


Preparing for the Future

Preparing for the Future:
How to Assess your
Institution's Environment
and Its Projected Changes
Using a Market Research
and Assessment Checklist

Gary Fretwell, Senior Vice President
Dr. Jim Hundrieser, Associate Vice President

February 2011



All material in this presentation, including text and images, is the property of Noel-Levitz, Inc. Permission is required to reproduce information.

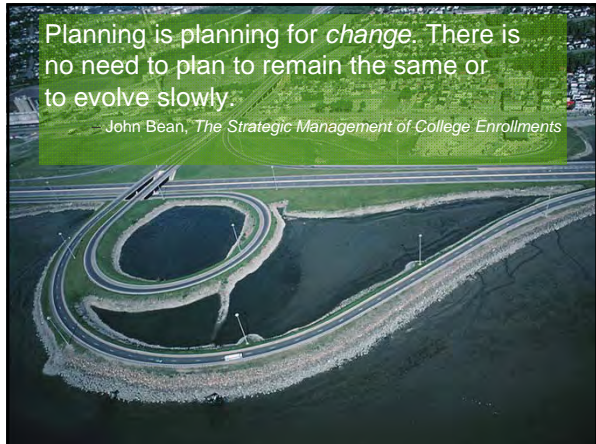
The future is embedded in the present.
– John Naisbitt



The best way to predict the future is to create it.
– Peter Drucker



Preparing for the Future



What do you know?	What do you wish you knew?



Preparing for the Future

Create your SEP research plan

COMPETITION

MARKET

PRODUCT

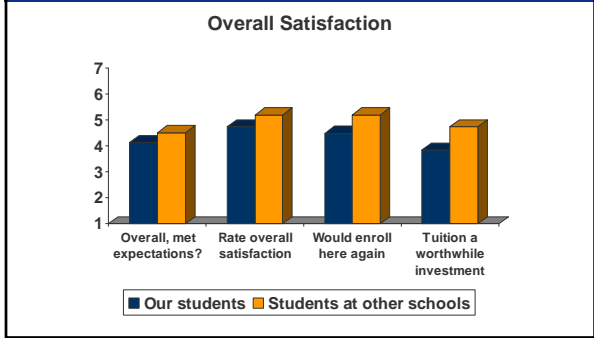
Q: How do we need to change *ourselves* to meet our strategic goals?

Research focus #1: The institution

- Student satisfaction and engagement metrics
- Faculty/staff satisfaction and alignment with student expectations
- Alumni satisfaction/outcomes
- Student attrition research

Preparing for the Future

Current student research reveals broad institutional issues...

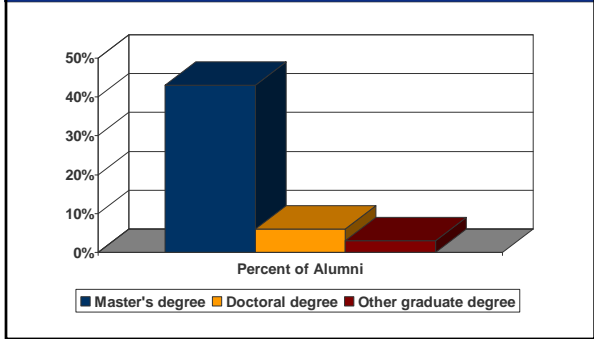


...and specific institutional challenges

1. I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
2. Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
3. There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
4. The campus is safe and secure for all students.
5. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
6. Adequate financial aid is available for most students.



Alumni research can inform your institutional strategy



Preparing for the Future

Faculty and staff attitudes shape institutional culture

"As a result of the findings, we have involved faculty and staff much more fully in the planning process, and have made improvements in wages and benefits and in our promotion process."

– Jackie Virgint, Director of Institutional Research
Santa Fe Community College (New Mexico)

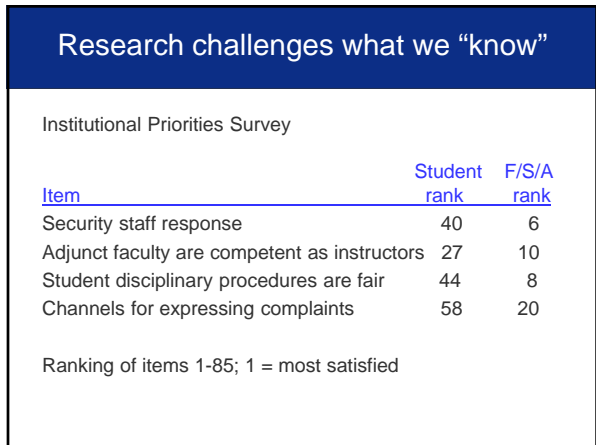


Research challenges what we “know”

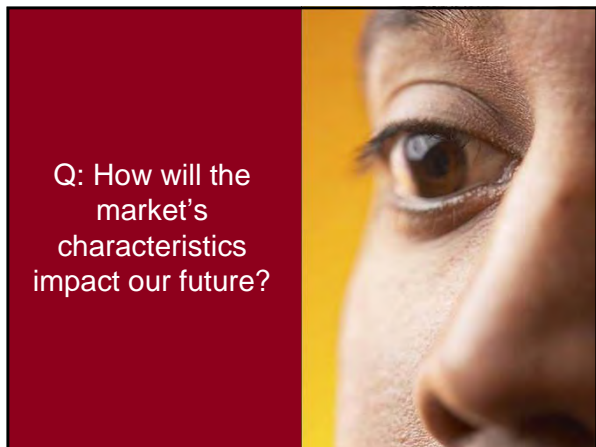
Institutional Priorities Survey

<u>Item</u>	<u>Student rank</u>	<u>F/S/A rank</u>
Security staff response	40	6
Adjunct faculty are competent as instructors	27	10
Student disciplinary procedures are fair	44	8
Channels for expressing complaints	58	20

Ranking of items 1-85; 1 = most satisfied



Q: How will the market's characteristics impact our future?

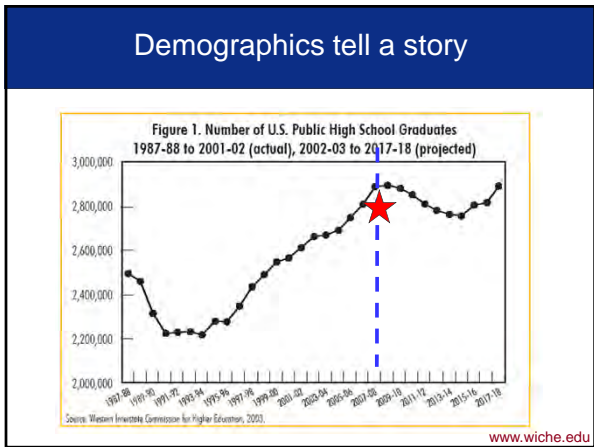


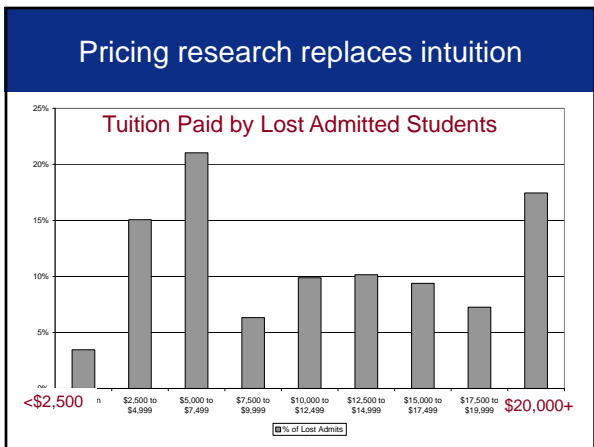
Preparing for the Future

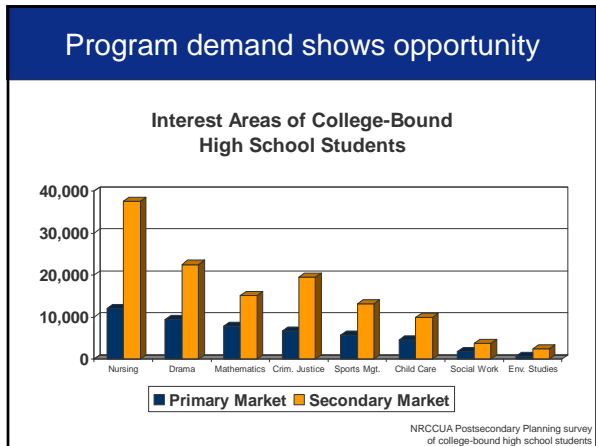
Research focus #2: The market

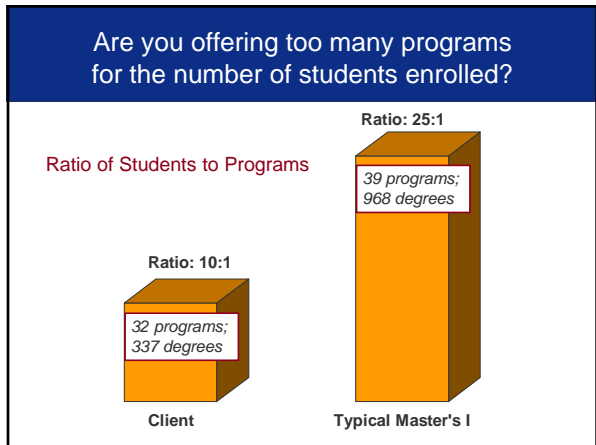
- Demographic trends
- Projected demand for academic programs
- Price sensitivity
- Lost inquiries and applicants
- Brand/image research
- Delivery format preferences











Essential attitudinal research

- What level of awareness of our institution exists in out-of-state markets?
- Are our marketing messages resonating with prospective students and parents?
- How can we use different messages to target different types of students?
- How are we viewed in terms of quality against our top competitors?

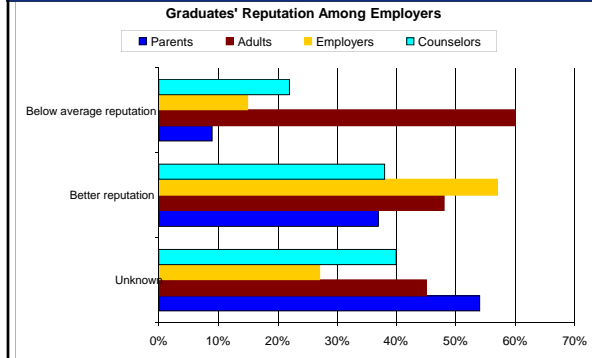
Preparing for the Future

Perception research can be a wake-up call

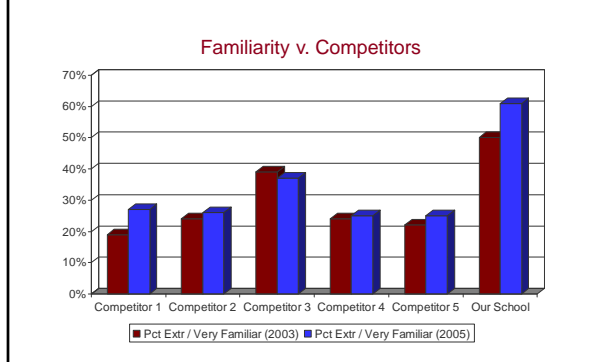
"Name a positive perception that students have of MyU..."

	Percent
Don't know, nothing	42.5
Community, area, scenery	19.2
Programs, courses (general)	9.8
Social atmosphere, environment	8.5
Campus	9.0
Reputation	5.8
Smaller classes/student-to-teacher ratio	3.8

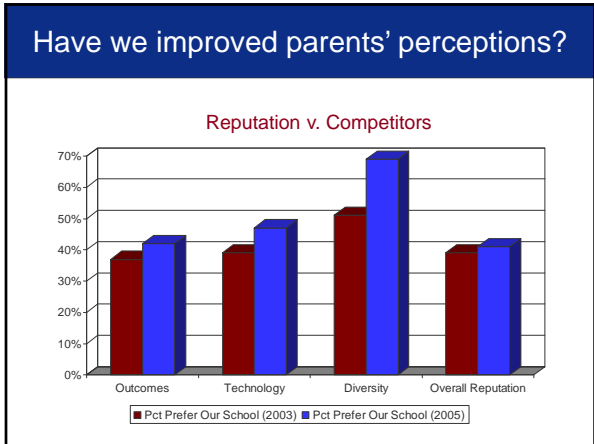
Perceptions can vary widely by audience

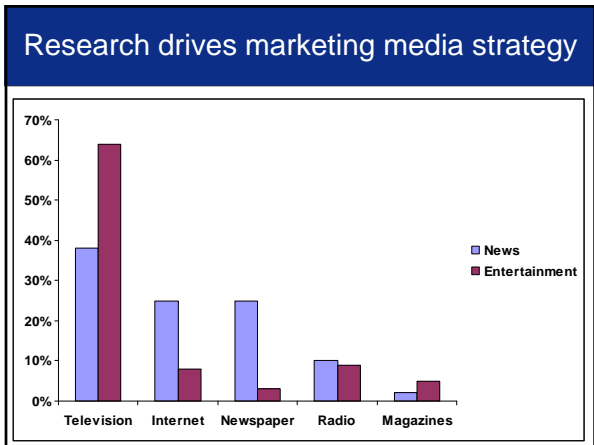


Measuring impact of a marketing initiative



Preparing for the Future



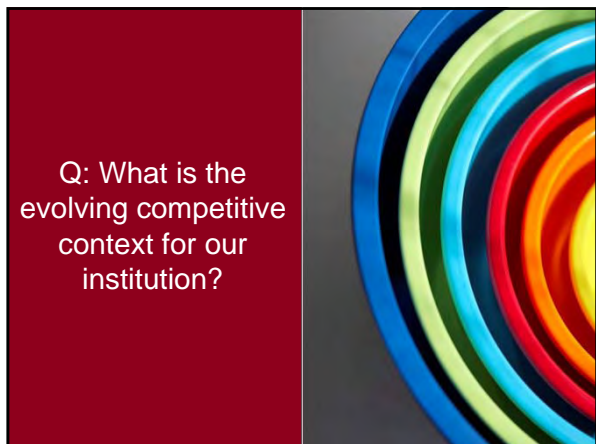


Non-enrolling admitted students



- Telephone surveys comparing features with school of choice
- In-depth interviews that get past the polite answers

Q: What is the evolving competitive context for our institution?

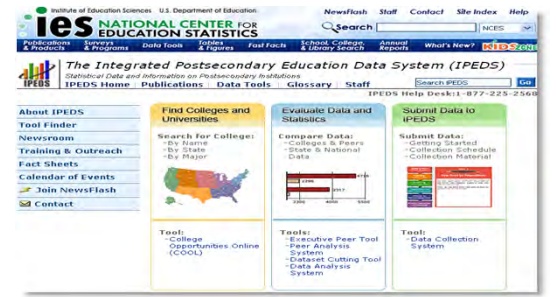


Research focus #3: The competition

- Competitor enrollment trends
- Competitor marketing messages
- Competitor academic program offerings
- Institutional image vis-à-vis competitors



www.nces.ed.gov/IPEDS/



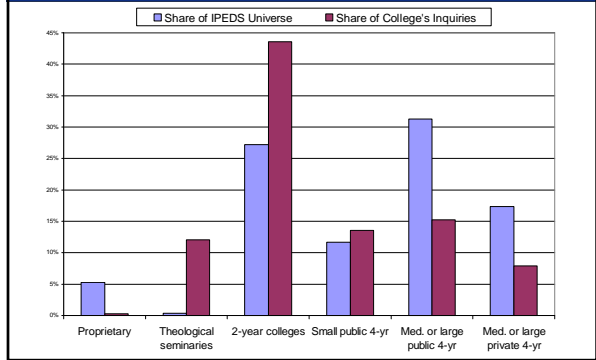
Preparing for the Future

What you can learn from IPEDS

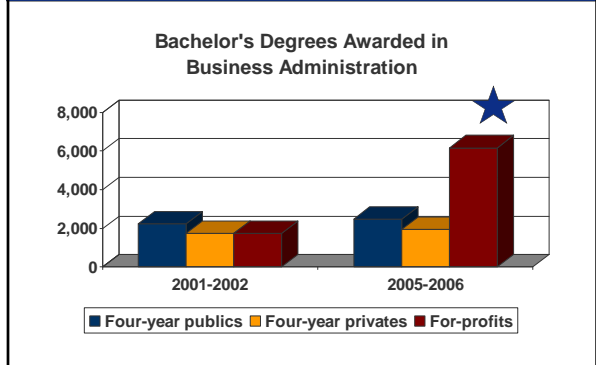
- Institution characteristics
- Degree completions
- 12-month enrollment
- Human resources
- Fall enrollment
- Finance
- Financial aid
- Graduation rates



Assess your *real* competitors



Understand your market share trends




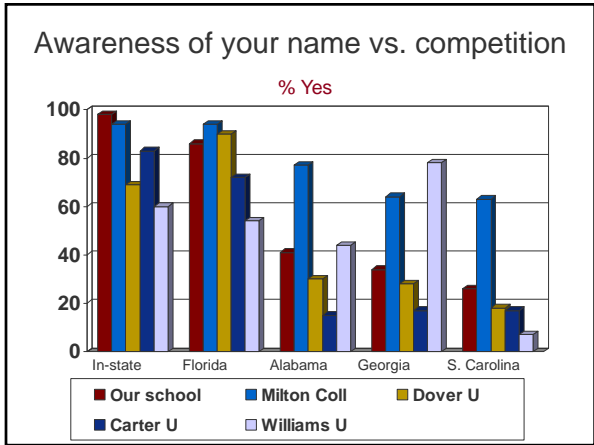
Preparing for the Future

Capture the basics of your competitive position

Top-of-mind (five-minute) telephone awareness survey

- Have you heard of (our institution/competitors)? (basic name recognition)
- Level of familiarity 1-5 (knowledge)
- One word or phrase they associate with the institution (perceptions)





Research to establish brand positioning

1. Ensure we are not simply duplicating the positioning of other institutions
2. Help correct misperceptions in the marketplace
3. Determine which brand messages should be primary
4. Define targeted messages by audience

Preparing for the Future

Research ensures the right marketing messages

Quality is...

- Faculty who publish
- The smartest students
- US News ratings





Quality is...

- Faculty teaching
- Career preparation
- Successful graduates

Competitor message content analysis

Key Marketing Messages of Competitors

Institution Name	Quality Programs	Faculty Credentials/Quality	Student Interactions	Career Prep	Facilities/Resources	Exchange Programs	Benefits of Size	Quality of Location or Setting	Cost/Value and Aid	Student Life Activities	Recreation Programs	Technology
Southern College	X	X		X	X			X	X	X		
Learn to Change the World												
Ace University	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Preparing You for Your Future												
Brinsford University	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No theme												
Francis University	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Academically Challenging, Passionately Caring!												
Perimeter College	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	
Four years that will change your life												
North State University	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Join a caring and responsible academic community												
Arkham Hill College	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
The college for you												
University of Denning	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X

Communications studies show competitive opportunities

- No competitors sent information designed for **parents**.
- Only two competitors sent meaningful information about the requested **major**.
- Only three competitors sent information about **financial aid**, which was specifically requested.
- Only three competitors **responded within 48 hours** to an e-mail inquiry.
- Public universities did not use **multiple communications** to build relationships with prospects.

Preparing for the Future