

SPAC report – November 2, 2010
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“Status of Current and Emerging Competitors”

Competitor schools:

- University of Missouri, Missouri State University and Saint Louis University
- Truman does not compete with any one type, it competes with: large public, small private, community college, etc.
- Community college enrollments are booming, double digit growth over a number of years – probable causes: economy, cost of college, A+ program, etc.

Changes on the recruiting landscape:

- Demographics:
 - 60,000-70,000 drop in high school graduates in our region in next 5 years
 - High school graduate pool will include higher percentage of minority, first generation, and low income students. In general, recruiting pool may include students who are not as well prepared for Truman and servicing these types of students has not been our strength.
- Degree completion is a major thrust of many public universities but it is not a major emphasis for Truman.
- How to attract increasing numbers of community college graduates to Truman-Kirksville for a residential college experience if they are more place-bound to other areas of the state?
- Half of students transferring to Truman come from other 4-year schools – this is a difficult group to market to.
- Increasingly, other schools recognize Truman as a competitor and they are giving greater emphasis to the liberal arts and honors programs.
- Online delivery of education is playing a greater role in college education, yet Truman is not a competitor in this mode.

Key A&S Findings – Recommendations

- Unless Truman takes bold action, it will be a smaller university in the future, and perhaps less able to attract high-ability students
- Truman must strategize a shift from enrolling students on the basis of merit aid to enrolling students on its own merits in order to sustain enrollment, or possibly increase it, in the future.
- Realizing Truman’s potential in the prospective student market will require a substantial cultural shift, involving the reinvigoration or campus life, revitalization of Kirksville and re-examination of the curriculum and pedagogy – this is not a question of simply promoting the university differently or asking the admissions operation to work harder.
- Primary factors that must be addressed if Truman is to compete successfully for students:
 - Location
 - Social life
 - Academic programs (Truman perceived as lacking strong academic programs)
 - Claim to Big Yet Small as way to distinguish Truman
- Additional recommendations on:
 - Communication strategy
 - Web presence
 - Recruitment strategies
 - Brand
 - Price and aid