

HIGHER EDUCATION LISTENING TOUR



ELEVEN STOPS

- Eastern Kentucky University - Manchester Campus
- Murray State University
- Owensboro Community and Technical College
- Western Kentucky University
- Kentucky State University
- Northern Kentucky University
- Campbellsville University
- Morehead State University
- Eastern Kentucky University

- University of Kentucky
- University of Louisville



OVER 3,000 PEOPLE ACROSS THE COMMONWEALTH



8 SESSIONS
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS



2 SESSIONS
HIGH SCHOOL STAFF AND
LEADERSHIP



10 SESSIONS
COLLEGE STUDENTS



19 SESSIONS
COLLEGE FACULTY AND
LEADERSHIP



10 SESSIONS
COMMUNITY MEMBERS
AND EMPLOYERS



21 SESSIONS
REPRESENTATIVES OF
THE MEDIA



8 TOURS
OF FACILITIES AND
FEATURED PROGRAMS

WE'VE LISTENED. WE'VE LEARNED.

STUDENTS



Many students and parents do not know **what constitutes "college."** They do not associate credentials from community and technical colleges, which some still call "trade schools," as college options.

Some students want a course available to help them **prepare for the college experience** with topics such as time management, study skills, financial literacy and tips on basic "adulting."

When asked about why they selected particular colleges, an overwhelming number of students said they preferred to **stay close to home**. When asked why some of their peers were not attending college, they responded similarly: that their peers wanted to remain living with their parents or at least within their communities.

Mental health issues, food insecurity and homelessness are real issues, affecting students and their success in college, as well as their friends who worry about them.

JOBS



Most participants believe **higher education is the pathway to better jobs** and brighter futures for all Kentuckians. The culture of communities, or even families, though discourages many students from "listening" to this message. Changing this will be a challenge for both higher education, community leaders and employers.

Both students and employers voiced believe **career counseling** needs to be conducted earlier and that more on-the-job opportunities should be available, such as co-ops, internships and job shadowing.

Employers are eager to **partner with higher education**, whether providing more observation activities, curriculum alignment or strategizing financial incentives for degree attainment.

Community members and students were unfamiliar with **Kentucky's WorkReady Scholarship program**. They said it is not marketed in their areas. They also suggested the name should be changed to connect it to higher education, rather than a career certification.

ACADEMICS



While students appreciate the opportunity to earn **dual credit**, many wish they had better advising for their degree or career prior to taking the courses. Some found that their courses did not transfer as expected after they chose their college major.

Many students said that the **ACT/SAT** is not a fair or accurate predictor of their college potential. They believe test anxiety and access to expensive preparation programs affect the tests' ability to gauge the real ability of students.

High school students are apprehensive that they are **academically prepared** for college-level work, even those who had completed dual credit and AP coursework. They did not associate these courses with college rigor, only college credit.

Some students voiced that **required college math courses** are barriers to completion. While many felt math is important to some majors, they also believed students should have alternatives if majors are not math-dependent.

AFFORDABILITY



When asked, "What is the first word that comes to mind when someone says 'college'," many participants responded, **"Debt."** In addition, most participant groups did not know the difference between sticker and net price.

Community members said more needs to be done to ensure affordability for the **"middle kids,"** those students whose parents earn too much to qualify for financial aid and whose ACT scores do not earn them substantial merit scholarships from campuses.

Students and community members alike expressed concern over the **lack of proper financial counseling** available, and that this counseling should also address career choices. Potential student debt should be compared to salary projections before a student selects a degree program.

