Assessing the Kent State University East Liverpool Campus against the Customer Focus Category of the 2011-2012 Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to assess Kent State University East Liverpool Campus against the Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence concerning the third category, which pertains to customer focus. To obtain the information needed for this report, I conducted several scheduled interviews with key administrative individuals within the East Liverpool Campus system. Those individuals include Dr. Susan Rossi, Assistant Dean; Bethany K. Gadd, Interim Director and Marketing Assistant of Public Relations; Shawn D. Golden, Assistant Professor of the Computer Technology Department; David E. Guy, Special Assistant to the Dean and Coordinator of Academic and Disability Services; Candice Solterback, Secretary to the Dean; and Deborah Woods, Career Development Coordinator. Because the answers to the Baldrige Education Criteria questions can be fairly in-depth, I was not able to gain answers to all of the questions from each of the individuals I interviewed. However, questions that some could not answer, others could. I would like to stress that most, if not all of those I interviewed, felt that the questions seemed to repeat themselves.

To begin, this reports starts with a brief paragraph pertaining to the history of the East Liverpool Campus, followed by its individual mission statement. Afterward, I have listed those I interviewed including their backgrounds. While some of you reading this report may be familiar with the Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, others may not. Therefore, I have included a section defining what the Baldrige Criteria is in general, followed by the description of the Customer Focus category. The questions that pertain to this particular area are then listed with the answers I obtained from my interviews. These interviews were recorded with the permission of each interviewee and because I had so many, I will be using what I obtained from all of them to answer the questions. Reason being, some had answers to certain question while other did not. Also, this will be a fairly long report because I had such a huge response when requesting interviews. These particular individuals set time aside from their own busy schedules to help me so I want to make sure that I include the most important things they had to say. My conclusion is formed by the information I recovered from interview responses.

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LIVERPOOL CAMPUS

"The East Liverpool Campus of Kent State University was permanently established in 1965. It began as an academic center in the International Brotherhood of Pottery building. In June 1968, the center became a Regional Campus of Kent State University and - thanks to the generosity of the East Liverpool City Schools which sold the former high school buildings to Kent for $1.00 - moved to its present facilities on East Fourth Street. In 1989, the Mary Patterson Building, a former women's residence, was purchased by the Friends of the East Liverpool Campus and was partially renovated in 1993. In 1996, the campus undertook a capital fundraising campaign, "Opening Doors to Opportunity," which raised $956,000 from the community to completely transform the Mary Patterson Building into a state-of-the-art learning center. In addition to the private donations, Kent State University and the State of Ohio contributed a total of $2 million in additional funds to complete the project. The Grand Re-Opening of the building was held in May 2000." (About Columbiana County, 2011)

MISSION STATEMENT

"Kent State University East Liverpool Campus, an open admission campus, provides high quality credit and non-credit courses and educational programs, career preparation, stimulation of critical thinking, and enhancement of creative and educational activity. Located in the Appalachian region, this campus also serves as a cultural center, thereby enhancing the quality of life. Educational opportunities and programs provide insight into local cultures, and increase understanding and appreciation of the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the region. Although regionally unique, Kent State East Liverpool shares the eight-campus network mission: to advance knowledge and creative activity, and to further the fulfillment of key societal goals." (KSUEL, 2011)

INTERVIEWS

I had the pleasure of interviewing the following six very inspirational, influential, and informative Kent State University East Liverpool Campus administrators, directors, and coordinators. The following information includes their backgrounds and answers to the questions pertaining to the Customer Focus category.

SUSAN ROSSI, PH.D., ASSISTANT DEAN, OFFICE OF THE DEAN

DR. Rossi comes to Kent State East Liverpool from Eastern Gateway Community College, formerly Jefferson Community College (JCC), in Steubenville, Ohio. At JCC, she held the position of dean of business, engineering and information technologies/humanities and social sciences. In this capacity she worked closely with faculty and staff to broaden existing programs. Additionally, during her tenure at JCC, she implemented a registered health information technology degree, a power plant operation degree and an electric utilities technician degree. Certificate programs she helped implement include one in entrepreneurship, one in real estate and two in the engineerinG arena for welding. DR. Rossi also began the school's Quest Programs, which include MathQuest, BizQuest, ChemQuest and MediaQuest. These day-long workshops introduce area students to various career opportunities in the fields of math, business, chemistry and media. They also encourage students to take college preparatory classes as they progress into high school. In addition to overseeing a budget of more than $2 million, Rossi authored or co-authored numerous grants. While dean of business, computer, and office information technologies, DR. Rossi co-authored a Tech Prep grant for creation of a wireless, mobile laptop lab for the accounting department. She was also responsible for recruiting all full-time and adjunct faculty members and providing them with continuous training. DR. Rossi's responsibilities also included course scheduling and evaluating all of her division's faculty and staff.   Prior to working for Jefferson Community College, Dr. Rossi was the coordinator of housing at Youngstown State University and an admissions counselor at Ursuline College. Dr. Rossi is an active member with the Steubenville Rotary and a board member for the Salvation Army. She holds a Ph.D. in administration and management from Walden University.

BETHANY K. GADD, INTERIM DIRECTOR, MARKETING ASSISTANT, PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Ms. Gadd and I had a phone interview and somehow got cut-off before I could get her background. I can assure you that she is very knowledgeable in her area of expertise, not to mention, a wonderful

person who obviously cares deeply for others and their success. She is a great asset to Kent State's East Liverpool Campus.

SHAWN D. GOLDEN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Professor Golden came to Kent State East Liverpool in August of 2004 and teaches many courses in the area of computer technology. Not only is Professor Golden exceptionally knowledgeable in his field of teaching, he goes above and beyond to help all students achieve their goals, while at the same time, referring them for jobs. It is because of the inspiration and mentorship I have received from Professor Golden, that my dream is to become a teacher. He has inspired me deeply throughout my entire journey at Kent which started in the spring of 2005, and I felt that it was appropriate to mention that. Prior to his arrival at Kent, Professor Golden taught for seven years at the East Liverpool High School. Professor Golden holds a B.S. in Mathematics from Youngstown State University where he graduated in 1994. He also holds a Master's Degree in Instructional Technology from Kent State University where he graduated in 2002. Professor Golden is currently working on his doctorate.

DAVID E. GUY, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE DEAN, COORDINATOR OF ACADEMIC AND DISABILITY SERVICES

Mr. Guy attended Ohio State University where he majored in engineering. He later transferred to Mount Union College to play basketball and while there obtained his education degree in English. He then taught in English at the East Palestine High School for ten years at which time he coached as well. He was promoted to Principal at EPHS where he stayed for over 20 more years. Mr. Guy finally retired but didn't want to stop so he went on to teaching at Youngstown State University. He then received a call from KSUEL's Dean Nolte requesting his help at which time he came to KSUEL and has been here ever since.

DEBORAH WOODS, CAREER DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

At the age of 21, Mrs. Woods was hired as a grade school and high school teacher in the Parochial schools of Pittsburgh, PA that were private catholic schools. After that she worked odd jobs in business before attending Indiana University of Pennsylvania for graduate school. She was employed at Butler County Community College in PA right after graduate school where she started a career center and worked there for seven years on a grant. It is after that when she came to KSUEL where she has been for 12 years now. Mrs. Woods has held the title of Career Development Coordinator for ten years and has done a variety of jobs along with that which include advising, career counseling, testing, proctoring and teaching.

CANDICE SOLTERBACK, SECRETARY TO THE DEAN

Mrs. Solterback graduated from Beaver Local High School in 1974. She then went on to attend college at Kent State University where she spent one year on the main campus and two years at KSUEL. Her initial goal was to teach Business and Office Education. However, during her studies at KSUEL, she became the first student to ever work in the office. After going to school for a few years she decided that she didn't want to teach Business and Office she wanted to do it. She then quit college and worked at a hospital for a while. Ever since she worked as a student in the office during college, her dream was to come back to work for KSUEL. Mrs. Solterback's dream came true 24 years ago this coming

November. She started out at KSUEL as the Assistant Dean's Secretary and eventually became the Secretary to the Dean.

THE BALDRIGE EDUCATION CRITERIA FOR PERFORMANCE

"The *2011-2012 Education Criteria for Performance Excellence* (referred to as the Education Criteria) is used by organizations that provide educational services in the United States and its territories. The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence provide a systems perspective for understanding performance management. They reflect validated, leading-edge management practices against which an organization can measure itself. With their acceptance nationally and internationally as the model for performance excellence, the Criteria represent a common language for communication among organizations for sharing best practices. The Criteria are also the basis for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award process."   (NIST, 2011)

The requirements for the education criteria are divided into seven categories: (1) Leadership; (2) Strategic Planning; (3) Customer Focus; (4) Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; (5) Workforce Focus; (6) Operations Focus; and (7) Results. These seven categories are subdivided into 17 process and result items that each focus on a major requirement. (NIST, 2011) The first six categories are made up of process items, while the seventh category is made up of result items. It is beyond the scope of this paper to cover all seven categories; therefore, it will only cover information obtained for the customer focus category.

CATEGORY 3: THE BALDRIGE EDUCATION CRITERIA FOR CUSTOMER FOCUS
"The Customer Focus category addresses how an organization seeks to engage its customers, with a focus on listening to and supporting them, determining their satisfaction, offering the right programs and services, and building relationships that result in loyalty to the organization and its programs and services. This category stresses customers' engagement as an important outcome of an overall learning and performance excellence strategy." (NIST, 2011) The two process items covered in this category are; (1) Voice of the Customer; and (2) Customer Engagement.

3.1 VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER
This item examines how an organization engages its students and stakeholders to determine their satisfaction and dissatisfaction for long-term market success. This engagement strategy includes how the organization listens to the voice of its customers (students and stakeholders), builds customer relationships, and uses customer information to improve and identify opportunities for innovation. It also examines the organization's processes for using these data. The aim is to capture meaningful information in order to exceed students' and stakeholders' expectations. (NIST, 2011)

QUESTIONS ASKED
To describe HOW Kent State University East Liverpool Campus listens to students and stakeholders and gains satisfaction and dissatisfaction information, please answer the following questions:

A) STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER LISTENING

(1) LISTENING TO CURRENT STUDENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS
How do you listen to students and stakeholders to obtain actionable information? How do your listening methods vary for different student groups, stakeholder groups, or market segments? How do you use social media and Web-based technologies to listen to students and stakeholders, as appropriate? How do your listening methods vary across the stages of students' and stakeholders' relationships with you? How do you follow up with students and stakeholders on the quality of educational programs and services, student and stakeholder support, and transactions to receive immediate and actionable feedback?

According to Dr. Rossi, depending on how you define who the customer is, the way KSUEL obtains information is going to vary according to the situation. Obviously, KSUEL's customers are students, internal faculty, staff members, administration, and the entire community at large. We are all serving each other. KSUEL obtains actionable information from students using the survey of instruction (student evaluations) which is completed by each student at the end of every semester for each class. This survey is not only used to evaluate the instructor but the course itself as well. Not only do students take this opportunity to evaluate instruction, they sometimes include comments that do not pertain to instruction at all. While some comments may pertain to the teacher others may be about the parking situation or that a room isn't clean. Because KSUEL has that information, they can act on those types of things as well. These surveys are included in the decision when a faculty member goes up for renewal. Not only are these surveys used for faculty renewals or finding what needs improved by a faculty member, they are also used when faculty members are brought up for a merit award. Faculty members take these surveys very seriously. KSUEL also has an end of the year survey which is much more quantitative from the student perspective.

Dr. Rossi stated that when KSUEL wants very specific information, it can and has held focus groups of students. For example, this past summer KSUEL started looking into the barriers blocking students from success. Instead of assuming what those barriers might be, focus groups enable the student to voice the barriers they are experiencing. During one focus group, a professional expert from the Kent campus who specializes in focus groups and how to conduct them attended with a structured list of questions that the students were asked. The questions were structured in a way that didn't lead the students to what the answers were; instead they were more like an open-ended "Can you tell us?" The compiled information of student answers was then taken to the computation of faculty so that they would know what the students were saying. Then it is determined from there as to how the university can help students overcome some of those barriers. The focus group not only helped identify student barriers, students would share recommendations as to how the university could help them overcome barriers, while at the same time, recommending solutions to each other. There is a facilitator that leads the questions. The answers are recorded by a scribe in the room that basically writes down what students are saying. These scribes are people from Kent that are trained in this type of data technique. It's a braining storming type of thing. It's not a time to evaluate. KSUEL will have a series of these particular focus groups to look for patterns in terms of hearing the same things over and over and to see whether a certain segment of students are experiencing the same barriers. Focus groups can be held for gathering information on many things.

Also, Dr. Rossi stated that other ways of obtaining input from students is by inviting them to become members of standing committees, hiring committees, or event committees. KSUEL also has a student government that, among other things, obtains input from students and stakeholders. According to Mr. Guy, another way of obtaining input from students and stakeholders is through telephone calls. However, telephone calls are not always a successful means of doing so. The traditional land line of the past when telephone numbers stayed the same is not the case today especially because of the wide use of cell phones. He also stated that many times, when trying to contact a student, he finds that the number was disconnected. According to Mrs. Woods, the student service department has an open door policy. Students come in either to talk or just vent. Her department uses email and phone calls quite frequently. She receives phone calls from the public who may have seen her name on the Web site and then call her to obtain information. She has even received emails from people in other countries requesting information on how to come to school here. The student service department's process of listening varies in many ways; however, active listening during a one-on-one basis whether through emails, phone calls, or office visits is used mostly.

Informational nights are another mechanism used; however, these nights are for giving information to potential students, in terms of financial aid, or exploring majors. According to Dr. Rossi, KSUEL is going to have an open-house where potential students can explore all of the majors. According to Bethany Gadd, informational nights include presentations on the information given and program specific brochures are passed out along with names and phone numbers of advisors. Ms. Gadd also stated that while this is an information giving process, it is also used to obtain ideas from potential students. Any ideas obtained are passed on to the appropriate department.

As for social media and Web-based technologies, KSUEL has recently started Facebook and Twitter accounts as a way to keep students and stakeholders informed. This is for those that use social media as a venue. According to Ms. Gadd, while the social media sites are mainly used to provide information to current and potential students as well as alumni and the community, two-way communication through the exchange of questions is also encouraged. Information that is posted on the social media sites includes upcoming events, school closings, campus emergencies, and new construction just to name a few. The different departments and programs within KSUEL will forward information to Mrs. Gadd to post on the social media sites. KSUEL uses email as a major two-way communication tool with its students as far as financial aid, scheduling, alerts, school closings, and emergencies on campus. Email is also used for two-way communication among internal and external stakeholders. KSUEL also has its own Web site which is loaded with information available for current and potential students, as well, as internal and external stakeholders. It contains information about programs, course schedules, testing dates, informational nights, among the many other things. During informational nights, new students can register or enroll for free. Fliers and postcards are sent out which include dates for informational nights and a link directing people to the Web site where they can obtain more information. These mailings target mainly high school students. Information about these nights is also posted on the social media sites. Web-based technologies include Kent's portal called Flashline, where students can check their email, schedule

for classes, view program requirements, and complete course evaluations. According to Professor Golden, the use of the Flashline platform for completing course evaluations at some point may replace the paper and pencil version. Other Web-based technologies used are Blackboard Vista and Course Compass for teaching online classes. Students can interact with each other and their instructors using the email and discussion boards within these class programs.

According to Dr. Rossi, obtaining information from faculty members tends to be more informal. Stakeholders such as faculty, staff, and administration have meetings by department and by group when they can state their opinions, concerns, and ideas. Some meetings are individual while others are together. Commutation meetings are held at the beginning and of every semester. The purpose for these types of meetings is for working on things such as the strategic plan. According to Mrs. Solterback, she and the Dean both attended the faculty group meetings. According to Professor Golden, the Faculty Professional Development Center offers workshops and training for faculty members along with offering developmental ideas. This is a very good resource for faculty members. A very nice thing about it, he stated, is if a faculty member wants to do something specifically in his or her class they can contact the director to ask if they do particular things that would help. If they don't, the FPDC will try to put something together for the future. More locally, the KSUEL has a faculty council which is made up of just full-time faculty from the EL campus. It does, however, include an adjunct representative. This council meets at least twice a semester and more times as needed. During those meetings relevant topics are brought up that can be used to improve faculty instruction along with discussions on other topics that involves faculty members. For example, this group recently put together a training session for faculty members on what to do if there is an active shooter on campus. After the training the group met to discuss some of the things they could do individually on campus and in their classrooms to reinforce the idea from the training. Faculty member group meetings are times when faculty members can get together to bounce ideas among each other in terms of getting support from other faculty members, administrators, or services throughout the Kent system to get their needs met as well.

(2) LISTENING TO POTENTIAL STUDENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS
How do you listen to former students and stakeholders, potential students and stakeholders, and students and stakeholders of competitors to obtain actionable information and to obtain feedback on your educational programs and services, student and stakeholder support, and transactions, as appropriate?
People from KSUEL perform regular recruitment visits to surrounding high schools. According to Professor Golden, he does this himself sometimes to get his name out there among potential students who may be interested in the Computer Technology program. He stated that sadly, a lot of people don't realize that KSUEL has a Computer Technology program. Most people think of the KSUEL as a health centric university because of the Nursing, PT, and the OT programs which are the three biggest programs on campus. The Computer Technology department tries to stay in contact with alumni from that department. Professor Golden will sometimes receive calls from businesses requesting candidates for jobs requiring certain computer skills. When this happens he will try to think of a former or current student who may be a good candidate for the job and then pass that

information on. Exit surveys are given to students who are leaving in hopes of receiving feedback on things that need improved or what students' learning levels are throughout so that those things can be assessed. Also, according to Dr. Rossi, listening to potential students and stakeholders is mainly accomplished through university and program-specific accreditation. During this time other institutions are surveyed as well in terms of what they are doing and what their success rates are. This helps KSUEL see what competitors are doing. Faculty members will go to other institutions' annual conferences and meetings on best practices as part of the accreditation process. A lot of KSUEL's faculty members are accreditors in their own body and will visit other institutions to sit in judgment of them. This is done all the time and very systematically and the community advisory committees lend their opinions and advice as well all. Most of KSUEL's colleagues are proud of what they do, so as a professional courtesy, they are usually happy to give information if asked. They may not hand over their teaching materials, but will usually give certain information because they know it is for the good of the students. According to Dr. Rossi, following up with former students is accomplished through post-graduate surveys as well as employer surveys which will ask questions pertaining to how the student they hired is doing. Surveys are usually program-specific, although the university as a whole will send out alumni surveys. A lot of students want to raise their standard of living. Knowing how well they are doing after graduation is a metric that KSUEL must use when determining the quality of its educational programs and services.

B) DETERMINATION OF STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT

(1) SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT

How do you determine student and stakeholder satisfaction and engagement? How do these determination methods differ among student and stakeholder groups and market segments, as appropriate? How do your measurements capture actionable information for use in exceeding your students' and stakeholders' expectations and securing your students' and stakeholders' engagement?

According to Professor Golden, one concrete way KSUEL has of measuring these things in terms of students is retention. If a student is successful and continually going through a program while not dropping out, that is a one good indicator. Unfortunately, it is not a strong one. KSUEL uses the Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE) process, which crunches data and analyzes it, generating charts and graphs from how many students are enrolled part-time or full-time to more extensive measurements such as retention, enrollment, and how many students are freshmen or sophomores, and so on. The Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP), used for obtaining and retaining university accreditation is a separate process from RPIE, however, these processes work in conjunction with each other. AQIP will pull data from RPIE to support its argument. A process that has been worked on extensively over the past couple years for students at KSUEL, which also trickles out to other areas of the campus, is the First Year Experience Course. This particular course teaches new students how to use technology such as the Flashline platform and Blackboard Vista, but also teaches new students what services are available at KSUEL such as career, advising, library, and financial aid; and how to use them. During this course students also meet key individuals in each of these service departments. In the past, this was a pass/fail course that could be taken during any semester and did not affect the students' GPA. It has been dramatically

improved to be campus specific and now must be taken during a student's first semester and has changed to a letter grade which will affect the student's GPA. Professor Golden stated that the improvements of this class, especially in terms of being a mandatory first semester requirement, has saved him in particular, hours of teaching students how use the technology needed for his classes. KSUEL also has a new service that will help students complete their annual taxes for free. KSUEL has some of its own local programs for engaging the faculty. Rachel Esterly, the Instructional Technology Coordinator, develops workshops for things such as how to use PowerPoint or create quizzes and assessments in Blackboard Vista. These workshops are offered on an as needed basis. However, Ms. Esterly even works one-on-one with an individual if needed.

(2) SATISFACTION RELATIVE TO COMPETITORS
How do you obtain information on your students' and stakeholders' satisfaction relative to their satisfaction with your competitors? How do you obtain information on your students' and stakeholders' satisfaction relative to the satisfaction levels of students and stakeholders of other organizations providing similar educational programs or services or to appropriate benchmarks?
Not too much was obtained from anyone about this. While some said that information about student satisfaction pertaining to competitors could be obtained from transfer students and exit counseling by those leaving for another school, nobody knew for sure if that was done. According to Mr. Guy, if all of a sudden KSUEL obtained 80 transfer students from YSU all at the same time, then that would be something worth measuring. It seems to me that most hard data pertaining to anything and anything is obtained from RPIE. Also, through the accreditation process.

(3) DISSATISFACTION
How do you determine student and stakeholder dissatisfaction? How do your measurements capture actionable information for use in meeting your students' and stakeholders' requirements and exceeding their expectations in the future?
State mandated exams required in the completion of programs such as Nursing, PT, and OT are one way of capturing actionable information pertaining to student requirements. According to Dr. Rossi, Advisory committees of professionals go out into the field to gain information pertaining to trends. It is their job to find out what employers and industry are demanding in terms of skills. This information shows KSUEL what students need to know in the next five years and if the university is moving in the direction it needs to in terms of its curriculum. Professor Golden stated that the Computer Technology department has just started its own advisory board of local people within the workforce and technology industry. Tim Mcfadden, Director of Business Management and Related Technology, has taken on the role of director of this particular advisory board, which enables KSUEL's Computer Technology department to stay in touch with people in society and business for obtaining information on what the university needs to be doing in terms of providing society with students who have the right skills. This information helps the university to understand things that need to be evaluated in terms of meeting those stakeholders' needs. While the health allied programs are the most competitive on the EL campus to the point there are waiting lists for those programs, the Computer Technology program is opposite, having a low number of students. Professor Golden said that at some point he would like to see the Computer Technology program so

competitive that they have to turn people away, or have a criteria of its own that potential students must meet to get in because there are so many wanting in. Hopefully someday this will be the case. According to Mrs. Solterback, the Dean goes through a five-year review in which all internal stakeholder segments are involved. A huge component of that is the community. This review process is completed to inform the Dean how the campus is doing, how the employees are doing, how he is doing, what people would like KSUEL to be doing or to be involved in, and what the community would like to see offered at KSUEL. During this review many surveys are sent out to just about everyone on everything. The use of Survey Monkey is a particular tool used for this. The Dean's review is completed by another campus's Dean. Dean Nolte is currently reviewing the Dean of the Tuscarawas campus.

3.2 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

This item examines an organization's processes for identifying and innovating educational programs and services that serve its students and stakeholders; enabling them to seek information and support; and using student and stakeholder, market, and program and services information. This item also examines how an organization builds relationships with its students and stakeholders and manages complaints in order to retain students and stakeholders and increase their engagement with the organization. The aim of these efforts is to improve marketing, build a more student- and stakeholder-focused culture, enhance customer loyalty, and identify opportunities for innovation. (NIST, 2011)

QUESTIONS ASKED

To describe HOW Kent State University East Liverpool Campus determines educational programs and services, communication mechanisms to support students and stakeholders, builds student and stakeholder relationships, please answer the following questions:

A) **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT**

(1) **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

How do you identify student, stakeholder, and market requirements for educational programs and services? How do you identify and innovate educational programs and services to meet the requirements and exceed the expectations of your student and stakeholder groups and market segments (identified in your Organizational Profile)? How do you identify and innovate educational programs and services to attract new students and stakeholders and to provide opportunities for expanding relationships with existing students and stakeholders, as appropriate?

According to Dr. Rossi, to identify new programs and services KSUEL does a lot of market survey. In one particular instance KSUEL hired a company that had expertise in this area to do market research. Advisory groups talk to employers in the community as well. KSUEL has an entire process which has a lot of steps built into it for obtaining data that must be completed before that information can be taken to the Ohio board of Regents to possibly create a new degree. For existing programs, again, a lot of it is continuing research. That is why Kent is a research institution. Faculty members will do their own research to find new ways of meeting and exceeding students' expectations and they bring what they find back to the classroom to keep the curriculum fresh and

current. Innovation is also accomplished through the advisory committees and the participation in separate accreditation boards. According to Mrs. Solterback, Dean Nolte is always out and about being involved with the community. KSUEL has partnered with the YMCA, the Red Cross, the East Liverpool City Hospital, and does things with the Carnegie Library of East Liverpool. (I can attest to this because I am currently working on the KSUEL Digital Archive Project, which will offer free resources such as texts, photos, maps, video, and so forth. This project is a joint effort between KSUEL, the East Liverpool Carnegie Library, and the East Liverpool Historical Society.) There is an advisory board of community members that all work within the community to gain input from the public. Being community members they hold the pulse of the community. They meet once a month, at which time they bring information to KSUEL in terms of things needing improvements and things the campus can do. KSUEL has many community focus groups that include everyone from business people to residents. The purpose of these particular focus groups is to get ideas concerning what the public would like to see KSUEL do or have happen. Especially in terms of surrounding property and buildings. KSUEL purchased a lot of property surrounding it. Part of that property contained a building that was an eyesore that the community wanted to see gone and KSUEL made it happen. KSUEL holds these focus groups because it values its stakeholders and their opinions. KSUEL also works with the East Liverpool Chamber of Commerce by participating in their Edutech Corridor group which includes someone from every educational institution around. This particular group has brainstorming meetings for things such as how to get more high school students to come to KSUEL for Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO). Through PSEO, high school students receive both high school and college/university credit for college or university courses that are completed. There are informational nights held for these as well and are the nights when high school students can register or enroll for free. Getting input from the stakeholders and the community is an ongoing process with KSUEL.

(2) STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT
How do you enable students and stakeholders to seek information and support? How do you enable them to obtain educational programs and services from you and provide feedback on your educational programs and services and your student and stakeholder support? What are your key means of student and stakeholder support, including your key communication mechanisms? How do they vary for different student and stakeholder groups or market segments? How do you determine your students' and stakeholders' key support requirements? How do you ensure that these support requirements are deployed to all people and processes involved in student and stakeholder support?
According to Dr. Rossi, KSUEL has a lot of support services designed by the Kent system. There are many offices of staff whose jobs are specifically to offer support for various areas such as career exploration, academic preparation, job placement, financial aid, and disability, just to name a few. How KSUEL determines that students need those services are by the students deciding for themselves that they need a particular service or through faculty members who may force a student to get help from a particular service because they are not doing well. Some things are automatically triggered. For example, computer generated lists of students with certain low GPAs will be passed to Mr. Guy so that he can make phone calls to those students to try and determine the problem and

what support service could be of help to them. Other times the student would have to decide for themselves. Students are made aware of the support services available especially through the First-year Experience course. While sometimes students may need to be alerted, it is an open-door policy as well. Students are reminded a lot about the support services by adding information about these services in newsletters and on the Web site, while hoping they take advantage of them. As for internal stakeholders such as faculty, support services include the Faculty Professional Development Center, there is also a part of the human resource packages that include a listening post wellness service which is confidential for those who are having personal problems that they can be referred to or refer themselves to. There is an administrative structure for faculty members to request new equipment or material for a course. These are just a few. Dr. Rossi said that this particular section could be a 20-page report in itself. KSUEL also has a Care Team that an instructor or student can report incidents to such as a student always crying in class. The care team will talk to them to see why and if they can be helped.

(3) STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER SEGMENTATION
How do you use student and stakeholder, market, and educational programs and services information to identify current and anticipate future student and stakeholder groups and market segments? How do you consider students and stakeholders of competitors and other potential students and stakeholders and markets in this segmentation? How do you determine which students, stakeholder groups, and market segments to pursue for current and future educational programs and services?
According to Mr. Guy, programs and services are designed to according to changes in society. In today's world of sophisticated technology the public is demanding online classes. Allied Health programs at the EL campus are strong because there is a job market here for those types of jobs. The Computer Technology program enables students to obtain jobs in many different areas. While our area may be a depressed one in terms of industry, many jobs that pertain to Computer Technology can be accomplished at home. According to Mrs. Woods, programs and services are also identified by looking at the environment and economy of the area. And of course, through advisory boards who go out into the public to see what skills industry is demanding.

(4) STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER DATA USE
How do you use information on students, stakeholders, markets, and educational programs and services to improve marketing, build a more student- and stakeholder-focused culture, and identify opportunities for innovation?
According to Ms. Gadd, at the end of each semester there is a master list posted on the wall that includes all classes scheduled for the prior semester. Under each class name or course number, students are broken down into percentages of pass and fail rates. These charts help too narrow down which areas need more focus for improvement. Dr. Rossi used a perfect example in explaining these types of charts. She explained that she looks at these charts as the electronic version of, "Where do you put a sidewalk?" Any time you put up a new building or a new residence hall, one of the best things to do is not put down sidewalks for the first year. It might look like crap but the students will start walking and make paths where they need to be and then you pave them. By

doing it this way, students show what needs ramped up by the way they walk; what needs more links or less clicks to get to. It's not so much that you shouldn't put up the sidewalk. But put up enough so that it looks good, and don't assume you know where the students are going to walk. Putting up the sidewalk immediately is assuming where they will walk. Then you find later that they created paths in the grass by walking in a totally different direction than you anticipated. This is also where RPIE is used extensively.

B) BUILDING STUDENT AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

(1) RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

How do you market, build, and manage relationships with students and stakeholders to achieve the following? Acquire new students and stakeholders and build market share, retain students and stakeholders, meet their requirements, and exceed their expectations in each stage of their relationship with you, Increase their engagement with you.

According to Dr. Rossi, relationship management is sometimes based on attitude. KSUEL tries to instill in all faculty, staff, and administration that they are there for the students. For example, Dr. Rossi explained that my being there and interviewing her was not keeping her from her job because I am her job. Relationship management starts with hiring the right people. KSUEL tries to hire people that believe in their vision and that have the right mindset pertaining to customer focus in terms of the students and stakeholders because that is who they are there for.

(2) COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

How do you manage student and stakeholder complaints? How does your student and stakeholder complaint management process ensure that complaints are resolved promptly and effectively? How does your student and stakeholder complaint management process enable you to recover your students' and stakeholders' confidence and enhance their satisfaction and engagement?

According to Dr. Rossi, KSUEL will try to resolve things at the lowest level possible. That is why a lot of times when students come to see her to complain about a professor, the first thing she will ask them is what the professor said when they brought it to the professor's attention. Many times the student's answer will be that they never talked to the professor about it. It's not that she doesn't want to help them, but the first line of defense is talking with the professor about it. This will most times solve the problem before a formal complaint is needed.   If that doesn't work, there is a formal process in place for complaints which has a time limit on it. It is very due process oriented so that they make sure they are not infringing on the students', faculty members', or administrators' rights. Things that really head up a chain that can't be resolved are basically done by a committee. There are students on that committee as well as faculty and administration. This way, a student doesn't feel they can't win because they are going up against just faculty and administration. If there are things in a handbook that needs to be changed administratively, it will have to go through a formal process for that to happen. According to Mrs. Solterback, students will come into the Dean's office with a complaint. However, the Dean is the last person in the hierarchy of individuals to deal with them. The Dean's involvement to starts when a complaint gets to the grievance level. Mrs. Solterback will steer these people in the right direction as to where or who to go to first. In the

meantime, she takes down their names, email address, or phone number so that she can follow up with them to make sure they received some type of satisfactory conclusion. Or she will give them her contact information and explain that they can call or come back if they need further assistance.

CONCLUSION

Although I am not a certified Baldrige Examiner by any means, the following is my conclusion pertaining to what I feel KSUEL's strengths and opportunities for improvement are concerning customer focus.

3.1 VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER: STRENGTHS

- KSUEL uses a variety of annual methods in listening to its students and stakeholders to gather information pertaining to current student segments, potential students, former graduates, alumni, surrounding high schools, employers, area industry, and the entire community at large. Methods of obtaining actionable information from these different sources vary according to student and stakeholder group and include the student survey of instruction, end of the year student surveys, exit counseling, focus groups, telephone calls, emails, face-to-face active listening, informational nights, social media, interactive university Web site, Flashline portal, Blackboard Vista, advisory boards, and faculty, staff, and administration meetings. The information gathered is used to address overall satisfaction and satisfaction with courses and programs, as well as, complaints and engagement.

- KSUEL systematically deploys an administrative policy and procedure for student complaints that encourages resolution on the lowest level possible. However, if that doesn't work, there is a process in place for students to submit a formal complaint.

- KSUEL uses various methods in determining the satisfaction and engagement of current students and stakeholders. These methods are mostly program-specific and include many surveys generated by Survey Monkey, which is a third-party instrument. KSUEL also uses advisory boards whose members go out into the community for gaining input on trends, ideas for new programs and services, and what skills are needed for particular jobs.

3.1 VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- While it is somewhat clear that KSUEL can use the accreditation process to compare the satisfaction level of its own students and stakeholders to the satisfaction levels of those of other institutions, it is not clear to me how KSUEL obtains information on its students' and stakeholders' satisfaction relative to what their satisfaction would be with its competitors. If the student attended a competitor institution before coming to KSUEL, then I can see where that could be used to determine this. However, while it may be possible, I was not given the answer.

3.2 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: STRENGTHS

- To determine whether educational programs and services meet and exceed the expectations of its current students and stakeholders, KSUEL uses many approaches, such as the student survey

of instruction (student course evaluations), employer surveys, advisory boards, focus groups, and the first-year experience course, just to name a few.

- Through the use of focus groups, KSUEL enables students and stakeholders to voice their ideas, opinions, and problems on a personal level. The information obtained during this wide-variety of groups is passed on to the appropriate department for analysis.

- Through the implementation of the Faculty Professional Development Center, faculty members are able to engage in a variety of learning resources.

- KSUEL's workshops provided by Rachel Esterly are a good asset to the campus in terms of faculty members' engagement for learning things that can enhance their classes. Especially, since they are provided locally.

- The overwhelming success of allied health programs offered at KSUEL is an important factor that contributes to KSUEL being a shining spot in such a depressed community.

- The value KSUEL has for the community as a whole is extremely high, and has enabled it to partner with other organizations within the community, with the added ability of participating in external programs to enhance the entire community.

- By being a participant in the Academic Quality Improvement Program, KSUEL is able to identify its key mechanisms of support, clarify learning needs of students, determine and make public academic goals and expectations for student learning, implement instruction and co-curricular activities, gather, analyze, and interpret evidence to determine the degree to which student learning outcomes meet these expectations, and agree on ways to use this evidence to improve student learning.

- KSUEL's ability to obtain specific statistical analyses in all areas of operations is available using Kent's own Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE) system.

- The Computer Technology department advisory board's idea of creating a training session on what to do if an active shooter is on campus is another asset in terms of engaging faculty members.

3.2 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
- While the allied health programs offered at KSUEL are extremely successful to the point each program has a waiting list, other programs offered, such as the Computer Technology program, needs much more promotion and exposure.

- While the training session created by the Computer Technology department's advisory board was very successful in terms of faculty members, this idea could be improved by creating such training sessions that involve students as well.

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

1. Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE)
2. Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP)
3. AQIP Assessment Instruments and Results
4. Faculty Professional Development Center (FPDC)
5. Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Information Night
6. KSUEL Emergency Management Plan – The University Care Team: Page 16
7. Kent State University College Portrait
8. Edutech Corridor Plan Unveiled – East Liverpool, OH Local News
9. Edutech Corridor Website

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