

Purdue University Calumet: Transitioning Toward Excellence

Introduction

Since 2006, Purdue University Calumet has been on a road of transition and transformation, moving from its roots as an all-purpose community campus to that of a regional university more narrowly focused on increasing its number of baccalaureate and master's degree graduates.

The transformation of Purdue Calumet and other Indiana regional universities is in response to a goal of Hoosier higher education to increase the number of state residents with post-high school credentials to 60 percent by the year 2025. With the Indiana Commission for Higher Education having effectively shifted various former educational delivery and service roles of regional campuses to the Ivy Tech State community college system, Purdue Calumet's transition into its new role has continued during 2012-13.

Our efforts to advance excellence, though steadfast, continue to be challenged by a changing Northwest Indiana regional higher educational environment that also remains affected by recent economic woes. Nonetheless, we have learned much during our transition and are applying lessons learned to advance and position Purdue Calumet for excellence.

As a redefined, transforming Purdue Calumet, we seek to attract successful high school and community college graduates capable of and committed to earning a Purdue degree as full time students. We also strive to continue advancing our region's economic development.

Our continuing transition

To accommodate our current role as a regional university, whose intention is producing more baccalaureate and master's degree graduates, we continue to build our foundation. Our recent implementation of a 5-year incremental increase of minimum undergraduate admission requirements is reshaping Purdue Calumet. Whereas four years ago we denied admission to some **40 applicants**, during the current 2012-13 academic year some **1,200 applicants** were denied admission due to being sufficiently prepared for the rigors of academic work on our campus.

In addition to having discontinued associate degree programs, we no longer admit students with English remediation needs. Likewise, effective at the close of the current semester, students needing math remediation will no longer be admitted.

The 2012-13 academic year also has been one in which full-time enrollment in our academic schools has declined, while enrollment in our academic outreach programs has increased. Our transition toward advancing excellence is fueling development of a strategic enrollment management plan in response to our distinct needs. Moreover, through more effective and comprehensive data acquisition/development, we continue to ascertain more about the university we seek to become and the students and partners we must attract to make it happen.

Graduation & retention

The number of baccalaureate and master's degree recipients at Purdue Calumet increased this past year from 977 to 1005 and 330 to 342 respectively.

Given the relatively large number of part-time and returning/transfer students, we embrace "degree attainment" as a much more representative indicator of our academic success than our 1-year retention and 6-year graduation rates. Nonetheless, we demonstrated increases in both categories the past year: *retention—69.2% from 68.5%, and graduation: 28% from 25.8%.*

Enrollment

The head count last fall of 10,054 was up from 9,786 in fall 2011 and represents the second highest overall enrollment in our history, but the total is misleading. Of greater concern and a more telling indicator of Purdue Calumet's changing environment is that our full time enrollment declined to 5,245 from 5,926.

Also indicative of our changing student body has been a continued increase in enrolled hours within our academic outreach programs (15,000, up from 5,206 two years ago) and a reduction among enrolled hours within our academic schools (86,674, down from 97,768 in fall of 2010). A reduction in the number of full time enrolled students has contributed significantly to our dip in enrolled hours within our academic schools.

Our academic outreach programs include Saturday MBA for Executives, English language training for international students, on-line offerings in nursing and graduate education, and high school dual credit. State reimbursement for these programs is less than the state support we receive for academic school enrollment.

Scrutinizing our operation & moving forward

We recently announced that we are addressing a current shortfall in our campus operating revenue and anticipate a projected \$4 million shortfall during the 2013-14 fiscal year, due in part, to reasons previously noted. Equally relevant, a steady decline in enrollment at our south Lake County-based Academic Learning Center (476 students in 2012 down from 1,406 in 2008) has prompted the decision to close this facility for an annual savings of over 280,000 dollars.

We also have been comprehensively reviewing all of our academic programs and related metrics of excellence as we consider the viability of under-enrolled programs. In studying faculty workloads, we have determined overstaffing in some programs and understaffing in others. At this time, some 12-15 non-tenured faculty positions have been identified for elimination.

We believe the key to our success in moving forward is the completion and implementation of an appropriate enrollment management plan designed to advance our goals and objectives as a transforming regional university and a producer of more Purdue baccalaureate and master's degree graduates. To provide leadership in that regard, we are recruiting a Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.

Becoming the Purdue Calumet we must become

Ultimately, as we transform into a more successful regional university—Northwest Indiana’s university of choice—we must demonstrate absolute commitment to our students and their persistence in achieving a higher education degree as well as the vitality of Northwest Indiana by continuing to secure, advance and engage in vital partnerships.

Purdue Calumet’s Strategic Plan (2013-18) for ADVANCING EXCELLENCE

- **Academic Excellence**
- **Learning through Engagement and Discovery**
- **Inclusivity**
- **Community and Business Partnerships**

Academic Excellence

Academic excellence is the cornerstone of Purdue Calumet. In response, strategically, we plan to: (1) conduct a thorough assessment of all our academic programs regarding interest and demand while developing measures of distinction; (2) upgrade our honors program to an Honors College to provide expanded opportunities for students to partner with faculty in undergraduate research; (3) develop student recruitment & admission strategies that focus on the needs and values of existing and potential students through a new Enrollment Management Plan; (4) develop and implement advisory, instructional and support resources to help students persist to graduation; (5) maintain appropriate and up-to-date campus facilities/labs that contribute to a functional, attractive, and safe campus; (6) strengthen sustainability of our international program by encouraging international student recruitment, study abroad opportunities, and faculty collaborations; and (7) encourage and develop excellence among faculty, staff, and student employees.

Learning through Engagement and Discovery

Driving this goal are:(1) expanding opportunities of our distinctive experiential learning initiative; (2) fostering a mentoring culture that prompts development of skills and knowledge outside traditional classrooms and workplace settings; (3) holistically supporting and developing students through volunteerism opportunities, a leadership development program, improved job and graduate school placement, and expanded health and wellness programs; and (4) increased student participation in research opportunities.

Inclusivity

This goal will be achieved by:(1) recognizing and celebrating the diverse people who learn and work on our campus; (2) expanding a sense of community on campus by fostering global and intercultural awareness; (3) our faculty and staff embracing a culture of adaptation

and change; (4) improving our competencies to work with diverse groups; and (5) becoming a leader in the development of an inclusive NW Indiana community.

Community and Business Partnerships

We will develop partnerships by: (1) increasing our campus profile through athletics expansion and success, including involvement with middle and high school level constituents; (2) increasing and embracing fundraising as a major university initiative; (3) becoming more engaged with alumni and friends while shaping regional economic development through development of Commercialization and Manufacturing Centers, as well as responding to regional and national concerns through our world-class Water Institute, Energy Efficiency and Reliability Center, and Center for Innovation through Visualization and Simulation; and (4) work with current partners to maximize resources to strengthen our community.

Noteworthy during 2012-13

During the current fiscal/academic year, we have:

(a) prioritized development of our 2013-18 Strategic Plan to enable Purdue Calumet to become the “University of Choice” in NW Indiana by 2018;

(b) acquired a nearby business building for conversion into the Purdue University Calumet Commercialization Center (We need to fundraise \$2 million for renovation/furnishings.);

(c) obtained federal grants to fund development of Water Institute and Energy Efficiency & Reliability Center labs on campus, thanks to help from NW Indiana Congressman Pete Visclosky;

(d) expanded our intercollegiate athletics program to 12 sports with the emergence of men’s and women’s soccer last fall and the hiring this year of baseball and softball coaches whose teams will begin competition in 2013-14. (*We anticipate our athletics program becoming the catalyst of some 200 full-time student athletes enrolling each academic year.*);

(e) introduced a master’s degree program in the field of modeling, simulation & visualization—a cutting edge offering that connects the current needs of today with the emerging needs of tomorrow; and

(f) advanced plans to develop a new campus Student Recreation Center, including Student Counseling and Student Health facilities, to help enable our regional university to grow in student functionality and appeal.

Purdue Calumet’s “Big 7” for 2013-14

1. Enrollment Management Plan/Strategy
2. Demographics
3. Development & Outreach
4. Commercialization Center
5. Dowling Park Sports Complex
6. Academic Scholarships
7. Downtown Towle Theater

These “Big 7” indicate specific initiatives that we look forward to advancing during the upcoming fiscal year: (1) previously referenced; (2) improving our ability to access vital data; (3) fundraising, partnerships, etc. as previously referenced; (4) securing \$2 million in private gifts for development of this catalyst for economic development; (5) developing/fundraising, in partnership with the City of Hammond, the outdoor “home” of Peregrine athletics teams; (6) developing and re-assessing resources for new merit student scholarships; and (7) partnering with the City of Hammond to bring Purdue Calumet cultural activities to downtown Hammond.

#