



Friends University
Case Study: Feasibility Research

Feasibility Study

When Friends University was working to implement their strategic plan, a key component was the development of new academic programs and the expansion of some of its most viable programs. So this private, liberal arts institution in Wichita, KS reached out to Paskill Stapleton & Lord to conduct a series of feasibility studies.

Should the University develop a new undergraduate program?

The first study was to determine if there was sufficient interest and demand for a new undergraduate program to warrant the investment of time to develop the curriculum. The study also sought to learn of competing programs and how these potential competitor programs were positioned in the market. To obtain these objectives Paskill Stapleton & Lord conducted an environmental scan of the higher education landscape. In addition, we worked with our partners at Monster Government Solutions to understand the dynamics of the career fields associated with the degree. The most significant outcome of the study was the recommendation to redirect the program's scope based on competition as well as the job market for careers aligned with the degree program. At this time, Friends is re-visiting the potential major and tweaking the programming and co-curricular components based on the study findings.

Will expanding a current graduate program enroll more students and generate additional revenue?

Friends University had an exceptional Masters program that was offered at one of their extended campuses. With such a very highly regarded program, the question was asked, can the program be expanded to other locations and grow enrollment while retaining the academic and advising attributes upon which the program's reputation was built? The University identified four possible locations in the Midwest. PS&L then studied the competitive environment, reviewed the accreditation issues with internal stakeholders, and assessed the demand for graduates of the programs. Of the four sites tested, we recommended three for further consideration and suggested that the fourth site did not show adequate potential to invest resources in developing the site and committing to marketing and promotions.

Does interest exist in the region for an expanded role for the University in professional development?

Based on conversation with business and civic leaders in the region, there appeared to be an interest in growing the University's role as a provider of professional development and business consulting services. Although the University was currently serving this function, its visibility as an educational resource to businesses and organizations was thought to be low. To gain a stronger perspective of the situation, Paskill Stapleton & Lord conducted an online survey of area organizations supplemented by telephone interviews. An on-campus focus group was also part of the discovery process as well as interviews with stakeholders on campus. Among the recommendations developed from the study was the need for a strong entrepreneurial leader of the "center" to focus on the region's needs and develop responsive, creative solutions.