



Criterion Three: Student Learning & Effective Teaching

Chapter Three: Student Learning & Effective Teaching

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Overview

“Student Learning & Effective Teaching” describes Eastern’s implementation of the educational goals its Mission Statement envisions and its planning processes facilitate. It depicts an institution that takes its teaching mission so seriously that it has designated teaching as its faculty’s primary responsibility, an institution that honors this commitment by empowering the faculty to determine the curriculum and by providing faculty members with professional development resources that aid their continuous improvement as teachers. It depicts an institution for whom students are the highest priority, an institution that acknowledges its responsibility by providing students with varied learning environments, opportunities, and support services that assist them in becoming the best learners—and the most successful graduates—they can be. It also depicts an institution that understands that assessing learning is a vital step *in* the teaching process, not just an extra responsibility, an institution at which teachers become learners and vice versa as they jointly work to improve the quality of an Eastern education.

In their analysis of Eastern’s greatest strengths (Item 13), respondents to the NCA Self-Study Survey identified several that directly support the university’s teaching mission: small classes, close relationships, academic reputation, faculty quality, student centeredness, and high retention and graduation rates. The close-knit community that *is* Eastern is both a cause and an effect of the university’s success in teaching and learning. Reasonable course loads and sensible class sizes have helped create a learning environment with opportunities for interactive formal instruction and an atmosphere conducive to both formal and informal mentoring. Formal mentoring occurs as faculty supervise honors and graduate theses; teach independent study courses; collaborate with students on undergraduate research grants; supervise practica, internships, and student teachers; and provide academic advising. But informal mentoring is vital to this close relationship too. Faculty often meet students outside of established office hours—and communicate with them by phone or (increasingly) via e-mail—to discuss course content, assignments, grades, academic progress, scholarships and awards, applications to graduate school, careers, and so on. These one-to-one interactions are meaningful and productive—and valued—by both students and faculty.

The traditional classroom setting undoubtedly is the backbone of an Eastern education. However, through independent studies or practica, collaborative research opportunities or service learning requirements, health service programs or technology enrichment seminars, Eastern students benefit from a host of diverse learning environments and from the expertise of faculty, advisors, administrators, and support professionals who are available when they are needed. As technology has continued to become more central to education, Eastern has striven to improve, expand, and upgrade the technology used to support student learning. But its also has continued



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to develop more traditional resources that benefit faculty and students alike. The renovated Booth library, for example, with its extensive electronic and paper holdings, computer labs, viewing rooms, photocopying areas, and study lounges, comprises an elegant and functional resource serving the entire university community. Whatever the learning environment, Eastern's students benefit from Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, External Relations, and Student Affairs' unified focus on providing them with a superior education.

Results of the 2003 Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) Alumni Survey reveal that students' relationships with their professors/advisors had the most positive impact on them during their time at Eastern. Respondents based this conclusion on professors knowing their names, providing them with individual attention, and being approachable, caring, and accessible, as well as excellent role models and experts in their fields. These conclusions are borne out by the results of the NCA Self-Study Survey, which indicate that 96% of faculty and 86% of students believe that "[s]tudents are Eastern's highest priority" (Item 2).

As this chapter demonstrates, Eastern has cultivated a nurturing and supportive environment for students to learn in, and this environment continues to enhance student learning. It also suggests that there is room for improvement in two areas: ensuring that instructional equipment is readily available, up to date, and in good repair; and ensuring that student learning assessment occurs in all programs at all levels, with a focus on continuous progress.

Core Component 3a: The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.

To demonstrate that student learning occurs and document what students are learning, Eastern has developed a rigorous and comprehensive assessment system. Central to this assessment system are clearly differentiated learning goals that provide evidence of student learning at all institutional levels. At the undergraduate level, institutional learning goals are predicated on the mission of general education: to enhance student literacy and oral communication; to encourage students to think critically and reflectively; and to introduce students to knowledge central to responsible global citizenship. Based on this mission, the University Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning developed by the Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning (CASL) identifies the following four learning goals:

- EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to write effectively.
- EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to speak effectively.
- EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- EIU graduates will demonstrate the ability to function as responsible global citizens.

Eastern's academic majors also have established learning goals, which are included in the annual assessment reports submitted to the Center for Academic Support and Achievement (CASA). (Learning objectives for post-baccalaureate programs are synonymous with those of the pertinent undergraduate major.) In many cases, those program objectives include one or more of the goals for general education. In Summer 2004, sixty-six undergraduate programs submitted assessment

General Education Mission Statement:

http://eillinois.acalog.com/preview_program.php?catoid=2&poid=2

Assessment Web Site:

www.eiu.edu/~asses/

Summaries of Departmental Assessment Plans:

www.eiu.edu/~asses/departamental_assessment_plans.htm



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plans, all of which included student learning objectives. Of these, thirty-two (48%) included critical thinking as an objective; thirty-one (47%) included written communication; twenty-three (35%) included effective speaking; and thirty (45%) included global citizenship. In all four categories, these figures reflect a gradual increase in the number of departments incorporating general education goals in the major.

Units also are required to submit assessment plans for graduate programs on an annual basis. In Summer 2004, academic units submitted twenty-five graduate-level assessment plans, all of which included specific objectives for student learning. In 2002-03, one of CASL's goals was to "[a]dvise the Graduate School on assessment," a first step toward the development of overall learning goals for graduate education. The committee worked with the Council on Graduate Studies (CGS) to draft a statement of learning goals that figured in the Graduate School's Spring 2003 study of assessment at the graduate level. Currently, CGS is partnering with CASL to develop general learning goals for the graduate program.

At the course level, student learning assessment is the responsibility of the individual department. It is aided, however, by the Council on Academic Affairs and the Council on Graduate Studies, which request information about student learning objectives, assessment measures, and results when departments propose revisions to existing courses or request approval for new ones. At the program level, evidence of student learning is requested annually as part of the assessment summaries described above; in these summaries, departments must identify objectives, measures, and results. At the institutional level, the Electronic Writing Portfolio includes samples of student writing for every thirty hours an undergraduate student completes at the institution. Similarly, global citizenship data is gathered at freshman orientation and in the senior seminar, Eastern's capstone course, while information relative to students' speaking competency is gathered in the freshman-level communication studies class and again in the senior seminar. Electronic Undergraduate and Graduate Student Surveys, linked to students' applications for graduation and scheduled for implementation in Fall 2004, will provide additional end-of-program information about student learning. Last, post-program assessment information solicited through the Alumni Survey mandated by the IBHE for all public institutions gathers information from alumni one, five, and nine years after graduation on a rotating three-year cycle.

Eastern's assessment plan not only requires assessment across-the-curriculum, but it also encourages the use of direct and indirect measures. As the University Assessment Plan advises, "assessment measures should focus on data demonstrating students' performance or outcomes (direct measures of student learning). Indirect measures of student learning (such as attitude or opinion surveys) may be used to supplement direct measures" (p. 6). The 1995 NCA Site Visit Team identified the lack of direct measures of student learning as a weakness. Ameliorating this situation has been one goal of Eastern's assessment efforts over the past few years. As a result, at the undergraduate level, 97% of programs with assessment plans have incorporated direct measures of student learning; the 3% that have not include a cooperative degree program requiring students to enroll in another institution after two years and a new major that is still developing its assessment plan. At the graduate level, 100% of programs with assessment plans have incorporated direct measures. Departments also employ indirect measures to supplement direct measures of student learning. At the undergraduate level, 47% of programs employ surveys

Student Learning Objectives Section of Course Proposal Format:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~eiucaa/CourseProposalFormat.doc>

Electronic Writing Portfolio:
www.eiu.edu/~assessment/electronic_writing_portfolio1.htm



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of alumni or employers or exit interviews with current students as regular measures. At the graduate level 68% of the programs incorporate surveys into their assessment plans.

Direct measures employed for General Education Program assessment include the Electronic Writing Portfolio, comprising documents students have written for different levels of courses during their tenure at Eastern; student speeches delivered in the introductory communication course and in the senior seminar; and the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, which assesses students' critical thinking abilities. (Faculty use standardized scoring rubrics to assess both written and oral communication skills.) Eastern also uses the Global Citizenship Survey, an affective assessment instrument developed by the institution, as the primary measure for this general education goal. Students complete the survey at Freshman Orientation and then again in senior seminar. Thus, no direct assessment of global citizenship is occurring. As the institution examines means of tracking students' co-curricular experiences (an issue discussed in "Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge), it also should consider instituting assessment measures that would provide direct evidence of their impact on the citizenship goal.

A full report on Eastern's progress at addressing the goals of the General Education Program is available in Appendix C-3.

Academic units also are required to assess learning in every major, option, and minor they offer, undergraduate as well as graduate, and to report on results annually. In fact, however, few departments have developed assessment plans for their minors, and as a result, only eight out of a possible twenty-six minors are being assessed at this time. In part, this stems from the fact that students can declare a minor very late in their academic careers, making it difficult for departments to identify the cohort they should be assessing. Similarly, while graduate-level certificate programs in the School of Technology and the School of Business are assessed as part of their respective master's programs, no formal assessment plan currently is required for them or for the non-credit programs offered by the School of Continuing Education. To address these concerns, CASL should enlarge assessment guidelines to require assessment plans for *all* programs. The academic area, in turn, should increase its support of CASL by ensuring that plans for all programs are developed and submitted.

Eastern has made a concerted effort over the past few years to encourage those who gather data to share it with appropriate constituencies and to use the data to improve programs and services. To that end, faculty assessing essays written in writing-intensive courses may share their assessments with students twice, first in response to the original document and ultimately on the revised essay that will be submitted to the student's Electronic Writing Portfolio. The scoring rubric used for this assessment clearly identifies both strengths and weaknesses and functions as a guide the student can use to improve his or her writing. Similarly, CASL shares results from critical thinking examinations. The first measure adopted to assess critical thinking was the Tasks in Critical Thinking Exam. Results were mailed to students by Educational Testing Service, and CASL shared departmental results with its membership as well as with chairs and deans. Composite results and qualitative information from those first exams also were shared with the campus community in the *Assessment Update*. When that test was discontinued, Eastern adopted the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal; results from this exam are disseminated by the student's senior seminar instructor. Results by major are given to the deans of each college and to

Electronic Writing Portfolio Scoring Rubric:

www.eiu.edu/~assessment/Scoring%20Rubric.pdf

Assessment Plans:

www.eiu.edu/~assessment/



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department chairs to share with faculty in that department, while composite data are shared with deans and chairs and are included on the Assessment web site. Finally, data from the IBHE Alumni Survey is shared with deans and department chairpersons, with CASL, and with the Academic Retention Committee. In general, assessment-related data gathered through CASL or CASA is made available through the *Assessment Update* and/or the assessment web site.

The Faculty's Role in Assessment

Eastern's Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning (CASL) was created in 1999 to develop and oversee policies and plans related to the assessment of student learning. The committee includes seven faculty members, three administrators, and one student and is chaired by one of the faculty members. Eastern's Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning notes that "[b]ecause assessment of student learning is so closely linked to the curriculum . . . faculty must play a principal role in the assessment process." The plan goes on to identify these roles:

- The faculty, in consultation with stakeholders, establish student learning objectives;
- The faculty select the methods and measures for evaluating achievement of the objectives;
- The faculty determine appropriate performance standards; and
- The faculty develop and implement curricular and program changes based on assessment data (p. 3).

The faculty members of CASL also serve as assessment consultants in their respective colleges and departments. As is clear from the departmental assessment summaries, most academic departments have their own assessment committees as well. All faculty proposing new courses also are involved in assessment, since they must identify learning objectives, measures, and expected results for these courses, information required by the academic councils and built into the course proposal format. (The electronic course library houses these course proposals.) Because CASL routinely shares plans and results with the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA), Eastern's primary undergraduate curriculum committee, faculty involvement in assessment is further enhanced.

Electronic Course Library:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~eiucaa/elibrary/>

The departments that have excelled at assessment appear to be those whose faculty feel ownership of the data and use it for program improvement. Of the faculty participating in the NCA Self-Study Survey, 66% agreed or strongly agreed that their department had articulated clear student learning objectives to assess learning outcomes. While a significant number of faculty recognize that their department has articulated goals, fewer faculty members (58%) indicate that their departments use assessment results to improve teaching and learning whereas 71% of administrators indicated agreement or strong agreement that their units link assessment results to improvement. Program improvement was identified by 37% of the faculty as one of the greatest priorities for investment in the future. Clearly, however, that improvement must be linked to assessment.

Thirteen percent of those responding to the NCA Self-Study Survey listed assessment as one of Eastern's greatest challenges. In part, this may be explained by the fact that while many faculty members have been involved with developing and instituting assessment plans, Eastern still



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struggles to engage faculty in the assessment process. Professional development opportunities, including on- and off-campus workshops and presentations, and individual and group support and assistance, are readily available to encourage faculty to participate in the assessment of student learning outcomes. However, resistance continues, perhaps as a result of concerns as to how data will be used and what the data may say about the faculty and teaching in a given program. Whatever its cause, increasing faculty engagement in assessment should be a priority goal for CASL and CASA in the coming years. For while significant strides have been made at the institutional level, analysis of departmental assessment plans is beginning to suggest that progress in some departments has slowed and that too much attention is being paid to process and not enough to results. Data derived from assessment plans submitted in Summer 2004 and analyzed in accordance with the NCA's "Levels of Assessment" document reveals that 6% of undergraduate programs have progressed no farther than to identify learning objectives. Eighteen percent have done no more than identify assessment measures. Only 23% have identified measures that emphasize direct assessment, focus on real-world tasks, stress higher order learning, and allow performance to be gauged over time. Only 8% have collected data for *all* objectives, analyzed it systematically, engaged faculty in discussions of the ramifications of results, and made changes based on these results. Granted, progress continues to be made within these extremes. However, increased vigilance is necessary if assessment in *all* programs is to yield the information faculty need to improve teaching and learning.

One of the several responsibilities of Eastern's departmental and college curriculum committees is to review student learning goals, objectives, and outcomes. The previously mentioned course proposal format, which requires departments proposing new courses or revising existing ones to provide information about learning objectives and assessment activities, facilitates this responsibility. Departmental curriculum committees comprise faculty and chairpersons who regularly monitor and develop assessment strategies within their departments and colleges. They also work directly with the Council on Academic Affairs, the committee that oversees general education requirements and requirements for graduation. Because institutional assessment impacts both of these areas, CAA also has a vested interest in the Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning, and as was noted above, CASL vets its plans through CAA. It also includes a representative of CAA among its members.

Assessing Assessment

Eastern is still in the process of implementing its Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning. A full cycle of writing assessment via the Electronic Writing Portfolio has just been completed, and once the results have been analyzed, the process itself will be evaluated to determine its effectiveness. Questions already have been raised about the validity of the scoring rubric used to assess student writing: Does it adequately assess writing in all disciplines? Does its use result in information that can be used to improve both learning and teaching? Other facets of the assessment program have yet to be fully implemented, however, meaning that a full evaluation of the assessment program is still a few years in the future.

In the meantime, in addition to the oversight provided by departmental, college, and university curriculum committees and the Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning, the Director of the Center for Academic Support and Achievement, the unit that houses the Office of



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Assessment and Testing, also evaluates departmental assessment plans and progress annually, providing specific comments on what departments are doing well—and what they are doing less well. This feedback directs departmental assessment committees to refine their assessment programs and instruments by, for example, making learning objectives more specific, by developing rubrics to guide students' successful completion of projects, and by more clearly defining expected outcomes. (Like most assessment information, these comments also are available on the Assessment web Site.) Recognizing exemplary departmental assessment programs is another means of evaluating assessment's effectiveness. Since Fall 2002, the Provost's Award for Achievement in Academic Assessment has recognized academic departments "that, in the process of systematically assessing their majors' achievement of learning objectives, adhere to established best practices in assessment, address university-wide learning goals in the major, demonstrate continuous progress in implementing their assessment plans, and cultivate a culture of assessment." The award includes a transfer of funds to the winner's operating budget that may be used to support professional development activities. Winners also are acknowledged in university publications including the *Assessment Update* available online. Faculty members from CASL, along with the provost, are responsible for the winners' selection. In 2002, the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences was the top recipient of the Provost's Award for 2002; in 2003, the Economics Department received awards for both its graduate and undergraduate assessment plans; and in 2004, the MBA program took top honors.

To provide evidence of institutional effectiveness in addition to student learning achievements, Eastern implemented the Major Assessment Profile (MAP) initiative three years ago. MAPs are department-specific web pages that summarize student learning achievements and departmental productivity and link to 1) detailed examinations of active learning opportunities, strategies to improve teaching and learning, collaborations with public schools, partnerships with area business and industry, certification and licensing exam scores, and so on; and 2) Excel spreadsheets that track major enrollments, degrees granted, credit hours produced, costs, retention rates, GPAs, graduation rates, and time-to-degree. By consolidating information from a variety of sources, MAPs make data more accessible, simpler to use, and easier to manipulate. Intended to document accountability to internal and external stake holders, MAPs also provide information useful to decision-making in the academic area.

Eastern also must report student learning assessment results—including students' licensure exam scores and other evidence that they are meeting identified learning objectives—to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. It does so through academic program reviews, mandated by state statute and required for all programs at least once every eight years, and through the annual accountability analysis known as the Results Report (now entitled the Performance Report). These studies also are shared with the Board of Trustees and made available to the campus community online. In compliance with Title II of the Higher Education Act, the university also maintains a web site at which an institutional report card containing teacher certification exam pass rate information is available. Such data are used as benchmarks against which future performance is gauged.

Departmental Assessment Plans & Feedback:

http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/departmental_assessment_plans.htm

Provost's Award for Achievement in Academic Assessment:

www.eiu.edu/%7Ea-caffair/assessment

Assessment Update Newsletter:

http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/assessment_newsletter.htm

Major Assessment Profiles:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~acaffair/MAP/>

Program Review Process:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~acaffair/progreview.doc>

Results Reports:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~acaffair/results.htm>

Title II Report Cards:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~ceps/title2/index.html>



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Core Component 3b: The organization values and supports effective teaching.

An organization that values and supports effective teaching also must value and support the hiring of qualified full-time faculty *and* the continuing professional development of that faculty as pedagogues and as scholars or performers/producers of original work. For the most effective teachers are qualified professionals who are actively engaged in their fields and are passionate about introducing students to the ideas and methods current in those fields.

Position

Announcements:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~civil/employment.htm>

Faculty Statistics:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~planning/fact/fa03/fsfacult.htm>

Unit A Agreement:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~acaffair/ua2002-2006sig-b.pdf>

Campus

Calendar:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~eiuevent/main.php>

TEAM Grants:

<http://cats.eiu.edu/eam/teampdq.cfm>

Professional Development Opportunities through CATS:

<http://cats.eiu.edu/raining/training.cfm>

<http://cats.eiu.edu/campus/campusres.cfm>

<http://cats.eiu.edu/online/onlineres.cfm>

Booth Library Technology Workshops:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~booth/resources/sched.htm>

On the NCA Self-Study Survey, an overwhelming majority (79%) of students who responded agreed or strongly agreed that the “majority of my teachers have been effective” (Item 23); a total of 93% expressed at least some level of agreement. This high rate of satisfaction is owed, in part, to Eastern’s hiring practices and standards. National searches well publicized in hard copy and electronic publications and on university web sites ensure that high quality candidates apply for positions. Furthermore, 92% of tenured/tenure-track faculty (414 of 449) have earned terminal degrees in their fields. This reflects the fact that “[t]o be eligible for consideration for promotion to the rank of Associate Professor, an employee must possess a terminal degree or a professional degree from an accredited graduate or professional school.” That this is mandated by the EIU-UPI *Agreement* demonstrates the commitment of both administration and faculty to this ideal. The integrity of university curricula is ensured further by committee bylaws stipulating that only tenured or tenure-track faculty may develop new courses or serve on the committees that oversee curriculum development. As was indicated in “Preparing for the Future,” however, data show that the percentage of tenure-track faculty has been decreasing. While the decline has stabilized, reduced state support has prevented Eastern from reversing the trend.

Eastern’s efforts to enhance professional development activities are described in “Preparing for the Future” as evidence that the institution “develops its human resources to meet future changes” (2b) and that it attends to “emerging factors such as technology” (2a). As that chapter suggests, faculty development opportunities and resources related to teaching are available for all who wish to avail themselves of them. In addition to numerous competitive grants (A complete list, “Professional Development Grants,” will be available in the Resource Room), Eastern offers a compelling variety of professional development opportunities every semester: workshops focused on pedagogical issues, colloquia in which faculty share their research in progress, panel discussions, reading groups, guest speakers, visiting writers and performers, and so on. The electronic Campus Calendar is the best place to survey a current list of these offerings.

Eastern also does an increasingly good job of providing faculty with development and training opportunities specifically related to technology. The Center for Academic Technology Services (CATS) offers Technology Enhancement and Management (TEAM) grants of up to \$1000 to faculty “to complete workshops, courses, training, or related activities. . . . The funds are intended to help faculty and staff improve their technological skills and knowledge in order to enhance, deliver, and/or support classes, programs and/or services through the use of technology.” Through the TECnet program, CATS also provides free professional development opportunities for faculty, staff, and graduate assistants. CATS also offers a variety of teaching-related professional development opportunities and resources both on campus and online, as does Booth Library.



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Professional development opportunities exist for Eastern faculty interested in identifying assessment strategies that lead to effective student learning outcomes as well. Examples of these include travel funds for assessment conferences/workshops (such as the Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis Assessment Institute, the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum, discipline-specific conferences, the North Central Association Annual meeting, and Illinois Board of Higher Education assessment workshops). In addition, CASL has offered annual on-campus workshops in assessment since 2000. Individual consultation opportunities also exist with the assessment coordinator and external assessment experts. The Assessment Web Site maintains a comprehensive list of assessment resources that enable faculty to develop and refine assessment strategies, including assessment research and instruments, assessment and technology, models of curriculum assessment, and list-servs and forums.

**Assessment
Web Site:**
www.eiu.edu/~assessment/

Seventy-two percent of faculty who responded to the NCA Self-Study Survey agreed or strongly agreed and an additional 21% agreed at least somewhat that “Eastern provides opportunities for professional growth” (Item 10g). Thirty-one percent felt that these opportunities had improved during their time at the university; 46% believed they had remained the same (Item 11c). Despite these reasonably positive responses, 51% of the faculty sees professional development as one of Eastern’s “greatest challenges” (Item 14). This response may suggest that faculty members are concerned with the university’s ability to maintain, let alone improve, support for professional development in the face of continuing reduced state financial support. This issue is discussed further in “Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge” and in the conclusion to this report.

Recognizing Effective Teaching

Contractually-mandated evaluation policies are detailed in “Preparing for the Future.” These policies and related practices reflect a campus culture that sets high standards for faculty—and does so explicitly. According to the EIU-UPI *Agreement*, by their fifth year tenure-track faculty must be able to document “superior” teaching—or they will not be retained. To gain promotion, tenure, and professional advancement increases, faculty must continue at this level (Article 8.6). In the most recent contract, evaluation procedures for annually-contracted faculty reward “highly effective” and “superior” rankings in the category of teaching/primary duties with seniority points that move these faculty up the employment roster (Article 10). Student evaluations are a mandated component of these evaluation processes. And because of Eastern’s commitment to strong teaching, faculty consistently receive strong evaluations. These evaluations must incorporate five core questions from the Purdue scale:

**EIU-UPI
Agreements**

Unit A:
http://www.eiu.edu/~EiuUpi/Contracts/Unit_A/Unit_A_Contract.pdf

Unit B:
http://www.eiu.edu/~EiuUpi/Contracts/Unit_B/Unit_B_Contract.pdf

- Question 1: Instructor demonstrates command of the subject/discipline.
- Question 2: Instructor effectively organizes material for teaching/learning.
- Question 3: Instructor is readily accessible outside of class.
- Question 4: Instructor presents knowledge or material effectively.
- Question 5: Instructor encourages and interests students in learning.



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Results from the most recent three semesters available (Spring 2002, Fall 2002, and Spring 2003) clearly demonstrate that the Eastern faculty excels in these areas. Based on a five point scale, with five being the highest, faculty received an average score of 4.6 on these five items across the three semesters. (A more detailed summary of these data will be available in the Resource Room.) Fifty-seven percent of students, 79% of faculty, and 63% of *all* respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “Eastern expects excellent teaching.” And when asked to rate their agreement with this statement, “Eastern promotes academic excellence” (Item 101), 72% of students and 61% of faculty agreed and strongly agreed. Altogether, 93% of students and almost 88% of faculty expressed at least some level of agreement.

Given these high expectations, it is appropriate that the university recognize faculty who exceed them. Numerous awards exist at the university and college level in addition to various awards made available through different campus organizations. Many of the awards are either entirely student-driven or require supporting documentation from students. A complete list of faculty awards at Eastern will be available in the Resource Room.

Creating Technology-Enhanced Learning Environments

Three major projects have enhanced the availability of educational technology and technology-related resources to faculty and students: the creation of the Center for Academic Technology Support in Fall 2001, the completion of the renovation of Booth Library in Spring 2002, and the completion of a much-needed network infrastructure upgrade in Fall 2004.

- The Center for Academic Technology Services emerged from a major reorganization that followed a campus-wide discussion of technology during which comments were solicited from all stakeholders. CATS offers comprehensive services in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of technology-enhanced materials in support of courses and programs. It promotes an academic environment conducive to the exploration of innovative applications of technology for teaching, research, and service; helps faculty and staff continue to learn about the use of instructional technologies in a variety of learning environments; and assists faculty with the improvement of instruction and learning through appropriate integration of technology into the curriculum. Additionally, CATS strives to support the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of materials for courses and programs; develop resource materials to support the technology needs of faculty, staff, and students involved with face-to-face, online, and distance learning courses; provide technology training and information sessions for faculty, staff, and students; and fund and support creative and innovative applications of technology. CATS staff members have created a number of on-line resources available for faculty, staff, and students to assist them with some of their technological needs in an easy, convenient manner.
- A Booth Library information page describes the variety of ways EIU’s librarians have made resources available to students and faculty: “Booth Library's public catalog is available through ILLINET Online (IO), the statewide network of 65 academic libraries. Additional options include online access to e-books, e-journals and a variety of periodical databases providing either citations to articles or full text copies of journal articles. Access is available at workstations in the library, through the Local Area Network (LAN) elsewhere on campus,

CATS:
<http://cats.eiu.edu/aboutcats.cfm>

Booth Library:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~booth/pub/infobooth.pdf>



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through EIU's web site, and through dial-up. Interlibrary loan services supplement Booth Library's resources by making available to the university community materials that are owned by other libraries.”

- The Network Infrastructure Upgrade Project (also known as the “Horizontal Infrastructure Project”) was completed in August 2004 under the supervision of Information Technology Services (ITS). Updated information about this project, which is intended to create a more stable and resilient infrastructure for academic technology across campus, is available online.

Network Infrastructure Upgrade Project:
<http://cats.eiu.edu/ctpc/network/project/index.cf>

Core Component 3c: The organization creates effective learning environments.

As has been documented, Eastern has a rigorous, systematic assessment program in place. Yet more important than simply mandating that assessment takes place is the encouragement to use assessment results to inform programmatic and curricular changes. Each year, academic departments must complete the Student Learning Assessment Program Summary Form. Part Two of the form asks them to “[s]ummarize changes and improvements in curriculum, instruction, and learning that have resulted from the implementation of [their] assessment program.” Similarly, at least once every eight years, departments must complete a program review report for the degree programs they offer. These reports, mandated by state statute and submitted to the IBHE, focus on the description and assessment of any major changes in the program since its last review. For the past three years, they also have required departments to document student learning assessment results and plans for improvements based on these results. These requirements, coupled with the annual Alumni Survey and the mandate that all course proposals must include student learning assessment information, help the university to create a culture in which learning assessment and improvement are automatically considered in the course of curriculum development and review. As an example, the English department reconfigured its graduate curriculum to focus on employment opportunities identified by alumni and external advisors as lucrative career paths, for example. The School of Technology revised the Career and Technical Education program, based on the results of the Illinois Teacher Certification Test suggesting that students required additional preparation in the content area of business education. Similarly, assessment results in the larger area of teacher education, coupled with national mandates that teachers be well prepared in the use of technology, resulted in the College of Education and Professional Studies developing a requirement that teacher education candidates pass an entry-level technology proficiency exam prior to being admitted to the Teacher Education Program. This requirement, in turn, was enabled by the college's development of a program focusing on teaching, learning, and technology under the umbrella of “Techshare.” Since the last NCA Self-Study, however, the most significant changes resulting from assessment were Eastern's revisions of its general education and assessment programs.

Techshare Program:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~ceps/techshare/index.htm>

The general education program reviewed by the NCA Self-Study team in 1995 was called the “Integrated Core,” and in conceptualization if not implementation, was intended to comprise a reasonably small number of cross-disciplinary courses. For decades, Eastern's general education program had been modeled after the area distribution system which allowed students to create a “cafeteria style” program—i.e., one requiring that they select an appropriate number of courses from the humanities, fine arts, math, science, and social studies. In contrast, the integrated core



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that Eastern adopted in 1990 was based on an innovative model designed to focus student learning on nine goals (“traits and abilities”) that were to be reinforced in a cohesive set of content-, not discipline-, based courses spread over the four-year college experience.

It came as no surprise that the 1995 NCA evaluators noted the following as an institutional concern: “The general education program needs continuing development and refinement to reconcile the various components of the integrated core so it can be, in fact, truly integrated.” Because it comprised a limited number of writing-intensive courses that could be offered in multiple small sections, the integrated core as it was envisioned originally proved too expensive to implement. Built to address nine broad learning goals and dozens of related objectives, it also contributed to the development of a complicated assessment program that, by 1998, had become too cumbersome to implement fully. Furthermore, in Summer 1998, Illinois implemented a statewide general education program, the General Education Curriculum Core (GECC), that did not articulate well with Eastern’s unique content-based program. Community college leaders and their transfer students, who represent as much as thirty to forty percent of Eastern’s student body, felt the integrated core impeded the seamless transition that the GECC was designed to foster. Students’ lack of satisfaction was apparent in their comments on the IBHE Alumni Survey. Their lack of understanding as to the general education program’s goals and objectives became more apparent after a series of focus groups led by the former University Academic Assessment Committee.

Owing to all of these concerns, the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) hosted a campus-wide general education forum in Spring 1999. Participants echoed the council’s misgivings: The “core” was not truly integrated; it lacked a unifying theme; and it created public relations problems with community colleges. Consequently, on 3-11-99, CAA formed a subcommittee charged with revising Eastern’s general education program in accordance with the following principles. General Education at Eastern should:

1. Comprise courses from disciplines that traditionally are regarded as arts and sciences.
2. Drive the development of a smaller number of overarching learning goals that link directly to Eastern’s assessment program.
3. Be structured to accommodate students transferring into or out of Eastern through the Illinois Articulation Initiative.

During Fall 1999, CAA charged an advisory committee to draft a new mission statement, one that clearly identified the general education program’s purpose, theme, and structure. The committee refined the nine traits and abilities into a much more unified statement reflecting the three major goals of general education at Eastern listed above. After reviewing general education programs throughout Illinois and at selected institutions throughout the country, the subcommittee presented CAA with the revised general education mission statement, structure, and curriculum approved on 11-18-99. Because individual course proposals had to be adapted to address the new learning goals and identify related assessment mechanisms, course review began late in Spring 2000 and continued into the fall. Eastern implemented its revised general education program in Fall 2000. Focused on the theme “Responsible Global Citizenship Through Mindful Scholarship,” it is structured like the state model to include courses in the humanities and fine arts, language, mathematics, biological and physical sciences, and social and behavioral sciences.



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However, it also preserves much of the uniqueness of the original “integrated core,” including some upper-division and cross-disciplinary courses, as well as its emphasis on cultural diversity and its culmination in the senior seminar, a cross-disciplinary capstone course. For the first time, Eastern’s general education program embedded student learning assessment. As one indication of the success of the revision of the General Education program, 82% of all those responding to Item 8 of the NCA Self-Study Survey expressed at least some level of agreement that “Eastern’s general education program prepares students for a life of learning” (58% agreed or strongly agreed).

Addressing the Needs of Diverse Learners

In Fall 2003, Eastern was home to 11,522 students who came primarily from Illinois and the Midwest, with nearly 40% hailing from the greater Chicago metropolitan area. However, students also represented twenty-three states and more than forty-five nations. Undergraduate students accounted for 85% of Eastern’s enrollment. According to the 2003 Fall Enrollment Survey, 10% of all students were members of minority groups; Black and Hispanic students constituted 9% of this figure. International students composed approximately 1% of the total student population, while the ethnic origins of 2% are unknown. About 10% of students in Fall 2003 were 25 or older, and 9% enrolled only in off-campus classes. In Fall 2003, Eastern enrolled 166 students with disabilities, ranging from learning disabilities (the most common) to Attention Deficit Disorder, physical and/or sensory impairments, psychological issues, and brain injuries. Eastern admits students with ACT scores of 18 and higher, depending on their high school class rank. Sixty-five percent of new freshmen were in the top half of their high school class.

Given these student demographics, Eastern has implemented a host of programs and services that respond to students’ diverse needs, including:

- The Honors College, a showcase for high-caliber teaching and learning, offers talented students challenging course work and the opportunity to participate in unique summer abroad experiences. In AY 2004-05, 626 students are enrolled in Eastern Illinois University's Honors Programs. New in 2004, Eastern’s Presidential Scholars Program is a concentrated scholarship and citizenship experience designed to foster and promote academic and personal excellence. It provides highly qualified students an eight-semester tuition and fees scholarship, a specially designed Honors First-Year Seminar focusing on critical thinking, leadership, and citizenship, one-on-one faculty mentoring, and a tailored sophomore/junior year experience that may include independent research, internship, study abroad, and/or a citizenship/service learning project. As such, it brings together all of the elements that create an effective learning environment.
- The Gateway Program is a provisional admissions program designed to meet the needs of students who have the potential to do college work but do not meet regular admissions requirements. Within this program, students register for a minimum of twelve semester hours (which must include enrollment in General Studies 1111, a study skills course, and University Foundations 1111, an introduction to the college experience course); attend a weekly “intrusive” advising appointment with a Gateway advisor who emphasizes academics, adjustment to university life, and social and personal issues impacting academic success;

2003 Fall Enrollment Survey:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~planning/falenrol.htm>

Honors College:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~honprog/>

Gateway Program:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~admissns/text/maphp.htm>



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attend supervised study tables at least five hours a week; and attend required programs/lectures that focus on academic skills and issues that impact academic success (i.e., high risk drinking). Currently, about 120 Eastern students are involved with this program, which has been quite effective in helping students who need help to stay on track;

**Office of
Disability
Services:**

<http://www.eiu.edu/~disabty/>

- The Office of Disability Services ensures that all students can freely and actively participate in all facets of university life by providing and coordinating support services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to increase the level of awareness among all members of the University so that students with disabilities are able to perform at a level limited only by their abilities, not their disabilities;

**Academic
Success Center:**

<http://www.eiu.edu/~lmasst/>

- The Academic Success Center, formerly the Learning Assistance Center, opened in 1998. It provides individual student consultations, thirty-minute workshops, diagnostic testing, learning related software, and referral services;

TRIO Program:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~eiutrio/>

- The TRIO Program is a comprehensive, federally-funded program that offers academic assistance to 175 first-generation college students and/or students with disabilities. Students can participate at any point in their undergraduate program (freshman through senior year) and remain in the program until they receive their undergraduate degree. The goal of the TRIO Program is to increase the retention and graduation rates of eligible students and to foster an institutional climate supportive of their success. All participants are assigned an individual advisor who will help them determine their specific strengths and weaknesses so that the program can offer the most appropriate assistance for each student. The program provides academic assistance, career and academic planning, personal counseling, cultural enrichment opportunities, financial guidance, disability accommodations, and leadership development. It offers a mentoring program in which faculty mentors meet with students regularly in informal sessions to give academic and personal encouragement. Mentors provide referrals for assistance, personal and professional development, and help with any other needs the student may have.

**School of
Continuing
Education:**

<http://www.eiu.edu/~adulsted/>

- The School of Continuing Education (SCE) assists adults to complete baccalaureate or master's degrees, acquire or update professional skills or prepare for a career change, gain new knowledge and information, or pursue a vocational interest regardless of the location of the student. Through off-campus credit courses, off-campus sponsored credit courses, cohort credit courses, online non-credit courses, online career training programs, off-campus and contract credit programs, the B.A. in General Studies (formerly the Board of Trustees BA), camps and conferences, and event planning, the School of Continuing Education serves almost 10,000 students each year.

Among its offerings are several different off-campus cohort programs for students wishing to pursue a bachelor's, master's, or specialist's degree but unable to register as on-campus students. These off-campus programs are assessed as part of the College of Education and Professional Studies' National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) review process and were determined to be providing the same quality programs as are offered on campus. They include Counseling and Student Development - Champaign; Education Administration - Carmi, Champaign, Danville (2), Decatur, Mt. Vernon (3), Olney, and



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Vandalia; Elementary Education – Centralia, Danville and Decatur; and Special Education - Norris City, Oglesby, and Springfield. SCE also supports the Organization of Adult Students, Informal and Supportive (OASIS), a Recognized Student Organization for nontraditional students who may need assistance to transition successfully into a higher education environment.

- Other programs for working adults are offered through the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences. They include the undergraduate Career and Organizational Studies Program and the graduate Technology and MBA programs.
- The Office of International Programs provides comprehensive support services to international students so they may integrate fully into the American community.

The faculty's availability also enhances learners' support. Eighty-one percent of students responding to the NCA Self-Study Survey agreed or strongly agreed that "Faculty in my department are accessible/available to help students" (Item 22). This accessibility is facilitated by the provisions of the *EIU-UIP Agreement*, which stipulates that faculty maintain a minimum number of posted office hours.

Eastern's advising system comprises centralized advising for entering freshmen through the Academic Advising Center; specialized advising programs for athletes, honors students, and those who may be less well prepared for college; and a combination of faculty and professional advisors at the department and school level who serve their own majors. All new freshmen, students with undeclared majors, and those who have not yet met admission requirements for specific majors are advised in the Academic Advising Center. In addition to assisting new freshmen with course registration, advisors assist students in meeting institutional standards and requirements while being sensitive to their individual needs. The unit's objectives—which include not only helping them plan a sequence of courses that will meet degree requirements in a prescribed length of time but also involve orienting students to the value of the university experience and acclimating them to the campus environment--underscore the importance of students' interaction with these initial advisors. Nearly 96% of new freshmen responding to a satisfaction survey indicated that advising services were "useful" or "extremely useful."

The Gateway, Honors, and TRIO programs, each of which offers assistance supportive of student learning, are described above. The Athletic Academic Support Services Program monitors the academic progress of approximately five hundred student-athletes, providing tutors and study tables and coordinating the implementation of additional academic requirements mandated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Staff members meet with individual student-athletes on a variety of academic, athletic, career and personal issues, including time management, study skills, and assignment preparation. When appropriate, they refer student-athletes to specialized resources and services, both on and off campus. Athletic Academic Support Service's "Panther Athletics Commitment to Excellence" (PACE) program is described online.

Once students have declared or been admitted to a major, responsibility for their advisement is assumed by one or more faculty advisors in most departments. Exceptions occur in the schools

International Programs:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~intern/>

Academic Advising Center:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~advising/>

Advising Surveys:
http://www.eiu.edu/~advising/2003MA_PS/AdvisingSurvey_sFA03.xls

Athletic Support Services (PACE) Program:
<http://www.eiu.edu/%7Epace/>



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Campus Advising Network:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~caneiu/welcome.html>

of Business, Family and Consumer Sciences, and Technology, which offer centralized advisement and employ professional advisors. The Campus Advising Network (CAN) was inaugurated in Spring 2001 in recognition of the fairly complex advising system on Eastern's campus and thus of the need to improve the dissemination of advising information. CAN coordinates yearly meetings of and training sessions for advisors; publishes at least four electronic *Advisor grams* per year; and holds twice monthly meetings of the Steering Committee and other meetings and events as the need arises. Campus-wide communication about advisement-related issues also is facilitated by an electronic list-serv, "Advise-1," through which individuals exchange ideas and pose questions regarding academic policies and concerns.

Student Support Services:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~advising/support.html>

There is no shortage of programs that supplement students' traditional educational experiences, and most of them offer services and information students may access via the Internet. A web-accessible list of these programs is available online. A selection of them follows:

Booth Library:
www.eiu.edu/~booth

- Booth Library underwent an extensive renovation and expansion since the last NCA review. The results of this effort have been spectacular, and Booth is now one of the premier educational resources available on campus or within the community. Booth's holdings are impressive for a university of this size. The collection includes over one million cataloged volumes, 1.3 million micro texts, government documents, maps, music scores, video cassettes, laser discs, DVDs, pamphlets, and leisure reading materials. In addition the library has maintained a substantial subscription to electronic databases providing students with over a hundred specialty databases at last count. As of the 2003-2004 academic year, Booth Library was open an average of 91.25 hours a week. Beyond the physical structure and holdings, the library also offers numerous workshops to the campus community. During each of the last four years, for example, Library Technology Services has offered an average of seventy-six workshops that have been attended by an average of 670 people per year. The library also provides additional assistance through Media Services, which offers media production, photographic services, media equipment, and support to faculty and staff using media in the classrooms or at university functions. Booth's high level of patron usage demonstrates that it is a critical campus resource, fulfilling a vital and active role in students' educations.

Center for Academic Technology Support:
<http://cats.eiu.edu/>

- Computer Technology is now available to Eastern students in the form of high-speed Internet access in all on-campus residence halls, including Greek court. This system allows them to access electronic mail, browse the web, access Booth Library's electronic resources, and download software from public archive sites twenty-four hours a day. In addition, Eastern provides specialized labs and work areas devoted to supporting technology-enhanced courses. CATS operates the TITL Room, which ensures that priority usage is given to faculty members who incorporate the use of technology in their teaching and learning. The room has wireless technology, twenty-four laptops, two data projectors, a white board, a document camera, and numerous software packages. CATS also has its own training lab. This lab is the location of frequent TECnet training workshops in the use of WebCT, Microsoft Office, Macromedia, and Adobe. There are nine computers and an instructor's presentation station, as well as a Smart Board for projecting what is on the computer screen.



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- Information Technology Services established a universal help desk in the spring of 2003. The ITS Help Desk currently consolidates all ITS client support and assistance services into one unit, centrally located at the Gregg Triad Open Computer Lab, with expanded staffing, enlarged scope, greater accountability, and a renewed commitment to service. The help desk offers students and faculty assistance with virtually any hardware or instructional-related problems they might have. The Help Desk can be reached via phone from 8AM–10PM daily, or by a web site and associated email link.
- Health Services offers development programs to new and continuing students as well. Through a wide variety of programs and interventions (e.g., presentations, lectures, interactive programs, marketing campaigns, one-on-one and group meetings, online/Internet programs) students learn how important health is in relation to academic success and how to develop healthy behaviors. For example, because there is a direct correlation between students' grades and their level of alcohol consumption, increasing students' awareness of the impact of drinking on their academic progress is one of the Health Education Resource Center's (HERC) major goals. Health Services also administers flu vaccinations to approximately one thousand students a year, noting that colds and flu are the third largest impediment to college students' health and thus their academic success. In addition, the unit supports the academic mission by bridging Student Affairs to Academic Affairs through internship and practica opportunities, providing training and consultation to faculty regarding various health topics, delivering guest lectures in classroom settings, sponsoring and advising several student organizations that allow participants to build upon basic knowledge and skills learned in classroom settings, and working with faculty to develop ways to infuse health education topics and skills in academic courses.
- The Counseling Center provides Life Skills Workshops, consults with professors whose students are in crisis and offers "culture shock" training to incoming international students.
- Two of the most highly used resources on Eastern's campus are the Student Recreation Center and Lantz building facilities. The Student Recreation Center is a 70,500 square foot facility that contains six gymnasiums, a free weight area, cardio fitness center, dance studio, leisure lobby, and a one-eighth mile walking/jogging track, selectorized weights, aerobics room, eighteen ellipticals, eighteen exercise bikes, seven treadmills, and thirty-four new Nautilus weight machines. Additionally, Lantz houses an indoor field house, racquet ball courts, and an indoor pool. The center is available to all students and is also available to faculty for a small fee each semester. The Student Recreation Center serves an average of two thousand students a day and averages over 30,000 student visits a month. To accommodate such high demand the center is open eighteen-and-a-half hours every weekday, the second highest number of hours of any facility on campus (the twenty-four-hour computer labs being the highest). These facilities directly support academic programs, including Recreation Administration, Physical Education, and Health Studies. The center also provides fieldwork, internships, and graduate assistantships to students from numerous departments. Indirectly, the Student Recreation Center supports student learning by providing students with the resources necessary to combat stress and obesity, two areas of increasing concern for Americans in general and college students in particular.

ITS Help Desk:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~itshelp/>

Health Service:
www.eiu.edu/~health

Counseling Center:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~counscr/>



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- At least three university tutorial centers serve new and continuing students. The Mathematics Diagnostic Center (MDC) is a tutorial service run by the Mathematics Department and designed to assist students who are under-prepared in mathematics. The Reading Center operated by the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary, and Middle Level Education, offers an array of reading-related services to several constituencies across campus and in the greater community, though the preponderance of staff time is devoted to General Studies 1000, a course in study skills and reading enhancement required of students in the Gateway Program and of all students previously dismissed for academic reasons. And the Writing Center, directed by the English Department, offers approximately one thousand tutorials per academic year. Each of these offices maintains regular hours. In addition, the Writing Center maintains a web site and a Grammar Hotline.
- The Office of University Housing and Dining Services extends students' access to computers and software by maintaining computer labs in Stevenson Hall, Taylor Hall, and Greek Court. The unit also requires its Resident Assistants to develop and implement programming that addresses a wide spectrum of social, emotional, physical, vocational, and intellectual needs, as well as offering leadership opportunities for students to get involved while on campus. Housing and Dining also funds math tutors for evening study tables in dining centers and residence halls; provides experiential sites for foods classes; sponsors a number of academic summer camps that enrich continuing students' knowledge and skills and support Eastern's ability to attract excellent new students from around the nation; and provides matching funds for the TRIO program so that first generation college students are able to complete their degrees.
- Focusing on the values of leadership, service, friendship, scholarship, pride and brotherhood/sisterhood, Eastern's Office of Greek Life oversees eight Pan-Hellenic Council sororities, nine Interfraternity Council fraternities, and five National Pan-Hellenic Council fraternities and sororities. Eastern's Greek Community, which composes over 20% of Eastern's student body, was awarded the Mid-American Greek Council Association's Jellison and Southerland Awards in 2002, 2003 and 2004. It offers four honorary organizations based solely on academic and leadership qualities, each of which participates in community service events throughout the year. All potential sorority and fraternity members are required to have a 2.25 cumulative grade point average in order to participate in formal recruitment. As an initiated member, to remain in good standing with Panhellenic Council, a student must maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average. For the past five years, Junior Greek Council Leadership Training has assisted new students who have joined fraternities and sororities to develop their leadership skills and qualities. Through the use of a weekend retreat involving a high ropes course, group discussions, and interactive activities, the training program shows students how to be leaders and to how to get the most out of not only their fraternity/sorority experience but their entire experience as a student at Eastern Illinois University. The group continues to meet weekly as a student organization to develop community service projects, philanthropic events, non-alcoholic social events, and educational programs targeted toward the students who are new members of the Greek Community.

Writing Center:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~writing/>

Housing & Dining Services:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~housing/>

Resident's Hall Association:

<http://www.eiu.edu/%7Ehousing/text/hallgov.html>

Greek Life:

<http://www.eiu.edu/~grklife>



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- Continuing students at Eastern also are supported by development programs offered through Student Government. Its Campus Service Day, for example, promotes volunteer service within the Charleston community. In the first two years of the event, Eastern students, faculty, staff, and community members volunteered to paint homes and clean up yard waste in residential areas and public parks. These activities led to the receipt of the Governor's Hometown Award in Fall 2004.
- Students who are farther along in their academic programs benefit from opportunities to apply what they have learned. Of the approximately sixty-five majors and minors at Eastern, nearly fifty have in place some form of internship, field placement, or student teaching program, allowing students to enhance their educational and professional growth through the application of knowledge and skills in non-academic settings. Every year, nearly one hundred Eastern students also participate in the Cooperative Work Study Program sponsored by the IBHE. The IBHE awards Eastern grant funds for this program, funds that are then matched by local agencies and businesses. Through the program, student interns are placed in work sites located throughout the state of Illinois: local and state government offices, legal professions, health and social welfare agencies, newspapers, public relations and design firms, as well as several business-related industries.
- Staff members in Career Services guide underclassmen through stages including career assessment, values clarification, occupational outlook, networking, social skill enhancement and job shadowing, all of which support effective choices of academic majors and personal development. They assist upperclassmen with leadership opportunities, internships, graduate school applications, and the fine points of job etiquette, which bridge the transition to the work world. And they continue to assist alumni long after they have graduated. Specific services are delivered through trained career counselors, computerized career exploration programs, interest inventories, workshops, class presentations, job fairs, campus interviews, online resources, and guest lecturers from varied industries. Owing to the quality of the service it provides employers, Career Services was named one of the top fifteen U.S. University Career Centers as the result of a 2001 benchmarking study completed by the University of Illinois, in addition to being named a Top 35 U.S. University Career Center by Kaplan's survey of high school guidance counselors.

By integrating assessment activities with such programming, units throughout campus ensure their effectiveness. Housing and Dining has partnered with Educational Benchmarking, Inc., for example, to add national benchmarking to its assessment processes. This enlarged perspective allows the unit to strategize changes that will enhance residents' satisfaction. Booth Library is another of a number of student learning resources that regularly assesses the quality of its services. In addition to surveying patrons, Booth Library staff annually review books and journal holdings, including usage and check-out history. The most recently completed Patron Satisfaction Survey found that overall, Eastern's faculty and students are quite happy with the resources available at Booth Library. Of the respondents who took the survey, 80% have used the book collection with 72% satisfaction; 76% have used the periodical collection with 68% satisfaction; 86% have used study areas with 75% satisfaction; 92% have used the library's computers with 62% satisfaction; 92% have used the library's web site with 78% satisfaction; and

School of Business Internships:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~business/internships.htm>

Career Services:
<http://www.jobstv.eiu.edu/>



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64% have received instruction in the use of the library with 55% satisfaction and 34% neutrality. Continuing to remain attuned to patrons' needs is one of Booth Library's major planning goals.

Responses to Item 27 on the Self-Study Survey—which asks students to assess the value of a variety of educational experiences—offer a somewhat more detailed picture of the effectiveness of Eastern's educational strategies. In this section of the survey, students were asked to rate the following according to the value they added to their education experience: class discussion, laboratories, individual conferences with instructors, service learning, study groups, team/group work, in-class writing, writing revision, oral presentations, presentations of research/creative activity, simulations/role playing, debate, individual projects, scholarly collaborations with faculty, field trips, guest speakers, case studies, observations in professional settings, field research, technology-enhanced instruction, library services, university service, community service, internships, study abroad, online courses, practicum, and professional conferences. Some experiences were nearly universal: 99% participated in class discussion, and 98% appreciated it. Others were nearly so: 80% had completed a lab course, and all but 5% found the experience valuable. More discipline-specific experiences such as "internships," "observations in a professional setting" or "role playing/simulation," and some cutting-edge pedagogies like "online courses" and "service learning" had lower numbers of participants (35%, 63%, 66%, 41%, and 64%, respectively), as did "collaborative research/creativity projects with instructors" (56%). But students who did participate found these experiences valuable. Students rated "Group/Team projects" as the least valuable strategy (10% of students deemed it "not valuable"), but even so, 85% declared it at least "somewhat valuable." In-class writing ran a very close second as the educational strategy respondents found least valuable.

ITS Help Desk:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~itshelp/index.php>

**Health Services
After Hours:**
<http://www.eiu.edu/~health/aftcare.pdf>

It is also worth noting that the institution strives to make its services accessible to students. As is noted above, Booth Library is open 91.25 hours a week and offers extensive electronic holdings accessible via the Internet. Computer technology is, ideally, available anywhere, anytime. In addition, "live" support is provided through the ITS Help Desk from 8 AM to 10 PM daily, while electronic assistance is available from a web site. The School of Continuing Education's job is to provide access to Eastern's programs and services to all students who are unable to come to campus. Fine Arts performance spaces are available to students until 10 PM each day (and longer when circumstances warrant it). Finally, Health Services is open from 8 to 5 Monday through Friday, and from 10 to 2 on Saturdays. It also offers online support in the form of "aftercare instructions" on how to deal with common medical problems. All other services are open during regular business hours.

Eastern clearly provides an environment that supports all learners and respects the diversity that they bring. This is evidenced not only by academic performance data, retention rates, and graduation rates of members of minority groups and women students, but also by students' perceptions. Most undergraduate students, irrespective of race, gender, or class rank, report that members of minority groups, women, and students with disabilities are "treated fairly in the classroom," according to 2003 campus climate surveys. African-American students, however, are more "neutral" (19%) on this subject, with only 3% reporting that they did not perceive that their instructors treated all students fairly. A review of longitudinal survey data of undergraduate students suggests that Eastern has a practice of providing equal opportunities for both genders in athletics. Such assessments are part of an ongoing effort by Eastern to ensure that both male and



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female students have the opportunity to participate in athletics, an important aspect of student life. Currently, Eastern offers twenty-two intercollegiate teams, eleven men's and eleven women's. Finally, most undergraduate students perceive that Eastern has a positive campus climate and that race relations were equal to or better than those in their high schools, although African-American students less so. However, Fall 2003 data suggests that all students were more neutral and somewhat less positive about the climate than 2001 respondents. Preliminary analysis suggests that some negative tensions regarding student climate issues have more to do with student interactions with each other in the residence halls and in other settings than in the classroom or with university offices, policies, and services. The Office of Civil Rights and Diversity is working with others on campus to determine what campus factors may have affected responses and what actions may be efficacious in affecting positive perceptions of campus climate.

**Campus
Climate Student
Surveys:**
<http://www.eiu.edu/~civil/facts.htm>

Core Component 3d: The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

When funds are limited, as they have been for the last four years, priority is placed on filling positions that provide *direct* instruction to students. In addition, an Illinois Board of Higher Education mandate that public institutions reduce administration by 25% over three years has made the university reluctant to fill administrative positions. Owing to both factors, some support positions currently are vacant. This situation does not normally reduce units' effectiveness: Means of increasing efficiency are discovered, less significant responsibilities are discarded, and remaining staff graciously take on additional work. However, units with reduced support staffs who also experience increasing demand for their services fare differently. The Counseling Center, for example, reported being unable to fill a counselor position this past academic year. Because demand for its services continued to grow, this vacancy increased student wait time for appointments and required the unit to rely on less experienced trainees to provide counseling services. Similarly, just three professional staff persons work for the student recreation unit, compared to an average of eleven professional staff at sister schools in the state. Clearly, the university's ability to augment its non-instructional workforce is constrained at the present time. It should continue to monitor vacancies carefully, however, to avoid long-term inconveniences to those it serves.

Across the board, administrators from various departments, programs, and colleges feel that resources are sufficient at best. Some programs, such as biological sciences, lack basic necessities such as lab space and equipment to service all students, requiring students to walk between labs, share equipment, etc. Additionally the physical sciences suffer from poor and out-of-date facilities. Lab ventilation, for example, is not up to modern standards in the chemistry labs. Labs in many departments suffer from poor temperature control, poor tap water quality and dirty circulating air. Such conditions are seriously detrimental because they negatively impact equipment longevity, scientific procedures, and ethical animal treatment. Requests for resources to correct ventilation and related problems have not resulted in funding from the state. As a result, plans have not been implemented, and Eastern continues to suffer from poor and out-of-date facilities.



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In the case of the College of Arts and Humanities, continued delays in the construction of a new Fine Arts Center and the deterioration of Coleman Hall have resulted in facilities that are not ideal at meeting teacher and student needs: Students in music must now practice in a 1930s gymnasium; art students who work in studio sculpture, ceramics, metalsmithing, printing, graphic design, 2-D and 3-D drawing and painting, and graphic design are all housed in a converted grocery store. While such facilities are clearly less than optimal, they also are temporary. Space and budgetary limitations also are impacting the humanities units located in Coleman Hall. The Department of Philosophy can best teach logic via computer technology, for example, but it has neither the space nor the budget to do so.

Many other programs felt that their resources were sufficient *at the present time*. Concern was expressed across the board for resources being able to meet student need and demand in the near future. Most areas felt that increasing student enrollment coupled with the need to keep facilities and equipment updated was putting a strain on resources that will only be exacerbated in the coming years.

One means of alleviating the stress of an insufficient budget is to develop partnerships that allow units to share resources of all kinds. Partnerships that strengthen teaching and learning are described in every chapter of the Self-Study Report. Thus far, they have included programs such as the Minority Teacher Identification and Enrichment Program, Peace Meal, and the Child Care Resource and Referral Project. They also have included collaborations to reinvigorate faculty development programming, to acquaint the campus with issues pertinent to disabled individuals' teaching and learning, and to provide effective, reliable technology for all university constituents.

University Foundations:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~eiu1111/>

Three other examples will be provided in this chapter. One notable instance of a partnership that enhances student learning is Eastern's incarnation of the freshman seminar. Called "University Foundations," it offers students an overview of academic expectations, resources, policies, and traditions of university life. Students are challenged to enhance their intellectual potential, understand their academic and moral responsibilities, and appreciate diversity in a framework that develops the critical thinking, learning, and communication skills necessary to contribute successfully to the university's intellectual life. A global citizenship project engages students in the scholarly and co-curricular community. The partnership aspect of University Foundations is evident in its staffing: Courses are co-taught by members of the faculty and staff, many of them from areas other than Academic Affairs. Furthermore, during and outside of class interactions, instructors provide academic and personal encouragement and opportunities to learn about the many on-campus and community resources that provide assistance, personal and professional development, and help with any other needs the student may have. As a result, University Foundations helps incoming freshmen to establish foundations and relationships that enhance their retention rates and support their continued success at Eastern.

Project WOW:
<http://www.eiu.edu/~wow/>

The second example, Project WOW (Wonders of Wisdom), is a collaborative venture that began in Fall 1997 when teachers in Charleston's Carl Sandburg elementary school invited Eastern students enrolled in Social Studies for Elementary School Children to participate in research projects with teams of third and fourth graders. Through this program, education majors gain valuable experience learning how to teach using cooperative strategies, cross grade-level teams, and research guided by children's questioning. The project also provides students experience in



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integrating cultural, historical, environmental, geographic and scientific knowledge with computer technology. The project design for 1998-2000 featured sixteen global heroes. Eastern facilitators introduced figures such as Mahatma Gandhi to the third graders in carefully researched skits. Once the children organized themselves into global hero teams, the Eastern facilitators prompted team questioning and guided team investigations into the culture, geography, and historical contributions of the global hero. In the spring, the teams selected prominent topics from their accumulated research and designed a multimedia presentation featuring the global hero. Beginning in Spring 2001, the WOW curriculum shifted to sixteen significant individuals of Illinois, investigating the contributions of home state heroes such as Jane Addams, Abraham Lincoln, Jean Baptiste Point du Sable, Frank Lloyd Wright, Carl Sandburg, and John Deere. The Fall 2003 curriculum focused on American heroes, including George Washington, Eleanor Roosevelt, and John Muir, while the Spring 2004 program featured Lewis and Clark. Project WOW is an exciting opportunity for education majors to implement the social studies curriculum they develop.

Non-academic areas also provide students with opportunities for scholarly engagement. For example, the Radio-TV Center (RTC) partners with the Communication Studies and Journalism departments to improve the quality of paraprofessional training students receive in preparation to enter the workforce. As a result, *NewsWatch*, the daily evening news that is produced entirely by students, is currently ranked by the Illinois Broadcasters Association as the best collegiate news production in the State. The RTC also has reallocated funds to recruit students to participate in a summer internship program that has allowed WEIU-TV to continue to produce nightly news throughout the summer. A partnership with the History Department allowed a graduate student to work with an RTC producer to develop and produce a very-well researched documentary of the role of African-Americans in Coles County, which is an excellent audio-visual aid to students from middle school through higher education in their State and local history studies. Finally, the establishment of the RTC Mobile Digital Production truck and the multi-year contract between Eastern Athletics and the RTC have provided dozens of students with an entirely new training experience through the production of live sporting events.

WEIU Radio-TV:
<http://www.weiunet/>

Conclusion

Evidence that Eastern lives by the commitment to teaching and learning espoused by its Mission Statement is discussed at length in “Preparing for the Future.” That chapter documents the university’s efforts to achieve institutional planning goals, particularly the first one: “Enhance the quality of academic programs.” Improving faculty salaries, enlarging professional development opportunities, revising the general education program, streamlining and focusing the student learning assessment program, and increasing opportunities for students to engage in their learning all are related to this goal.

One other testament to Eastern’s commitment to effective teaching and student learning is that in spite of serious cutbacks in state support, the resources available for faculty and students have, on the whole, remained intact. This is not to suggest that available resources have not been stretched thin or could not be improved, but to highlight the fact that when difficult financial decisions require cutbacks, academics traditionally has suffered the least. As a result, Eastern has been able to maintain reasonably small class sizes and reasonable faculty workloads. Visitors to campus



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note in surprise that Eastern has very few large lecture halls. (To be precise, it has four: one each in Buzzard, Coleman Hall, Lumpkin, and the Physical Sciences Building.) A remarkable 77% of students who responded to the NCA Self-Study Survey identified small classes as one of Eastern's top strengths. In fact, the only thing students ranked higher (78%) was "cost" (Item 13). In Fall 2003, average class size was 23. Some classes are much smaller; some are much larger. However, 92% of all classes enrolled fewer than forty students. Students and faculty realize that appropriately sized classes allow for more interaction in class, more personal attention in class and out, and better assessment of student learning. Thus "writing-centered" English courses such as freshman composition are capped at twenty-three so that instructors can assign, facilitate, and assess student writing productively and individually, laying a foundation on which students will build throughout their careers at Eastern.

Reasonable course loads also create opportunities for more individualized responses to students and their work and support institution-wide efforts to improve teaching and learning. The *EIU-UPI Agreement* requires faculty to teach no more than the equivalent of twenty-four credit units per year (though faculty may elect to teach as many as thirty). Within those parameters, course loads vary by department and college. During the six-year probationary period, tenure-track faculty members are assigned reduced teaching workloads (a maximum of twenty-one credit units annually) to pursue development prerequisite to tenure. As a result, they are more able to act as mentors to their students. Both students and faculty value these more intimate interactions: 44% of faculty and 35% of students surveyed saw "close relationships" as one of Eastern's greatest strengths; 13% of students and 15% of faculty prized "opportunities to collaborate with faculty." Similarly, 89% of students surveyed attested to the value of "individual conferences with instructors" (Item 27c). But perhaps the most important measure of Eastern's commitment to teaching and learning is this: 80% of student respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "[f]aculty in my department care about teaching and student learning" (Item 21).

See the Conclusion of this report for final comments on issues discussed in this chapter.