Planning and Feedback Session

The purpose of this session was to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis for Eastern Illinois University.

**Group:** President’s Cabinet  
**Date:** March 31, 2011  
**Tool:** Carousel Design

Most groups did considerable combining of similar ideas to compose their top 5, so all individual comments are listed below.

**Top 5 Strengths**

1. Student-Faculty Ratio and Relationships  
2. Alumni Support/Satisfaction  
3. Community Involvement  
4. Academic Performance  
5. Some Facilities (Doudna, Renewable Energy Center, etc.)

*Textbook Rental Service received the most votes, but was regarded as a tactical issue and so was not selected for the top 5 by the group.*

**All Strengths**

- Textbook Rental System (9 votes)  
- Some Facilities (Doudna, Renewable Energy Center, etc.) (9)  
- Student-Faculty Ratio and Relationships (8)  
- Alumni Support/Satisfaction (7)  
- Leadership with clear passion for EIU (7)  
- Student-Oriented (6)  
- Community Involvement (5)  
- Student Community Service (5)  
- Recognized Strong Performance Metrics (Retention, A.C.T., Graduation) (5)  
- Overall very positive reputation in state/national (4)  
- Metropolitan Recruitment Base (4)  
- Local school partnerships (4)  
- Student satisfaction (3)  
- Stable economic base compared to rest of community (jobs, discretionary income) (3)  
- Safe campus and community (3)  
- Traditional personal relationships (2)  
- Student-athlete academic performance (2)  
- Midwest Location (2)  
- Faculty credentials (2)  
- Undergraduate research (2)  
- Freshman-Sophomore Retention (2)  
- Student interns (1)  
- Working with community (Bus. Solutions Center, etc.) (1)
Top 4 Weaknesses

1) Response to change/lack of nimbleness
2) Labor relations issues
3) Facilities
4) Insular thinking/not thinking “big enough”

The group chose only 4 weaknesses. Although “Parking” received the most votes, they regarded it as a tactical issue and so they chose not to list it in the top 5.

All Weaknesses
Parking (7)
Labor Relations (6)
Reaction time (4)
Insular (3)
Response to change—nimble? (2)
Willingness to embrace change (2)
Facilities (2)
Need to prepare students for the business world (2)
Signage (2)
(Attitudinal) Not thinking “big enough” (1)
Some disparities among departments (1)
No room to grow (1)
Diversity in backgrounds (1)
Top 5 Opportunities

1) Proximity/relationship with Lake Land College
2) Ratio of faculty: students
3) Appeal of Coles Co. (safety)
4) Tuition rate vs. other schools
5) Entrepreneurship as regional growth factor

All Opportunities
Proximity/relationship with Lake Land College (6)
Appeal of Coles (safety) (6)
Tuition rate vs. other schools (6)
Entrepreneurship as regional growth factor (5)
Ratio of faculty: students (5)
Student volunteerism/service (4)
Leadership in energy initiatives (3)
Be a learning destination (3)
Family relationships—Athletics, Doudna, Camps, etc. (3)
Partnership with community orgs. (Chamber, city, CUSD #1, Coles Together, SCORE, etc.) (3)
Attracting international students (growth) (2)
Further alumni engagement—recruitment/placement (2)
Leverage social networks for recruitment, alumni relations, connect alums with current students (2)
Fewer/focused majors (1)
Student involvement in learning-niche (future careers + personal development) (1)
Technology can drive EIU’s presence world-wide (1)
Seek out emerging opportunities (1)
On-line education (1)
Top 5 Threats

1) Diminishing state funds
2) Competition for student recruitment
3) “Quality of life” in region—lack of some cultural opportunities, shopping, etc.
4) Need for more real estate for expansion
5) Trend towards non-traditional types of higher education--online

All Threats
Diminishing state funds (15)
All schools recruiting heavily (competition) (especially out-of-state) (11)
Legislative action relative to faculty/staff recruitment (6)
Lack of real estate for future expansion (5)
On-line competition (5)
Unfunded mandates (4)
Certain types of markets becoming less reliant on college education (3)
Larger percentage of student pool live below poverty line & median income (3)
Challenge to innovate/start new initiatives (1)
Chicago vs. downstate focus (1)
Cannot do it all (1)
“Quality of life”—Charleston (1)
Long-term recession (1)