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Survey Reflects Emphasis on Teaching, Mentoring

Recently reported results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) indicate that EKU seniors surpass the state average among public universities in all five benchmark categories related to learning and personal development.

The survey polled seniors and first-year students to measure the level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching academic experiences and supportive campus environment.

The NSSE’s random survey of seniors, Eastern also eclipsed the national average in two of the five benchmarks: student interactions with faculty members and supportive campus environment. The gain was the greatest in the faculty interaction category, where EKU recorded a benchmark score of 46.4, easily surpassing the 42.9 nationally.

Clearly, said Dr. Karen Carey, EKU director of institutional research, “the NSSE data reflect EKU’s long-standing tradition of faculty taking a strong interest in students and working closely with them. Our students perceive a strong, accessible and helpful faculty.”

The survey showed in four of the five benchmarks a dramatic increase in EKU students’ involvement in the life of the University from their freshman year to their senior year. In four of five benchmark categories, that increase is greater than the state and national averages.

The national averages are compiled from participating public and private institutions. Comparisons between EKU and other master’s degree-granting institutions nationwide show similar patterns.

“The NSSE shows us, in yet another way, that something important happens to students while they study and work at EKU,” Carey said. “Our students are becoming more involved in the life of the University as they proceed in their education.”

The results from the most recent survey show improvement for both freshmen and seniors since the previous NSSE survey at Eastern, according to Carey. She expects that trend to continue, thanks to the implementation of learning communities, living-learning centers in residence halls, the new Teaching and Learning Center’s workshops on collaboration and other classroom strategies, expanded international study opportunities, various new speaker series and several initiatives designed to enhance the campus culture, such as First Weekend and New Student Days for freshmen.

The improvement notwithstanding, Carey cited two factors that might contribute to first-year students’ relative lack of involvement in campus organizations and activities.

“EKU has a slightly higher percentage of first-generation college students than most colleges, which may indicate that they arrive with a less developed idea of the benefits of participating in college life than some,” Carey said. “Also, EKU freshmen spend a higher than average amount of time taking care of dependents (child, spouse, parent). Students who have family responsibilities are likely to have less time for campus involvement in anything they perceive as extra.”

A ‘CAN-DO’ SPIRIT – EKU student organizations put their “can-do” spirit on display in recent weeks when they collected canned food for Kentucky Harvest. The students collected more than enough to spell out E-K-U on Hanger Field Sunday, Nov. 19. The three leading organizations were recognized with cash awards by Kentucky Harvest.
Macon and Spears Featured Artists in New KET Series

EKU faculty members Dan Macon and Karen Spears are among 14 Kentucky painters to be featured in “Looking at Painting,” a new series from KET that offers viewers the chance to learn about how the artists see their world, how they became painters, what motivates their work, and what inspires them.

The series, co-produced by Guy Mendes and University of Kentucky art professor Robert Tharsing, will air Monday, Dec. 3 through Wednesday, Dec. 5 at 9 p.m. on KET. An extensive Web site will accompany the program, available at www.ket.org/painting in early December.

Tharsing, who hosts the show, leads viewers through a unique look at realism, expressionism and abstractionism, using as examples the work of contemporary Kentucky painters and the masters who have inspired them. Through visits to the artists’ studios and stops at various museums, the series seeks to illuminate the creative process involved in painting by revealing what lies beneath the finished works.

State Group Honors Harvey

Art Harvey, who retired recently after 29 years at EKU, the last 16 as director of career services, has received the Distinguished Service Award from the Kentucky Association of Cooperative Education and Career Employment (KACEE).

Harvey was a co-recipient of the KACEE award with Dr. John Gump, recently retired faculty co-op coordinator for EKU’s College of Business & Technology. This year marked the first time that two individuals received the award in the same year.

Harvey joined EKU in 1972 as an assistant professor of school and public health and head track and cross country coach. From 1979 to 1985, he served as assistant director of the Career Development and Placement office.

“Art has been an outstanding contributor to the Career Services profession for 22 years,” said Laura Melius, who succeeded Harvey as director of career services. “In addition to helping and encouraging thousands of students, he has made major contributions to the profession. Art is a true leader in our profession.”

Harvey has served as president of the American Association for Employment in Education (formerly ASCUS, now AAEE), and was awarded AAEE’s Distinguished Service Award, its highest honor. He was the founder of the Southeastern Association for Employment in Education (AAEE, formerly SEASCUS) and received the Rollins Distinguished Service Award from AAEE.

James Madison Fellowships Available

The James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation, a federally-endowed program designed to strengthen instruction about the Constitution in the nation’s schools, will award numerous fellowships in 2001 for full-time graduate study of the framing and history of the U.S. Constitution.

College seniors and college graduates who intend to become secondary school teachers of American history, American government or social studies are eligible for the fellowships.

Through a nationwide competition, James Madison Fellowships will be awarded to at least one legal resident of each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories. After completing study under their fellowships, James Madison Fellows are required to teach American history, American government or social studies in grades 7-12 for a minimum of one year for each academic year of graduate assistance they receive.

Fellowships carry a maximum stipend of $24,000 (for up to two full years of full-time study for college graduates), which is used to cover tuition, required books, fees and room and board. Fellows must enroll in graduate programs leading to master’s degrees in American history, political science of education offered by any accredited university. Participation in an accredited four-year senior institute at Georgetown University on the Constitution and Bill of Rights is required of all Fellows.

For more information, contact Dr. Paul Blanchard (622-4580) or the James Madison Fellowship Program, Box 4030, Iowa City, Iowa 52243-4030, telephone 1-800-525-6028.


Information Needed on Faculty-Student Collaborations

A trio of EKU professors is looking for examples of faculty-student collaborations. Dr. Frank Shaw, professor and chair, Department of Chemistry; Dr. William Farrar, professor, Department of Biological Sciences; and Dr. Rose Perrine, professor, Department of Psychology, recently attended a Council on Undergraduate Research conference on institutionalizing undergraduate research.

“We want to learn about the collaborations that already exist and to share ideas on how to make faculty-undergraduate collaborations a more public and more rewarding experience,” Perrine said.

To report a collaboration or for more information, contact Shaw, Farrar or Perrine.

Events

Tuesday, Nov. 27

Colonels at Home

EKU vs. Marietta, men’s basketball, 7:30 p.m., McBrayer Arena.

Annual Madrigal Feasts

Thursday, Nov. 29-Saturday, Dec. 1

String Orchestra Performs

8 p.m., Gifford Theatre.

BFA Candidates Art Exhibit Opening reception, 2-4 p.m. Dec. 2, Giles Gallery, Campbell Building. For regular gallery hours, call 622-8135.

Wednesday, Dec. 5

Saxophone Ensemble Concert

8 p.m., Brock Auditorium.

Holiday Concert in Song & Dance

8 p.m. nightly, Gifford Theatre, Campbell Building, admission $2.

Thursday, Dec. 6

Horn Studio Concert

8 p.m., Brock Auditorium.

Saturday, Dec. 9

Holiday Concert

5 p.m., Brock Auditorium, admission $10.
EKU Research Team Presents Environmental Survey Results

Community surveys on environment-related issues and community life in Martin and Perry counties conducted by an EKU research team reveal a citizenry concerned about mining regulations and water quality, among other local issues.

The student-faculty research team presented its findings at a town meeting Nov. 9-10. The event included a work session where community members discussed ways to address the community and environmental issues surrounding coal waste ramifications.

“The research project was launched in Martin County in Fall 2000 to gauge community reaction to one of the worst environmental disasters ever in the southeastern United States. On Oct. 11, 2000, a coal slurry impoundment spill sent over 250 gallons of coal waste into two major creek arteries that feed into the Big Sandy River. The team visited Perry County this year to survey local residents there for their views on coal waste mining regulations and other community environmental concerns. Results from the two counties were then compared.

The team employed a ‘community-based’ approach to its research, constructing a survey that would accurately reflect citizen concerns, according to Dr. Stephanie McSpirit, project director. The survey succeeded because of the University’s independent, neutral position and ability to administer a ‘scientifically sound’ survey, according to Sharon Hardesty, field coordinator for the project. ‘More people from all of the sides of the issue were willing to talk with us.’ “We did not go in there with an activist agenda,” McSpirit said. ‘People were also receptive to us because they felt comfortable talking one-on-one with EKU students.’

Because many Martin Countians were directly affected by the major impoundment spill, their responses to questions about trust in government and coal companies, such confidence in the local water supply were considerably more negative, Field Supervisor Rob Welch noted. For example, 51 percent of Martin Countians surveyed ‘strongly disagree’ that they have trust in the coal company, compared to 19 percent in Perry County. Forty-one percent of Martin Countians ‘strongly disagree’ that they have trust in the local government, compared to 12 percent who feel the same way in Perry County. Forty-one percent of Martin Countians surveyed say that the environment is a ‘serious problem’ in their county, but only 16 percent of Perry Countians say that about their county. In Martin County, 80 percent of the respondents said drinking water quality is a ‘serious problem,’ but only 24 percent of Perry Countians said the same. Not surprisingly, 69 percent of Martin Countians identify coal waste as a ‘serious problem,’ but only 12 percent of the respondents in Perry County responded accordingly.

In one interesting twist, 58 percent of Martin County respondents strongly agreed that Martin County residents ‘should be compensated for the spill, but only 8 percent strongly agreed that they would be fully compensated for the spill.

The 12 students who worked on the project this semester made presentations at the Town Meeting. Each has conducted one-on-one interviews with the six members of a Citizen Advisory Committee that has worked in close consultation with the research team. “These undergraduate students have gotten a graduate-level experience of what it means to be part of a major community-based research initiative.”

Dr. Stephanie McSpirit

“SOMETHING TO REMEMBER EKU – At a recent reception at EKU’s Danville Center, President Glasser visited with EKU student Jessica Payne, right, and her daughter Jerica, who received an EKU pin from the new president.

EKU Fields Most Panelists at National Honors Conference

Forty-five EKU Honors Program students made presentations at the National Collegiate Honors Council’s 36th annual conference in Chicago Oct. 31-Nov. 4.

The eastern students, accompanied by 19 faculty mentors, were involved in 17 panel presentations. Both the number of students and the number of presentations easily led all other participating schools. The theme for the conference was “Fields of Discovery.”


In addition, the students enjoyed several cultural diversions, including a play, a visit to the Oceanarium and a visit to the special Van Gogh GAuGIn traveling art exhibit.

Eastern’s extensive participation in the conference was made possible in part by funds from the Paul S. McBrayer Endowed Scholars Program and a gift from Jane and Charles Boyer, Prospect. The McBrayer scholarship fund was established by former players to recognize the high standards that Coach McBrayer set for his student athletes on and off the basketball court. McBrayer coached at Eastern from 1946 to 1962. Jane Boyer is a member of EKU’s Board of Regents and the Boyers are longtime supporters of EKU’s Honors Program.
Name: Mark Cross

Current Position at EKU:
Events Coordinator, Division of Community and Workforce Education.

Job Description:
This job involves many tasks; it’s hard to compile it all in one statement. Requirements are scheduling functions here at Eastern and meeting with various clients. I also manage the logistics of events, such as food, speakers and room arrangements. Occasionally I do a post-event follow-up. This helps me to find out what worked well and what could have been done better.

How long have you been in this position?
I’ve been at this position since July 2000.

What’s the most rewarding part of your job?
Seeing an event go well. Thankfully, the vast majority of them do. The real satisfaction comes when you leave at the end of the day and know that you helped create something for an individual or group that meets or exceeds their expectations.

What’s the most challenging part of your job?
There are so many challenges in this job; however, the main thing I must say is keeping track of what I call “the events tornado” of different jobs that must be done for each event. I must keep track of all aspects of the events through the progression of planning to the finish. That can be extremely tough at times.

What is your favorite food?
There are so many foods I love. If I have to choose now I’d say my mother’s buttermilk pie.

What are your interests and hobbies?
My number one hobby would have to be swimming. Any water sport is a huge passion of mine. I also enjoy fine art and antiques. I take a real interest in historic preservation. I like to observe old houses and old buildings.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Charleston, South Carolina. It has numerous historical buildings, water and a warmer climate. I enjoy any place with warm weather and water.

What is your favorite movie?
In terms of current films it would be “Moulin Rouge.” My favorite classic film would have to be the “Wizard of Oz.”

What book would you recommend to others?
I’m not a huge book reader; my attention span is too short. I acquire quick knowledge from newspapers frequently. If I had a recommendation for people to read it would be the Bible. I don’t think enough people read and apply it in their lives these days.

Can you recall your most embarrassing moment?
I must say it was the time I wore the classical tuxedo to a real estate event. I was supposed to meet with the owner of the building but, as we walked to the event, the owner of the building recognized me. The rest of the day I was an embarrassment to myself and everyone around me.

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What issue concerns you most about today’s world?
After September 11 there are so many concerns. My biggest concern is that not enough people contemplate the consequences of their actions. I can fall into that trap as well but I make every attempt to place myself in the other person’s shoes.

Who or what has influenced you the most?
I would hope that throughout my life the biggest influence came from Jesus Christ. My family runs a close second and my friends following them.

If you could have dinner tonight with one historical figure from the 20th century, who would it be?
I can think of two right now that would be very fascinating. Robert Worth Bingham, a Louisa resident who was the patriarch of the Bingham family and head of the Courier-Journal newspaper for years, or John Sherman Cooper from Pulaski County, who was a political giant and who rose to be a great national and international figure. I would have to flip a coin between those two choices.