



Conclusion: Strengths, Challenges, & Future Considerations

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The Provost's academic Vision Statement asserts that Eastern offers the "best undergraduate education of any public university in the state complemented by high-caliber master's and post-baccalaureate programs appropriate for our region." While there certainly are aspirational elements to this vision, the evidence provided in the *Self-Study Report* suggests that it is an eminently defensible view. A brief reflection on some of the institution's strengths will substantiate this conclusion.

Eastern does many things well. Analysis conducted for this report, for example, indicates that the Mission Statement is accessible, understood, and adhered to on a daily basis. This statement is the driving force behind the university's quest for academic excellence, its efforts to enhance diversity, and its commitment to preparing students for success in their professional and personal lives and for leadership in the public arena. Eastern's Mission Statement delineates educational goals that are refined in general education, graduate education, and academic department mission statements and put to the test by the Plan for the Assessment of Student Learning. It outlines the plan of work to be undertaken by each of the university's governance groups. Its goals are echoed in articulating mission statements at every level of the institution and in planning documents used to secure funding, direct daily operations, prepare for the future, and most of all, to enact the mission itself. Just as important, Eastern's mission is broad enough to allow the institution room to grow and room to adapt to social and economic changes.

Eastern also is attentive to its planning priorities, linking them to the budgeting process and to statewide goals and thereby increasing the institution's chances of receiving new funds. At the same time, it strives to make efficient use of existing resources. Such strategies have aided the institution in making significant progress at improving salaries and technology and addressing deferred maintenance needs. As Eastern demonstrates repeatedly, a key strength is its ability to respond to adversity with flexibility, innovation, and creativity. As a result, its resource base remains solid despite significant decreases in state funding, and it has been able to sustain key indicators of high quality, including high student retention and graduation rates, solid enrollments, high levels of alumni, faculty, and staff approval, competitive costs, and *U.S. News and World Reports* recognition. Because it takes its teaching mission seriously, Eastern has cultivated a nurturing yet academically rigorous environment in which students can—and do—learn.

The evidence also indicates that Eastern provides its constituents with access to information: Student records, planning documents, evaluation policies, and trend data are readily available on web sites and in hard copy form, ensuring that constituents who choose to be are informed and can contribute to discussions about the institution's past, present, and future. Similarly, university personnel evaluation policies provide a framework for performance assessment and improvement that is complemented at the unit level: Peer evaluations, mentoring programs, annual retreats, and external reviews provide ideas and models for improving performance. At the same time, Eastern's emphasis on continuous improvement increases employees' pride in their work and their commitment to the institution.



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Eastern has a history of focusing on the lifelong learning of its students, faculty, and staff in keeping with the values its mission documents espouse. To this end, it provides them with an organized program of professional development. It also builds its academic programs, graduate as well as undergraduate, around learning goals that direct students to acquire the habits of lifelong learners, individuals who communicate effectively, think critically, engage in independent learning, and live and learn successfully in a diverse, global community. Lastly, it enacts policies and programs that support research, creative activity, and freedom of inquiry and that recognize the achievements of its artists and scholars.

Faculty, staff, and students continue to support strongly the rich tradition of service and engagement historically found at Eastern Illinois University. Every year Eastern touches the lives of many thousands of external constituents through programs whose goals are to improve the preparation of the state's teaching professionals; to provide students with opportunities to apply classroom learning and practice civic and social responsibility; to support economic development; and to enrich the lives, broaden the perspectives, and ensure the health and safety of community residents. As Eastern looks to the future, it continues, through its service and engagement activities, to serve the common good as it advances the quality of higher education.

Yet as this study indicates, there are matters which require the institution's continued attention. Embedded in these, of course, are opportunities for further growth as an institution and as a learning community.

Mission

No evidence exists to suggest that Eastern's Mission Statement no longer serves the institution well. Indeed, its broad description of the responsibilities of a regional, comprehensive institution whose focus is on teaching has provided appropriate direction and needed flexibility as the university has sought to identify and address planning priorities and to improve its quality and effectiveness. At the same time, however, the statement has not been reviewed formally for nearly a decade, and it is clear that the campus community would benefit from its re-examination. Such a review would offer the campus the opportunity to recommit collectively to the goals and ideals the Mission Statement espouses. It also would increase collective understanding of the relationship among mission, planning, and resource allocation, an area in which NCA Self-Study Survey results suggest improvement is needed. Specifically, respondents were asked to rate their agreement with this statement: "In general, Eastern effectively allocates its resources to accomplish its mission and goals." Only 51% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed, and only 77% agreed at least somewhat, even though evidence proves that Eastern's planning and budgeting priorities do, indeed, relate to and support the mission. In addition, recent developments affecting higher education could be intentionally incorporated, including the role of technology. Most importantly, review of the Mission Statement would allow the university community to determine how well the institution is positioned to achieve the aspirational goals identified in university and academic area vision statements.

Actually undertaking the reconsideration of an institutional mission statement is both always timely and never timely. That is to say, it is always valuable to undertake such reconsideration, but there are inevitably reasons to delay. This is, of course, the case for Eastern, and the timing of this must be



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considered carefully. Certainly, there are several campus groups which would need to be involved, including the Council on University Planning and Budget, the various senates, and several management groups. The university will begin these conversations and consider how fast to move them forward in the months to come.

Resources

Budget Support. The greatest challenge affecting Eastern's efforts to be responsive to its mission and goals is the continuing loss of appropriated funds. It must be remembered that for at least part of the ten-year review period, the state's financial outlook was favorable, and Eastern made significant strides in improving both salary levels and infrastructure. In contrast, during the last three years (2001-2004), statewide rescissions and callbacks, coupled with the imposition of new assessments for health insurance, the obligation to provide significant sick leave/accrued leave payouts to departing faculty and staff, and the annualization costs resulting from the implementation of mid-year salary increases, have depleted reserves and seriously stressed the budget. If it continues, this situation has the potential to impede Eastern's ability to maintain quality, undertake new initiatives, or make further progress on existing ones. Perhaps most importantly, it could imperil the ability of the institution to fund the activities that produce the high quality education it currently provides its students. It also may impede the institution's ability to respond to unanticipated expenses or to any additional burdens that might be imposed on it by the state as it struggles to balance its budgets. For these reasons, the Council on University Planning and Budget identified the decreased state appropriation as the primary threat facing the university.

Because ensuring stable levels of state support and securing increased external funding are essential, the President and other senior officials have and will continue to work closely with both local legislators and legislators across the state. A good deal of their time is spent in Springfield to keep Eastern visible to the IBHE and legislative and government leaders. It is clear that Eastern is well regarded and seen as pursuing effectively an appropriate role within the state. To date, this has not translated into a more favored position in the queue for state funding, however. To augment support for the university, efforts are underway and will be expanded to marshal alums and current students and their parents as additional advocates for Eastern. Like public institutions elsewhere, much of the resulting revenue shortfall has been made up through increased charges to students. It is unfortunate that the implied change in public policy toward higher education has occurred without an open debate, but that is not a decision for individual institutions to make. In the meantime, it is vital that continued efforts be made to control expenditures and make efficient use of human and financial resources, and this is occurring. The recent reductions in "administrative" support mandated by the IBHE, however, have reduced these expenditures to levels that are proving difficult to sustain without negatively affecting student services. Efforts continue, but the realistic limit of such reductions is very near. In this environment, alternative revenue sources are being pursued through friend raising and fund raising.

Development and Alumni Relations. Eastern's alumni speak very favorably of their alma mater. Data from the Illinois Board of Higher Education Alumni Surveys consistently document a 95 – 98% satisfaction level with the educational experiences provided at Eastern. Alumni do complain, however, that communication from the university has not been provided on a regular or consistent basis, and it is true that because of rising print and postage costs, both central and departmental



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newsletters have seen a decline in size and their distribution schedule. The *Old Main Line*, a four-color, glossy magazine, is published by the Alumni Association and is only provided to dues paying members, approximately 4000 alumni. The lack of regular communication with our alumni may be a factor in the institution's single digit alumni participation figure. Eastern's alumni support the institution at a rate of 9%. Although this is higher than the national average for public master's-level institutions (7%), it is lower than those public master's-level institutions which rank in the upper tier of *US News and World Report* (12 – 15%). While the functions of Alumni Services have been augmented significantly during the past decade, the many years of infrequent and inconsistent communication will take a long time to overcome.

As is true at many public institutions, the tradition of development at Eastern is rather short-lived; nevertheless, with the decrease in support from the university's largest benefactor, the State of Illinois, cultivating additional revenue streams is critical. Even during the difficult financial circumstances of recent years, modest steps have been made to augment Eastern's fundraising capability through internal reallocations. New staff has been added, development research has become more sophisticated, and essential connections between development and academic units have been established, vital first steps toward the institution's implementation of a major capital campaign in a few years. A true culture of philanthropy is probably many years in the future still, but identifying additional resources to support development efforts and helping alumni understand the importance of a continuing relationship with their alma mater will move Eastern in the right direction.

To reflect for a moment on what is underway currently, a mini-campaign is being conducted with a goal of \$10M to be raised over three years (2004-06). This campaign is seeking funds to support three major initiatives: endowment, infrastructure, and annual operations. Over the first fifteen months of the campaign, \$4.1M has been receipted, indicating that progress is proceeding as planned. Following this mini-campaign, the Board will consider launching a major fundraising campaign with a goal to be determined following a full feasibility study. In preparation for this, regular augmentation of the capacity of the Development Office will be made as appropriate for a campaign of this magnitude. It is not realistic, of course, to anticipate that revenues from the development function will approach the magnitude of those coming from tuition or state general funds. They will, however, provide needed "flexible" dollars to augment the support from these more traditional sources.

Tenure-Track Faculty. Data presented in the *Self-Study Report* show clearly that the percentage of tenure-track faculty has decreased: In Fall 1996, 77% of the faculty was tenured/tenure-track; by Fall 2003, this figure had decreased to 65%. This trend certainly is not unique to Eastern; indeed, the percentage of faculty who are tenured/tenure-track is relatively high when compared to comparable institutions. One of the university's strengths, however, has been the extent of contact between students, especially undergraduate students, and the permanent faculty. The academic area, therefore, is focused on reversing this trend: Tenure-track positions increased by four in FY 2004, and forty-one tenure-track searches have been authorized for FY 2005. The challenge is that faculty are departing (as the result of retirement, personal reasons, or professional advancement) at higher rates than seen in the past, thereby making it difficult to restore the desired balance of tenured/tenure-track and annually-contracted faculty. Furthermore, continuing financial hardships make funding these needed hires difficult.



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Instructional Equipment. As is obvious, financial challenges manifest themselves in a number of areas, but a particularly important one pertains to instructional equipment. Through FY 2001, healthy state appropriations allowed the university to increase equipment allocations. In subsequent years, these allocations declined. While resources are still well above FY 1996 levels and equipment allocations are adequate overall, the downward trend cannot continue for long without negatively affecting teaching and learning. Not surprisingly, responses to the NCA Self-Study Survey record department chairpersons' perception that resources are not sufficient to ensure that laboratory and instructional equipment remain up to date. It is probably true that no matter how bountiful such resources, more would be preferred; however, it is clear there has been increased pressure on such funds.

If resources were to drop to a level where instructional equipment such as computers or lab equipment became outdated or inadequate in number, students would lose the opportunity to develop and hone the skills expected by employers. To avoid this, Eastern has instituted several budgeting techniques. A fixed cost account for instructional equipment was established in 1996, funded in 1997, and funded annually in each subsequent year. These funds can only be redirected by presidential authorization. In 1998, the Board also established an on-going equipment reserve which allows for the funding of equipment needs. This has allowed the university to set aside funds specifically for equipment purchases. While these techniques have helped assure equipment funding to date, they cannot totally ensure adequate funding of equipment needs if the institution's budget becomes too seriously stressed due to developments beyond the institution's control.

Deferred Maintenance. Eastern's backlog of deferred maintenance also continues to present challenges. In 1999, the IBHE recommended that Eastern reduce its deferred maintenance backlog by spending \$7 million per year over the next twenty years; however, support for this level of spending has not been forthcoming from the state. In spite of these challenges, the university has made strides in this area. Specifically, since fiscal year 1998, Eastern has spent \$11.8 million of its State appropriated funds on deferred maintenance. These expenditures are in addition to \$13.2 million of deferred maintenance reductions realized as a result of Eastern's participation in three energy performance contracts, \$6 million of network infrastructure upgrades funded through student fee backed debt securities, and other capital projects funded through the Capital Development Board (e.g., the \$11.4 million Buzzard Hall and \$18.8 million Booth Library renovations) and university-controlled funds (e.g., \$6.7 million for the construction of a new Human Services Building). Consistent spending in this area is essential if the campus is to reduce its accumulated deferred maintenance and appropriately support its academic mission. As such, Eastern continues to support such expenditures at their historic levels and is seeking additional funds through the IBHE, Capital Development Board, and other funding sources.

Assessment

While Eastern has made great strides over the past ten years in assessing student learning, particularly at the institutional level, varying levels of departmental commitment remain, and it is probably correct to say that many departments have reached a plateau. Based on the assessment plans submitted in Summer 2004 and analyzed in accordance with the NCA's "Levels of Assessment" document, 23% of undergraduate programs have identified measures that emphasize direct assessment, focus on real-world tasks, stress higher order learning, and allow performance to be



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gauged over time; and 8% have collected data for all objectives, analyzed those data systematically, engaged faculty in discussions of the ramifications of these results, *and* made appropriate programmatic changes. Despite such progress, 6% of undergraduate programs have done no more than identify learning objectives, and 18% have only identified assessment measures. 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. This vigilance must and will occur.

There also are a few gaps in assessment efforts to date. For example, Eastern does not yet assess its five graduate-level certificate programs and its one non-credit program systematically. The Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning (CASL) will assist this effort by revising assessment plan guidelines to encompass not only undergraduate and graduate majors, options, and minors, but certificate programs and non-credit programs as well. Similarly, degree programs do not necessarily specifically address students' development of attitudes and skills requisite to a life of learning in a diverse society: Out of sixty-six assessment plans submitted for review, just eighteen (27%) include objectives that relate to global citizenship. And, while a *general* graduate-level knowledge base also is embedded in the Mission Statement for graduate education, there currently is no centralized mechanism directing the assessment of students' achievement of these objectives. It is also the case that Eastern, like most of its peers, has not devised a systematic framework for assessing co-curricular activities that have an impact on student learning. The challenge of developing a culture of assessment in the academic realm generally has relegated such efforts to a subsidiary role, and this is understandable. Nevertheless, such activities speak directly to the global citizenship goal of the General Education Program, and it would be useful to collect such data in a systematic way. In the same way, student learning would be enhanced by the development of a systematic means of collecting and analyzing information pertinent to internships and other applied learning experiences. Because of the connections of these latter experiences with traditional academic experiences, these will be tackled next in the on-going development of our assessment program.

Not surprisingly, those departments/programs that have excelled at assessment are those that feel ownership of the data they have collected and that use these data for program improvement. The Self-Study Survey indicated that 68% of faculty agreed that their department's assessment results are valid. Faculty also made connections between their department's goals and those of the institution, with 82% agreeing with this survey item, and 66% agreed that their department had articulated clear student learning objectives to assess learning outcomes. On the other hand, while a significant number of faculty members recognize that their department has articulated goals, fewer faculty members (58%) indicated that their departments use assessment results to improve teaching and learning. At the same time, 37% of the faculty identified program improvement as one of the greatest priorities for investment in the future. Clearly, such improvement must be linked to assessment.

The greatest challenge in the area of assessment is one shared with many other institutions: Assuring broad and deep faculty engagement in the assessment process. Thirteen percent of those responding to the Self-Study Survey listed assessment as one of Eastern's greatest challenges. While professional development opportunities, including on- and off-campus workshops and presentations, and individual and group support and assistance, are readily available and have encouraged faculty to participate in the assessment of student learning outcomes, resistance continues, perhaps as a result



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of normal concerns as to what these data may say about the faculty and teaching in a given program. This last point is a particular challenge. Dr. Peggy Maki, former Senior Scholar and Director of Assessment at AAHE, has noted that undertaking meaningful assessment means that one must be prepared for occasional “bad news.” To be open to such news, there must be an underlying understanding of the basic value of what is being attempted and a willingness to confront openly what has yet to be achieved. Whatever its cause, increasing faculty engagement in assessment must and will remain a priority goal for the Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning and the Center for Academic Support and Achievement in the coming years.

Enrollment Management

With tuition income constituting an increasing portion of the university’s resource base, it is imperative that the institution augment its ability and sharpen its strategy for managing enrollments. Designing an undergraduate admission process that is more intentionally selective is the Enrollment Management unit’s assigned priority for the coming years. This will entail positioning Eastern as a “first choice” institution for more of its most highly qualified applicants, as well as beginning to target and manage enrollments by college and major. While increasing the student profile is not the primary goal of this initiative, this is expected to be an ancillary outcome of the revised enrollment management process. The most obvious step taken to ensure attention to this charge was the recruitment and hiring of a new undergraduate admissions director in 2004. The director, in turn, is aggressively implementing changes in the techniques and strategies for prospect development and recruitment including the development of much more sophisticated electronic management of prospect records. These initiatives must and will continue.

Eastern also faces a number of particular challenges in enrollment management, including increased competition for students. Even though the number of high school graduates is expected to grow throughout this decade, the competition for these students will be keener than ever, given that there are 175 institutions of higher education in Illinois alone. Furthermore, even as the institution prepares to admit students more selectively, the fact remains that the pool available is less prepared for college than in the past, the result not simply of uneven preparation in high school, but also of the statewide push to provide a college education to every student in Illinois. With statewide administration of the Prairie State Achievement Exam, all high school juniors in Illinois now take the ACT test, and many who would not previously have considered college now are doing so. The evidence may be anecdotal, but it is pervasive: Across the nation, students are not as well prepared for college as desired. To keep faith with these students, the institution that admits them must be responsible for providing them with the tools they need to be successful. Eastern’s tradition of close faculty/student relationships position it well to meet these needs.

Faculty Development: The Teacher Scholar

For institutions of higher education generally, the need to refresh constantly the expertise of the faculty is probably even more critical than addressing the accumulated deferred maintenance needs of the physical facilities. The intellectual capital of any institution is embodied in its people, and nowhere more importantly than in its faculty.



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There is widespread acknowledgement that Eastern's faculty is deeply committed to its students and to providing them superior learning experiences. It is noteworthy, however, that there are no formal initiatives to support faculty in exploring the pedagogy of their disciplines or both the art and science of teaching except in the most informal of ways. When asked, faculty members focus their development needs on support for research, scholarship, and creative activity. Not only is this understandable, but it is similar to faculty responses at most institutions, and it is appropriate. As the Provost has articulated, even at a predominately teaching institution such as Eastern, being a university faculty member means being intellectually connected to the scholarship of one's discipline. That said, the matter of support for teaching, instruction, and the pedagogy of the disciplines is not addressed adequately at Eastern. This led the Faculty Senate to have the Provost establish a Faculty Development Committee in 2002, and this committee's efforts have focused primarily on instructional support. The absence of any formal instructional mentoring program, institutional initiative in teaching and learning, or instructional development at a predominately teaching institution has begun to be addressed. An annual speaker series has been initiated, as have regular luncheon gatherings of faculty to discuss aspects of pedagogy. In addition, a faculty member is being designated to coordinate faculty development activities with special focus on pedagogy and instruction. Even the faculty survey conducted by the Faculty Development Committee showed significant faculty interest in "improving my skills as an effective teacher" and in development activities focused on guiding productive class discussions and stimulating student motivation. While the ongoing development of faculty expertise is an unfinished agenda, it is now moving forward.

All this said, the ongoing intellectual development of Eastern's faculty is essential to the quality and vitality of the institution. Both the survey conducted by the Faculty Development Committee and the Self-Study Survey revealed substantial faculty interest in augmenting support for faculty research, scholarship, and creative activity. The first area of need identified is professional travel. Many faculty pay significant amounts of money out-of-pocket to attend conferences, workshops, and professional meetings that are essential in keeping them apprised of developments in their fields. These activities are necessary if members of the faculty are to fulfill their contractual obligations in teaching/primary duties and research/creative activity. Full funding seldom is available even to those presenting papers or the results of their creative activities at conferences. Support for faculty travel has improved, but it still is deemed inadequate. A strong program of internal grants is available, but funding for both the faculty development Mini-Grant Program and the Council on Faculty Research Program has remained at the same level for almost a decade. Staying abreast of current research—pedagogical and disciplinary—is essential to effective teaching; participating in research is essential to engaging students in their academic disciplines. It is clear that faculty members understand the financial straits of the institution and that no one is implying that departments and the university are not being as helpful as possible within the context of the times; nevertheless, existing support is not sufficient. Addressing this need will require careful examination of opportunities, scarce though they may be, to reallocate resources and constant work to ensure adequate financial resources overall.

In discussions about the levels of support for research and creative activity, it is worth noting that the roles of these activities are not always perceived in the same manner by all members of the faculty. Unlike research universities, regional comprehensive institutions need to embrace a very broad view of scholarship such as that espoused by the late Ernest Boyer. Specifically, the intellectual contributions of the faculty will not always or perhaps even typically be restricted only to "basic



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research or scholarship” as is the case at research institutions. That this is not necessarily a view embraced by all faculty at Eastern is understandable, but dissonance between the aspirations of these faculty and the realities of an institution like Eastern is inevitable. The focus of Eastern must be--and is--on developing teachers who also are scholars. Eastern also has a special opportunity to engage its students, including especially undergraduate students, in the intellectual work of the faculty. The nature of faculty scholarship is likely to be more accessible to such students here than at institutions focused almost exclusively on cutting-edge, basic research.

In short, opportunities and support for research and creative activity must be augmented, but always within the context of the approved mission of Eastern. Engaging the Council on Faculty Research and related campus constituencies in discussions that re-conceptualize the university’s commitment to scholarship in the context of its role as a teaching institution would serve Eastern well. Such discussions may yield new and better ways to define and achieve a “vision” of scholarship for both faculty and students. The charge to initiate these discussions has now been given.

Service

As the *Self-Study Report* has demonstrated, the service contributions of Eastern’s faculty, staff, and students are enormous. These individuals serve well over 100,000 individuals every year and are awarded more than \$5 million in grants, on average, to support their efforts. Yet no mechanisms currently in place accurately track these contributions. The Faculty Activity Analysis Form, for example, tracks only the assigned service activities of faculty, and thus represents only about 10% of all assigned duties. Based on the number of service activities described in “Engagement and Service,” it is clear that most service is conducted *outside of* assigned duties. Because the current form collects information required by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, it may be necessary to devise a supplemental mechanism, one over which the university has control, to collect data that accurately document the service contributions not only of faculty, but of students and staff as well. Once a fuller account of service contributions is available, its analysis may serve to counter the perception that community service is less valuable than university service, another concern raised during the self-study process. Academic departments also can help to ameliorate this concern by 1) ensuring that Departmental Application of Criteria documents (which guide the evaluation of faculty achievements in teaching, research, and service) clearly identify the kinds of service activities most pertinent to retention, tenure, and promotion; and 2) by more clearly identifying the connection between service/service learning activities, departmental and institutional priorities, instructional practices, and student success.

A more comprehensive view of student service within the context of academic work already is underway. At the beginning of the current academic year, AY04-05, the President directed the Provost to study how service activities, service learning, and similar student engagements might be incorporated more broadly into undergraduate degree programs. An ad hoc study group has been established by the Provost to research this matter and provide suggestions/recommendations. A report is expected during the Spring 2005 Semester. The Provost has indicated that the conversation will then be taken to departments and college curriculum committees for further examination, reflection, and action.



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Institution-Wide Collaboration

Another challenge for Eastern is to continue the trend—one not yet fully engrained on campus—of units collaborating to achieve long-range planning objectives which benefit the institution as a whole. This kind of collaboration has resulted in and will continue to result in significant improvements in technology resources on Eastern’s campus, and it has begun in the area of development as well. Yet, it is a model that needs to become standard practice if the institution is to be successful in the face of ongoing reductions to its resource base. Revisiting institutional planning—to ensure that it focuses on long-term strategies, not just short-term ends; on outcomes, not processes; on the institution and its students, not on individual departments or employees—is an important first step. That only 50% of those responding to the NCA Self-Study Survey agreed that “Eastern plans appropriately to ensure that it is prepared for the future” indicates that it is time for the institution to take this step. However, that 92% identify it as an institution that “strives for continuous improvement” suggests that the university is up to the challenge. An opportunity to focus on institutional mission and vision should provide an opportunity to practice concentrating on overarching goals and objectives. A mature and sophisticated ability to focus on an institutional perspective will need to be practiced, but the gains make it worth the effort.

Afterword

Though it began in 1895 as a normal school and has long passed its centennial anniversary, Eastern Illinois University assumed its current and full-fledged university form much more recently. University-level needs and expectations in areas such as technology, development, grant and research support, organizational development and governance, planning infrastructure, and faculty development are still in the process of being fully realized. Many of the challenges and, hence, future directions discussed in this chapter and elsewhere in this *Self-Study Report* are reflections of the ongoing maturation of these and similar elements of Eastern’s landscape. Such maturation is never easy, but it can be energizing and is absolutely essential. The roadmap already charted offers a viable path for Eastern Illinois University to progress to the next level.