Planning and Feedback Session

The purpose of this session was to identify possible events/issues/trends which EIU needs to address in our planning process.

What would make EIU first choice for faculty, staff and students?

- EIU was this student’s first choice because of the emphasis on education program.
- Local student who was frequently on campus during high school for music lessons. This student believes that EIU should advertise in the community that arts and music are lively and available on campus—it would attract prospective students to the campus initially.
- Student states that more people would be open to choose EIU if we emphasized diversity at the school. Student described their hometown as “culturally barren,” but EIU is more vibrant and the university should advertise it more.
- The LGBT community is vibrant and active on campus, with a web center being built and many faculty and staff have completed Safe Zone training. Student also stated that all entry level employees should be required to complete Safe Zone training, as that would be a visible demonstration that EIU is open and valuing of diversity.
- The student stated that more could be done in freshman orientation to make students learn more about the community and organizations. This student stated they did not feel actually integrated until later in the freshman year, but when a student is more involved earlier the student will do better academically. More should be done to advertise the groups and culture available on campus.

What can be done to improve academic quality and scholarship across campus?

- Student is currently English major and loves his department. They (the department) have given a lot of opportunities and ability to thrive. Professors are supportive, all professors (also outside English) have been.
- Professors have PhD and are knowledgeable in their fields. Student feels like their “know professors” and can go to office anytime—approachable faculty.
- KEEP CLASS SIZES SMALL
- Some peers are disinterested in class work; they do not see how gen ed classes are relevant. Maybe help students figure out the connections between classes, such as an outline of how classes are tied together.
- Integrative learning is regarded as a success by this student. Student organizations could be more involved in this area.
• U of Illinois was 2nd choice of this student, but did not allow as many opportunities for involvement.
• Other students do not speak in class, even though professor makes it inviting, and student does not understand why they do not participate. EIU is a place where a student’s voice can be heard. “My opinion matters here.”
• Coleman Hall could use an update, specifically with technology. “It’s quaint—cute and old.” The AC bangs and it is hard to concentrate in class.
• EIU has great programs and is well-rounded, but an expansion of the foreign languages program would be nice.

What is your hope and vision for EIU for the next 5-10 years?

• LGBT Resource Center or maybe a resource center for all minority/marginalized students. Would also like to see a staff member in the Counseling Center who specifically deals with LGBT issues. Student reports that several student peers have come to him for assistance, but they did not feel comfortable seeking out other resources. This would make EIU stand out from other universities, and would include space, staff, programming and counseling services. EIU would seem progressive and cool, but only if it is advertised well.
• Mandatory Safe Zone training for all entry level employees. “Everyone has different opinions, but do we want people here who are not comfortable enough to at least learn about others?” EIU would be progressive and understanding, and make it known that they are supportive of LGBT students—“I know that now, but I think more could be done for sure.”
• More nurturing of diversity on campus- great job now, but would like to see everyone be active. It would be nice to see administrators come to events, see them be on a panel or actively talk about issues on campus. There is a lot of pressure on student groups to do everything, but where is the support from faculty and administrators? This may also lead to more discussions in the classroom about recent programs/events.
• Diversity Advisory Council needs to come to fruition. Many groups get caught up in their own things, but need to branch out more and work together.

What is the most vital core value that EIU should preserve?

• Community- this is the greatest strength at EIU. Loves the feel of EIU and the opportunities that everyone has access to on campus.