

**TASK FORCE ON UNIVERSITY STATUS, TOWN HALL MEETINGS—Student Sessions
(APRIL 2 and 10, 2013)**

Please note, the Powerpoint which accompanied this Student Town Hall Meeting is also provided on the Task Force for University Status website. Cues for when slides appeared in the presentation appear below.

PPT #1: Cover Image

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW:

In March 2012, Stockton College successfully completed its Middle States re-accreditation—this is a process that our institution voluntarily undergoes every five years.

PPT #2: Middle States Highlights

As I'm sure many of you know, Stockton passed with flying colors. The full report is available on the college website, but in short reviewers thought that Stockton placed a commendable emphasis on teaching, demonstrated a commitment to student learning, and fostered creative, inter-disciplinary work. In fact, the college's overall health and growth—at both the undergraduate and graduate levels—prompted Middle States evaluators to ask whether Stockton had considered re-classifying itself from a public liberal arts college to a comprehensive university.

PPT #3: Definition of a Comprehensive University

A clear definition of what it means to be a comprehensive university is essential, so let me offer it here. In New Jersey, an institution that offers graduate and undergraduate degrees in a

variety of academic disciplines may apply to become a comprehensive university. Such institutions emphasize teaching.

PPT #4: List of Current New Jersey Comprehensive Universities

The application process to become a comprehensive university was implemented in 1993. So far, ten institutions in New Jersey have done so. Montclair State University was the first, followed by Rider, Monmouth, Rowan, William Paterson, Kean, Georgian Court, Fairleigh Dickinson, and Jersey City Universities. St. Peters University was the most recent school to do so, completing the process in 2012.

As important as understanding what a comprehensive university is, is understanding what a comprehensive university is not. Comprehensive university status does not enable an institution to expand its current mission or program offerings, and permission to offer doctoral degrees must be sought through a separate and equally rigorous process.

As a result, changing to comprehensive university does not mean additional costs on students or taxpayers. The new designation simply permits an institution to change its name to reflect its status more accurately and in a manner consistent with peer institutions in the state and around the nation.

PPT #5: Definition of a Comprehensive v. Research University

A comprehensive university is also not the same as a research university. Comprehensive universities, by definition, emphasize teaching at the undergraduate and Master's levels. Research universities place a heavier emphasis on basic and applied research and on Ph.D. programs.

PPT #6: New Jersey's Research Universities

New Jersey currently has six research universities, three private (Princeton University, Seton Hall University, and the Stevens Institute of Technology), and three public (the Rutgers University campuses, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry).

2. ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS:

PPT #7: Task Force Timeline

Last September, Mike Frank, President of the Faculty Senate, brought the question posed by Middle States evaluators to the full Senate, which agreed to form a Task Force to collect and synthesize feedback from various college communities (faculty, staff, students, and alumni).

Over the fall, we drafted several surveys to collect preliminary reactions. The Faculty and Staff versions went out in late January and early February, and full reports are posted at the Task Force website. The Student survey also launched in March, and an Alumni version went out in early April. Fair warning—this is the graph heavy portion of the conversation.....and I do move

through them quickly because the full reports are available online, but I'm happy to return to any slide during questions if you'd like.

The Faculty Survey received 248 responses. The Staff Survey was smaller, 135 responses. The Student Survey received the highest—and fastest—response rate, almost 1,200 responses in under a week and a half.

PPT #8: Profile of Student Survey Takers

Students of all levels were well-represented among respondents. One hundred, eighty-three respondents were freshmen, 230 were sophomores, 338 were juniors, 332 were seniors, and 113 students were graduate students. Nearly 60 percent of respondents were transfer students. Let me briefly walk you through what we learned.

The first set of questions asked students to consider the impact of becoming a comprehensive university on a variety of factors: 1) the institution's reputation; 2) student recruitment; and 3) education and curriculum.

PPT #9: Impact on Student Recruitment (student)

Here is what you responded—most students thought the impact of a move to comprehensive university status on reputation would be a good one (87.6% thought it would be somewhat or very positive for undergraduate recruitment, 87.1% for graduate recruitment, and 78.5% for international students). Because the impact on recruitment was so strong, it not surprising that

responses to questions about reputation were likewise somewhat to very positive (85.7% thought it would improve the institution's overall reputation).

PPT #10: Impact on Curriculum

Very few student survey takers thought there would be a negative impact on Stockton's current course offerings and commitment to the liberal arts, and you're right. It is really important to remember that becoming a comprehensive university does not change what we teach—in fact, outside evaluators would be assessing what we do now if we chose to take this step (10.4% thought there might be a somewhat or very negative impact on the liberal arts, and 10.5% thought the same for general studies).

PPT #11: 3 Key Issues

Next the survey targeted what we thought were three key issues for students: 1) tuition costs 2) class size, and 3) parking (this last really falls into a different category, but it seems to generate a lot of discussion so we thought it was worth exploring).

There was definitely concern about tuition. 25.6% of you thought tuition would be somewhat negatively affected, and another 25.4% thought it would very negatively be affected. That's over half of the student surveys. There was less concern about class size, but the numbers were close enough that I wanted to talk about them: 46.1% thought undergraduate class size would be somewhat or very positively affected by such a change, but 37.1% thought it would be

somewhat or very negatively affected. By the same token, 41.8% thought the impact on graduate classes would be positive, and 23.2% thought the opposite.

To some extent both of these issues relate to two other issues—what will Stockton teach, and how many students will be in each class. Because we would not anticipate any real change in what Stockton already offers (in the types of classes, compositions of degrees, etc.), there is no need to raise tuition. You would still be paying for the same degree you do now, it's just that it would be issued by Stockton University rather than Stockton College. The same applies to class size—classes would neither go up or down. No structural changes, in other words, in what we teach are anticipated.

PPT #12: PARKING

As for parking...69.2% thought the change would further exacerbate what is already a “competitive” parking situation. This was by far the most negative score on the survey. If it helps, staff and faculty weren't terribly optimistic either, but I think this has more to do with the daily grind we all already face than with what we chose to call ourselves.

Before I open the floor for questions, I wanted to give you the results of each survey's final question: “On a scale of 1 (completely against it) to 10 (completely for it), what is your opinion about transitioning from a college to a comprehensive university?” And here I'm going to put your numbers up against those from the other two surveys we've completed.

PPT #13: Overall Support

The overall results for faculty were 28% low support (ranking 1-4); 13% moderate support (ranking 5-6), 59% high support (ranking 7-10). Staff results were higher still: 9% low support (ranking 1-4); 21% moderate support (ranking 5-6), 70% high support (ranking 7-10). But students had the highest scores from any group on campus. On the same 1 to 10 scale ranking, your preliminary responses were: 13% low support (ranking 1-4); 12% moderate support (ranking 5-6), 75% high support (ranking 7-10).

PPT #14: Task Force Committee members and Website Address

We thank you for taking the time to join us this afternoon, and look forward to hearing your questions.