

Updates:

Challenges to Higher Education :

- *Lowered public perception* that college education has a positive effect (student debt crisis, low completion rates). Students who don't complete a degree are nearly 3 times as likely to default as those with a college degree, even though they have less debt. A college degree pays off for students as long as they graduate.
- *Tension* between providing the short-term skills for landing a job and the general ones for further education and citizenry and the difference between what students borrow and what they earn. Our ideas of what college is and who it should serve has changed but institutions of higher education have not caught up.
- *Shrinking resources:* <http://www.post-journal.com/news/local-news/2018/11/fredonia-to-reduce-cut-university-programs/> As part of the next phase of SUNY Fredonia's Procedures for Emergency Program Reduction/Elimination (PEPRE), President Virginia Horvath, Ph.D., announced that 20 undergraduate and graduate degree programs are being considered for elimination or reduction.
- *Declining enrollments:* According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC), college enrollments have been steadily declining across the nation for the last several years, following a peak in enrollment from 2006-2011. Institutions with 3,000 students or fewer have been more affected by the enrollment decline than larger institutions of 10,000 or more students. Reasons for the decline include:
 - Strong economy-less need to go back to school
 - International student slump
 - Concerns over tuition costs and student debt
 - Demographic shifts
 - Traditional population decreasing; low birth rate; High school graduating classes have been decreasing. The number of 18-to-24-year-olds in the nation has ceased growing and the Census Bureau projects it will stay relatively flat for the next 10 years. The nation is projected to produce fewer high school graduates between 2014 and 2023. From SUNY: High School graduates by County; shows need to shift to non-traditional populations;
 - Post-traditional age population increasing. 37% over the age of 25, they often attend classes part-time, juggle a job. They may pick classes based on a babysitter and bus schedules rather than who is the best professor

In terms of enrollment growth:

- There will be a rapid increase in populations that have historically graduated at lower rates;
- The Hispanic college enrollment is predicted to increase dramatically over the next several years;
- Post-traditional age population is increasing.

Opportunities:

Summary of what Admissions Travel Counselors are hearing on the road from prospective students:

- Most frequently asked for major that we do not offer: health-related fields
- Most frequently asked for major that we do have: game design and development, criminal justice, vet tech, nursing
- Biggest concern from students: taking out student loans, distance from their home
- Greatest needs in St. Lawrence County: daycare, weekend/evening classes

Research and Emerging Strategies Subcommittee

The charge of the Research and Emerging Strategies Subcommittee was to **identify and evaluate emerging trends in higher education**. We examined key indicators including demographics, business intelligence data, student and academic trends and best practices.

After many discussions throughout the fall 2017 semester, the Research and Emerging Strategies Subcommittee would like to share its findings and recommendations on emerging trends in higher education in order to achieve SUNY Canton's enrollment and institutional goals.

The Committee spent considerable time discussing, researching and studying the literature on:

1. New & emerging majors
2. Demographic & geographic trends

Key findings of our research:

1. New & emerging majors
 - Most students select a major based on communications with friends and family members, not data or concrete facts.
 - Nationally, majors in areas like psychology, health professions and law enforcement are seeing increased student demand while interest in majors like engineering technology is stagnant.
 - The admissions staff is receiving requests for a few specific majors that we don't offer but may want to consider adding to our lineup.
2. Demographic & geographic trends
 - Population is shrinking in upstate New York.
 - NYC, Long Island & Westchester County are experiencing population increases.
 - Colleges must adapt to attract ethnically and culturally diverse students.

As the result of the above-mentioned activities and discussion, the Subcommittee recommends the following actions:

The College consider exploring and offering:

1. *Diesel Mechanics/Heavy Equipment* There seems to be strong student demand for this program.
2. *Fire Protection Technology and/or Emergency Medical Services* Demand for these majors is growing nationally and they align well with our existing majors in law enforcement and homeland security as well as our existing EMS program.
3. *Health Specialties such as Phlebotomy, Sonography/Ultrasound, Radiology Tech., Pharmacy Tech. Med Lab Tech. etc.* Student demand for these types of majors is growing nationally and graduates are very employable. We also believe we would retain more "pre-nursing" majors if we offered additional options for those who don't enter the nursing program.
4. *Architecture or Architectural Technology* We have seen strong student demand for these majors for many years and they align well with our existing engineering technology curriculums. Additionally, there are a limited number of competing programs in New York State.
5. *Forensic Psychology* Demand for this major seems to be quite strong and it aligns well with our Applied Psychology and Criminal Investigation programs.

The College continue to:

- Increase downstate recruitment efforts
- Actively seek ways to adapt to the needs and expectations of a diverse student body.

Research on New & Emerging Majors

A September 2017 report by Gallop and the Strada Education Network found most students pick their major based on information from informal social networks (mostly the recommendations of family and friends). Colleges need to be cognizant of the fact that the majority of students select a major based on anecdotal advice from their friends or family members rather than selecting a major based on something more concrete like program content, quality of the faculty, job placement rates or income potential. Instead they often choose a major simply because their friend is in the same major or a family member made a suggestion. Because of this, demand for a major is typically driven based on “popularity” rather than program quality. A college can offer a major with excellent content, brilliant faculty, 100% job placement, and high income potential and still have difficulty finding students to enroll in the degree program. Conversely, a college can offer an academic program with questionable content, poor job placement and low income potential and find strong student demand for the program because it is simply a cool or popular major. A quick review of the national academic program enrollment data from 1970-2014 is a great way to look at trends. Some academic majors have been consistently popular for decades (like business-related majors) while others are seeing increased enrollments each year (like psychology, health-related, law enforcement) and some are stagnant or declining (like engineering technologies). Interestingly, SUNY Canton’s program enrollments seem to roughly mirror national trends. Programs like nursing, applied psychology and criminal justice related majors are consistently popular while we increasingly seem to find it challenging to entice students into engineering technology programs. As such, from an enrollment perspective it would behoove the college to concentrate on growing and developing popular academic programs rather than majors in areas of declining demand.

One of the best methods to determine the most in-demand or popular majors is to ask the front-line admissions counselors what students are seeking. We poled the counselors and asked them what students are looking for that we don’t offer and what are some unique niche-type academic programs we might also want to consider. Here is the compiled list:

<p>Popular Major Requests: Architecture, Interior Design Diesel Mechanics/Heavy Equipment (maybe as an AOS degree?) Forensic Psychology or Forensic Anthropology Automotive Collision Repair Aeronautical Engineering, Engineering Culinary Arts Equine Studies Computer Science, Cyber Security Biology, Chemistry, History, and “science” English, Film Occupational Therapy, Radiology Technician Marketing Sonography/Ultrasound Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Biomedical Education (4-year programs), Social Work</p>	<p>Unique Major Ideas: Outdoor Adventure Education Environmental Science Sonography/Ultrasound Health-related specialties: Phlebotomy, Pharmacy Tech, Radiology, Med Lab Tech, EMS, etc?? Floral Management Cloud and Mobile Computing Agricultural degrees such as Brewing, Wine-making, and Distilling Hospitality and Tourism Fire Protection Tech/Fire Science Mental Health Counseling Interior Design Sports Broadcasting/Journalism Personal Fitness Audio Engineering Spanish and French</p>
---	---

References:

1. Major Influence: Where Students Get Valued Advice on What to Study in College (2017), Gallup, Inc. and Strada Education Network
2. National Center For Education Statistics. *Table 322.10. Bachelor's degrees conferred by postsecondary institutions, by field of study: Selected years, 1970-71 through 2014-15* Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_322.10.asp

Research on Demographic & Geographic Trends

Overview of findings

Geographically, Northern NY and its counties are shrinking due to lack of economic prosperity, and smaller family sizes. Population growth is in areas such as Westchester county and Long Island, where former NYC families are moving out into the “suburbs,” bringing new cultures, and families to these locations. Growth can also be seen in NYC as more families move to the city for economic opportunity. Fueled by increases in numbers of Hispanic and Asian students, mostly found in urban areas of the state, the student population is becoming more diverse as well. However, while the percentage of Latino and Asian high school graduates enrolling in college has increased, barriers to higher education remain for some students. Many of these students have limited access to higher education opportunities due to other obligations, such as work and familial responsibilities, or they cannot afford the rising cost of college.

Recommendation

The increase of recruiting efforts in urban areas such as NYC, Westchester, Long Island, and the surrounding areas. New programs which include engaging first-year students in the career office from day one, alumni career mentoring initiatives and targeted efforts to provide career support for low-income and first-generation college students. Career assistance, better information about job placement, opportunities for internships and increases in scholarship support all have to be on each institution’s docket, especially for those students coming from the growing, more diverse, populations. People from underserved communities often struggle to see themselves on a college campus, so any additional resources for these demographics can only help.

References:

<http://www.higheredtoday.org/2017/01/25/aligning-demographic-shifts-college-participation-increasing-latino-degree-attainment/>
<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016007.pdf>
<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/01/13/upcoming-trends-2017-colleges-should-prepare-essay>
<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/10-demographic-trends-shaping-the-u-s-and-the-world-in-2017/>
http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2016/05/middle_class_on_the_decline_in_upstate_ny_cities_study_shows.html
http://www.newyorkupstate.com/news/2017/03/new_york_population_numbers_census_shows_which_counties_are_growing_shrinking.html