That the college could choose to use either the designation "college" or "university" in our name, but that the definition speaks for itself. They noted that there are colleges that call themselves universities and universities that call themselves colleges. The name of the institution is up to the board of trustees. It is not anticipated that the school mascot, the bear, or the colors, orange and black, will change.

The board directed the committee to conduct an extensive process to determine the opinion of the various members of the Pikeville College family as to what the name of the institution should be and recommend to the board a minimum of three names for consideration at the May 20 board meeting. The only limitation on the names brought forward by the committee is that they include the word university. Of course the board could decide to maintain the current name of Pikeville College. The responsibility to determine the name of the institution is the exclusive responsibility of the board of trustees of Pikeville College and no other person or entity.

The four board members and the last five members of the board of trustees, the consultants, and the planning committee met together a Long Range Planning Committee to address that question as well as the long-term future of the college. The committee also hired nationally prominent consultants to assist us in our task.

While the terms "college" and "university" are often used interchangeably, the consultants supplied the committee with definitions that help to distinguish between the two:

College: "An institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate programs, usually of a four-year duration, that lead to the bachelor's degree in arts or sciences. A college may also be part of the organizational structure of a university."

University: "An educational institution that usually maintains one or more four-year undergraduate colleges with programs leading to a bachelor's degree, a graduate school of arts and sciences awarding master's degrees and doctorates, and graduate professional schools. At a trustees' meeting Feb. 5 in Lexington, Ky., the board voted to authorize the college to create a program leading to the Master of Arts in Education Administration. This program is expected to begin in the fall of 2011. With this decision, and building upon the fact that the college does confer bachelor's degrees and has for 10 years been conferring the professional degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, Pikeville College now meets the definition of a university."

Based on this discussion, and with the intention of being as candid as possible, the board voted to acknowledge that Pikeville College is indeed a university. The consultants explained to the trustees that the college could choose to use either the designations "college" or "university" in our name, but that the definition speaks for itself. They noted that there are colleges that call themselves universities and universities that call themselves colleges. The name of the institution is up to the board of trustees. It is not anticipated that the school mascot, the bear, or the colors, orange and black, will change.

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The board wanted the input of all the members of the Pikeville College family; however a committee that large would be unwieldy so I limited the membership of the Long Range Planning Committee to 16. The committee is composed of seven of the college's senior administrators, four members of the Board of Trustees, and five representatives of the various elements of the college family. The Long Range Planning Committee consists of the following members: President Paul Patton, Chairman; Board of Trustees' Secretary Dan Stratton, Board of Trustees' Vice-Chairman Bill Baird, Board of Trustees' member and Pikeville College School of Osteopathic Medicine (PCSOM) alumnus Bill Webb, President of the Pikeville College Alumni Association Kay Hammond, Pikeville College undergraduate student Taylor Mullins, PCSOM student Alice Higdon, Pikeville College undergraduate faculty member Nancy Cade and PCSOM faculty member Bill Betz.

The four board members and the last five members of the board represented the many members of their constituent groups and are expected to receive input from those members and relay that input to the committee. Of course all members of the committee are expected to solicit and relay input from the community in general. Perhaps more importantly, it is the opinion of the Long Range Planning Committee that Pikeville College has the potential to become the leading institution of postsecondary education in Central Appalachia within 10 years. The Board of Trustees agreed and directed the committee to propose a plan of action which would facilitate the realization of that vision and an organizational structure which would be the most efficient to achieve that end.

An informational meeting for students, faculty and staff, alumni and interested community members was held on Feb. 8. In the coming weeks, we will continue to seek input from our many constituents. As members of the Pikeville College family, I would like to invite you to join in the discussion. We have established a page on our Web site for you to express your opinion and provide your advice directly to the committee. This page may be found at forum.pc.edu. In addition, our consultants will establish other formal mechanisms for collecting input regarding the naming issue as well as input on the draft vision for the future of the institution.

Keep in mind that many colleges and universities have the same name or at least names that are virtually identical. To see a list of all the colleges and universities in the United States go to http://www.usnews.edu/world/univ/ search. We need everyone’s input to fulfill the directives of the board and urge you to help us with your opinions and advice in person or on the Web.

Tell us what you think at FORUM.PC.EDU

87 alumni February 9, 2011
I think the name should be University of Pikeville - part of it is the tradition of our school. Throughout our history of becoming a college the name "Pikeville" has remained and should continue to do so.

myers February 10, 2011
While tradition is important, we can’t let it compromise our ultimate goal. If we truly want to gain national recognition we must choose a name that people can identify with across the country.