were needed (Q15).



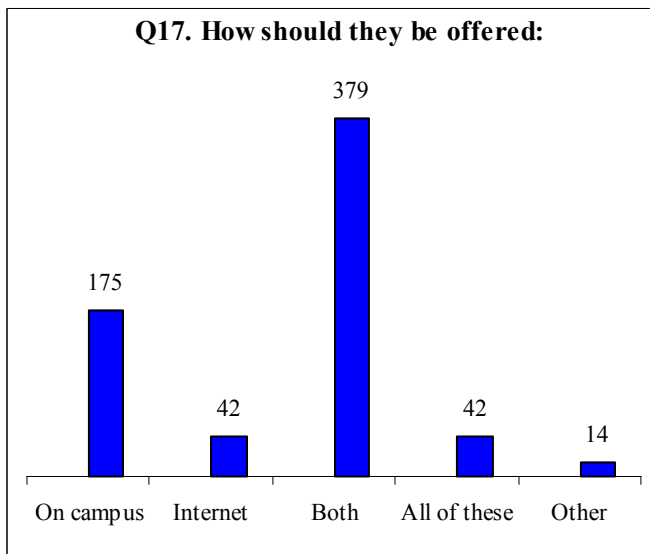
Eighty-eight percent of the community residents believe that more graduate programs, especially master’s programs, are needed.

Scheduling flexibility seems to be one of the perceived values of an expanded higher education presence in the community. Evenings and weekends were the preferred class

schedule options for 40 percent of the indicated responses, compared with daytime hours as the preference for 15 percent.



People also were flexible with respect to delivery method, although nearly 60 percent favored a combination of on-campus and Internet programs. On-campus was the preferred mode in 27 percent of the cases. Internet alone did not score well, acceptable for only about six percent.

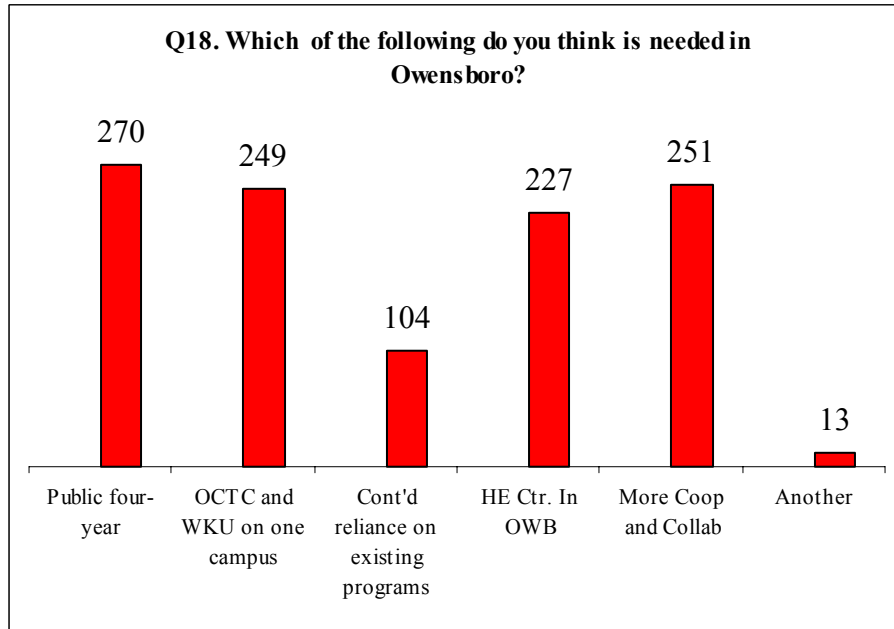


People in the community appear open to a variety of changes as long as they provide something more extensive, relevant, and different than what they have.

The last substantive question of the survey asked people what they thought was needed with respect to higher education structures, relationships, or arrangements in Owensboro. Responses were about evenly distributed among preferences for a new public four-year institution (24%), expanded OCTC/WKU services on that campus (22%), a higher education center located in the downtown area (20%), and more

cooperation and collaboration among existing institutions (23%). Continued reliance on the programs already in Owensboro finished last with 9 percent (Q18).

This may be the real story behind the response patterns: people in the community do not seem to want to continue with business as usual and are open to consideration of a variety of changes as long as they provide something more extensive, relevant, and different.



COMMUNITY FORUMS

A series of meetings in Owensboro were organized as community forums at Brescia, Kentucky Wesleyan, and OCTC in mid-January 2005. People who attended offered the following comments.

- At the KWC Forum participants were concerned about the need to bring graduates back to the community after they had left to attend college on a distant campus.
- They also spoke of the importance of creating a learning community, cultivating a culture of learning, creating more programs among the existing institutions to attract more students, more collaborative and cooperative program relationships among both the independent and public institutions, increasing marketing efforts on the part of all of the institutions, and coordinated internship programs with local employers and companies.
- Eliminating roadblocks to improve access for all, providing mentoring services, and offering HOPE-type scholarships for all also were brought up in the conversations. They also talked of the importance of a coordinated, “seamless” P-16 system in the community.

- Similar themes emerged at the Brescia forum. Here participants mentioned the need for more partnerships between higher education and local businesses.
- They also talked about the need for cooperation between existing institutions and marketing existing opportunities on a regional basis. This might require finding ways to give existing institutions more opportunities and ways to collaborate to meet existing needs and increasing awareness of existing opportunities in the area.
- Providing more graduate programs in the region, during evenings and weekends was a particularly popular notion. Related to this, especially at the undergraduate level, was a call for meaningful programs and course offerings living up to community expectations.
- They asked if it were possible to develop local centers of excellence and to accomplish a better interface between the two- and four- year colleges. One person stated there was a need to break a University of Kentucky monopoly on PhD programs--- to look at collaboration, distance learning for graduate programs.
- Changing public attitudes about the importance of education prompted considerable discussion. Thoughts along such lines included promoting information on the importance of higher education earlier in the school experience, before the middle school level. Some felt that local colleges need to have personal contact with local K-12 students. In the case of adults, a question concerned how to convince people of the need to invest in a four-year degree if they already have a good job.
- Participants also spoke of the need to educate the community on cost vs. value of higher education – on the actual costs of higher education to students. They needed to dispel impressions at home that an education obtained in Owensboro was somehow inferior to one obtained somewhere else. People asked rhetorically, why would anyone come to Owensboro for a higher education, and why would they return after they left, especially since average wages in the area were lower than in other regions.
- Discussion of the difficulties of anticipating business’ needs in education led to suggestions for a local entity to serve as a “gate keeper” to coordinate program offerings, ‘broker’ programs from other providers, and search for more efficient ways to acquire and use higher education resources.

The third community forum was held at OCTC. As at the other two, need for more cooperation between area institutions was a prominent theme.

- People noted that there were needs for additional services that would not duplicate existing programs. An existing four-year public institution could supplement much of what is now being offered. One person noted that OCTC was established and exists because the local colleges had not been meeting higher education needs.

- This led to the observation that OCTC and WKU cooperating in a 2+2 program relationship would be tantamount to a four-year public institution. This would not threaten the private institutions, which could continue to provide their own unique programs. Some considered more public higher education a necessity for the area.
- One participant noted that high school students want to go to college but often do not know what they want to study. Discussion of a local culture that does not value education emerged at this forum as it had at the other two.
- On the subject of employer needs, some thought that people in the community either were very over-qualified or very under-qualified for jobs available.
- There was considerable discussion of OCTC, which was viewed as a good starting choice (although “there should be more job shadowing”). A participant stated that the institution was working on transition from GED to college, but more is needed than just academics. Concerns about students not prepared for college after leaving OCTC were brought up, though it also was noted that OCTC is a crucial link in the education process (“helps get kids ready for college”), and that transfer students do well at the four-year institutions.
- Some believe there is need for a comprehensive list of all course offerings in the area. Cooperating enrollment arrangements also were suggested.
- As at both other forums, people spoke of the need for more master’s and PhD programs and life-long learning opportunities for people who already had college degrees.
- Finally, the ‘gatekeeper’ concept came up in terms of a stated need for an articulated cooperation plan between the existing institutions.

The opinions offered at the forums informed both the conclusions and strategy that formed during the study. These are subjects of the next and last chapter.

CHARTING A NEW COURSE: HIGHER EDUCATION IN OWENSBORO AND DAVIESS COUNTY, KENTUCKY

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A NEW COURSE FOR OWENSBORO AND DAVIESS COUNTY

Strategic studies usually are predicated on a stated concept or purpose.³³ The purpose to which this study applies derives from the OCCE's interest in the need and prospects for additional higher education services for Owensboro and Daviess County. In the words of the Committee, the study "will seek ways to complement and enhance existing [higher education] institutional interests even as it seeks to identify collaborative opportunities, perspectives, and actions that enhance the entire community's interests."

Also in accordance with the OCCE's interest, the emphases are on economic growth and enhanced quality of life, present higher education opportunities, the degree to which existing institutions are positioned to meet needs, the extent to which they are doing so, and, finally, recommendations for alternative ways of expanding services.

These elements suggest goals, evaluation standards, and initiatives that can constitute a higher education strategy for Owensboro and Daviess County.

A NEW COURSE: STRATEGIC GOALS

The measures and indicators described in this report, the nature and scope of higher education resources available to the community, and the evidence of local interest in

³³ Strategic plans also frequently include a vision. There is some feeling among the study sponsors that since the vision would apply to the community, it should be a product of a community process. The following vision statement was drafted during the course of the study. It may offer a helpful starting place, and it is presented in that vein:

"Owensboro will become a higher education magnet and a brighter higher education star in Western Kentucky by achieving education participation and attainment levels equal to those of the leading county among its peers. This will be accomplished through cooperation and collaboration among the community and its local institutions, an expanded presence of Kentucky public college and university programs in the city, innovative and flexible schedules and delivery arrangements, and a comprehensive range of programs relevant and responsive in level and variety to the needs of Owensboro's and Daviess County's residential and commercial communities, its economic aspirations, and the occupations of the future. Boldness, responsiveness, cooperation, relevance, innovation, and excellence are the keys to the realization of this vision."

additional services constitute a compelling case for more comprehensive higher education services.

Owensboro is blessed with a diverse variety of higher education institutions and services. But this is a restricted assortment in that collectively these institutions are limited in mission, reach, and scope or are not sufficiently developed programmatically to satisfy the full range of higher education needs in the community.

This applies both to fields and levels of study. Moreover, higher education assets of Owensboro for many seem to operate at cross purposes to community perceptions of need, whether these involve different schedules and arrangements, experimentation with alternative structures, or a more comprehensive public upper-division and graduate program inventory.

Perceptions that institution concerns about market shares beget objections to the addition of new public sector programs were encountered frequently during the course of the study. Sometimes these views led to speculation that virtually any hopes for expansion in the scope of public higher education services in the community are doomed to failure. Whether these perceptions are accurate or not, they operate as virtually self-fulfilling prophecies.

Employers' responses to survey questions about their recruiting experiences varied. Bachelor's and master's degrees were considered essential credentials for managerial and professional staff positions by about half. Nevertheless, there is not a lot of emphasis on Owensboro as a managerial or professional staff recruitment center among the larger firms.

Although people in organizations of all sizes indicated they recruited locally (medium and smaller firms more so than the larger ones), the large firm participants spoke of little

Community resident responses were unequivocal: nearly three-quarters felt that additional higher education services were needed. Nearly 90 percent felt this way about master's and graduate programs.

difficulty finding qualified staff, a view not always shared by those in the medium and smaller firms. The relatively strong competition among applicants for job openings, particularly in the larger firms, also was a factor.

Employers also differed somewhat in perceptions about the preferred higher education majors of job candidates: the large firms identified Business and Management/Administration as the favored fields; the medium and smaller firms focused on the Physical Sciences, Technical Training, and Inter-Disciplinary studies. This suggested that medium and smaller sized firms need people who can operate in a variety of job

positions and capacities, while the larger firms need more specialized credentials to accord with more narrowly defined positions.

Some employers reported that the absence of higher education programs did not create special recruitment problems, but they also agreed on the need for and importance of additional curricular fields in the community. Health Science programs often led the list.

While the majority of employers overall reported that the present programs and institutions were meeting their staffing needs, 75 percent also stated that additional programs and opportunities were important for the company and its employees.

The explanation for this seeming contradiction may be that in the first instance respondents were thinking of company staffing needs while in the second they were thinking more in terms of family and community needs. Nearly 80 percent, for example, agreed that additional higher education programs in the community would make it a better place to live and work.

Community resident responses were more united: nearly three-quarters felt that additional higher education services were needed. Nearly 90 percent felt this way about master's and graduate programs, a subject on which employer and resident opinions converged.

Members of both groups expressed interest in most of the organizational and structural alternatives that were presented (a public four-year institution, a higher education center, an OCTC/WKU presence on one campus, more collaboration and cooperation, and continued reliance on existing programs), and they also displayed a considerable amount of openness to all of them, except for continuation of the status quo (continued reliance on existing programs).

The economical, cultural, and higher education challenges that confront Owensboro and Daviess County and the aspirations of the residents that live there lend further weight to the need to seriously consider alternatives.

The employer questionnaire did not present the same list of alternatives contained on the community survey, but nearly 70 percent agreed that a public four-year institution was needed, although this is probably the alternative with the least short-term feasibility. Almost as many, 60 percent, would be comfortable with more cooperation and collaboration among the institutions presently serving the area.

Community residents agreed in virtually equal proportion on these points with employers – 71 percent – that Owensboro needs a public four-year institution. Sixty-nine percent also indicated they would be happy with another Kentucky public institution increasing services in the County (possibly an indirect reference to WKU-O).

The comparative education, employment, and social indicators are pretty clear: Owensboro's and Daviess County's numbers are rather consistently below parity in comparison with state averages and those of the peer counties. On balance, these indicators and the eagerness of residents for options that promise change are fairly clear manifestations of a problem.

Resident aspirations and the economical, cultural, and higher education challenges that confront Owensboro and Daviess County also create a compelling case for change. Responsiveness begins with the identification of goals and strategies to accomplish them.

A NEW COURSE: HIGHER EDUCATION GOALS

The comparative indicators of performance for Daviess County and its large population county peers offer a promising place to start the search for goals. The indicators most germane to a higher education strategy are college participation (enrollment) and education attainment (percentage of adults with postsecondary experience or credentials.)³⁴

*Enrollment rates
pegged at the levels
other large
Kentucky counties
have accomplished
are manifestly
attainable and can
be posited as
feasible goals for the
people of Daviess
County.*

HIGHER EDUCATION PARTICIPATION

Daviess County, with an undergraduate participation rate (public and private institutions combined) of 3.89 percent, ranks next to last among the eight peer counties; below the statewide average participation rate, 4.47 percent; and well below the leaders in this category, Warren (11.35 %) and Fayette (9.85 %) Counties.

At the graduate/professional degree level, Daviess County residents' participation rate, 0.53 percent, ranks it last in the peer group. Fayette County (2.69%) ranks first. The Kentucky average (sixth place in the rankings) is 0.84

percent.

In view of the fact that Daviess County's peers has achieved participation rates well in excess of Daviess' own in most cases, as has the state on average, enrollment rates pegged at such established levels are manifestly attainable and can be posited as goals.

The questions then become: first, what are the preferred participation and attainment levels? And second, by when should these be achieved? The answer to the second question will depend a lot on the answer to the first.

The magnitude of the changes involved may be deduced by factoring Daviess' 2000 postsecondary education enrollment levels by any other peer rate selected for use as the standard. In all likelihood this would be one of the following three: the "Leading Peer County Average" (which for reasons discussed later are the Fayette County performance

³⁴ Education attainment also is a standard employed by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education in its draft Public Agenda, as evidenced by its call for nearly doubling the number of Kentuckians ages 25-64 with at least a four-year degree over the next 15 years. See CPE Draft Public Agenda, p. 4. www.cpe.ky.gov.

levels), the “Average Peer County Average,”³⁵ and the “Kentucky State Average.” In effect these are high, medium, and low target rates, respectively.

The results, using Daviess County’s 2000 enrollment level as the base, are shown on the following chart for both the undergraduate (year 2000 figure, 3,417) and the graduate/professional (year 2000 figure, 494) enrollment levels.

The “Increase Number” columns describe the numbers of additional students from Daviess County that would have been in college (undergraduate and graduate and professional) during the Year 2000 Census had the Peer Average, Kentucky State Average, and Fayette County percentages, respectively, been achieved by Daviess County residents at that time.

2000 Above Age 3 Base (87,773)	Daviess Percent (DCA)	Peer Average Percent (PCA)	Increase Number Under PCA	Kentucky Average Percent (KSA)	Increase Number Under KSA	Fayette County Percent (FCA)	Increase Number Under FCA
UG (3,417)	3.89	5.90	1,761	4.47	506	9.85	5,228
Grd/Prof (494)	0.53	1.06	436	0.84	243	2.69	1,867

If these rates are applied as standards to the *projected* Daviess County population for the years 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025, 2030, the respective numbers of Daviess County residents enrolled at the two levels –undergraduate and graduate—at each point using the four participation rates (including Daviess County’s) as standards (or “Goals”), the enrollment levels would be those shown on Table 39. Again, the abbreviations, DCA, PCA, KSA, and FCA refer to the Daviess County Average, the Peer County Average, the Kentucky State Average, and the Fayette County Average, respectively. “UG” refers to “Undergraduate.” “G/P” refers to “Graduate and Professional.”

³⁵ One important qualification must be noted when using the Peer County Average standard. Warren County, which ranks at the top of the undergraduate enrollment level --- 11.35 percent – also is host county of WKU, an institution attended by substantial numbers of Daviess County residents (at least 800). Thus, there could be a possibility of double counting if the Census sample for Daviess and Warren Counties counted some of these students as residents of both counties. The use of the PCA as a standard, accordingly, is mainly for purposes of illustration at this point.

Table 39.
Participation Rates for Each of the Four Averages (Including Daviess County’s
Year 2000 Rate) Plotted Against Daviess County’s Projected Population, for
Undergraduate, Graduate, and Total Enrollments

	2010 (94,567)	2015 (97,166)	2020 (99,438)	2025 (101,420)	2030 (102,708)
(1) UG DCA (3.89)	3,678	3,779	3,868	3,945	3,995
G/P DCA (0.53)	501	514	527	537	544
Total	4,179	4,293	4,395	4,482	4,539
(2) UG PCA (5.90)	5,579	5,732	5,866	5,984	6,059
G/P PCA (1.06)	1,002	1,029	1,054	1,075	1,088
Total	6,581	6,761	6,920	7,059	7,147
(3) UG KSA (4.47)	4,227	4,365	4,445	4,533	4,591
G/P KSA (0.84)	794	816	835	852	862
Total	5,021	5,181	5,280	5,385	5,453
(4) UG FCA (9.85)	9,314	9,570	9,796	9,989	10,116
G/P FCA(2.69)	2,543	2,613	2,675	2,728	2,762
Total	11,857	12,183	12,471	12,717	12,878

Census Data and Projections Source: KSDC

The difference between Daviess County’s present higher education participation rate and each of the alternative standards plotted against the county’s projected population can be seen by comparing the first row of totals against each of the succeeding rows, all of which are shown in bold type in shaded cells.³⁶

EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

Another statistical measure that can be applied as a standard is education attainment. This measure is a function of the number of residents that go to college in the county and remain, go to college elsewhere and return, and migrate into the county from elsewhere, often other states. It correlates both with the county’s access to higher education resources and its status as a higher education and economic magnet. It is another way of measuring progress.

Daviess’ and the other seven large peer counties, the Kentucky state, and the Fayette County higher education attainment averages, in this case limited to residents age 25-34 years in the interest of space, are displayed by degree level on the following table.

³⁶ The probability that the population will be changing, possibly exceeding the projected levels as the participation and education attainment rates change, is not entered into the calculations. It also is worth noting, that once a projected standard is reached, say, in Year 2015, the incremental increases for the succeeding years will be modest.

Table 40.

Education Attainment Levels: Percent 25-34 Year-Olds with Associate, Bachelor's, and Graduate/Professional Degrees for Daviess County, the Eight Peer County Average, Fayette County, and the State Average

2000 Census Data

	Daviess County	PCA	KSA	FCA
Associate	9.1	6.82	6.5	7.3
Bachelor	18.6	27.9	20.8	42.4
Grad/Prof	3.4	7.5	5.6	12.6

Data Source: www.higheredinfo.org

Markedly, Daviess County exceeds all of the averages in the percentage of 25-34 year-olds with an associate degree. In this case it obviously should not strive to gear downward to meet the other peer standards. The figures that apply to bachelor and graduate/professional degrees provide more meaningful standards. For Daviess to meet the Peer County Average it would need to increase its present baccalaureate attainment level by 50 percent, from about 6,500 to about 9,750 degreed residents. A 12 percent increase (from about 6,500 to about 7,200) would be needed to match the Kentucky State Average. The Fayette County Average would require an increase from the Year 2000 figure of 6,500 to about 14,750.³⁷

For Daviess to meet the Peer County Average it would need to increase its present baccalaureate education attainment level by 50 percent. The Fayette County average would involve a 225 percent increase.

At the graduate/professional degree levels, the increase would need to be from about 3,600 to about 5,400 for the PCA. The KSA would involve an increase from 3,600 to about 5,900, and the FCA standard would entail an increase to about 13,300.

Any of these standards except maintenance of the status quo rate could be applied. Maintenance of the status quo rate, however, does not even maintain stasis over the long term, since Daviess would be losing standing relative to the other counties as their population increases exceeded its own. Thus, this is not considered an option.

Again, the Kentucky State Average, while setting the bar higher, in most cases represents the lowest option. The eight Peer County Average may be taken as the mid-range standard, and the Fayette County figure may be used as the high option. For a number of reasons this, the high standard, is worth considering for adoption as the goal

³⁷ Projections by age category to 2030 would be necessary to estimate figures for the five-year intervals used to calculate participation rates.

both for participation and attainment. Notably, achievement of these relatively high levels is demonstrated by the fact a Kentucky county has accomplished them. There are other reasons for using Fayette County as a standard as well.

A NEW COURSE: A HIGH PERFORMANCE COUNTY STANDARD

Forbes Magazine identified Lexington as eighth among the ten best places in America for businesses and careers in 2004, moving the city from fourteenth place the year before. The rankings were based on income and job growth, cost of doing business, labor pool qualifications, crime rate, housing costs, and net migration. The list was compiled from a variety of different rankings conducted by different sponsors around the country. Among its other important attributes, Lexington ranked eighth nationally on the basis of education attainment.³⁸ *Forbes* also ranked it eighth in terms of advanced degrees held by residents. On the basis of education attainment overall it ranked thirty-fifth among the country's metropolitan areas (35.6 percent of its age 25 and older population had at least a bachelor's degree).

These things tend to proliferate. In 2002, Princeton Survey Research Associates conducted a study of 26 localities throughout the country for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Lexington was among them. The study sought to determine "civic engagement and attitudes concerning seven topic areas: education, arts and culture, children and social welfare, community development, homelessness, literacy, and citizenship."³⁹

The purposes were to determine and document the social and cultural health of these communities. Essentially, residents of the counties surrounding Fayette were interviewed regarding their attitudes toward Lexington. The study concluded that education and household income levels in Lexington are very high, with incomes showing substantial growth in recent years. Indicators of the well being of children and families were considered very strong. Public education scored above state levels on standardized tests and national averages on SATs (although dropout rates were higher than the state average). Adult literacy was considered high and newspaper readership was rated strong.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky tends to score below national averages on many indicators, a point noted earlier in this report, but as far as an in-state performance standard is concerned, achievement of Fayette County's higher education and attainment

Achievement of Fayette County's higher education and attainment levels would represent a challenging but very positive goal for the people of Daviess County.

³⁸ <http://www.lexchamber.com/marketing/Lex%20Rankings.PDF>

³⁹ <http://www.cpanda.org/data/a00180.html>

levels would represent a challenging but very positive goal for the people of Daviess County. Thus, use of the Fayette County participation rate and attainment level are recommended as goals for Daviess County residents.

A NEW COURSE: TWO NEW CONCEPTS FOR KENTUCKY

The road to the accomplishment of the goals is a little more problematic than the business of defining them. Most of the approaches proposed and discussed during the course of the study, particularly during the interviews, the survey research, and the forums, revolved around a few options, some more acceptable and feasible in the short term than others. These included:

- Involving the independent institutions in Owensboro more fully in the business of addressing community high education needs.
- Bringing more programs, particularly cutting edge programs in such fields as Engineering, Agriculture, Health and the Physical Sciences, and graduate programs, especially master's programs into the community.
- Expanding the scope and presence of cooperation and collaboration among the institutions serving Owensboro, particularly between the public and the private institutions and between OCTC and WKU-O.
- Providing more flexible schedules and scheduling options.
- Augmenting local programs with substantive distance education (Internet) degree program options.
- Establishing a local higher education center that would serve as a “neutral campus” in which participating institutions could provide classes and other services and which would lend additional ambience to the community.
- Exploring joint registration and collaborative scheduling arrangements both in the community at large and in a higher education center.
- Accomplishing a more comprehensive public four-year institution presence in Owensboro.
- A variant or combination of some or all of these.

Similarly, interest often was expressed in particular accoutrements that could form within the framework of these – endowed chairs and visiting professorships were among them. A greater presence of research university programs, e.g., the University of Louisville, particularly in the Health Sciences area, was another.⁴⁰ There also was considerable discussion of and interest in a community higher education organizational

⁴⁰ In a March 1, 2005 letter to William Chance, President James Ramsey of the University of Louisville stated that Owensboro is an important community for the University and noted that they were working to strengthen their relationships with OCTC and the hospital/medical community.

structure to coordinate and facilitate responses to community needs. This was sometimes referred to as a “gatekeeper.”

These can be considered as goal accomplishment strategies, but if they are to succeed, they must be both feasible and congruent with community needs. When it comes to structures and organizations to address such needs, old habits linger.

BRANCH CAMPUS

A brand new public four-year institution created from whole cloth usually is not a feasible short-term option in most states. Although a few new institutions have been established in recent years in this country, other forms – comprehensive branch campuses, university centers, consortium operated community higher education centers, etc. – have been the more frequent choices. Most were selected with some awareness that they would evolve with time and need into more comprehensive forms.⁴¹

The flexibility and variety afforded by proceeding incrementally have allowed states and communities the options of moving more quickly to establish accessible higher education services than was possible under the rationing that necessarily occurs when the only imaginable choice is a brand new residential university campus, necessarily limited in number and location.

The solution to Owensboro’s higher education needs lies in such an evolutionary direction, starting with modest models, building on what is available in the community in innovative ways, and allowing progress to work its way.

Innovation is the operative term. While Americans still tend to think in terms of “two- and four-year” institutions as ideal types, and, indeed, classify institutions of higher learning accordingly, these have become more the mature than the embryonic forms. A number of less advanced institutional types and multi-institutional arrangements and configurations can form as effective measures to address educational needs.

⁴¹ Kentucky also is a state that is home to an innovative arrangement – The University Center of the Mountains. According to the description on the Center’s home page, “The University Center of the Mountains (UCM) is not a new university and Hazard Community and Technical College is not becoming a four-year college. The UCM is a partnership and consortium consisting of the following originating partners: Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Hazard Community and Technical College, and the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Lindsey Wilson College, a private college, located in Columbia, Kentucky, joined the UCM in August, 2004 bringing two degree programs.

The UCM is a collaboration of these post-secondary institutions for the purpose of increasing opportunities to obtain selected undergraduate and graduate degrees and professional certifications that address lifelong learning, economic and workforce needs, and community development within the Kentucky River Area Development District.

The UCM will serve as an umbrella bringing new degrees and continuing with the existing bachelor degree programs between the partners. Eight bachelor degree programs are presently available in which students can obtain all their course work in the immediate area. Currently, four master degree programs are available.” The UCM also could serve as a model for the higher education center discussed below.

These include university centers (similar to WKU’s, often located at a community college), and various inter-institutional consortia, such as the Greenville (South Carolina) Higher Education Center, or the IUPUI program (Indianapolis, Indiana). They also include conversion of community colleges into baccalaureate institutions (or, more likely, authorization for them as community colleges to offer bachelor’s degrees), the establishment of branch campuses, and the conversion of branch campuses of universities (upper-division and graduate programs) into four-year institutions, sometimes retaining their association with the parent campus as in the UC system of California. The State of Washington presently is converting two of its upper-division/graduate branch campuses to comprehensive four-year institutions.

In the present case, the branch campus form is particularly important, and here a little explanation may add some clarity. Just as there are “cities,” and there are “Cities,” so are there varieties of branch campuses. A university branch campus in the conventional parlance, and as the term is used here, involves a physical presence in the community. If a community college also is present, the program focus will be initially and almost exclusively on upper-division and graduate-level (usually master’s) programs, which, ideally, will be those suited to the education needs of place-bound working adults and the economic development needs of the community.

The branch campus also displays greater autonomy with respect to local programming and faculty selection decisions than, say, an extended campus or university center, and for this reason it is administered at a post relatively high in the parent campus academic hierarchy (e.g., it has a president, or a chancellor, perhaps in the beginning, a dean, rather than a manager or director who reports to a dean). It also probably has a strong local advisory committee presence. Some of the distinctive features of each are shown on Table 41.⁴²

Table 41.

**Characteristics of Branch and “Extended” Campuses (Including University Centers)
(On a Scale Ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 Connoting Weak or Non-Existent Status)**

Characteristic	Branch Campus	Extended Campus
Local Role in Decisions About Programs	4-5	1-2
Strong Local Campus and Community Presence	4-5	2
High Level Campus Director in the Parent Campus Administration	4	2
Strong Local Advisory or Governing Role	3-4	1
Comprehensive Program Inventory	3-4	1-2
Presence of Local Faculty Complement	4-5	1

⁴² These are generalized assignments, as the characteristics will vary from state to state and system to system.

Several states have used the branch campus option as a solution to their place-bound student needs; among them are California (e.g., Contra Costa, North San Diego—now the 20th four-year institution in the state university system—and Ventura), Washington, and Arizona. In two of the cases (Washington and Arizona) responsibility for branch campus operations is assigned to research universities, although the governance systems of these two states are different: Washington has independent institutional governing boards for its universities and a statewide higher education coordinating board; Arizona has a state university system.

All of these states initially opted for upper-level university forms (ULU). The University of Washington used the Arizona State University West (ASUW) campus as a model. ASUW was modeled, in turn, on the Clear Lake campus of the University of Houston.

Several institutions began as ULUs and evolved into relatively full-service institutions. North San Diego State is one. The University of Colorado at Denver is becoming another. Florida International University and the University of North Florida at Jacksonville are two others. The University of Michigan at Dearborn also is a former ULU.

A close tie with the local community college is important. The program must build on a strong community college effort if the upper-level concept is to succeed. Some argue that the upper-level universities should be co-located with a community college campus, not only to share capital facilities, such as libraries, classrooms, and parking lots, but also to provide the upper-division students with the lower-division courses they need to flesh out their programs.

There are other forms, the point being that there are other ways to address needs and move toward an ultimate solution than beginning with a new four-year public institution, although, if conditions warrant, that may be the final result.

CONTRACTS WITH ACCREDITED INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS

The involvement of Owensboro's two independent colleges in the accomplishment of the higher education goals is essential. In Kentucky the present relationship between government and the independent higher education institutions revolves principally around student financial aid programs, which involve funding needy students, facilitating access and expanding choice.

In a report prepared several years ago by the present author it was noted that approximately 22 states had programs that authorized contracts with accredited independent institutions. "Grants or contracts were awarded, for example, for the purposes of increasing enrollments in particular programs, ensuring the availability of various program services [in a community], reinforcing institutional vitality, and

reserving space for public purposes.²⁴³ In these cases, contracts with individual institutions were the common vehicle. Sometimes these contracts were designed to address specific societal, individual, or community needs. Contracts for places in certain programs, frequently those in health-related fields, were one form; more general enrollment contracts between the state and the institution were another.

A number of states authorize contracts with independent colleges and universities to address public policy needs if this is the more cost-effective approach. Florida, for example, operates on a principle that all of the available higher education resources must be utilized in the fulfillment of education needs. Independent institutions are reimbursed for the true cost of providing the contracted service, and contracts are awarded to institutions on the basis of quality and effectiveness. In Connecticut an institution may be reimbursed for up to 50 percent of the costs of providing the service.

State programs based on direct contracts with independent institutions for places in available degree programs that align with a community's strategic plan would offer an alternative to the possible duplicative competitive development of programs in the public sector and would offer a way to bring existing programs more fully into the response to community needs.

Contracting allows a state and a community to take advantage of the range of available education programs in a cooperative, collaborative, and clearly cost-effective manner. It is an option worthy of consideration in the case of Owensboro.

A NEW COURSE: EVALUATION CRITERIA

The essential ingredients of a strategic program are goals, a mechanism for assessing the efficacy of the chosen approach in accomplishing these goals, and an organization to manage on a continuous basis. Criteria for evaluating alternatives and options are important.

- To the extent possible and practical, a solution must build upon existing resources and institutions, their missions and programs, and impart minimal negative effects on their continued vitality.
- It must be centered on the achievement of the community's long-range higher education goals.
- It must have strong community support.
- It must have the potential for growth and continuity and development as needs require.

⁴³ William Chance, *From Rhetoric to Reality, Washington and its Independent Colleges and Universities* for the Washington Independent Colleges Association (nee, Washington Friends of Higher Education), December 1986, p. 25.

- It must be programmatically and institutionally responsive to local and regional higher education needs.
- It must articulate programmatically with and to the extent possible accommodate the programs of other institutions to facilitate student progression.
- Although legislative attention might be needed, it must be feasible, both in short- and long-term expressions. It must make sense.
- It must pursue a clear community-centered mission.
- It must accommodate, incorporate, and count upon distance education technologies.
- It must accommodate a strong community presence in its planning and governance structure.
- Its programs and presence must correspond with local and regional conceptions of an institutional presence.

A NEW COURSE: STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The following initiatives align with these criteria. They describe an organizational structure and a program that would operate to address local education needs, facilitate cooperation and coordination among Owensboro's institutions, and move the community in the direction of its goals and greater higher education program comprehensiveness.

COMMUNITY HIGHER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

It is difficult to see how the Owensboro/Daviess County community can progress toward the accomplishment of its higher education goals without an organization to guide, oversee, and give coherence to a goal accomplishment campaign.⁴⁴ Progress will not be great if the community continues to depend on uncoordinated, isolated, and disparate initiatives. Without a coordinated campaign it also is likely that the higher education participation and attainment levels will not change very much.

A community association that would be broadly representative of Owensboro's and Daviess County's civic, education, and business interests should be established to guide and oversee the goal accomplishment program.

The purposes of the association should be to direct a long-term, at least fifteen-year, campaign to increase higher education participation and attainment rates among community residents and adults to proportions comparable to those represented in the averages attained by Fayette County in the Year 2000 Census and to provide a

⁴⁴ This notion was discussed by telephone with Dr. Aims McGuiness on January 25, 2005, and some of these ideas reflect his writings, e.g., "The Rationale and Feasibility of an Integrated Learning System for Richmond-Wayne County, Indiana," NCHEMS, March 6, 2002.

coordinating framework and organization base for the initiatives and actions that will be necessary to accomplish and sustain this goal.

The functions and responsibilities of the association should include at least the following:

- Establish and adopt long-term higher education goals and benchmarks for measuring progress.
- Continuously assess need, plan, organize, and evaluate initiatives consistent with the overall goals and mission.
- Act on behalf of the community to obtain the services of providers of higher education programs, including others outside of the area and Kentucky’s research universities, to meet specific needs.
- Advocate for contractual arrangements between Kentucky and the local independent institutions for enrollments in programs that align with the strategic plan.
- Seek private gifts and contributions for these purposes.⁴⁵
- Serve as a community higher education gatekeeper, broker, and facilitator.
- Operate a higher education center in Owensboro.

The two strongest themes that emerged during the research concerned interests in more cooperation and collaboration and a stronger public four-year institution program presence.

The association would not itself provide programs directly but would rely on brokering, contracting, and coordinating programs of the institutions, public and private, drawing on other institutions outside of the area for programs and services if necessary.

INCREASED COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION AMONG INSTITUTIONS

The two strongest themes that emerged during the study concerned community interests in more cooperation and collaboration among existing higher education providers and a stronger public four-year institution program presence, often identified as a “new public four-year institution.” A higher education center also aroused considerable interest. The recommendations of this report encompass these as strategies.

The association must represent a persistent community interest in accomplishing more cooperative and collaborative relationships among OCTC and WKU-O, other public Kentucky institutions, Brescia, and Kentucky Wesleyan.

⁴⁵ Legislation may be necessary to establish such an association as a quasi-public entity to receive public funds and perform these functions.

Such relationships should include contractual arrangements and measures that could combine courses of separate institutions into synergistic new program structures, designed as much as possible to address future economic conditions, development of a common integrated community institution course/program catalog, and cross registration and resource sharing, among others.

The advocacy association also should work to bring additional needed programs into the community, particularly master's programs and, if needed, the WKU cooperative doctoral program with the University of Louisville. In its program planning efforts, the advocacy association should stress the potential of "sequential cohort" programs that could be offered periodically on an as-needed basis in Owensboro.

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE WKU BRANCH CAMPUS IN OWENSBORO

Western classifies the WKU program in Owensboro as an "Extended Campus". Owensboro's long-term community interest lies in the direction of a more comprehensive public four-year institution presence. However this becomes manifest, the short-term practicalities favor an Owensboro *branch* campus of a Kentucky public university. In all probability this would be WKU.

The branch could and probably should have a special program emphasis – such as a regional center for the provision of programs in the health sciences with close ties to the regional hospital.

The branch should have a special program emphasis – such as a regional center for the provision of programs in the health sciences with close ties to the regional hospital.

At the same time, and whether or not such a focus applies, the association also should work continuously with WKU and other institutions to bring needed programs in the Technical, Science, Engineering, Agriculture, and Health areas to Owensboro. Special attention might be directed to accomplishing a conjoint Bachelor of Applied Technology program that combines OCTC's Associate of Applied Science and a WKU upper-division/management specialization. Other programs that prepare students for "jobs of the future," by providing a combination of technical and managerial skills, also deserve attention.

Finally, nominalism is important: "A Branch Campus of a Kentucky University in Owensboro" is a more prestigious concept both for the parent institution and for the community, as well as the branch itself, than a title that denotes an off-campus site of a regional university.

There are, however, more substantial differences, including the relatively greater autonomy from the home campus the branch concept implies, a greater capacity to bring in programs from the parent campus or to establish its own, local faculty and staffing, and a considerably greater opportunity for the community to be involved in local governance decisions.

HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER

The hopes for greater cooperation and collaboration among existing institutions will not be realized if left to the drag of momentum. The higher education association should be a mechanism to make things happen. Under its auspices a higher education facility could be established and operated. Such a center would be a place in which all of the interested local institutions could offer courses and share facilities cooperatively and collaboratively. There could be programs composed of the courses of several participating institutions, cross-registration, a shared library, and full programs offered by individual institutions, including those contracted for from providers in Owensboro and throughout the country.

Essentially the Center would be a multi-institution facility in which coordinated academic and technical programs at the upper-division and graduate level are provided. It also could serve as a site for endowed professorships, such as the St. Louis “Des Lee’s Vision” program, which seek to bring higher education’s expertise to bear on community issues and problems.

The Center might be modeled to some extent on the Greenville Higher Education Center complex, which features modern classrooms, computer laboratories, study areas, conference rooms, counseling areas, student commons, exhibit hall, televised study classrooms, administration and faculty offices, and which is jointly occupied by components of several institutions.

In Owensboro, OCTC should continue to provide the preponderance of public lower-division instruction; its classroom and laboratory facilities also could be potential instruction sites, on a time-available basis. In addition, Center classrooms and other instructional facilities would be available to any participating institution.

Basic roles and responsibilities associated with institution involvement would be specified through memoranda of understanding and inter-local agreements developed and managed by the advocacy association.

Individual institutions would assume responsibility to provide the preponderant portions of individual programs, filling in gaps with courses offered by other participating institutions; student financial assistance would be available through the institution sponsoring the respective students’ program.

The facility would have an instruction mission centered on community needs, and the program focus would be academic and technical, with instructional programs suited to area needs and interests; a heavy emphasis would be placed on fully articulating (“seamless”) lower- and upper-division programs.

A community operated higher education center could be a multi-institution facility in which coordinated academic and technical programs at the upper-division and graduate levels are provided.

The higher education center could serve as a delivery site for Kentucky Virtual University and other degree programs available through the Internet. It also might be located in a refurbished building in the downtown area, in which case it could be an important downtown asset for the community. Significantly, while some public funding for this purpose might be sought, most states, certainly including Kentucky, are no longer spending a lot of money on new physical facilities, so the Center would need to be promoted by the community. The association's roles in bringing this about and managing such a facility are obvious. Similarly, the presence of strong and active community support and employment-relevant education would be assured through the advocacy association.

While both the recommended WKU branch campus and the Owensboro Higher Education Center might ultimately evolve and converge in time into a comprehensive public four-year presence, should that need continue to grow and be manifest, they could operate in their initial forms as long as the community's services were being fulfilled.

Finally, an additional point worth noting: all of these measures – participation and attainment rate goals, community higher education organizational structures, multi-institution higher education center, and strengthened services of regional universities - align with the spirit of the Kentucky CPE's draft Public Agenda and visions of a stronger stewardship role for the state's regional universities.

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A NEW COURSE: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary form the recommendations of this report are the following:

- An Owensboro higher education advocacy association should be created to direct a long-term campaign to increase higher education participation and attainment rates among community residents and to provide a coordinating framework and organization base for the initiatives and actions that will be necessary to accomplish and sustain these goals.
- Higher education participation rate and attainment level goals equivalent to those of Fayette County in the Year 2000 Census should be adopted. These participation rate and attainment levels should be reached by the year 2020.
- Authority and funding for contractual relationships between the Commonwealth of Kentucky and accredited independent colleges and universities should be sought for the purpose of acquiring spaces in programs that accord with the community's or the state's strategic plan.
- The higher education advocacy association should work continuously with WKU and other institutions to bring needed programs in the Technical, Science, Engineering, Agriculture, and Health areas to Owensboro.

- Special attention should be directed to forming a conjoint Bachelor of Applied Technology program that coordinates a WKU upper-division management major with OCTC's Associate of Applied Science on the OCTC campus.
- The WKU Extended Campus program should be elevated to a full-fledged University Branch through which a more comprehensive public four-year institution program inventory could be pursued and maintained. This will require action both on the home campus in Bowling Green and by the Council for Postsecondary Education and, possibly, the Legislature in Frankfort.
- A community operated higher education facility should be established under the auspices of the higher education advocacy association. It should be a place in which the interested local institutions could offer courses and share facilities cooperatively and collaboratively and in which there could be cross-registration, a shared library, and programs offered by individual institutions.

This report ends here. The recommendations may require further development, and legislation, but they should not be abandoned because of their ambition. The case for action is compelling. Owensboro needs more than it has. It is time for it to chart a new course.

