The purpose of this discussion session was to gather information relating to what Eastern Illinois University needs to address in our planning process.

1. What would make EIU first choice for students, faculty, and staff?
   a. We need to have available more community/city things to do for our students.
   b. We need to consider the needs of a diversified student body.
   c. Why isn’t the town square utilized and exploited as a “college town” square?
   d. With the escalating cost of fuel and transportation, students will not be able to escape to their larger cities on the weekends. There is a remarkable absence of good restaurants here.
   e. There is nothing to do in town. We need to fix that.

2. What is the one thing we need to change at EIU that would enable us to be a great institution?
   a. Use low cost/high tech recruitment tools to attract potential students. For example, we could recruit at high schools throughout the state via video conference Skype.
   b. We need to develop with the growing push for on-line studies. But, we also need to be aware that on-line studies can erode the “campus community” presence of this university.
   c. We need to better market our recruitment and campus events.
   d. We need to “get the word out” about this great university. We need to market ourselves more effectively.

3. What about our history and traditions do we need to remember and preserve as we plan for the future?
   a. Faculty members with terminal degrees are teaching our students—not graduate assistants.
   b. EIU started as a teachers’ college. We need to continue to embrace that heritage.
   c. We need to sustain our exceptional level of direct contact with students.
   d. We need to practice what we preach in terms of our relationships with students.

4. What are 2 emerging issues that you can anticipate that we will have to deal with effectively if we are going to thrive in the future? (e.g., role of technology in the classroom, retirements, tenure, demographics, online education)
   a. In the light of the recent union negotiations, faculty members are looking elsewhere.
   b. There is a wave of retirements pending.
   c. We need to think about what specific factors will encourage faculty to stay with EIU.
   d. There is a prevailing sense that students are ill-prepared, disengaged, and carry themselves with an air of entitlement. They lack maturity, and intellectual curiosity.
   e. The faculty, staff, student and local communities are disconnected—what can we do to bring them together?
   f. We—faculty, staff, and students-- feel increasingly distant and foreign from one another.

5. What is the most vital core value that EIU should preserve?
   a. EIU is student oriented not faculty convenience oriented.
   b. We need to sustain EIU’s accessibility.
   c. We need to continue to be acutely sensitive and responsive to student needs.

6. What questions do you have for us to take back to the Strategic Planning Committee?
   a. What can we do to advance pride in EIU?
   b. What can we do to promote student research at the UG and Grad levels?
   c. What can we do to leverage our small town-rural strengths?
   d. What do students perceive as missing from their EIU experience?
   e. What can we do to keep students at EIU?
   f. How can we motivate the community to be more engaged with the university?