

Assurance Argument

Eastern Illinois University

Review date: 9/30/2024

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1.A.1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

Eastern embraces its role as a university that strives to provide an inclusive, accessible education. The [mission](#) asserts Eastern's commitment to providing students with applied curricular and co-curricular learning experiences, highlights the intentional design of Eastern's campus culture around the needs of its students, and emphasizes the importance of DEI on campus and in students' education.

In Eastern's mid-cycle review (2019), the HLC recommended the establishment of a more regular mission review process. Eastern's Board of Trustees (BOT) responded to this recommendation, [formally delegating responsibility](#) (page 2) for regular mission review to the Council on University Planning and Budget (CUPB), a university advisory committee with broad representation from stakeholders from all areas of the university. CUPB updated its [bylaws](#) (page 6) to reflect this new responsibility on April 7, 2023.

1.A.2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

On November 3, 2023, CUPB carried out its mission review responsibility, approving a [motion](#) to retain the mission statement as written and review it again in three years.

Eastern's [vision statement](#) echoes the commitment to academic excellence, DEI, and student-centeredness articulated in the university's mission statement: *Eastern Illinois University will be a premier comprehensive university, global in its reach and impact, where personal connections with faculty and staff support students' academic success.*

The missions of each vice presidential area and auxiliary unit are directly reflective of the university's mission statement:

- [Division of Academic Affairs mission](#): *As the University's largest division, Academic Affairs is committed to advancing the mission of the institution. Faculty, administration, and support professionals embrace the values, aspirations, and vision of the campus community.*
- [Division of Student Affairs mission](#): *The Division of Student Affairs welcomes and celebrates our students' commonalities and differences, focusing on development, active citizenship, experiential learning, engagement, leadership, and preparation for a diverse, global society. Collaborating across campus, we ensure student success and retention and are dedicated to cultivating a sense of community on both our campus and beyond. We are committed to the health and well-being of our students and encourage them to lead balanced lives. We advocate for an inclusive environment where students feel safe and secure.*
- [Division of Business Affairs Guiding Principle #1](#): *We will be student and EIU mission centered in our approach.*
- [Eastern Illinois University Foundation mission](#): *. . . To assist and support Eastern Illinois University's educational and cultural mission through encouraging philanthropic gifts of cash, property, and other materials of educational and artistic value. . . .*
- [Alumni Association mission](#): *The Eastern Illinois University Alumni Association supports and fosters the overall mission of the University by inspiring the loyalty and commitment of all alumni.*

The university's mission guides major planning initiatives, such as the [Fall 2022 climate survey](#) conducted as part of Eastern's Quality Initiative, the [General Education Assessment Work Group](#) convened in Fall 2022, and [Plan 2028](#), Eastern's five-year strategic plan developed during AY2023. Criterion 5.C.1 discusses the alignment of these initiatives to the mission.

1.A.3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

Eastern's mission statement clearly positions the education of students, at both the undergraduate and master's levels, as the institution's primary obligation. That education is delivered within an environment that is uniquely and purposefully student-centered. With a focus on accessibility and DEI, the university is committed to serving all students.

1.A.4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

The university's [51 undergraduate degree programs, 32 graduate degree programs, and 10 post-baccalaureate certificate programs](#) reflect the mission's commitment to the "arts, humanities, sciences, and professions." Eastern's undergraduates are first introduced to the arts, humanities, and science through the [general education program](#), which includes 12 credit hours in foundational courses (writing, speaking, and math), 7 credit hours focused on quantitative reasoning in natural sciences, 9 credit hours focused on citizenship in social and behavioral sciences, and 9 credit hours focused on communication in humanities and fine arts.

Both general education and the major programs adhere to the five undergraduate [University Learning Goals](#): critical thinking, writing and critical reading, speaking and listening, quantitative reasoning, and responsible citizenship. Revised in 2014, these five learning goals reflect Eastern's mission, which states that "throughout their education, students refine their abilities to reason and to communicate clearly so as to become responsible citizens and leaders."

While emphasizing academics, Eastern's mission also commits to providing "accessible" education on a "student-centered campus." Eastern offers a [range of learning modalities](#) to meet students' needs: 48.3% of degree-seeking undergraduates in Fall 2023 were enrolled fully in face-to-face classes, 15.6% were fully online, and 36.1% were enrolled in a combination of face-to-face, online, and hybrid classes. Among graduate students, 36.7% were enrolled fully face-to-face, 37.6% were fully online, and 25.7% were in a combination of face-to-face, online, and hybrid classes.

The university's student support services (discussed in detail in 3.D) reflect the commitment to accessibility as well. Here, two services are highlighted to demonstrate their alignment with the university's mission:

- Strong academic support is provided by the [Academic Support Center](#) through individualized academic consultations, [workshops](#), and centralized online and [in-person tutoring](#). The Academic Support Center also oversees the university's Early Alert System, a retention strategy that helps identify at-risk students early in the semester and directs them to needed support services. During AY2023, staff responded to [1,074 Early Alerts](#). (The Early Alert System is discussed further in 4.C.3.)
- Eastern recognizes that supporting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds to remain in college requires more than financial aid and scholarships. In October 2021, the university opened the [Campus Food Pantry](#). In its second year of operation (AY2023), the pantry provided meals to [889 students over 2,688 visits](#) (page 6). Expanding on the success of the food pantry, Eastern applied for and received the IBHE End Student Housing Insecurity ([ESHI grant](#)). This \$200,000, 8-month grant (November 2023 - June 2024) will be used to launch an expanded series of services for housing-insecure students, including housing and childcare vouchers, and expanded pantry offerings.

Eastern's enrollment profile is consistent with the university's commitment to "accessible undergraduate and graduate education," and to "diversity and inclusion." In Fall 2023, Eastern's enrollment included [4,402 degree-seeking undergraduate students and 1,955 graduate students](#). Fall 2023 demographic breakdowns highlight diversity within the student body:

- [Race/ethnicity](#): 53.9% White, 14.2% Black or African American, 13.8% International, 8.3% Hispanic, 1.4% Asian, 0.2% American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.1% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander, 2.7% two or more races, and 5.3% unknown/not reported.
- [Gender](#): 55% women, 31.6% men, 2.6% other (includes transfeminine, gender non-binary, transmasculine, cisgender, and agender), and 10.8% unreported. Note: gender data for Fall 2023 includes reporting from first-semester freshmen only as this data was gathered differently in prior semesters.
- [Age](#): 70.5% under 25, 29.5% 25 and over
- Students receiving [services through the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations](#): 6.2%
- Students using [military benefits](#): 2.8%

The financial need of Eastern's students is high. During Aid Year 2022–2023, among Eastern undergraduate students who completed a FAFSA, [46.6%](#) were from low-income families (defined as

150% of federal poverty level and below). Also during Aid Year 2022–2023, [31.6%](#) of students who completed the FAFSA had an Estimated Family Contribution of \$0.

Eastern’s commitment to accessibility is also seen in its high school dual credit offerings, which increased from 1,580 students in Fall 2019 to [2,447 students in Fall 2023](#). In Fall 2023, Eastern’s dual credit students identified as [racially/ethnically diverse](#): 55.4% White, 29.5% Hispanic, 9.1% Asian, 5.7% Black or African American, and 0.3% unknown/not reported.

1.A.5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Eastern’s mission and vision statements are publicly available on the [university’s website](#) and on the first page of the [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) catalogs. The mission is included at the beginning of every [board report](#) for meetings of the BOT.

In addition to the mission statements and major planning initiatives discussed in 1.A.2, Eastern’s commitment to an “accessible” education and “student-centered campus culture” is emphasized in student-directed language in [current recruitment materials](#):

Welcome to Eastern Illinois University, where you can be part of a welcoming community that genuinely cares about you. We’ve got more than just a top-notch education to offer – we’ve got your back with academic, financial, and personal support to help you make your dreams come true. Picture yourself in the not-so-distant future walking across the stage in your graduation gear while your family and friends cheer you on. That’s the day we’re all working toward at EIU and we’re here to help you become that amazing version of yourself.

Area-specific mission statements are included on websites (e.g., [College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#), [Health and Counseling Services](#)) and in annual reports (e.g., [Division of Student Affairs](#), [Tarble Arts Center](#), [EIU Foundation](#), page 30).

Sources

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- Student race / ethnicity demographics Fall 2023 - PBIR Office
- Students enrolled with Military Student Assistance Center Fall 2023
- Students enrolled with Office of Accessibility & Accommodations Fall 2023
- Students referred to Early Alert Fall 2023 - Academic Support Center
- Students with 0 Expected Family Contribution Fall 2023 - Office of Financial Aid
- Tarble Arts Center FY23 Annual Report
- University Learning Goals - 23-24 Undergraduate Catalog

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.B.1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

As a public, regional comprehensive university, Eastern is independently governed by its [BOT](#). Seven of the eight trustees are appointed by the Illinois governor to six-year terms, while the eighth is a student elected annually by the student body.

Eastern's primary educational role is to serve the citizens of the state of Illinois: in Fall 2023, [76.6%](#) of Eastern's degree-seeking undergraduates and graduate students were Illinois residents. Through on-campus and online courses, Eastern extends its educational service to students from other states ([9.6%](#)) and to international students ([13.8%](#)).

In fulfilling its public mission, Eastern offers multiple pathways to education for new and continuing students. Some examples:

- In Summer 2023, Eastern welcomed its first cohort in the [Accelerated Masters in Teaching \(MAT\)](#) in Secondary Education. Participants with undergraduate degrees in select disciplines take online coursework and complete a full-year, full-time residency in a secondary school. At the end of this year-long program, participants are eligible to apply for licensure by the state of Illinois. An additional [Accelerated MAT in Special Education](#) was approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2024 and an [Accelerated MAT in Elementary Education](#) is in development.
- Between 2021 and 2023, Eastern established [off-campus cohorts in elementary education and special education](#) in the cities of Champaign, Decatur, and Danville. The program is designed to attract BIPOC paraprofessionals and career changers who are interested in becoming teachers.
- In Fall 2021, Eastern began a partnership with the [Danville Correctional Center](#) to offer courses toward a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies to men incarcerated there. By May 2023, [11 students](#) in the Danville program had earned their degree from Eastern.
- For more than 10 years, Eastern's [RN to BSN program](#) has provided a distance-ed based path to a bachelor's degree for working nurses. This distance-ed option now continues alongside the traditional BSN degree program begun under the [Gail & Richard Lumpkin School of Nursing](#) in Spring 2021.

- The university's robust [Rural School Initiative](#) offers a pathway toward becoming a teacher. This program begins with opportunities for high school cohorts, continues on through pre-service programs at community colleges and at Eastern, and ends with hands-on mentoring for new teachers in rural districts.

Eastern's commitment to serve the public is guided, in part, by our university mission to provide students with "applied learning experiences" that help them "become responsible citizens and leaders." Thanks in part to small class sizes and strong student-teacher relationships, Eastern is able to offer a range of experiential education opportunities in credit-bearing courses that allow students to deepen their education while serving the public. (See 1.C.1 for examples.) The institution also offers opportunities for community members to participate in educational endeavors. (See 1.B.3 for examples.)

1.B.2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

In keeping with the mission of the university, Eastern's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes. As a nonprofit public state institution, Eastern is not obligated to generate financial returns for investors, nor does the institution support any superordinate organizations. The university's budgeting process is guided by [IGP 99: Budgeting Process](#), which states that *The highest priority shall be assigned to meeting the instructional needs of students*. The university helps to ensure the focus on its educational mission through CUPB. Also tasked with annual review of the university mission as discussed in 1.A.1, CUPB receives regular reporting from the president and vice presidents regarding budgets and appropriations and makes recommendations regarding setting budgetary priorities for programs and the institution's overall planning process.

As a public institution, Eastern has an obligation to students, to the state of Illinois and its citizens, and to donors to ensure both fiscal responsibility and educational primacy. This obligation is met through regular reporting to the BOT, which oversees spending.

1.B.3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Eastern stands as a hub for academics, services, and entertainment for the region.

The School of Extended Learning (SEL) hosts a number of opportunities for community members. In conjunction with local and national partners, SEL offers [training modules, professional conferences, and safety workshops](#). The Academy of Lifelong Learning hosts workshops and courses for adults in the local community. Lifelong Learning also offers the Academy Pass, which allows adults in the community to audit Eastern courses. Activity 2.12 of [Plan 2028](#) has set a goal to increase participation in SEL annually over the next five years.

Eastern also hosts a number of conferences that are open to the community:

- The Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement hosted the [EIUnity Diversity Conference](#) annually from 2008–2021. Eastern plans to continue the conference under the newly hired Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer.
- The [Making Excellence Inclusive RISE Conference](#) has been held each October since 2017. In 2021 and 2022, the conference offered a track specifically focused on Culturally Responsive

Teaching and Leading in K–12 institutions.

- Eastern’s Counseling Clinic hosts the [Bonine Suicide Prevention Conference](#). This annual conference allows mental health professionals to earn Continuing Education Units.
- Eastern’s [Autism Center](#) offers an annual conference for area teachers which typically draws 125–250 participants.

In addition to programming for adults, Eastern hosts a wide range of summer camps and conferences for area youth. Although COVID-19 dramatically impacted this programming (0 camps in 2020 and 12 in 2021), camp participation returned strong after the pandemic, with [7,003 participants in 2022](#) and [8,341 participants in 2023](#). Eastern’s [longest-running camps](#) include Eastern Music Camps (67 years), Johnson Flight Encampment–Civil Air Patrol (56), IHSA Girls State Track (50), IHSA Boys State Track (49), and American Legion Premier Boys State (47).

Eastern also contributes to the public good through free or low-cost campus resources and programming available to the local community. Examples include the following:

- [WEIU TV](#), the local PBS television station licensed to Eastern’s BOT, provides rich local news and programming to 22 counties with more than 1 million potential viewers. For example, WEIU’s student-produced daily local news program, NewsWatch, offers viewers a unique version of nightly news, weather, and sports centered on Coles County and bordering counties.
- Radio station Hit-Mix 88.9 [WEIU FM](#) has a broadcast radius of 50 miles as well as online streaming worldwide. As the flagship station for Eastern football and basketball, WEIU FM now produces a number of regular podcasts.
- The Doudna Fine Arts Center provides rich cultural experiences that include student and employee performers and artists, as well as renowned national and international performers and artists. Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Doudna hosted [73 events](#) during AY2023, with an estimated total attendance of 8,060 patrons. Highlights of the season included Ensemble Mik Nawooj, *Xanadu: The Musical*, *American Soldier*, Randy Brecker, and *Dar He: The Story of Emmett Till*.
- Tarble Arts Center provides the region with visual arts exhibitions, educational programming, and lectures from artists and other speakers. Tarble is the pre-eminent center for visual arts for the region. During [AY2021](#) (page 4) when much of the campus was shut down due to the pandemic, Tarble used its “institutional resources to effectively create both solitary moments and shared experiences that served these needs while keeping...staff and audiences as safe as possible.”
- The Athletic Department encourages community members to attend athletic competitions. All sports except football and basketball offer free admission.

Strong enthusiasm for volunteerism, both on Eastern’s campus and throughout east-central Illinois, sets Eastern apart. In 2022, the campus’s Civic Engagement and Volunteerism Office and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life combined to form the Office of Leadership & Engagement (OLE); both before and after this change, this branch of Student Affairs was and is committed to developing civic-minded graduates who will continue to be engaged in life-long service to their communities. OLE is the home for connecting student abilities with community needs through year-round volunteer projects and its [three signature service days](#) (page 6):

- *Jumpstart 2 G.I.V.E.* is a partnership between OLE and New Student and Family Programs, forming part of the activities for incoming students on the Saturday of move-in weekend. Each service project is led by a student or employee site leader, which allows new students to connect

with campus leaders and the local community. In August 2022, 645 new students participated in service during this event.

- MLK Jr. Day of Service honors Dr. King's legacy by helping members of Eastern's community renew their personal commitment to citizenship through service to others. In January 2023, 150 volunteers participated in this event.
- Panther Service Day allows students, employees, alumni, and community members to work side-by-side in service to Charleston and the surrounding areas. In April 2023, 214 volunteers served in this event.

OLE lays a strong foundation for a culture of direct service at Eastern, and that foundation is supported by other areas of campus. Some examples:

- The [Illinois Collegiate Music Education Association chapter](#) (page 3) requires members to provide service hours each semester, including activities such as assisting band directors with instrument try-out events and hosting music clinics on campus.
- During Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October 2022, the [National Residence Hall Honorary](#) (page 10) sold goods to raise nearly \$1,800 for Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center.
- In October 2022, Interfraternity Council sponsored [Karting for a Cause](#) (page 7), a competition with 60+ participants that raised approximately \$400 for Eastern's Campus Food Pantry.
- The Newman Center, part of Eastern's Association of Campus Ministers, has hosted [Amigos & Friends](#) two to four times per week throughout the year since 2003. Currently engaging 40 Eastern student volunteers with 36 adult English language learners living in the community, Amigos & Friends is about far more than English-language acquisition; it is about engaging in respectful friendships, learning from each other, and building a world without barriers.

Activity 2.11 of [Plan 2028](#) (page 8) has set a goal to increase volunteerism on campus by 3% each year through AY2029.

EIU demonstrates a commitment to civic engagement through public service grants received by the university. These grants provide new research and experiences for the campus, the local region, and the citizens of Illinois. According to data compiled by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Eastern received [\\$15,591,878](#) in public service funding from FY21 through FY23. For example, as a result of an annual grant of \$180,000–\$225,000 from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Eastern has been home to the Illinois Higher Education Center (IHEC) since 2009. IHEC provides technical assistance and professional development for all Illinois institutions of higher education that wish to improve their substance abuse prevention programming and Federal Drug Free Campus compliance. In another example, Booth Library was awarded a \$50,000 [digital literacy grant](#) from the state of Illinois in 2021 to develop a curriculum on topics such as digital citizenship, basic computing skills, and social media.

Sources

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- WEIU Internal Press Release - Spring 2023

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.C.1. The institution encourages curricular or co-curricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

Eastern's mission to help students "become responsible citizens and leaders" is achieved through both curricular and cocurricular initiatives. One of the university's five [undergraduate learning goals](#) is Responsible Citizenship, which states that *EIU graduates make informed decisions based on knowledge of the physical and natural world and human history and culture by*

- *Engaging with diverse ideas, individuals, groups, and cultures.*
- *Applying ethical reasoning and standards in personal, professional, disciplinary, and civic contexts.*
- *Participating formally and informally in civic life to better the public good.*
- *Applying knowledge and skills to new and changing contexts within and beyond the classroom.*

Students' curricular engagement with informed citizenship begins with the general education curriculum, for which each student completes a three-credit cultural diversity requirement. Students can then develop their global citizenship through programs such as Africana Studies, Asian Studies, Communication and Cultural Diversity, French and Francophone Studies, German Studies, Latin American and Latinx Studies, Premodern Global Studies, or Spanish and Hispanic Studies. Other programs prepare students for service to their communities: for example, Aging Studies, Civic Nonprofit Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Environmental Sustainability, Leadership in Community Recreation, and Public Health.

Through volunteerism (discussed in 1.B.3) and other initiatives, Student Affairs also prepares students for informed citizenship. As an example, efforts to promote voting amongst college students have been recognized at the national level: in November 2022, Eastern received the "Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting" recognition from the [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#). Since 2021, Eastern has been designated a [Voter Friendly Campus](#) by NASPA and the Campus Vote Project for its commitment to educating the campus community about the importance of voting, registering the campus community to vote, and building excitement to participate in the next election.

High-impact practices (HIPs)—defined by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to

include service-learning, learning communities, research with faculty, internships (discussed in 3.B.3), study abroad (discussed in 3.B.3), and culminating senior experiences—are key to preparing students for informed citizenship as well as for post-graduate success. In the 2023 NSSE data, both first-year and senior students at Eastern participate in HIPs at a rate equal to their peers at other institutions in the [Carnegie 2022/2023 data set](#): 56% of first-year students and 86% of seniors reported that they had participated in at least one HIP during their time at Eastern. Eastern students are slightly less likely than peers in the Carnegie data set to engage in two or more such HIPs, as recommended by NSSE: 57% of seniors at Eastern reported that they have engaged in two or more HIPs as compared to 59% at all institutions in the NSSE data set. Examples of HIPs that support informed citizenship and/or post-graduate success include the following:

- Eastern offers [eight living learning communities](#) (LLCs). While some of these LLCs are formed based on academic level or affinity group, the Roosevelt Leadership Institute LLC in Pemberton Hall is uniquely dedicated to informed citizenship: residents engage in inspiring programming, service activities, and a guest speaker series. Two additional LLCs, the Health and Human Services LLC (Taylor Hall) and Business and Technology LLC, contribute to students' preparation for post-graduate success: residents participate in career-specific programming, network with faculty and professionals in the field, and learn career-specific skills.
- As part of their education, students in some majors provide essential services to the regional community. Seniors and graduate students in the Department of Communication Disorders & Sciences—supervised by their faculty—staff the Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic, which provides diagnostic and treatment services to individuals with communication disabilities in east-central Illinois.
- WEIU's student-produced daily local news program, NewsWatch, offers training opportunities for an average of 40 students each semester while the radio station, Hit-Mix 98.1, offers hands-on training for an additional 30 students.
- From Fall 2019 through Summer 2023, 76 students were awarded [Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity \(URSCA\)](#) funding by the university. URSCA awards are given to undergraduate students carrying out an independent project under the guidance of a faculty member. Students also have multiple opportunities to present their research and creative activity to the campus community. In Spring 2023, for example, 123 students presented their work at the [15th annual Student Research and Creative Activity Conference](#). Many more students present their work at conferences held within individual departments and at regional and national conferences.

Activity 1.11 of [Plan 2028](#) (page 7) sets several goals to increase student participation in high-impact practices over the five-year period of the strategic plan, including 50% increases in both the number of students studying abroad and the number of students presenting at NCUR and other undergraduate conferences as well as a 25% increase in the number of students participating in the Student Research and Creative Activity Conference.

Beyond HIPs, one measure of Eastern's commitment to students' post-graduate success can be seen in the university's ongoing responsiveness to workplace trends and demographic shifts. In Fall 2022, 24.7% (1,616 students) of on-campus students were enrolled in [majors that have been added or redesigned since Fall 2016](#). Eastern continues to adapt through its online curriculum as well: in Spring 2023, Eastern added the Bachelor of Applied Arts & Sciences (B.A.A.S.) degree type for working professionals who are already invested in their fields and who are seeking a four-year degree. The [first two proposed B.A.A.S. programs](#), one in the Lumpkin College of Business and

Technology and another in the College of Health and Human Services, were approved by the Board of Trustees in January 2024.

For many students, leadership is key to their post-graduate success, and in Student Affairs, OLE's mission prioritizes leadership preparation. In Spring 2022, OLE initiated the [Greek 101: Start Your Legacy](#) (page 9) leadership series. This four-level, annual program is designed to develop leadership skills as students progress through their collegiate experience by focusing on hazing prevention, values-based leadership, philanthropic leadership, career preparation, and more. The [Lead Lunch](#) series kicked off in Fall 2023; this series connects students with university and community leaders over a complimentary lunch.

Ultimately, students' preparation for post-graduate success is evident through career outcome data. The [career placement rate](#), as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) for Eastern's Class of 2020 (88%), Class of 2021 (87%), and Class of 2022 (92.2%) consistently exceeded the national average. [Career Services](#) also offers services to guide students through the career preparation process.

1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.

Eastern's commitment to inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations is evidenced in the university's ongoing HLC Quality Initiative (QI): Diversifying Eastern Faculty and Staff for Student Success. The plan was approved by the HLC in Summer 2020, and after a year of research and study, the QI Committee released its [Faculty & Staff Diversity Plan](#) in Fall 2021. The Diversity Plan includes 36 recommendations for employee diversification in the areas of hiring, recruitment, and retention.

First among the recommendations of the Diversity Plan was the hiring of an SDIO. Eastern's first two national searches were unsuccessful, but feedback from these experiences helped the university to better define and advertise the position. Eastern's third national search was a success, [resulting in the hiring of John Blue, effective January 8, 2024](#).

Recommendation #31 in the Diversity Plan called for the university to conduct a periodic campus climate survey of employees and students, making the results of that survey "accessible to the university community and beyond, as an unambiguous demonstration of our commitment." The first of these climate surveys was conducted in Fall 2022, measuring respondents' perceptions of their experiences at Eastern based on their race and ethnicity. Positively, the [executive summary](#) of this first survey indicated that 81.1% of BIPOC students reported satisfaction with their experiences at Eastern, compared to 85.5% of white students. There were, however, several important differences among employees' experiences on campus: "Underrepresented faculty/staff report feeling uncomfortable raising issues of concern for fear of retribution. This population is also more likely to feel as if they must 'represent' their identity group and must work harder than their colleagues to achieve the same level of recognition. This population also raised concerns in response to questions about the extended burden of university service responsibilities due to their race."

In response to these challenges and others, the university has embarked on a number of initiatives. For example, Recommendation #18 in the Diversity Plan encourages "departments to consider revisions to the Departmental Application Criteria (or DACs) that value the additional labor invested by faculty in mentoring colleagues of color and students from underrepresented groups and recognize all faculty for sustained participation in associated programs." This support for DEI-related labor was

taken up with additional language in the most recent UPI Contract (Article 3, which now states, “The Board and the Union support colleagues and students from underrepresented groups. Faculty and academic support professionals’ participation in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging programming will be encouraged and recognized by the board”) as well as a November 2023 [resolution by the Faculty Senate](#). Communication Disorders and Sciences is the first department to have answered this call: their [revised DAC](#) (page 5), effective 2024, now recognizes “supporting colleagues and/or students from underrepresented groups or with diverse needs (e.g., mentoring, sharing resources, additional meetings)” as evidence of significant-level service to the institution. More details about the ongoing QI, including progress on each of the 36 recommendations, can be found in the [2024 QI report](#) submitted to the HLC.

In the Spring 2023 NSSE survey, Eastern invested in an additional module, "Inclusiveness & Engagement with Diversity." [Results from that module](#) indicate that Eastern students reported higher ratings on average than students from peer institutions on a third or more of the 27 questions.

Despite these positive indicators, Eastern’s president has [asserted](#) the university's ongoing commitment to continued improvement, as Eastern's DEI goals for itself are higher than the current peer means across higher education.

During the pandemic, the state of Illinois established the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, using federal dollars, to support targeted initiatives to enroll and retain underrepresented, first-generation, and high-need students at higher education institutions. Eastern received approximately \$1.1 million in [Round 1](#) and \$400,000 in [Round 2](#) of the GEER funding, which was used to support over [two dozen initiatives](#) on campus. For example, in Fall 2021, Eastern launched [Freshman Connection](#) and Transfer Connection using GEER funding. These programs pair incoming first-year or transfer students with advanced undergraduate mentors. Incoming students who participate in Freshmen Connection are enrolled in EIU 1111: University Foundations and meet with their mentor in small groups throughout the year. Incoming students participating in these mentoring programs are invited to join the Freshman Connection Living Learning Community (LLC) or the Transfer LLC. [Participation and retention data](#) from the first two cohorts of the Freshman/Transfer Connection is encouraging: although more than 70% of all participants are first-generation, Pell eligible, and/or underrepresented students, retention rates among all three groups (freshmen mentees, transfer mentees, and mentors) exceed the overall university retention rate. Participation among both freshman and transfer mentees increased from the first to second years of the program. Now that GEER funding has ended, Eastern has committed to continuing Freshman/Transfer Connection along with other targeted mentoring through programs such as TRiO and the Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement.

Commitment to inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations is demonstrated through processes and activities across campus. Following a pilot in 2020, Eastern switched to test-optional admissions in Fall 2021, which the state of Illinois has since mandated. In addition, the university’s merit scholarships no longer use standardized tests as part of the awarding process. In Fall 2018, the Financial Aid Office and the EIU Foundation launched the [Scholarship Opportunities](#) homepage, which allows students to enter their information and then easily apply for all scholarships for which they are eligible. The changes have resulted in more equitable admissions and scholarship distribution processes.

Eastern offers a number of processes and programming related to gender and sexual diversity (GSD). For example, since 2015, Eastern students and employees have had the option to indicate a preferred name in Banner, which is then used in all course rosters and public directories on campus. Eastern

offers on-campus gender-inclusive housing to students through the [Doug DiBianco Living Learning Community](#) (established in 2021), and gender-inclusive restrooms are provided in academic and residential buildings throughout campus with [their locations](#) identified on the GSD Center's website. The university's GSD Center provides educational programming to campus and hosts the [Trans*Formation Station](#), a confidential service that provides free clothing, accessories, and hygiene products for transgender and nonbinary students on campus. The university offers [two scholarships](#) specifically for students who are members of the GSD community.

Eastern provides students from underrepresented groups with support systems during their time at the university. This support begins during Move-in Weekend, when students have the option to participate in [Find Your Fit](#) affinity groups. The 2023 Find Your Fit groups included meetings for the LGBTQIA+ Community, BIPOC Community, First Gen Students, International Students, Nontraditional Newcomers, Transfer Students, and Christian Faith Communities. This support continues into the academic year through mentoring as discussed above and through campus spaces and affinity groups. Several spaces currently available on campus are designed to support a sense of belonging for members of the campus community from underrepresented groups. In April 2023, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences opened [three affinity spaces](#) (page 7) in Coleman Hall: the African American and African Diaspora Hub, the Latinx and Spanish Speaking Hub, and the Pan Asian and Pacific Islanders Hub. The Cultural Center and the Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity offer comfortable, welcoming environments for social events, meetings, studying, and relaxing. Students are also supported and celebrated through organized activities, events, and student groups. Examples include multicultural campus celebrations such as Holi, heritage months, Registered Student Organizations (RSOs), and the Multicultural Greek Council. University Housing's [DEI Committee](#) hosts an annual DEI week and Tunnel of Oppression event to raise awareness. During AY2023, [thirty-one](#) (page 7) of the 135 events sponsored by the Student Life Office were multicultural in focus.

Physical accessibility remains a priority on campus. Eastern's current [ADA accessibility initiative](#) has been ongoing since 2022 in response to a submitted list of accessibility concerns. Facilities Planning and Management, Housing, and the City of Charleston have completed improvements to sidewalks, ramps, building entrances, parking, elevators, classroom seating, and restrooms. [Additional sidewalk and ramp improvements](#) are scheduled for Summer 2024.

1.C.3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

In 2023, the university's DEI language was expanded and revised (Diversity Plan Recommendation #14) by the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity to state: *Eastern Illinois University is committed to fostering a learning community where all members feel welcomed and valued. The university provides equality of opportunity in all areas of campus life and we strive to recognize and appreciate the unique value of our students, faculty, and staff. Every member of campus has the right to learn and work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment, and beyond that, our goal is for all members of our community to develop a strong sense of belonging to Eastern Illinois University.*

Eastern's current strategic plan, [Plan 2028](#) (page 10), emphasizes this commitment through Theme 3.1: *Cultivate a campus climate that prioritizes belonging and values diversity.* This section of Plan 2028 articulates the university's ongoing commitment to the newly created SDIO role and to the university's QI to increase the percentage of employees from underrepresented groups.

A number of practices on Eastern's campus have been designed to enact that statement by proactively creating a positive campus climate for underrepresented groups. Several of these practices were described in the university's [Quality Initiative](#) (QI), including the following:

- Making Excellence Inclusive (MEI), an initiative of the American Association of Colleges and Universities, seeks to achieve academic excellence for all students. Introduced at Eastern in Fall 2012, MEI has grown into a committee whose mission statement, bylaws, and committee structure focus on interrelated systemic oppressions and how these affect students of different backgrounds.
- The Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity offers the [Safe Zone Training Program](#), which is open to any student or employee interested in becoming an ally to members of the LGBTQA+ community and learning more about issues related to gender and sexuality. Workshops include Safe Zone Core, Asexual Awareness, Beyond Bystander Advocate Training, Bisexual/Pansexual Awareness, Black LGBTQA+, GSD History, Queering Faith: The Bible, and Trans 101/201.
- Installed in October 2020, the ["We Are EIU" flagpole](#) recognizes the diversity of heritages, cultures, and gender/orientation on campus. Criteria for flags to be flown on the "We Are EIU" flagpole are outlined in [IGP 166](#): Flag Display.

Through the QI, several new policies have been implemented as of October 2023 to improve the climate surrounding hiring processes. Effective July 1, 2023, all search committees are required to complete unconscious bias training provided through Vector Services ([Diversity Plan Recommendation #8](#)). Also in 2023, several internal governing procedures on hiring (IGPs [12](#), [13](#), and [14](#)) were revised to include the following statements:

- *All screening committee members and hiring managers must complete training on equitable and inclusive hiring practices. The training is effective for a period of 2 years.* (Diversity Plan Recommendations #28 and #30)
- *Particular attention must be paid to achieving a diverse composition including gender and race/ethnicity.*
- *Unless approved otherwise, screening committees should have at least 4 members, including the chairperson and one member from outside of the unit. Student participation is encouraged when appropriate.* (Recommendations #29 and #30)

Offices around campus have provided additional DEI-related training opportunities for employees. In May 2023, Human Resources provided training on creating inclusive department cultures. The VPAA Office and the college deans have sent teams to a number of conferences related to DEI and supported the Chair's Council training on diversity, inclusion, and belonging ([Diversity Plan Recommendation #23](#)). Before his retirement, President Glassman committed professional development funding to the Office of the SDIO for invited speakers or for groups of individuals to receive DEI training (Recommendation #5). Through the Student Affairs Recognition and Professional Development Committee, the VPSA division has offered its staff members the opportunity to participate in DEI training (Recommendation #26). All members of the University Police Department have completed cultural competency training. In Activity 3.11 of [Plan 2028](#), Eastern has set a goal to increase participation in DEI-related programming by 50% by AY2029 as compared to AY2023.

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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

As described in this chapter, Eastern Illinois University successfully addresses the core components of Criterion 1: Mission.

Since the last HLC review, the university has established a process for triennial review of the university mission for continued alignment with our values and goals. The mission was most recently reviewed in November 2023 and found to adequately meet the current needs of the institution. The missions of all major areas within the institution are aligned with the university's mission and vision; these mission and vision statements are publicly available on websites, major reports, and admissions materials. Serving as a guiding focus in the implementation of recent major initiatives, Eastern's mission statement clearly positions the education of undergraduate and graduate students as the institution's primary obligation. Eastern's curricular and cocurricular programs provide students with education in the arts, humanities, sciences, and professions in an accessible, student-centered environment.

In alignment with its mission, Eastern demonstrates commitment to the public good in a range of ways, including through alternative education programs, student and employee volunteerism, community-based learning programs, camps and conferences, arts programming, and grant-funded external partnerships. While pursuing commitment to the public good, Eastern's educational responsibilities remain its primary focus.

Eastern's mission to help students to become responsible citizens and leaders is reflected in the university's Responsible Citizenship learning goal for undergraduates. Evidence in support for students' preparation for post-graduate success can be found in Eastern's high-impact practices data in the 2023 NSSE data set, outcome data from Career Services that consistently exceed the national average, and awards in recognition of Eastern's status as a voter-friendly campus. Eastern has prioritized students' leadership development through the establishment of the Office of Leadership and Engagement in 2022.

Eastern understands that commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is essential to the success of the university's mission. This commitment is evidenced by the university's current Quality Initiative: Diversifying Eastern Faculty and Staff for Student Success. As part of the QI, the university has recently hired its first Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer and has conducted the first in a periodic campus climate survey of students and employees. Data from the Spring 2023 NSSE survey of Inclusiveness & Engagement with Diversity indicate that Eastern students' perceptions of their experiences and curriculum outperform peers. Eastern offers programming, mentoring, and affinity group spaces designed to support students from underrepresented groups. The institution fosters a climate of respect on campus through equitable hiring processes and DEI training opportunities as well as through programming and campus celebrations.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

The university's mission is managed in a two-layer process designed by the Board of Trustees (BOT). First, the Council on University Planning and Budget (CUPB) conducts regular reviews of the mission and makes recommendations ([CUPB bylaws](#)). Second, the BOT reviews the recommendations and determines whether any changes are necessary.

2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Integrity in the operation of the university is of highest importance. All employees and students of the university are expected to act in a manner consistent with federal regulations, state statutes, university policies, and other internal regulations that are found in governing documents, which include: (1) The BOT's [Bylaws](#), [Regulations](#), and [Governing Policies](#), which are the Board's policies for the entire university; (2) [Internal Governing Policies](#), which apply to students, staff, and faculty; and (3) the [Course Catalog](#), which contains the authoritative statements of curriculum.

Besides publishing policy documents, the university expects all employees and trustees to comply with the [State Ethics Act](#). All are subject to the state laws on Gift Bans and Revolving Door prohibition. When there is a question of how a regulation, statute, or policy may apply, a principle of "do what is right" guides the application of those mandates.

Eastern's internal auditor promotes integrity across all functions by testing for compliance with all governing documents and external regulations. According to [policy](#), internal audits are scheduled to review all major systems of internal control of the university on a regular basis. The internal auditor reports to the president and the BOT. Annual external financial and compliance audits are performed. Any findings from either internal or external audits are addressed and corrected in a timely manner.

Financial

A hierarchy of state statutes, accounting standards, and internal accounting rules establish clear standards to be followed for financial activities. These standards are covered in the university's [Financial Manager Training](#), which is available to all employees who serve as financial managers.

Procurement is regulated by the State of Illinois Procurement Code (30 ILCS 500) as well as a specific Internal Governing Policy ([IGP 108](#)). As appropriate, the processes depend on the cost of the purchase, with greater levels of oversight required as the cost becomes greater. In addition, the State of Illinois requires that [Statements of Economic Interest](#) be filed annually by employees who have P-cards or other purchasing authority.

An especially notable financial function centers on stewardship of university property. [IGP 163](#) specifies the requirements, including an online [fixed asset inventory system](#) that tracks equipment assigned to a fiscal agent responsible for each item, and the disposal of property that is deemed excess property. An annual inventory process conducted by account managers or their designated proxies is used to confirm the possession of items of significant value.

Academic

The university's curriculum is the starting point for discussing academic structure; Eastern's faculty have primary authority over the curriculum. In assuring curricular integrity, the university has [established procedures](#) for approving academic programs, curricula, and courses. Each academic department has a department curriculum committee. There is a college curriculum committee for each college that reviews proposals brought forward from the departments within the college. The college curriculum committees forward proposals to the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) or the Council on Graduate Studies (CGS) for final approval. The Council on Teacher Education must also approve proposals for programs that prepare teachers. CAA and CGS have also established general university-wide educational goals and regulations and published them in the [Course Catalog](#).

Students often view grades as the most concrete measure of their progress through Eastern's curriculum. The integrity of the grading system has been protected with a [Grade Appeal Policy](#). Students who believe grades were assigned in an unfair manner have a clear and well-defined grade appeals process that they may utilize. The process consists of multiple opportunities with appeals first to the instructor, then the department chair, then a grade appeals committee, and finally the college dean. A limited and specifically defined set of reasons are basis for an appeal. Students are informed of this process on the Academic Affairs website, which provides policy and the accompanying form.

Faculty, staff, and students alike must respect intellectual property as part of an overall commitment to academic integrity. The university specifically acknowledges this commitment with [IGP 48.4](#), titled "Use of Materials Protected by Copyright."

Personnel

Eastern has implemented policies that promote fair treatment of all employees. Section II of the BOT Regulations is dedicated to "Employees." This section states, for example, that "employees shall avoid nepotism and creating the appearance of nepotism as well as other forms of conflict of interest."

The University Department of Human Resources and the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity work together to ensure that fair and ethical hiring procedures are practiced during the recruitment, hiring, and employment process for all new employees. These offices are guided by the federal non-

discrimination statutes such as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. These statutes are implemented by Eastern's Internal Governing Policies that cover all categories of employees: Administrative Positions ([IGP 12](#)), Civil Service ([IGP 13](#)), Faculty and Academic Support Professional Positions, Continuing and Temporary ([IGP 14](#)), International Faculty and Professionals ([IGP 14.1](#)), and Students ([IGP 71](#)).

All employees are required to complete five types of training: Ethics, Identity Protection Act (IPA), Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (ANCRA), Preventing Sexual Harassment, Preventing Sexual and Interpersonal Violence, and Search Committee Training. Collectively, these training programs inform employees of their rights and responsibilities as well as procedures to follow when they believe their rights have been violated.

In addition to university policies and procedures, several groups of employees, including the faculty, are represented by unions. University Professionals of Illinois (EIU-UPI) is the collective bargaining agency for tenured and tenure-track faculty, annually contracted faculty (ACFs), and academic support professionals (ASPs). Nine groups of civil service employees are represented by union contracts. In addition, there are structured processes for imposing sanctions on employees in cases of possible employee violation of policies. These processes are specified in internal governing policies ([IGP 31.1](#), [IGP 35](#), [IGP 36](#)) or in collective bargaining agreements, where appropriate. In all cases, there is an appeals process to ensure employees are treated fairly.

The safety of students, employees, and the public is extremely important to the university. Both the University Police Department and the Office for Environmental Health and Safety exists to assist individuals and departments in keeping the university a safe place. A central [webpage](#) summarizes all safety resources as well as contact information. Eastern employs public warning systems including an emergency siren, text messages in the Alert EIU system, and campus-wide email alerts.

Eastern specifically targets sexual harassment with [IGP 175](#) and with preventive training for all employees. Sexual assault prevention efforts at Eastern include a required annual online training for new students and information about policies, procedures, resources and how to report provided to every student when they log in to register for classes. Online training is also provided for employees throughout the year. The Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, Dean of Students Office, Counseling Clinic, and the Health Education Resource Center provide information through staff training, information tables set up at various events throughout the year, residence hall presentations, and programming for Sexual Violence Prevention Month in April. Information is posted in all residential and academic buildings regarding available resources, processes for reporting, and survivor's rights.

Eastern also protects privacy of information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA); the Office of General Counsel oversees compliance with FERPA.

Auxiliary Functions

Auxiliary functions of the university, such as parking service, Housing, Martin Luther King, Jr. Union, Textbook Rental System, and Campus Recreation Department, all have policies in place. For example, the Campus Recreation Department has published an [Intramural Sports Handbook](#) containing policies for the use of its facilities and participation in its intramural sports activities that ensure fair access, appropriate behavior, and consequences for rules violations. [IGP 49](#) outlines the policies of the Textbook Rental System.

Sources

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2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships

The university manages its website to maintain the accuracy of the information presented to the public. The website concentrates on critical matters such as curriculum, academic programs, cost of attendance, and internal policies at multiple levels. Web developers regularly maintain and update university web pages for greater accessibility on multiple platforms. The home page provides general access to information via a search function and general index pages.

Prospective students are able to view general admissions requirements, Gateway admissions standards, and academic program requirements in the [Course Catalog](#). The cost of attendance for all different categories of students, including breakdowns of those costs by tuition, fees, and housing and dining are easily accessed through the university's [Financial Aid website](#).

Current students depend on the descriptions of academic programs easily accessed from Eastern's home page. Each academic department maintains a web page that presents descriptions of the field of study and examples of possible career paths for students. Eastern's website also includes the [Schedule Planner](#); students rely on this function for planning their schedules each semester; the Schedule Planner is embedded in the PAWS system overseen by Information Technology Services.

Specific information about faculty and staff is available in the [Faculty Directory](#) as well as on departmental web pages. Many faculty and staff maintain individual web pages containing extended professional information useful to students.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs maintains a web page that displays [accreditation information](#). This page documents the university's current accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission and a listing of individually accredited programs, the accrediting agencies, and the expiration years of that accreditation.

2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Beyond the academic core presented by the university's website, Eastern enriches the experience of its students with a wealth of opportunities overseen by the [Student Life Office](#). This unit takes administrative responsibility for student government, campus entertainment (University Board), multicultural programming, leadership support services and more than 100 registered student organizations (RSOs). On its website, Student Life organizes information about this entire scope of opportunities.

Many academic units also sponsor activities, clubs, and honor societies which are open to students majoring in those disciplines. These clubs and honor societies provide academic and social leadership opportunities for their members. A few examples of student organizations and clubs include: the Astronomy Club, Television and Film Club, Association of International Students, American Marketing Association, and the Art Association. The Finance 4220 student-managed portfolio is one of the [top student managed funds in the nation](#).

The [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE) was completed by 189 freshmen and 206 seniors in AY23. Results showed that both groups of Eastern students rated the university very favorably for the quality of student-faculty interactions and interactions with others in the general campus environment. Eastern's ratings were significantly higher than the average for Great Lakes Public universities as a group. Eastern creates these personal relationships through small class sizes and providing ways for faculty, staff, and students to interact outside of the classroom. For example, there are a variety of [student employment](#) positions in offices and departments throughout the university such as fitness instructor, lab assistant, peer tutor, and photographer for the *Daily Eastern News*. These positions help students pay the bills, build their resumes, and connect with faculty and staff.

Eastern is also committed to providing ways for students to apply what they learn in the classroom in community engagement settings. To that end, measurements are conducted annually by the [Office of Leadership and Engagement](#). For example, during the 2021-2022 academic year, students devoted approximately 35,000 hours to volunteering. If these volunteer hours were translated into a dollar amount, it would equate to \$875,000 in economic impact. (The State of Illinois recognizes one hour of service-learning or volunteerism is worth a \$25 donation.) The survey also identified courses that require students to participate in service learning collaborations.

Sources

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

An individual who joins the Board of Trustees (BOT) is trained by meeting with each of the four academic deans. In this way, board members become knowledgeable about the university at the college level. [Records of BOT training](#) are on the BOT website.

2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

The board has a documented history of working in the best interest of the university. On its website, the BOT maintains a collection of its own regulations and bylaws. This document states that "The Board herewith adopts [Bylaws](#), [Governing Policies](#), and [Board Regulations](#) intended to encourage and facilitate cooperation among the Board, the President, faculty, staff, and students in their mutual efforts to strengthen, improve, and protect the integrity of the education provided at the University." A recent example is the Board's involvement with Plan 2028, the university's current strategic plan. [Plan 2028](#) was developed collaboratively by individuals from across the university and then [approved by the BOT in June 2023](#).

3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

The BOT structures its duties to include the interests of both internal and external constituencies. The [agenda](#) of every board meeting follows a standard format that includes a section called "Reports from Constituencies." This section is dedicated to three internal constituencies: Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government. External constituencies are also invited to present occasional reports. BOT meetings always close with a "Public Comments" section providing an opportunity for anyone—external or internal—to address the board.

4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.

By [state law](#), Eastern's Board is an independent legal entity. Although the governor appoints seven of the eight members of the Board, no one political party can be represented by more than four members. A campus election among students is used to select a student member. The Board is able to preserve its independence because members are protected from the two principal threats: legal risks and bribery. First, they are assured of representation by the Illinois Attorney General should they be sued for anything related to their work with the board. Second, BOT members are subject to the [state ethics act](#), which prevents them from accepting gifts or anything of value in exchange for influence on their decisions.

5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

The BOT included this carefully crafted statement in its governing document: "As the final institutional authority, the Board delegates primary responsibility to the President for the management of the University, with the understanding that provisions shall be made for advisory participation by the faculty, staff, and students in university decision-making." [Published minutes](#) demonstrate that the Board structures each of its meetings to solicit reports from each of these three constituencies.

Faculty, specifically, oversee academic matters by means of curriculum committees that function at the department, college, and university levels as shown in Eastern's [Curriculum Approval Process](#) and described in detail in criterion 4.A.

Sources

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- 5 ILCS 430 State Officials and Employees Ethics Act
- Board of Trustees Bylaws 2009
- Board of Trustees Governing_Policies 2020
- Board of Trustees Regulations 1997
- BOT Agenda 11-17-2023
- BOT Minutes 09_08_23
- BOT minutes June 23 2017
- BOT Minutes Strategic Plan 2028 6.23.23
- BOT Trustee Training Completion 1-18-2024
- BOT_Governing_Policies 2020
- Curriculum Approval Process 1-17-2024
- Strategic Plan 2028

2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

As Eastern's Board of Trustees states in its [bylaws](#), "The Board emphasizes its conviction that inquiry and discussion, safeguarded by tenure and academic freedom, are essential to the University's quest for truth and excellence." The board also specifically mentions that "the common good depends upon the free search for knowledge and truth and its free exposition." The same commitment to freedom of expression is formally expressed in the [Unit A Agreement](#) between Eastern and the faculty union: "Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the faculty member in teaching and of the student to freedom of learning. Academic freedom as it relates to research and creative activity is fundamental to the pursuit of truth and the advancement of knowledge." The Agreement also provides a mechanism for responding to issues of academic freedom.

Students have the freedom to explore a wide range of courses within the general education curriculum that reflect viewpoints from many different disciplines. As stated in the general education section of the [Course Catalog](#), "By facilitating students' exploration of questions across multiple fields of study, general education courses foster knowledge, while also engaging students in issues encountered by citizens in a democracy."

Sources

- Board of Trustees Bylaws 2009
- Unit A Agreement 2022-2026

2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students. Policies and procedures are especially notable when they are intended to comply with federal regulations. Like all universities, Eastern has implemented policies and procedures that protect human and animal research subjects. At any given time, Eastern has approximately 100 projects that include humans and fewer than 10 projects that include animals. All such projects are reviewed and overseen by the [Institutional Review Board](#) or the [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) with coordination by the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Eastern also has other policies and procedures that cover the full range of responsibilities for sponsored research, including [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and Financial Conflict of Interest for projects funded by both the [National Science Foundation](#) and the [National Institutes of Health](#).

2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

Eastern encourages awareness of research compliance policies by offering specific training. The training is offered in online format by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative ([CITI](#)). Training in "Responsible Conduct of Research" is required of all employees who submit any research proposal to any U.S. Federal agency. The university provides for the handling of noncompliance. [IGP 58](#) sets out policies and procedures for responding to scientific misconduct. There have been no allegations of scientific misconduct in the past 5 years. In addition, the Sanctions and Terminations Hearing Committee exists to handle cases in which a faculty member has violated employment obligations in the faculty contract, or in Board and university policies, rules, and regulations.

3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources. Booth Library offers a collection of [research guides](#) on its website. The research guides include instruction in the style of

citations used by the major academic disciplines. One of the library's guides is devoted to [understanding plagiarism](#).

4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity. Students are expected to comply with the [Student Code of Conduct](#) that documents academic ethical standards. According to the [Syllabus Policy](#), a reference to this code is a mandatory part of every course syllabus. Instructors have access to software that detects plagiarism and use of AI; this software (Turnitin) scans documents submitted by students in the course management system to deter students from submitting plagiarized works.

Although there is no specific policy that covers the unique challenges of ensuring honesty and integrity in online classes, any instructor at Eastern may choose to require that students use [Respondus Lockdown browser and Monitor](#) while an online exam is in progress. This practice limits access to other programs and enables the instructor to use a webcam for verifying the identity of the students and compliance with the student code of conduct.

On the occasions when a student is suspected of academic misconduct, the Dean of Students Office conducts an investigation and oversees any penalties that may follow. In a recent year (2022-2023), a total of 57 students were required to take an Academic Integrity class overseen by the Dean of Students Office. Individual faculty members are also authorized to impose their own academic penalties.

Sources

- Booth Library Guides 1-18-2024.pdf
- CITI Institutional Requirements May 2022.pdf
- FCOI Policy NIH
- FCOI Policy NSF
- IACUC Policy.pdf
- IGP 48.5 Responsible Conduct of Research.pdf
- IGP 58 Scientific Misconduct 1-18-2024.pdf
- IRB Policy
- Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor
- Student Conduct Code_2023
- SyllabusPolicy 6.29.21
- Understanding Plagiarism Booth Library 1-18-2024

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

Eastern Illinois University builds integrity into its structure, beginning with its Board of Trustees (BOT), which is an independent legal entity. On its website, the BOT maintains a collection of regulations and bylaws. This document states that “The Board herewith adopts Bylaws, Governing Policies, and Board Regulations intended to encourage and facilitate cooperation among the Board, the President, faculty, staff, and students in their mutual efforts to strengthen, improve, and protect the integrity of the education provided at the University.”

The Board of Trustees “delegates primary responsibility to the President for the management of the university, with the understanding that provisions shall be made for advisory participation by the faculty, staff, and students in university decision-making.” Eastern’s administration, in turn, has developed Internal Governing Policies. The University communicates its expectations to students in the Student Handbook and in the Course Catalog. Ongoing internal audits ensure compliance with all of these expectations.

The university ensures financial integrity by educating financial managers as to their responsibilities, by adhering to rigorous standards of procurement, and by carefully tracking all university property. Eastern promotes academic integrity with a robust system for developing and improving the curriculum under the primary guidance of the faculty.

Eastern is committed to ethical treatment of employees, as demonstrated by policies that promote fair hiring and continuing employment. All employees are required to complete five types of training, each of which focuses on an ethical or legal responsibility of all employees.

The university intends to make all relevant information easily available to students and the public via its website. Descriptions of academic programs and their requirements, as well as cost of attendance are easily accessed from the university home page.

Eastern promotes academic freedom, as indicated by the BOT statement that “inquiry and discussion, safeguarded by tenure and academic freedom, are essential to the University’s quest for truth and excellence.” The Board also specifically mentions that “the common good depends upon the free search for knowledge and truth and its free exposition.”

The university has implemented a range of policies and procedures to promote responsible conduct of both faculty and students during the acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. Eastern communicates its ethical expectations of students in the Student Code of Conduct.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

Overview

Eastern Illinois University has long prided itself on having a community committed to supporting all students in learning by its implementation of high-impact practices. The [mission statement](#) guides our efforts to provide students with opportunities for rigorous inquiry, applied learning experiences, and student-faculty scholarship. Faculty hiring and evaluation practices ensure that we continue to be known for "excellence in teaching, research, and service."

Eastern provides significant learning and life opportunities designed with the highest and most current standards in mind. The student-centered culture extends to all programs, including those online and off-campus. Regardless of mode of delivery, Eastern encourages students at all levels to make connections and apply learning gained in classes to new, complex situations.

As a comprehensive university, Eastern offers a [range of degree programs](#) appropriate to its Carnegie class. These include programs in the arts and humanities; social, behavioral, and laboratory sciences; education; and professional and applied programs. Eastern's many undergraduate offerings are complemented by graduate programs offering master's degrees and post-baccalaureate certificates in select disciplines. Eastern offers 51 undergraduate degree programs, 32 graduate degree programs, and 10 post-baccalaureate certificate programs.

Multiple processes ensure that Eastern's degree programs are current and appropriately rigorous. Eastern maintains consistency in quality across all modes of delivery and consistent alignment to clearly articulated learning goals through [accreditations](#); external and internal program reviews; continual review of assessment plans and data within and outside of departments; and faculty committees and councils charged with curricular oversight.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students

appropriate to the credential awarded.

Illinois state law mandates that public universities review their undergraduate and graduate academic programs at least once every eight years, following guidelines developed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). The primary focus of the review process is to improve the quality and productivity of individual academic programs. The review process requires involvement of students, alumni, faculty, department chairs, deans, the provost, appropriate academic councils, and potential employers. Regular [review of General Education courses](#) began as a separate undertaking in Spring 2024.

In addition to regular program review, a valuable criterion for determining program currency and relevancy is accreditation by an external agency. Eastern has 12 programs that are [accredited](#) by professional/discipline-based agencies and must maintain these agencies' standards. For example, Music Education is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, while the Speech Language Pathologist program is accredited through the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Until 2025, education programs at Eastern are accredited through CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation). In Fall 2023, Eastern withdrew from CAEP, following the lead of other Illinois public universities such as Illinois State and Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. Individual programs will be monitoring choices made by CAEP Specialty Professional Associations (SPAs) for opportunities to seek further recognition.

Eastern's three academic councils—the [Council on Academic Affairs](#), [Council on Graduate Studies](#), and the [Council on Teacher Education](#)—provide [oversight on curriculum development and academic standards](#) so that Eastern may articulate and differentiate learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, and post-baccalaureate certificate programs. Before curricular items go to these councils, departmental curriculum committees develop course and program proposals that the departmental faculty vote to approve or revise, after which college-level curriculum committees further consult to approve proposals prior to sending them for final approval by the appropriate university council. This multi-layered process ensures that Eastern takes advantage of faculty knowledge and expertise while maintaining consistent standards of rigor. Additionally, at the graduate level, an annual [Fall Graduate Summit](#) is held to review current and future challenges in graduate education and discuss how programs will rise to meet those challenges.

To ensure students are prepared for the appropriate level of course, [all courses are divided into five levels](#) indicated by their course number: freshman courses (1000-1999), sophomore (2000-2999), junior courses (3000-3999), senior (4000-4999), and graduate (5000-6999). [Graduation requirements](#) also ensure that students meet performance indicators for all credentials awarded.

2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.

Eastern's university-wide learning goals focus on the abilities, attitudes, and behaviors developed by students at Eastern, and this learning continues at the department level, where it is complemented by disciplinary content knowledge. The [Undergraduate Learning Goals](#) (revised and adopted in 2014) are addressed in the general education courses as well as in majors and minors. The goals center on Critical Thinking; Writing and Critical Reading; Speaking and Listening; Quantitative Reasoning; and Responsible Citizenship.

Following a revision process that had been briefly halted by the pandemic, in fall 2022 the General

Education Assessment Work Group began to clarify undergraduate learning goals as a result of attending an HLC general education assessment seminar. An [Action Plan](#) developed from participation in the seminar aims to facilitate authentic inclusion of the University Learning Goals in General Education as well as to encourage and support systematic extension of the University Learning Goals into discipline-specific curricular, instructional, and assessment practices in each major program.

The [Graduate learning goals](#) (revised and adopted in Fall 2021) build on the undergraduate learning goals and incorporate research and creative activity to provide an advanced level of scholarship.

Each undergraduate and graduate degree program also has learning goals related to the content and skills associated with that field. These learning objectives are aligned to the appropriate [undergraduate](#) and/or [graduate](#) learning goals in biennial reports and in curriculum planning, proposals, and review.

3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Courses, inclusive of all modes of delivery, duration, and location, go through the same approval and evaluation processes, ensuring that students will achieve the same learning outcomes regardless of delivery mode or site. A [credit-hour policy](#) determines number of contact hours and expectations for credit. This standard applies to face-to-face, hybrid, online, dual-enrollment, and study abroad courses. [Online degree programs](#) are available for each of the four academic colleges. Currently, Eastern offers 9 online undergraduate degree programs, 9 online minors, 20 online graduate degrees, and 4 online graduate certificates. All courses in these programs were approved through Eastern's curricular approval processes and conform to university and departmental expectations in terms of learning goals.

Several additional policies and procedures ensure that program quality extends beyond Eastern's campus. Online courses are designed to maintain standards of instruction, integrity, and interaction, and online course proposals--with learning goals as rigorous as for their face-to-face (F2F) counterparts--must address how these standards will be maintained. All of this ensures consistency, no matter the mode of delivery. For example, the Psychology department uses the same [learning goals](#) for its F2F and online majors, and both sets of students take a capstone course in which they are assessed on items linked to those learning goals. In 2022-2023, there were no significant differences between the two modes of delivery on the [four capstone performance items](#).

Faculty are well prepared to teach to the learning goals, regardless of class mode. All faculty teaching online courses must first complete the [Online Course Development Institute \(OCDI\)](#) overseen by the [Faculty Development and Innovation Center](#) (FDIC). As part of the OCDI, online courses are evaluated by applying standards and rubrics from [Quality Matters](#). In 2019, 33 faculty and staff completed OCDI training, while in 2020, the number jumped to 112 (a result of COVID). The OCDI training process is continuously reviewed and updated to ensure quality of delivery. As of 2022, faculty can apply to have their courses certified as "Quality Online Courses" after teaching the course for two semesters. Applications are reviewed by the FDIC and if the course earns a score of at least 85% and meets all 23 Essential Standards, the course receives Quality Online Course certification for three years. EIU presently has 6 Quality Online Courses.

In Spring 2017, Eastern began piloting a [dual credit program](#) in two local high schools. It has since developed a flourishing collaborative model of dual credit in which professors develop online coursework aligned to the same learning objectives as Eastern's F2F offerings. In 2022-23, there were 2,311 dual credit students. Each online course has the same content, assignments, exams, and time commitment as a normal online course. High school instructors supplement the core material provided by Eastern with topics, activities, and discussion for at least 150 minutes of F2F instruction per week for 15 weeks. To ensure dual enrollment courses are the same quality as at Eastern, a standard syllabus is used and an Eastern professor discusses with the high school teacher how to integrate the material with high school information. Dual credit students are vetted (they must be juniors or seniors, have a 3.0 GPA, and be recommended by the school administrator). Courses offered include general education courses such as SOC 1838G, ENG 1009G, BIO 2002G, and CMN 1310G.

Sources

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- About FDIC -Faculty Development and Innovation Center - 9-21-2023
- Academic Regulations - Eastern Illinois University University Catalog - 2-7-2024
- Academic Regulations - EIU Catalog - 9-21-2023
- Accredited Programs List - About EIU - 9-21-2023
- Action Plan- HLC Workgroup - EIU Assessment - Spring 2023
- APA Learning Goals 2.0 - Linked from F2F and Online Majors - 9-20-23
- APEER Academic Program Efficiency and Effectiveness Report AY2020-AY2024 - VPAA - 10-29-20
- CAA Agendas and Minutes - Council on Academic Affairs - 12-1-23
- Call for Materials - General Education Committee - Fall 2023 - CMN
- Council on Graduate Studies Website - 12-1-23
- Council on Teacher Education - EIU Educator Preparation - 12-1-23
- Credit Hour Policy -EIU Office of Internal Auditing - 9-21-23
- Curricular Chart - Council of Academic Affairs - 9-21-2023
- EIU at a Glance Academics - About EIU - 12-1-23
- EIU Dual Credit Brochure - Dual Credit - 2023-2024
- Fall Graduate Summit Slides - Graduate School - 9-6-2023 v1
- Graduate Learning Goals -Eastern Illinois University Graduate Assessment - 9-21-23
- Mission Statement - About EIU - 12-1-23
- OCDI -Faculty Development and Innovation Center - 9-27-23
- Online Degree Options - Eastern - 9-21-23
- Psychology Assessment Data 2022-2023 - Psychology Dept - 9-20-23.pdf
- Quality Matters Program - 12-1-23
- SLAP Grad Template - Graduate Assessment - 9-21-23
- Undergraduate Major Assessment -Eastern Illinois University Assessment
- University Learning Goals - Eastern Catalog 2023-2024 - 12-17-23

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

Per Eastern's 2023-2024 [undergraduate catalog](#), Eastern's University Learning Goals were reworked in 2014 to reflect the mission that "throughout their education, students refine their abilities to reason and to communicate clearly so as to become responsible citizens and leaders." General Education at Eastern offers students an intellectual foundation for their future academic, professional, and personal lives. The [general education program](#) catalog description articulates the purposes, content, and learning outcomes of general education and is closely aligned with the [university mission](#): both statements focus on rigorous inquiry, applied learning experiences, and student-faculty scholarship that prepare students to be responsible citizens who can communicate effectively in a diverse world.

2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

[General Education at Eastern](#) offers "an intellectual foundation" for students' academic, professional, and personal lives and is aligned with the University Mission of developing responsible citizens and leaders. To this end, there are five core intellectual skills central to General Education: (1) critical thinking; (2) writing & critical reading; (3) speaking & listening; (4) quantitative reasoning; and (5) responsible citizenship (this includes ethical reasoning as well as considering diverse perspectives). All courses in General Education are aligned to at least one—and often four and even five—of these skills. The General Education program undergoes constant improvement by participating faculty as well as by committees charged with its oversight. Once headed by a General Education Coordinator

appointed in 2019, the General Education Committee is now directed by a chair who leads the committee in vetting all newly-proposed and existing general education courses.

General Education exposes students to the wide array of liberal arts foundational coursework, with students taking courses in Language (2 composition and 1 speech course); Humanities and Fine Arts (9 hours); Social/Behavioral Sciences (9 hours); Scientific Awareness (7 hours); and Mathematics (3 hours). The critical thinking goal is infused throughout the segments while foundational courses lay the groundwork for skills in speaking and listening (CMN 1310G/1390G), writing and critical reading (ENG 1001G/1091G, ENG 1002G/1092G), and quantitative reasoning (MAT 1160G, 1170G, 1441G, 2110G/2190G, 2120G, 2250G/2290G, 2420G). The communication goals of speaking and listening as well as writing and critical reading are infused specifically in courses within the humanities and fine arts. Quantitative reasoning is taught within courses in mathematics and science while responsible citizenship objectives are part of the courses in the social and behavioral sciences. In addition, as part of the general education, each student takes at least one course designated as cultural diversity, which also connects to the responsible citizenship goal. Finally, all students at EIU are required to take a [capstone course](#), whether a cross-disciplinary Senior Seminar or a capstone in their major. In either case, the capstones encompass and are the culmination of the undergraduate learning goals. At present, there are 45 different thematic Senior Seminars—ranging from “The Meaning of Life” to “Pop Culture Economics” to “Frontiers of Communications”—as well as 12 honors options. Fourteen departments offer their own disciplinary-based capstones.

Additionally, new general education courses carefully adhere to the core learning goals. Lifting a 2018 CAA moratorium on the proposal of new general education courses in 2021, Eastern faculty have since proposed 11 new general education courses approved by CAA. The History Department, for example, proposed three new general education courses in 2022-2023 that enhance inclusive approaches to history (and thus meet the Cultural Diversity requirement) as well as carefully adhere to four of the five General Education learning goals (critical thinking; writing & critical reading; speaking & listening; and responsible citizenship). Biological Sciences launched a new general education course in Human Biology designed for non-majors that focuses on the human organism in the broader context of biological systems.

Eastern ensures that all degree programs engage students in collecting, analyzing, integrating, and applying broad learning skills, both at the general education level and through disciplinary-specific work in majors and minors. Research methods are incorporated throughout the curricula at Eastern, and the development of these skills starts in first-year courses (ENG 1001G, 1002G, CMN 1310G) that are part of general education. Many majors have lower-division courses that introduce the research methods of the discipline (HST 2800, AFR 2500, HIS 2500). Biology Forum (BIO 1150) helps freshman and transfer students develop skills in using the library, interpreting graphs, and engaging in critical scientific reading, while HIS 1101 introduces students to both the discipline and methodology of history and to campus-specific resources for the major. In Economics, BUS 1950 introduces majors to a computer literacy requirement. Numerous courses at the upper-division level build on this scaffolding and require students to master modes of inquiry or creative work, as well as require research and creative activity as part of course assignments.

3. The education offered by the institution recognizes human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

High impact learning experiences at Eastern particularly emphasize application of skills developed in

traditional courses, allowing students to enact what they are learning outside the classroom in a multicultural world. For example, the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Foundations integrates fieldwork experiences at multiples stages: observations, a practicum, and student teaching. At the undergraduate level, Communication Disorders and Sciences students are required to complete one semester of clinical observation and one semester of practicum. At the graduate level, the students complete one semester of practicum in a hospital setting and then one semester in a school setting. Such experiences allow students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to a real-world setting. Internships are fundamental to many majors at Eastern. One example comes from Human Services, in which students enrolled in [HSL 4275](#) intern at a variety of sites at which they can put what they are learning in the classroom to use. Students are closely supervised and mentored throughout the process.

As discussed above, all students complete a course with a focus on cultural diversity as part of general education. Students can also choose from a menu of upper-division courses (3000 level courses) to meet this requirement through offerings from the departments of Art, English, Music, Philosophy, Public Health, and Theatre. Additionally, attention to diversity is at the heart of the General Education goal of responsible citizenship. The learning goal of responsible citizenship explores ethical reasoning, civic life, and engagement with diverse ideas, people, groups, and cultures.

The general education diversity requirement is enhanced by a number of academic and co-curricular programs. Such interdisciplinary and other minors include Africana Studies, Asian Studies, Communication and Cultural Diversity, Latin American and Latinx Studies, Premodern Global Studies, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Co-curricular programs and centers also recognize diversity and foster skills and dispositions which students need. The [Institute for Interdisciplinary Collaborations](#) (IIC) replaced the Interdisciplinary Center for Global Diversity (ICGD) in Fall 2021. Housed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the IIC's mission is to provide a space for faculty and students to meet, collaborate, and advance multi- and inter-disciplinary work. The Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement offers programs throughout the year that enhance the curriculum related to diversity, including African-American, Asian, and Latino Heritage months. These month-long celebrations include lectures and cultural events meant to complement and expand on issues discussed in the curriculum. The EIU Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity also hosts year-round programming, Safe Zone Training, and provides support services for our diverse student population. Additionally, Eastern's Making Excellence Inclusive (MEI) group, hosts RISE, an annual national conference focused on inclusion and diversity in education. The [7th Annual RISE conference](#) was held in October 2023. In the 2022-2023 academic year, three new academic hubs were launched in Coleman Hall to provide meeting and gathering spaces for historically underrepresented groups on campus. They include Latinx, Pan-Asian and Pacific Islander, and African American/African Diaspora spaces. A designated hub is being planned for Indigenous/American Indian communities.

Through [Study Abroad at Eastern](#), students are able to adapt their skills to changing environments. Students have the opportunity to study abroad through faculty-led or individual programs. During the period of this report, the number of students studying abroad has ranged from 13 during the first year of the pandemic (AY19–20) to 64 in AY22–23. To encourage more students to participate, Eastern's Study Abroad Office is working to make international study available to a wider range of students, providing resources for students with disabilities, and for first-generation, non-traditional, and veteran students.

Eastern provides high-impact practices identified by the Association for American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). According to [2023 data](#) from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) on high impact practices (HIPs), EIU student participation in one or more HIPs compares favorably with peer institutions: 56% of first-year students and 86% of seniors participated in at least one HIP experience compared with 55% of first-year and 83% of students in EIU's Carnegie class.

4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

Eastern's faculty are required to engage in scholarly/creative activity. Scholarly activity is considered in faculty annual reviews; probationary faculty pre-tenure reviews; and promotion and tenure decisions. Each department/school has its own Departmental Application of Criteria (DAC) by which tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty are evaluated. Only tenure-track faculty are evaluated in the area of research and creative activity. Article 8 of the EIU-UI [2022-2026 Unit A Contract](#) states: "Evaluation of the effectiveness of an employee's research/creative activity will include consideration of: the quality and quantity of research/creative activity; contributions to the employee's discipline or field; extent and nature of national, state or local recognition of research/creative activity; extent and nature of participation in professional organizations."

Eastern's faculty are active scholars and artists. Since 2013, the [Celebration of Scholarship, Creativity, and Engagement](#) has been an event for the recognition of faculty who choose to submit their research and creative activities for display. Eastern also tracks faculty productivity in research, scholarship, and creative contributions. Faculty annually [submit their information](#) to the Faculty Publications database.

The university also encourages the pursuit of external funding for research. Grants received through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (OSRP) [totaled \\$6,844,540](#) for public service and research grants. Within the past five years, Eastern faculty have secured research grants from agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

The Graduate School provides a [number of awards](#) that promote and honor graduate student research. Established in 2017, "Student Impact Grants" help advance faculty members engaged in high-impact student activities, including primarily joint research endeavors between faculty and students. These individual grants are each \$1,500 and funding levels in recent years have allowed for up to 10 grant recipients per academic year. Every spring, EIU holds a [Graduate Student Exposition](#) that includes student awards (including multiple awards for student research and for travel for research) as well as research presentations. At the Spring 2023 Graduate Expo and Awards Ceremony, 23 students presented their research and creative activity, 48 were recognized for earning Williams Travel Grants, 26 earned Research/Creative Activity grants, and four students received the King-Mertz Research/Creative Activity awards, which recognizes the highest achievement in graduate research. Additionally, awards for Faculty Mentorship, Distinguished Graduate Student, and nomination to the Hamand Society Scholars recognize both faculty and graduate student contributions in the area of research and creative activity.

At the undergraduate level, students (mentored by faculty) engaged in research, scholarship, and creative activity. Students contribute to research/creative activity in their respective disciplines through university or departmental honors, non-thesis capstone experiences, publications, presentations, works of art, and musical and theatrical performances. Students have the opportunity to submit and showcase their work at the annual [Student Research and Creative Activity Conference](#),

sponsored by the Honors College. This annual campus-wide event has featured student posters, presentations, and performances by Eastern's students since 2009. At the Spring 2023 event, there were 123 presenters offering 80 total presentations including 55 posters, 20 oral presentations, 4 student panels, and 1 musical performance. At the annual [Celebration of Scholarship, Creativity, and Engagement](#), a faculty member from each College is recognized for their work with students by receiving the Undergraduate Research Mentor Award.

EIU has increased opportunities for faculty to receive support for innovative programs that involve student participation. Academic Program Innovation (API) grants of up to \$5,000 support projects designed to enhance the academic reputation and foster new curriculum innovations of the university. In spring 2023, two projects were funded in Music and Special Education and two additional projects were funded in 2023-24.

[The Pine Honors College](#) houses a robust and growing honors program that encompasses general education courses as well as opportunities for honors courses and thesis writing at the departmental level. Enrollment in the Honors College has increased over the past several years. Fall enrollment in 2023 was at an all-time high of 511 (13.1% of the total EIU undergraduate enrollment). This was an increase from 506 in 2022 and 471 in 2021. The Honors College sponsors the [Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity \(URSCA\) Awards](#) each semester. The Honors College distributed 76 URSCA awards between Fall 2019 and Spring 2023. Student research and creative activity funded by these competitive awards has been presented at regional and national meetings and at the National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR). Since 2019, 32 students have presented at NCUR and 20 EIU students are slated to attend the 2024 conference in Long Beach, CA. Additionally, since 1993, Eastern has co-sponsored the [Mid-America Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference \(MAUPRC\)](#). Between 2019-2023, 23 Eastern students presented their research at MAUPRC in oral or poster format to their peers from multiple states including Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Kentucky, and others. EIU students also have a long-standing commitment to participation in the annual Butler Undergraduate Research Conference held in Indianapolis. In addition to the Annual Research Day, programs across Eastern's campus provide opportunities for graduate research presentations and professionalization. Two standout examples are English, where graduate students annually present at the [Annual English Studies Conference](#), and Public Health and Nutrition, where graduate students [coordinated a conference on Cottage Food Safety](#) in April 2023.

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3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission for the constituencies it serves.

As noted in the EIU [mission](#) statement, EIU is “committed to diversity and inclusion and fosters opportunities for student-faculty scholarship and applied learning experiences within a student-centered campus culture.” Overseen by the Office of Civil Rights and Diversity, the hiring process for faculty and staff helps ensure that hiring pools are as diverse as possible. To achieve the goal of a more diversified faculty and staff, EIU created a [Faculty and Staff Diversity Strategic Plan](#) as part of the HLC Quality Initiative “to increase student success by increasing the diversity of EIU’s faculty and staff to levels that are representative of the increasing diversity in our student population.” Details about the initiative, including information about available resources, are publicized in part on the [EIU Quality Initiative](#) website. EIU prioritized the hiring in January 2024 of a [Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer \(SDIO\)](#) who reports to the President and holds a seat on the President’s Council.

In 2022, EIU conducted a campus climate survey inviting faculty, staff, and students to respond to multiple questions about race and ethnicity. The survey is an important source of data to help guide decisions related to the aims of the quality initiative. [Data from the survey](#) has been made publicly available and is reported based on race and ethnic categories for faculty, staff, and students. A summary of the data notes that while EIU can be considered a “friendly” campus, students of color report that they experience a level of racial tension on campus. More pronounced is the experience of faculty and staff of color, which is discussed in more detail in 1.C.2.

2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.

In 2023 Eastern had 252 tenured/tenure-track (Unit A) full-time faculty and 123 non-tenure-track (Unit B) full-time faculty, compared to 2017 with 292 tenured/tenure-track (Unit A) full-time faculty and 94 non-tenure-track (Unit B) full-time faculty. Eastern students continue to experience close student-faculty bonds formed due to both small class sizes and caring faculty. Eastern maintains a [student to faculty ratio of 15:1](#), as of Fall 2022.

Faculty continue to play key roles in [oversight of the curriculum](#) through service on departmental and college-level curriculum committees along with the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA), Council on Teacher Education (COTE), and Council on Graduate Studies (CGS). These bodies serve to vet the undergraduate, teacher licensure, and graduate curriculum respectively on campus. Faculty are involved in the assessment of student learning in multiple capacities including engagement with department-level assessment. EIU has recently updated its assessment procedures in an effort to create a more standardized approach to assessment at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.

Faculty qualifications are outlined in [IGP #30: Educational Requirements for Faculty Rank](#). Eastern's hiring system ensures instructors are appropriately credentialed across all programs, modes of delivery, and locations. As of Fall 2023, 90% of tenured or tenure-track faculty held terminal degrees, and 92.7% of this faculty had earned tenure. Furthermore, all faculty positions require a master's degree or doctorate relevant to the position description, with [appropriate terminal degrees](#) required for Unit A faculty.

Faculty without terminal degrees may qualify to serve as associate or adjunct graduate faculty based on a tested experience exception. Adopted in 2018, the [tested experience process](#) requires that a faculty member have tested experience along with advanced experience in the profession, specialized licensure, clinical training, and/or considerable post-graduate work beyond the MA to the greatest extent possible.

Eastern uses the same credentialing/staffing processes for dual credit as for campus courses, according to HLC policy. Eastern uses a collaborative model for offering [dual credit options](#) to students, in which an Eastern professor or instructor partners with area high school teachers. Therefore, all dual credit courses are taught together by qualified faculty who are already teaching in other campus programs along with high school teaching partners. Eastern does not participate in any consortia or contractual course delivery.

4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

Faculty are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures. Although the specific policies and procedures of Eastern's annual faculty evaluation system are detailed in the EIU/UPI [Unit A & Unit B Agreements](#), key aspects of this system are worth mentioning here. Evaluation of Unit A faculty members is completed on the basis of a [Departmental Application of Criteria \(DAC\) document](#) that is developed by each department and by Unit B

[Evaluation Criteria](#) amended in accordance with the faculty agreements. The Unit A Agreement codifies [performance metrics](#) across three areas: teaching and the performance of primary duties, research/creative activity, and service. DACs must follow the guidelines set out by the contract—i.e., to earn tenure, teaching must be SUPERIOR—but each department can tailor the criteria to meet their specific disciplinary needs. Student, peer, and chair evaluations play important roles in the evaluation process at Eastern. The administration and UPI periodically agree to allow revisions to DACs to accommodate new developments in academic disciplines and departmental objectives. Although the faculty members develop and amend departmental DACs, the department chairs, college deans, and the provost have an opportunity to suggest changes to the document, which ensures the document conforms to contractual guidelines. Prior to submitting the required annual review materials, all faculty members are apprised of the evaluation procedures by the provost's office, which, along with EIU-UPI, hosts workshops in portfolio preparation.

5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

EIU offers professional development support to faculty at multiple levels and actively encourages their participation. The [Faculty Development and Innovation Center](#) (FDIC) director and staff offer faculty assistance with instructional design for all course modalities and can assist faculty with exploring new tools that will enhance teaching as well as research/creativity. In addition to offering one-on-one assistance on matters of pedagogy and instructional design, the FDIC website hosts a vast array of Faculty Resources, including a podcast, monthly newsletter, Teaching and Learning Library, and a full calendar of [professional development events](#) (offered in F2F, virtual, and on-demand formats). In recent years, the FDIC has hosted an August Institute series to prepare faculty for the upcoming year, and invitations to participate in Faculty Learning Communities and/or in the Online Learning Community. The FDIC offers financial support to faculty in the form of [Partnership Grants](#) and an [FDIC fellowship](#) designed to foster faculty engagement in pedagogic innovation.

FDIC is also responsible for conducting Eastern's annual [new faculty orientation](#). The orientation addresses many areas of interest for incoming faculty including discussion of the characteristics of Eastern's student body with an emphasis on recruitment and retention efforts. In this segment, faculty members are presented with approaches to teaching and engaging with a diverse student body. Given EIU's changing student demographics, incoming faculty are introduced to programs for conditional, first-generation, international, and underrepresented students and are made aware of the resources provided by the EIU DEI office and the Making Excellence Inclusive (MEI) committee on campus.

Faculty are also supported in their professional development in other areas. For example, the Credit Unit (CU) pool offers faculty a chance to apply for up to 6 CUs in a given semester to engage in research and creative activity. According to the [Unit A contract](#), Eastern allots the equivalent of 3 credit units (time equivalent to that of a 3-credit class) for 10% of the tenured faculty. Tenure-track faculty are also provided 3 CUs for scholarly or creative activity annually, as well as one semester of 6 or more CUs of reassigned time for non-instructional activity during the teaching faculty member's probationary period.

The university provides funds to support professional travel that are distributed by each college's dean's office. Travel funds are allocated to deans for dispersal based on the number of faculty in each college. Redden grants, which provide funding to support undergraduate instruction, serve as an additional faculty resource. In Fall 2023, the FDIC sent a survey to solicit information about serving established and late-career faculty. One initiative that resulted from the survey was that the president

announced twenty \$1,000 [professional development grants](#).

6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

Faculty at Eastern are known for their student-focused approach to education and are dedicated to being accessible to, and connected with, their students. Per the Unit A Agreement, “faculty interaction with individual students, other faculty, and university staff is recognized as essential in a successful learning environment.” This focus is formalized in three ways. First, the 2022-2026 EIU/UPI agreement [specifically stipulates](#) that to “provide individual student access to faculty, each teaching faculty member shall maintain an on-campus schedule of at least four office hours per calendar week spread over at least three days” and office hours must be scheduled in increments of at least 30 minutes. The past two agreements have required more student access to faculty than previously, which underscores Eastern’s commitment to student learning. During the summer session, faculty members shall post a campus schedule of at least two office hours per week of the teaching assignment: the hours will be scheduled to allow reasonable student access. Each faculty member shall provide the department chair with a written schedule of her/his office hours. Faculty teaching entirely online may conduct office hours virtually, while faculty teaching partially online are required to have at least two days of on-campus office hours. Second, faculty office hours must be listed on every course syllabus. Finally, faculty accessibility is assessed as one of the five core questions on student evaluations at the end of each course. It should be noted, too, that many faculty members are in-office far above the contractual minima; in the last decade, student email correspondence and other kinds of non-office-hour contact have also become standard practice.

7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

Eastern is committed to ensuring that the staff members who provide student support services—such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities—are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development. Staff job descriptions are reviewed regularly to ensure listed qualifications reflect the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to provide exceptional student support services. Similar to faculty hiring processes, Eastern has in place a formalized system for recruiting and hiring student support staff. Once hired, student support staff complete appropriate orientation and placement training that familiarizes the new employees with the information and skills necessary for them to perform their duties effectively. Student support staff also are evaluated on an annual basis to ascertain performance levels for each employee and, when needed, to identify areas in need of development. For example, academic advisors in 2022-2023 [participated](#) in a Campus Advising Network Advisor Read and attended an [Advising Symposium](#), while in 2023-2024 they attended a New Academic Leaders Forum and a Mental Health Panel.

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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

Eastern is a student-focused campus, with programming and infrastructure investments designed to support student learning and effective teaching. Through the recent disruption and pedagogical pivots required by the COVID pandemic, Eastern has continued to prioritize superior support services that are directly aligned with the needs of its diverse students. From the institution's educational and applied learning facilities to its academic support and career counseling, Eastern proactively delivers services to assist students before, during, and after their time at Eastern. Academic advisors work with students, first in general university advising and then in specialized departmental advising.

Eastern offers an array of academic supports, such as the [Academic Support Center](#), the [Writing Center](#), and [TRiO Student Support Services](#) through the Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement. Eastern's TRiO program is federally funded and enrolls up to 175 students in an effort to increase retention and graduation rates and foster an inclusive climate of success for underrepresented students. Similarly, Eastern's [Gateway Admissions Program](#) supports students who need additional academic interventions throughout their time at Eastern. Admitted students are required to participate in a specialized orientation and extended transition program as a cohort prior to the start of school and receive additional academic feedback and support coaching.

Eastern's [Office of Accessibility and Accommodations](#) is committed to facilitating equal access and opportunity to all campus programs and services for students with disabilities. In 2015, Eastern piloted its [Students with Autism Transitional Education Program \(STEP\)](#), the first program of its kind in Illinois. STEP provides enhanced support along with individualized peer mentorships that work to facilitate the transition to university classes, majors, and campus life. Students with documented autism apply to participate in STEP for an extra fee. Eastern's STEP program has won many awards for its service to students with autism, including a 2023 "[Best Colleges for Students with Autism](#)." In Fall 2023, 27 students were enrolled in EIU's STEP program.

In addition to offering proactive academic support services to students across campus, the [Early Alert](#)

[program](#) at Eastern exists to help students who may need an additional, individualized support system. When a faculty member initiates an early alert warning, support personnel such as the student's academic advisor, athletic advisors for athletes, and TRiO/Gateway advisors for students in those programs are instantly notified by email. Faculty are informed at each step of the process and receive notification when a student has been successfully contacted by appropriate support staff.

In addition to academic student support, Eastern hosts a number of campus centers serving the holistic needs of students, including the Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity, [Women's Resource Center \(WRC\)](#), [Health Education Resource Center \(HERC\)](#), [Military Student Assistance Service Center](#) and [Campus Food Pantry](#), which was launched in 2021. The Food Pantry has been a particularly successful initiative. Additionally, Eastern provides a [Child Care Resource and Referral](#) office. Connecting students to affinity-based mentors, [Panther Peer Mentoring](#) groups are offered through the Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement. Currently, there are a variety of mentorship programs, including [Freshman Connection](#); Transfer Connection; FOCUS, a one-on-one mentorship program for students with disabilities; and the STRONG MENToring program, which offers peer-to-peer mentorship for young men of color on campus. Criteria 1.C.2 discusses living learning communities. The Dean of Students office also helps students navigate their day-to-day existence on campus and offers a variety of supports to help students find resources, advocate for their needs, and negotiate conflict.

The [Counseling Clinic](#) on campus provides free personal counseling to all undergraduate and graduate students as well as organizing support groups for a variety of needs, and offers a number of web-based resources for mental health concerns, including online mental health screening. Committed to supporting the well-being of students, Eastern encourages faculty and staff to share information about services to students in need. The Faculty Development and Innovation Center has web resources and sample syllabus statements in a [brief guide](#) to support faculty knowledge about campus resources for students and help disseminate that knowledge to students.

2. The institution provides learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

At the outset of their Eastern education, incoming students are encouraged to take [EIU 1111 \(University Foundations\)](#), which is a one-credit-hour course serving as an inquiry into the academic expectations, resources, policies, and traditions of university life. The course description states that students are "challenged to enhance their intellectual potential, understand their academic and moral responsibilities, and appreciate diversity in a framework that develops critical thinking, learning, and communication skills necessary to contribute successfully to the university's intellectual life. An experiential learning component engages students in the scholarly and co-curricular community."

Eastern has established placement criteria for math and English courses based on ACT/SAT scores or placement tests. Many courses also have prerequisites at the major level to ensure that students are prepared for the rigor of upper-division courses. A few non-credit-bearing courses offer aid to students whose prior education did not prepare them for college-level work.

EIU offers multiple levels of tutoring for students. Through a partnership with [Knack Tutoring](#), students can book free course-specific peer tutoring and mentoring services. Tutors are fellow students who have previously aced the courses for which they offer assistance. EIU's [Academic Support Center](#) maintains a database detailing departmental tutoring information and also provides tutoring in the Gregg Technology Center staffed by hired tutors. Additionally, many departments

such as Mathematics and Computer Science offer [specialized tutoring](#).

3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.

Eastern's commitment to student retention and graduation is evident in its extensive [academic advising system](#). Academic advising is mandatory at Eastern. All new freshman and transfer students are first connected with Eastern's [Academic Success Center](#) (ASC). The ASC has seven professional advisors, a director, and one support staff; advisors assist students with course selection, career goals, major selection, and academic policies and procedures. They educate students on making the transition to a four-year university. All students are advised in the ASC until they have completed 15 credit hours or have met the admissions criteria for their chosen program. At that point, students are advised by a faculty member in their major department.

Advising in the major is addressed in a variety of ways to meet students' needs. Some departments have centralized advising: the College of Education has one staff member whose entire role is advising early childhood and elementary education majors while another handles middle level and post-baccalaureate advising, while both the History and English departments have faculty who are assigned course releases to work as department advisors. Sometimes advising extends beyond one department: the Pre-Health Professions Advisor works with students in Biology and other majors. Students who are double majors are advised in both departments, while students with minors and interdisciplinary minors are also invited to consult with those advisors.

Students work one-on-one with their advisors, who mentor students' course selection process, provide suggestions for relevant workshops and conferences, and assist with fieldwork and/or internship placements that meet students' unique needs and interests. Prior to registering for classes each semester, students meet with their academic advisor. These collaborative meetings include discussions about the students' aspirations and goals, specific academic requirements, and strategies for success.

Due to the scope and diversity of advising services at Eastern, the [Campus Advising Network](#) (CAN) was established to ensure consistent and superior advising. CAN promotes cooperation and circulates information to all advisors on campus; hosts new advisor training sessions each fall and advisor coffees each semester; maintains the advising listserv where members can post advising alerts; holds monthly meetings of the Steering Committee; and schedules other meetings and events as needed.

In addition to such thorough academic advising, full-time staff in [Career Services](#) work directly with students throughout their college experience and beyond graduation. The Career Services staff provides individualized counseling, group meetings, and professional development training workshops; they coordinate multiple job fairs on campus each year and oversee a website full of resources to help students visualize and achieve their career options. For example, 10 job fairs were held in academic year 2022-2023 and 816 students participated. A spring education job fair has been established in partnership with the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and was held on EIU's campus in Spring 2023.

4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

To support academic excellence in the classroom, all Eastern classrooms are equipped with a variety of technological configurations and seating capacities. To support effective distance learning during the COVID pandemic, Eastern rearranged seating in its campus classrooms, acquired OWLs (360-degree view cameras) and other equipment to facilitate distanced and remote learning, and pivoted to using larger common spaces such as the Library Reference Room as classrooms. Eastern's 61 science labs provide discipline-specific opportunities for hands-on student learning. The [Geographic Information Systems \(GISci\) Laboratory](#), for example, is developed, maintained, and served by faculty in the Geography Program and the GISci Center and contains computers with current GIS, Remote Sensing, and mapping software. This lab has been one of the first on campus to incorporate a virtual desktop environment to better serve students both on and off-campus. Off-campus laboratory spaces include the Kaskaskia Biological Station and the EIU Observatory. The [Assessment, Testing and Prescription \(ATP\) Lab](#) provides undergraduate and graduate students with hands-on learning experiences in conducting comprehensive physical fitness assessments, leading to the development of individualized exercise prescriptions for the patrons they serve.

Other colleges provide specialized laboratory spaces as needed. For example, in the Lumpkin College of Business and Technology, the Securities Analysis Center (SAC) provides students with experiential learning opportunities in investment. Students manage an actual portfolio and make decisions based on current market conditions and analysis.

The Doudna Fine Arts Center, opened in 2008, includes a 600-seat concert hall, a 175-seat Recital Hall, a 300-seat proscenium-stage theater, and a 150-seat black-box theater. In addition to these performance spaces, the Doudna offers traditional classrooms, computer labs, well-equipped art studios, rehearsal halls, a student gallery, and a recording studio. Eastern's museum space, the Tarble Arts Center, also offers competitive student worker positions, graduate assistantships, and internships related to curatorial research, education and programming, installation and collection care, and communications and design. The Tarble also hosts annual programming to showcase student work and facilitate community engagement. For example, in Fall 2021 students enrolled in the Department of History's Public History Practicum course worked with a core faculty member and Tarble staff to research and select existing Tarble permanent holdings, practice curatorial methodologies, and engage in community outreach for their exhibit *Working Artists*, which ran in Spring 2022.

Students in the departments of Communication Studies and Journalism gain real-world training on state-of-the-art radio and television equipment through the WEIU stations. WEIU students and staff also host regular podcasts, and in 2022 WEIU-TV launched a new local outdoor show called *Take a Hike: The Mini-Series* that takes viewers on tours of area parks and natural areas in Central Illinois.

Eastern's comprehensive library services support effective student teaching and learning. The Booth Library collection includes more than 1 million physical items, including monographs, media, serials, maps, music scores, and government documents. In addition, electronic systems provide online access to 310 online research periodical and subject databases providing access to over 465,000 e-books and 95,000 unique serials. These materials are selected by subject specialist librarians to support the university's educational mission. For example, the [Ballenger Teachers Center](#) contains K-12 curriculum materials, including an extensive young adult collection and a variety of non-print teaching materials. [Research, Engagement, and Scholarship Services](#) provides individualized assistance, information literacy instruction, instructional materials, orientation sessions, other specialized services, specialized research clinics to help users access and use Booth Library resources. To support off-campus students, the library has developed the "Ask a Librarian"

service through which patrons may access live, online help, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition, students may check out devices such as 270 laptops or other technology for a limited time. In addition to specialized services, students have access to study carrels equipped for independent viewing and listening in the library as well as 13 rooms for collaboration and group studying, and meditation and lactation/child feeding rooms. Over 105 computer stations are available to patrons in Booth Library. The Library's [Center for Student Innovation \(CSI\)](#) provides consultations and instruction on emerging technology supporting learning and research, and offers student and faculty access to equipment such as a podcasting studio, virtual reality stations, gaming computers, 3D printers, large computer monitors, and a green screen. Instructors and students can use the active learning classroom to support active learning, and class-based or student-initiated projects.

Eastern uses the Brightspace D2L course management system that offers a suite of tools to deliver course content, assess learning, and promote student engagement; staff from the FDIC have provided training to help faculty optimize the learning experiences for students. In addition, Eastern staff located at Parkland College serve as a resource for prospective students attending off-campus locations. Eastern also has established partnerships with offsite locations for learning: affiliated hospitals provide clinical experiences for students in programs such as Nursing and Dietetics; Illinois K-12 schools provide education students with sites for practica and student teaching; and area community organizations provide a wide range of internships and other experiential learning opportunities.

In an effort to improve student access to and tracking of internships, an Internship Taskforce was formed in 2018. As part of their charge, they developed a standardized internship form to record for-credit internships. Career Services now tracks for-credit internships through the Handshake system. Since tracking began in Handshake, 413 undergraduate and graduate internship experiences have been recorded in the system with 196 completed in academic year 2022-23. The School of Business has a detailed [Resources for Finding an Internship student guide](#) on their website. Other guides and information related to internships have been developed by the following academic units: Human Services, Public Health, Kinesiology, Journalism, Psychology, Digital Media, Sociology/Anthropology/Criminology, and Geology/Geography.

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- Resources for Finding an Internship - School of Business - 12-1-23
- Student Support Services for Faculty - Faculty Development and Innovation Center - 12-1-23
- Students with Autism Transitional Education Program - EIU Autism Center -12-1-23
- The Best Colleges for Students with Autism
- TRiO Student Support Services - Eastern Illinois University - 12-1-23
- University Foundations - Eastern Illinois University - 12-1-23
- Womens Resource Center - Womens Gender and Sexuality Studies - 12-1-23
- Writing Center - English Department - 12-1-23

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

As described in this chapter, Eastern Illinois University successfully addresses the core components of Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support.

Eastern offers a range of degree programs appropriate for a regional comprehensive university. These include undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, and master's level programs in the arts and humanities, social, behavioral and lab sciences, and professional and applied programs. Eastern has several processes in place to ensure the programs—no matter the mode or site of delivery—are current with clear and consistent learning goals and objectives.

Eastern has sufficient instructors to carry out classroom and non-classroom roles of faculty. Eastern faculty members are appropriately qualified and are regularly evaluated through the auspices of the EIU/UPI Unit A and Unit B agreements. Faculty and staff are supported in their professional development in multiple ways and have access to resources and programming through the Faculty Development and Innovation Center.

Eastern is a student-centered campus and offers multiple resources for its student populations, including academic support, career counseling, tutoring and an Early Alert program to identify and provide support for at-risk students. Academic scaffolding is provided at progressive levels to help ensure student success, one focus of which is the engaged and extensive academic advising provided by Eastern faculty and staff. Eastern offers an enriched educational environment with multiple opportunities for student engagement.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

Eastern Illinois University demonstrates its commitment to providing a high-quality education by establishing and revising policies and procedures for awarding credit that are aligned with best practices established by accrediting bodies and professional organizations. Eastern has continually monitored and improved its procedures for approving new courses to reflect current needs and trends in higher education. The university has improved its processes for assessing student learning outcomes using reviews and feedback from multiple sources to guide this important responsibility. Outcomes assessment is integrated fully into the curriculum development process at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Eastern continues to analyze critical data in an effort to maintain its long-standing and impressive history of graduation and retention rates that average higher than our national cohort of comparison institutions.

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

Eastern's quality assurance relies upon the development of multiple internal and external review practices that advance the quality of educational programs.

All undergraduate and graduate programs are [reviewed every eight years](#) following the Illinois Board of Higher Education ([IBHE](#)) [guidelines](#). Each program describes changes in the program/disciplinary context (e.g., student demand, societal need) and actions taken since the last review. The [review and summary form](#) includes:

- A statement of program goals and intended learning outcomes;
- An assessment of student learning from multiple measures;
- A summary of feedback from key stakeholders (students, alumni, and employers);
- The documentation of processes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs; and
- A list of recommended actions to improve or enhance the program.

[Undergraduate program reviews](#) are submitted to the college dean and provost, who provide feedback. Program assessment committees are strongly encouraged to meet regularly and implement improvements based on their findings. In addition, undergraduate reviews are presented to the Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) following their guidelines; these presentations are documented in the CAA minutes.

[Graduate programs reviews](#) are submitted to the provost, and to the dean of the Graduate School, who provides a response to the department and a brief summary of the program reviews to the Council on Graduate Studies (CGS). The Council may request an opportunity to read the entire review or invite a program representative to discuss the review.

Once the review is finalized, the Provost's office—in conjunction with the college dean—assigns one of the following outcomes to the review prior to submitting it to the IBHE:

- Program in good standing;
- Program flagged for priority review; or
- Program enrollment suspended.

“Flagged for priority review” means that the program review identified problems such as low enrollments, high costs, accreditation issues, below-average scores on certification or licensure exams, below-average employment placement rates, or low satisfaction ratings. Eastern reports every three years on programs flagged for priority review until the problems are resolved. Between 2020-2023, four undergraduate and four graduate degree programs were flagged for review following the enrollment and degree completion guidelines of the IBHE's annual [Academic Program Efficiency and Effectiveness Reports \(APEER\)](#). Through changes in modality (in-person to online), curricular overhaul, and enhanced promotion, all flagged programs have been revised to improve enrollment and efficiency.

In 2022, the Graduate School and CGS developed the [Graduate Program of Excellence](#) designation to replace the First Choice Graduate Program Review, which had served as a model for other universities to support high-quality, graduate-level academic programming. Programs seeking to earn this distinction must be able to provide strong, compelling data and other examples as evidence of the program's excellence. Four criteria are used when reviewing a program for this designation: superior graduate education ensuring rigor and excellence, program accessibility and flexibility in program delivery, enrollment management and recruitment, and student success and support through health and wellness initiatives. Programs are required to advance a budget plan as part of the application process to demonstrate how awarded funds will be used to advance student achievement and success. Those programs earning this designation receive a \$7,500 stipend to further student achievement and

success.

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

Eastern's process for awarding credit ([IGP 46.1](#)) conforms to standards set by the Higher Learning Commission Policy (FDCR.A.10.020) and the Federal credit hour definition (Federal Register 75 FR 66832 page 66946). One semester credit hour approximates not less than 37.5 hours of academic engagement in coursework (in-class/instructional time plus out-of-class student work) as represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement. All courses leading to the awarding of credit, including courses that have experiential learning and less-structured classroom schedules—such as independent studies, internships, practica, and studio work—must have, at minimum, clearly stated learning objectives, expected outcomes, and workload expectations that meet the standards set forth above.

Undergraduate independent study credit is awarded in most undergraduate programs. A maximum of six hours may be applied to a degree. As stated in the [undergraduate catalog](#), an independent study involves the pursuit of clearly defined goals and learning objectives by a relatively self-directed student effort supervised by a faculty member. Independent study proposals include a statement of goals and a description of the intended final product of the project. Undergraduate research credit (1-6 hours) and undergraduate thesis credit (3 hours) are available in the 23 undergraduate [departmental honors programs](#).

Graduate independent study credit, research credit, and thesis credit are available in all graduate programs that are research-focused or offer a research track. As noted in the [graduate catalog](#), graduate independent study is an advanced, individualized study of a topic or topics selected and conducted by the graduate student under the supervision of a member of the graduate faculty.

Procedures for approval of a graduate independent study plan are equivalent to those for undergraduate study. A maximum of six hours of independent study, thesis, or research may be applied to a graduate degree, and a maximum of nine hours in a combination of independent study, research, and thesis may be applied to a graduate degree.

Internship credits awarded vary from 1-15 credit hours across colleges, but all meet or exceed minimum Eastern/federal credit hour criteria of 37.5 hours of work per hour of credit awarded. Similarly, practica are shorter-term experiences of 1-4 credit hours.

Eastern undergraduates may earn credit for prior learning through proficiency examinations, military service review, and portfolio review, as detailed in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs. Eastern awards credit for prior learning in multiple programs such as [Organizational and Professional Development \(OPD\)](#), RN to BSN, Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS), and Public Health following the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) standards. Students must take a portfolio development course and submit a portfolio to document learning from their previous experiences. Portfolios are evaluated by faculty with expertise in the area sought for course credit.

Some military service experiences may be submitted to the Office of the Registrar for elective college credit; these experiences are submitted on the student's Joint Services Transcript from the Department of Defense. [Proficiency examinations](#), if approved by an academic department, offer an opportunity to obtain undergraduate credit for knowledge and experience relevant to certain courses.

Eastern allows credit through College Level Examination Program (CLEP), College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB), Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate programs. Rules for proficiency examinations for credit are explained in the undergraduate catalog, and scores required for credit for [nationally standardized tests](#) are maintained on the Registrar's webpage.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

Eastern's standards for awarding undergraduate transfer credit are aligned with the [Illinois Articulation Initiative \(IAI\) Agreements](#). This initiative is designed to streamline transferring undergraduate credit among Illinois institutions and ensure consistency and quality within the transfer process. As part of the quality assurance process, all participating institutions must submit course syllabi to IAI faculty-led panels for review and must adhere to standard processes for evaluating courses transferred from other institutions. Quality assurance processes described in the undergraduate catalog verify that Eastern awards transfer credit for acceptable courses from colleges and universities that are accredited by the HLC or other regional accrediting agencies. Passing grades are required; however, credit for courses in which students earned a "D" will transfer if the student achieves a cumulative GPA with at least a "C" average from that institution. To verify the quality of writing and speaking, Eastern requires that students earn a "C" or better for English and speech (any course transferring in as ENG 1001G, ENG 1002G, or CMN 1310G).

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for ensuring that courses from other institutions are transferred in according to established quality assurance agreements and guidelines. Eastern's policy prohibits awarding of transfer credits for remedial, developmental, preparatory, or orientation courses. Credit is not awarded twice for the same course. Although there is no limit on the number of undergraduate hours that can be transferred, Eastern requires that its baccalaureate candidates earn a minimum of 30 residency hours. Eastern also requires students to earn at least 56 hours at senior institutions, including Eastern.

Standards for awarding graduate and post-baccalaureate certificate transfer credit are outlined in the [graduate catalog](#). Graduate candidates may petition the degree or certificate program to accept up to 12 hours of previously earned graduate credit. All courses approved by the program must meet the transfer credit criteria.

Awarding credit for international coursework requires a course-by-course evaluation from any evaluation agency member of the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services such as World Education Services (WES) or Span Tran. Courses must be completed with a minimum grade of "C" or better from a Higher Education Institution (colleges and universities) recognized by the Ministry of Education in the foreign country or other regional accrediting agencies. Course equivalencies are evaluated by a Course Transfer process with approval from the Office of International Students and Scholars [International Course Transfer Process](#) and forwarded to the Registrar for final approval. Major and general education courses are referred to the appropriate department chair for approval. Study abroad courses appear on the student's transcript as Eastern courses and are included in the student's cumulative GPA.

4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

Each program maintains authority over the quality and rigor of its courses (on-campus, off-campus, dual-credit, and online). As described in Criterion 2.A., Eastern's three major curriculum councils approve new courses and changes to existing courses, approve new programs and revisions to existing programs, and establish academic regulations for their respective areas of responsibility. The Honors Council and the [International Education Council](#) have oversight for some courses and policies that are part of the honors or study abroad curriculum.

To create a new course or revise an existing course, faculty members must complete a [course proposal form](#), which was last updated Fall 2021. The proposal must:

- Specify the course prerequisites, co-requisites, and method of delivery;
- Document course rigor in multiple ways: providing justification of credit level, outlining course content, specifying required work, and summarizing methods of evaluating work;
- Provide a rationale for including the course as a general education, major, minor, or elective requirement; and
- Articulate the learning objectives, assignments, and methods of assessment.

Eastern maintains the quality of online courses by expecting all courses taught online to meet these same standards for course approval. When programs or courses are part of an interdisciplinary program, the process again moves from the department to the sponsoring college, but also requires review by the interdisciplinary program's advisory committee, composed of faculty representatives from the participating departments, before advancing to the major curriculum committees.

Once the appropriate curriculum committees have approved a course and its prerequisites, departments bear the responsibility of enforcing those prerequisites for students on a case-by-case basis or by relying on registration programming. Several university policies and procedures encourage authority over course rigor and expectations for student learning outcomes. Article II-D of Eastern's BOT Governing Policies describes academic freedom and academic responsibility:

It is the faculty members' mastery of their subjects and their own scholarship that entitle them to their classrooms and to freedom in the presentation of their subjects. Thus, it is improper for faculty members to persistently introduce material having no relation to their subjects, or to fail to present the subject matter of their course as announced to their students and as approved by the faculty in their collective responsibility for the curriculum.

Eastern's [syllabus policy](#) requires all instructors to provide their students and department chairs with printed or electronic copies of course syllabi during the first week of classes each semester. The syllabus should include course objectives, an outline or statement of content, a list of assignments, the grading policy and/or grading scale, attendance policy, evaluation procedures, office hours, and information for students with disabilities. In some departments, a master syllabus is utilized for multiple sections of the same course. Dual-credit syllabi must be approved by the dual-credit coordinator for each course.

As discussed extensively in Criterion 2.A., several layers of institutional control exist to ensure that qualified people are hired for teaching positions at Eastern ([IGP 14](#), [29](#), [30](#), and [47](#)). Faculty hired to teach at additional locations or online programs are subject to the same hiring procedures as adjunct faculty teaching on campus. In addition, the faculty evaluation process provides a system of checks and balances to ensure quality control over those teaching at the university. For adjunct instructors, the VPAA periodically reminds deans and chairs about hiring requirements and continually monitors instructor credentials upon hiring ([IGP 30](#)).

Criterion 3.D. addresses the issue of access to learning resources more fully; this section will focus on the university's *authority* over access to learning resources.

The [Academic Success Center](#) (ASC) is administered by the newly named (2022) Dean of Student Success. The ASC offers academic support services, assesses student learning, guides students through the transition to college, and contributes to the university community's knowledge of its students and graduates. Programs include: Academic Advising, Academic Support Center, Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement, newly-renamed Office of Accessibility and Accommodations, and TRiO Student Support Services. The ASC also oversees the [University Foundations](#) (EIU 1111) and [Strategies for Academic Success](#) (EIU 2919) courses.

Eastern employs a [Textbook Rental Service](#) (TRS) ensuring that all students have access to the same textbooks. Students pay a per-credit-hour fee for this service. TRS mails textbooks to students enrolled in online courses and who live outside of Coles County; these students return their books by mail at the end of the semester. High schools in dual-credit partnership with Eastern purchase textbooks for their students.

Eastern has developed and piloted dual-credit partnerships with several Illinois high schools to offer [dual-credit coursework](#). Two models, "an upstate model" and a "downstate model," have been utilized. In the upstate model, course instructors are approved by the respective high schools to provide instruction, then approved by the Eastern department chair to have the credentials that Eastern requires for adjunct work that were specified by IBHE in 2015. In the downstate model, to ensure rigor, courses are designed by the professor from Eastern who develops a standard syllabus listing all topics, assignments and exams as well as the content that is delivered online. Each dual-credit course includes a minimum of two visits by the Eastern professor per semester to the high school and all university assignments are graded by the college instructor. Dual-credit students receive some supplemental materials/support and practice from the high school teacher; however, this model allows the professor to be the instructor of record for college credit while the high school teacher remains the instructor of record for the high school credit. In this model, Eastern maintains authority over any course credit awarded at college level ensuring compliance with HLC guidance on all dual-credit experiences. The program continues to expand with more course options and additional sites being added.

4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

Several Eastern programs engage in regular reviews required to obtain and maintain specialized accreditation through national professional accrediting bodies. These reviews ensure an additional level of quality review based on discipline-specific criteria. The institution maintains specialized accreditation from a number of accreditors, including the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the American Chemical Society (ACS). Eastern maintains a current list of [programs with specialized accredited programs](#) on its website.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Eastern uses a comprehensive set of processes to track the success of its graduates. Eastern's achievement for advanced study is particularly impressive. Eastern prepares more undergraduates

who go on to earn doctoral degrees than any other master's university in Illinois and remains ranked in the [top 5%](#) of master's-level universities in the nation according to 2019-2022 data from the [NCSES Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) and the [NSF Study of the Baccalaureate-Origin Institutions of Research Doctorate Recipients](#).

The Annual Report collects data from graduating students. For [FY2022](#), placement data was collected six months post-graduation for students who were assisted by Career Services. Overall, 89.2% of responding bachelor's degree and 95.5% of master's degree graduates were employed, serving in the military, or attending graduate school.

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- University Syllabus Policy - Council on Academic Affairs - 6-29-2021

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

Eastern engages in effective processes for assessing student learning, utilizing assessment information, and ensuring substantial participation in academic programs and in cocurricular programs. Since 2019, assessment at Eastern has moved from a highly centralized system to a more *decentralized* set of processes that invites much greater participation and follow-through from a larger number of faculty across programs and colleges.

4.B.1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.

Every academic program at Eastern collects and uses assessment data for making improvements in student learning. While such assessment practices come out of a long-established tradition of program-level assessment (dating back to 2000), Eastern has made several recent strides in assessment. In 2019, the university began a [campus-wide process](#) focused on identifying strategies that would make the assessment of student learning more meaningful and impactful—and in the process advance the goal of *continuous improvement*. To review and refresh the process, the Provost appointed a task force from across the university to review existing assessment policies, practices, and timelines, as well as examine the compliance practices of peer institutions. The task force issued [a report](#) recommending a new assessment process that more fully engages participants, focuses more deeply at the local level of program-specific challenges, and encourages regular meetings of faculty in responding to the unique findings of a program's assessment review. As a result, the Provost issued [a memo](#) informing faculty of the revised assessment framework that would alleviate some of the strain of producing multiple assessment reports and minimize redundancy for programs submitting to accrediting and other external bodies.

While every academic program is expected to obtain and make use of assessment data on an ongoing basis, the task force developed an [improved assessment process](#) that allows more time and energy to invest in increasing the impact on student learning. Student Learning Outcomes reports articulate each program's student learning goals, the outcomes' alignment with university learning goals, the measures/instruments used, and a quick description of how results are used to effect real change. Reporting offers programs a chance to tell their story of how assessment is conducted and how it is used to improve student learning. [Accredited](#) and [non-accredited](#) programs use different reporting forms to allow accredited programs the option of substituting a significant external accrediting agency report completed within the same calendar year.

The university's newly streamlined [assessment processes](#) include marked changes in internal and external reporting. Internally, [Student Learning Outcomes reports](#) are now submitted on a [biennial schedule](#), with direct feedback and advisement by associate deans (biennially) and by the VPAA office (quadrennially). Externally, programs submit a short review every four years and a [full review](#) every eight years to the IBHE (Illinois Board of Higher Education).

The [Division of Student Affairs](#) provides and assesses the effectiveness of a rich tapestry of cocurricular programming for students, covering everything from comprehensive health education to civic engagement and volunteer work. As the annual reports (AY [2020](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#)) demonstrate, and as the mission statement notes, Student Affairs programming strives to "ensure student success and retention and [to be] dedicated to cultivating a sense of community on both our campus and beyond." The [Division of Student Affairs strategic plan](#) includes five priorities with 30 strategic goals.

Much of the cocurricular assessment data collected by Student Affairs centers on student satisfaction and learning goal outcomes. In particular, the Health Education Resource Center (HERC) regularly holds ten different health-focused programs per semester. Since last accreditation cycle, [evaluations](#) indicate that all programs showed an increase in post-test responses compared to the pre-test, with the exception of one program. Moving forward, the HERC will improve the process for all program evaluations as some programs did not monitor results. HERC has partnered with Vector Solutions to deliver three mandatory courses for incoming freshmen and transfer students. Previous data has indicated that all three courses (AlcoholEDU, Mental-Wellbeing, and Sexual Assault Prevention) either demonstrate positive increases or remain steady from pre- to post-test. HERC, along with Health and Counseling, offers Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR), a one-hour training program to help recognize those in crisis and to prevent suicide. Early reports indicate the training increases individuals' knowledge and perceptions about suicide prevention across the board. The training also shows an increase in participant self-efficacy, confidence, and competence to carry out an intervention. HERC, in conjunction with Health and Counseling, will monitor the program and market the training campus-wide.

4.B.2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

The revamped curricular assessment processes described above prioritize practical feedback from the associate deans and VPAA office and the need to reflect upon what is and is not working to improve student learning. Evidence of success can only be determined by the program, but more college-level feedback helps evaluate holistically the effectiveness of each program's curricular, career-preparation, retention, and enrollment decisions.

For example, in the case of the [B.A. in History's eight-year full program review for IBHE](#), the program captures the kind of reflective assessment practices that lead to the most effective changes for the benefit of student learning:

Our assessment process indicates to us that students struggle most with historiography, and we are monitoring that learning goal. We have had a few History with Teacher Licensure students struggle recently with the content test. Viewing that test in the context of the rest of our assessments and individual student performance, we find that the test is neither a fair nor accurate measure of student proficiency with the subject-area content or a predictor of success in the secondary social studies classroom.

The History-Teacher Licensure program reduced its semester hour requirements, expanded the

counting of outside electives, and experienced enrollment growth. As is expected, the program continuously evaluates its practices and curriculum for equity and inclusion, including concerted efforts to attract students from diverse backgrounds.

In another instance of effective evaluation processes, the [B.S. in Fashion Merchandising's four-year program review for IBHE](#) demonstrates the tremendous value of aligning programmatic goals to internal and external assessment requirements. From the outset of the program's transformation, there were four goals: overhaul curriculum to integrate into an entirely new department (from Family & Consumer Sciences to Art + Design); plan approval for integration into Art + Design by an external accrediting body (NASAD); restructure student learning outcomes to strengthen alignment with University Learning Goals; and increase enrollment. With a thriving program that nearly doubled its majors through this period of migration (2019-2022), the Fashion Merchandising program's accomplishment of its goals over a four-year period indicates the value, if not necessity, of using information gleaned from the assessment process and seeing the tangible benefits (increased enrollment) of an organized approach shared by a substantial number of participants invested within a program and across a college.

In this and numerous other cases, Eastern recognizes the difficult decision-making process for programs as they allocate limited financial and human resources—faculty time, courses taught, and testing costs—within the larger framework of the university's mission to provide “superior, accessible” education that is fully committed to inclusion.

4.B.3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Alongside program-level assessment processes, university-level assessment processes continue to undergo evaluation, which includes revising the CAA bylaws to articulate the duties of the [General Education Committee](#) (a subcommittee of CAA composed of elected members representing the 5 subject areas—humanities, sciences, education, health & human services, business & technology—3 at-large, a student, an advisor, and the VPAA ex officio), aligning the General Education learning outcomes with the University Learning Goals, updating instruments for the assessment of the University Learning Goals, and starting conversations on how to assess general education on campus.

Once headed by a [General Education Coordinator](#) appointed in 2019, the General Education Committee is now (as of Fall 2023) directed by a chair who leads the committee in the [review](#) of all newly-proposed and existing general education courses. The General Education Committee is also responsible for leading campus-wide discussions to improve student learning.

In an effort to increase participation in reassessing general education on campus, a team comprising faculty and administrators (including the Gen Ed Coordinator and HLC Liaison) attended the [HLC Assessing General Education Seminar](#) (Fall 2022). The ensuing activities resulted in a major retuning of Eastern's approaches to assessing general education and university learning goals. From this seminar, the three main takeaways included the setting of the following immediate and long-term goals:

- Agree upon a shared vocabulary of performance indicators
- Reset measures and methods (sample size, sample source, and report writing)
- Increase faculty engagement

Equipped by lessons from the HLC seminar, a [General Education Assessment Workgroup](#) was convened in Spring 2023. First, the workgroup obtained approval from CAA to streamline the language in the [course catalog](#). Mainly an exercise in clarification for the benefit of students, this aligned the general education learning outcomes with the university learning goals and the university mission. Second, the need for applying more inclusive practices for first-generation students and ensuring equity across all majors precipitated the request to CAA that one fewer writing sample (from three to two) be required of all students for measuring the university learning goal of writing. Third, the Special Assistant to the Provost on Student Learning, in close consultation with a mathematics education expert from the workgroup, developed and beta-tested a new Quantitative Literacy instrument.

This line of work, centered on improving general education assessment, is conducted by the General Education Committee. Meanwhile, each of the five [university learning goals](#) has its own instrument, process, and report writer:

[Writing](#)

This goal has the longest assessment history, and its administration has undergone significant changes to better address its ultimate purpose: What do we want to learn about students' writing skills so that we may improve it?

1. All students must submit two papers written for Eastern courses to the [Electronic Writing Portfolio \(EWP\)](#). All faculty who already graded these papers receive an email requiring them to rate these papers using an [EWP rubric](#). Students must meet this requirement to graduate.
2. The thousands of paper submissions in any given academic year are vetted by a single person; such vetting includes resolving (or not resolving) issues of student-faculty disagreements. Unresolved issues can delay a student's graduation.
3. The assessment director asks a group of faculty readers to assess a randomly selected portion of complete portfolios, which are reviewed using a new intake and reporting system created by our web developers in Spring 2023.
4. The assessment director writes a Readings Report (AY[2023](#), [2022](#), [2021](#), [2020](#)) and a Submissions Report (AY[2023](#), [2022](#), [2021](#), [2020](#)), and, as for all of the reports below, notifies the deans and chairs, and posts the reports for future reference by programs.

[Speaking](#)

While improvements can always be made, this learning goal is the clearest and most effectively administered.

1. Faculty teaching Communication Studies CMN 1310 and EIU Senior Seminars and Capstones use a [speech rubric](#) to assess their students.
2. Speech rubric scores are submitted online to the Director of Testing & Evaluation.
3. The Basic Course Director writes a [Speaking Executive Summary](#), [Speaking Across the Curriculum Report](#), and [Speaking Holistic Data Report](#).

[Responsible Citizenship](#)

Students give their opinions about their political proclivities, community involvement, and attitudes to racial and cultural differences (drawing from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education and the Miville-Guzman Universality-Diversity Scale-Short Form). The General

Education Committee will begin discussions to create an updated instrument.

1. Freshmen take a responsible citizenship survey when they come to campus for orientation. Seniors take this survey when they are enrolled in an EIU Senior Seminar or Capstone.
2. The assessment director writes a [report](#).

[Critical Thinking](#)

This goal was described in the Eastern course catalog as ubiquitous, yet the measures were unclear, random, and, occasionally, counterfactual: “Critical thinking infusion in all general education courses.” Vaguely advertised and lacking direct assessment, this goal needs additional attention. Currently:

1. EWP faculty readers apply an additional rubric (the [critical thinking rubric](#)) to the same set of EWP portfolios that they assess for the EWP report.
2. The assessment director writes a [report](#).

[Quantitative Reasoning](#)

This goal had the least developed assessment measure and method. Faculty teaching quantitative reasoning were asked to fill out a rubric assessing the quantitative skills of their students in the aggregate. These data, along with student data from the [NSSE](#) (National Survey of Student Engagement) were used for assessment [reports](#). However, the assessment director and members of the General Education Work Group created and beta-tested a new quantitative literacy instrument in Spring 2023.

As noted in the [HLC General Education Seminar Consultant’s feedback](#), the strength of Eastern’s approach to reforming assessment is the clear focus on student learning, not mere compliance: “It would be very easy to focus on compliance, but your work will be much more meaningful and have greater potential for impact when framed around student learning.”

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

Eastern Illinois University sets ambitious and realistic goals for improving student retention, persistence, and completion of degrees. Since 2006, several Eastern offices have analyzed and acted upon information identifying areas of student success and struggle. Since 2019, Eastern has developed a coordinated plan for expanding student services and supports for academic success.

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.

Adhering to its mission to deliver “superior, accessible” education, Eastern’s strategic plan ([PLAN 2028](#)) aims to “increase the overall 6-year graduation rate for all students and demographic sub-groups with an overall 60% graduation rate for the Fall 2023 cohort and beyond.” Eastern’s Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 freshman-to-sophomore retention rate was 70%, and its graduation rate was 45%. Eastern’s current [retention rate](#) places it in the middle of all [Illinois Public Universities](#).

Key Performance Indicators show Eastern’s average [time to degree](#) (Fall 2022) was 3.37 years for all Eastern students, 4.04 for first-generation students, and 4.81 for native students which is similar to what it was for the 2017 cohort of native students (4.66 years). [Minority student retention and graduation rates](#) (page 30), while still above the national average, remain lower than that of other students.

Eastern’s [graduation rates](#) are slightly below the national average and have decreased slightly, from 54.7% with the 2016 cohort, to 44.5% with the 2017 cohort. The retention rates have remained relatively stable, at 70% with the 2017 to 2018 cohort, and 70% with the 2022 to 2023 cohort.

Considering that Eastern is now ACT/SAT test optional, Eastern is still a selective institution (students in the top 50% of high school graduating class and average ACT scores between 18-24).

The Fall 2021 freshman connection cohort was composed of 79% first-generation students, which is a significant increase compared to 40.6% of the Fall 2018 class.

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.

The [Committee on Retention Efforts \(CORE\)](#) has the following outcomes and objectives:

CORE Outcomes

1. To address specific areas designed to increase retention and/or graduation rates;
2. To report annually on retention and graduation rates as well as progress on action plans;
3. To analyze data in a systematic way;
4. To make recommendations on action plans and best practices to institutional stakeholders; and
5. To disseminate data to the university community.

CORE Objectives

1. Analyze and communicate retention data and best practices across campus through CORE newsletter, committee reports, website, and retention forum;
2. Share ideas and initiate conversations on issues contributing to retention, such as campus culture, shifting student demographics, and so forth through committee meetings, the retention forum, and on website;
3. Recommend the implementation or continuation of programs for identifiable at-risk groups;
4. Participate in national research and conferences as appropriate; and
5. Evaluate institutional policies, practices, and procedures as they pertain to retention of students.

CORE publishes [Enrollment Management Newsletters](#) each semester to highlight retention initiatives and to offer ideas for initiating new programs or practices to aid in retention and student success. For example, students no longer receive registration holds for small balances owed to the institution; only amounts above \$1,000 prevent a student from registering for the next semester. The Bursar's Office emails students before placing this hold to allow students time to pay bills that may impede registration. Another recent change to this process is that holds are not placed on student accounts until one week after the student is able to register for courses. CORE also has established a series of email reminders to students and provides lists to departments of their students who have not registered by certain dates in the semester.

As part of the Strategic Student Success Initiatives in the most recent strategic plan, Eastern committed to integrating retention goals into the Enrollment Management plan and prioritize retention as a core element of enrollment goals to counter predicted demographic shifts in the number of college-age adults in Illinois.

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

Through the efforts of CORE and a variety of other measurements of academic risk factors, Eastern has taken multiple steps to maximize students' chances of degree completion.

In Fall 2021, the Council on Academic Affairs approved a course revision to require all new first-year students with a high school GPA below 3.0 to enroll in [EIU 1111: University Foundations](#)

(effective Fall 2023). This is a 1-credit writing-active course with four main objectives: to familiarize students with the expectations, policies, resources, and traditions of Eastern Illinois University; developing critical thinking, learning and communication skills; enriching perspectives on personal, academic, and moral issues in higher education; and engaging students in the educational and social life of the university. In 2018, 50% of the freshman class enrolled in the course; in 2023, this remained the same at 50% enrolled.

In AY2023, an [Academic Alert Task Force](#) (page 2) was formed to strengthen the [Early Alert System \(EAS\)](#), which is connected to faculty course rosters in Banner. Available to faculty since 2011, the EAS allows faculty members to submit a student's name directly from their rosters to the EAS; student names can be submitted for poor performance on assignments/tests or for attendance issues. Automated emails are sent to these students and staff members who follow up with an email, phone call, or in-person visit.

After consultation with the Council of Chairs, Faculty Senate, and the Chairs Retreat, the Academic Alert Task Force encouraged greater specificity in faculty descriptions of the cause for the alert and earlier entries of alerts in each academic term. The task force partnered with the Faculty Development and Innovation Center (FDIC) to produce an [infographic](#) to serve as a job aide for faculty considering submitting an alert, focusing on faculty contact with students about the issue whenever possible prior to reporting it and how to describe the concern for the response team. These revisions enabled the response team to triage and provide care faster. Modes of response included emails, phone calls, text messages, and physical visits to residence halls.

CORE formed a subcommittee January 2022 devoted to the retention of first-generation students on our campus. On average, first-generation students are approximately 43% of Eastern's population overall. According to the Center for First-Generation Student Success (CFGSS), nationally, first-generation students are about 4% behind their continuing-generation peers at public 4-year institutions when looking at first-to-second year retention rates. The median parental incomes for first-generation students is \$41,000 compared to \$90,000 for continuing-generation students. This discrepancy is very significant for Eastern since our top risk factors are financial. According to the CFGSS, too, first-gen students are less likely to use health services, academic advising, or academic support services—especially in their first year of college when these services could be crucial to their success and retention.

In responding to the need posed by the rising number of first-gen students, several resources and programs were developed, including the creation of a [First-Generation Resources page](#), which highlights campus resources, scholarship information, and tutoring services provided for first generation students, the formation of a First Gen Week Celebration Committee, and the inaugural First Gen Celebration Week in Fall 2022.

The New Student Program was overhauled in 2021 with the formation of a New Student and Family Programs Office. This office oversees Orientation and [Welcome Weekend](#), a transition program for all new [freshman](#) and [transfer](#) students. Once admitted to Eastern, students are required to attend the Orientation, Advisement, and Registration program. Students meet with their advisor to develop a course schedule, learn about academic life at Eastern, and discover opportunities and services available to them. Family is encouraged at all Eastern Orientation programs. As a part of this, all new students (freshmen and transfers) are required to participate in Welcome Weekend. The program provides ongoing orientation and transition programming for new students.

Freshman and transfer students who participate in opening programs before classes start are more

likely to persist than those who do not. These findings reflect student motivation and prioritization, but they are also testaments to the success of the programs the institution has developed to help students make early connections to Eastern and their peers.

The **Office of Inclusion and Academic Engagement (OIAE)** coordinates a variety of minority programs to assist with the recruitment and retention of a diverse student population. The federally-funded [TRiO program](#) is designed to increase the college retention and graduation rates of students who are low-income, first-generation, or disabled. The program is open to all undergraduate students who meet the selection criteria. TRiO offers free tutoring, scholarships, counseling, leadership development, career and motivational workshops, graduate school visits, internship assistance, faculty mentors, cultural enrichment activities, leadership conferences, and advising. The program can serve up to 175 students, selected on a first-come, first-served basis.

The **Gateway Program**, administered by the Office of Academic Advising, is a provisional admission program (established in 1990) for incoming freshmen who do not meet regular admission standards. Students with an ACT score of 16 or higher and a high school GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale are considered for admission. Gateway students take the University Foundations course; attend weekly advisement sessions; and, depending on the Nelson Denny reading score, may be required to enroll in a general studies course (GST 1000) to assist with reading comprehension. On average since its inception, Gateway students have had a 48% graduation rate.

The OIAE offers several peer-to-peer tutoring and mentoring programs:

- [Knack Tutoring](#) is an online platform that enables Eastern students to book course-specific peer tutoring and mentoring services. Knack Tutoring offers flexible hours and platforms so that students can request in-person or virtual tutoring from a student who has successfully completed the course in which they are seeking help.
- In Fall 2020, CORE launched a new retention initiative called [Freshman Connection](#) that provides one-on-one peer support in order to help freshman and transfer students navigate all aspects of campus life: academic, financial, and interpersonal. Participating students meet once a week over a free meal in a dining hall, in a cohort of six students. Students concurrently take the University Foundations Course, an inquiry into the 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.
- [iSTEM](#) brings together students from underrepresented groups in the natural sciences, social sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science fields. Faculty and peers serve as mentors and are committed to encouraging and empowering these students to be successful in STEM disciplines. The peer mentoring program offers freshmen, sophomores, and transfer students the necessary support they may need during the critical early years of their college career in a STEM major.
- Eastern's [STRONG MENtoring Program](#) (Successful Teaching Relative to Overcoming Negative Generalities) was created in response to the increasing national attrition rate of men of color in higher education. This program has the following goals:

1. Improve the retention and graduation rate for African-American males and increase their

- knowledge about continuing their education after post-secondary education;
- 2. Develop leadership skills in male students;
- 3. Increase the number of minority males in graduate programs; and
- 4. Foster long-term relationships between students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Eastern offers many of the best practices associated with strong retention rates: mandatory advising, a freshman seminar course, tutoring and support services for at-risk and academically struggling students, a small faculty-to-student ratio, few large lecture classes, on-campus housing, many opportunities for student involvement, scholarships and grants to supplement federal financial aid, and on-campus employment for students.

4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice.

Eastern's Office of Planning, Budget, and Institutional Research regularly generates reports from student records to calculate retention, persistence, and graduation rates according to standard practice and [IPEDS](#) definitions. These rates are calculated using data from full-time, first-time freshmen. Retention is based on first-year fall-to-fall enrollment data. Graduation rates are based on completion at 6 years, and persistence data is collected from the [National Student Clearinghouse Research Center](#). Data is submitted annually to IPEDS and IBHE. These rates are further broken down by demographic categories to analyze subpopulations of students who may be at higher risk of not being retained or graduating on time.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

Eastern Illinois University effectively addresses the core components of Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement. As described in this chapter, Eastern prioritizes the continuous improvement and well-being of its students on both academic and cocurricular fronts.

Eastern demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through clear policies and procedures for awarding course credit, credit for experiential learning, dual-credit and transfer credit; regular internal and external program reviews including maintenance of specialized accreditation; and evaluation of the success of graduates through university-wide and departmental-level tracking procedures. Eastern remains committed to providing a high-quality education by establishing and revising policies and procedures for awarding credit aligned with best practices established by accrediting bodies and professional organizations. Outcomes assessment is integrated fully into the curriculum development process at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Eastern continues to analyze retention and graduation data in an effort to support all learners, from freshmen through graduate students whom Eastern prepares at an impressive rate for the doctoral level.

Eastern is committed to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing, robust assessment of student learning; assessment within all academic programs emphasizes continuous improvement through the assessment of major as well as university undergraduate and graduate learning goals. Cocurricular assessment of student development goals is demonstrated through NSSE data as well as program assessment in areas such as residential life and health education. Eastern's prioritization of continuous improvement has entailed significant changes to the assessment processes imagined, developed, and enacted by a broad swath of participants across campus. Major developments include the streamlining of assessment reporting structures and schedules, a General Education Committee that oversees the regulation and approval process for new and continuing general education courses, a renewed focus on programs implementing curricular changes when they serve student learning outcomes, regular meetings of assessment committees within programs, and a more *decentralized* set of processes that invites greater participation and follow-through from a larger number of faculty across programs and colleges.

Setting ambitious and realistic goals for improving student retention, persistence, and completion of degrees, Eastern provides supports, programming, and best practices that have resulted in graduation and retention rates that are on par with average national benchmarks for regional, comprehensive institutions. Members from the Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) have developed a coordinated plan for expanding student services and supports for academic success, and continuously improved its broad suite of student supports, including the Student Success Center, Freshman Connection, FOCUS Program, Prowl Program, Family Welcome Weekend, Knack Tutoring, and the Early Alert System; developed resources for at-risk populations; and continued to focus and refine retention efforts through the use of Eastern's retention predictor model.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

5.A.1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

Eastern is governed independently by its Board of Trustees (BOT), established by [Illinois State law](#) on January 1, 1996. [All appointed BOT members](#) are Eastern alumni, leaders in the region, or former Eastern educators. As a result, the BOT is familiar with Eastern's geographical and historical context as well as its academic programs. BOT members offer a significant breadth of experience including a partner in an accounting firm, a banking and services professional in risk management, a longtime educator, a family physician, a former COO for insurance and investments company, a robotic process automation and artificial intelligence professional in the financial services industry, and a financial planner.

The BOT oversees all aspects of the university and exercises its authority to operate, manage, and support the university in service to its legal and fiduciary responsibilities. To ensure that the university operates in a fiscally responsible manner, the BOT [reviews and approves](#) (p. 4) the annual budget. For continued transparency in budgeting, the Vice President for Business Affairs presents [final budgets](#) (p. 14) to the BOT in a public meeting for its review, comment, and approval.

The BOT established [bylaws](#), [governing policies](#), and [regulations](#) to encourage and facilitate cooperation among the BOT, president, faculty, staff, and students in their mutual efforts to strengthen, improve, and protect the integrity and mission of the university.

In addition to the BOT Regulations, Eastern's shared governance policies and procedures include

more than 190 Internal Governing Policies; union contracts; bylaws for advisory boards and councils and committees; and other university, college, and department policies and procedures. At the senior level, the President's Council meets twice per month and includes the president, the provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Business Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Enrollment Management, Vice President for University Advancement, General Counsel, Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Director of Government Relations, University Treasurer, Chief Information Officer, and Athletic Director. This group is instrumental in communicating among divisional areas.

The [Faculty Senate](#), along with the [Council on Academic Affairs \(CAA\)](#), the [Council on Graduate Studies \(CGS\)](#), the [Council on Teacher Education \(COTE\)](#), and the [Council on Faculty Research \(CFR\)](#), constitute the comprehensive shared governance system of Eastern. These councils include both faculty-elected and administration-appointed members. The goal of the Faculty Senate and the councils is to represent faculty in the shared governance of the university in the best interests of the university, its students, and employees.

The Faculty Senate ([constitution](#), [bylaws](#), [policies & procedures](#)) represents faculty in all matters affecting the welfare of the university, except in matters within the scope of collective bargaining as determined by Regulations for Collective Bargaining by Academic Employees, or where limited by relevant law. CAA, CGS, and COTE represent faculty on issues of curriculum and programs, as stated in their respective bylaws. [Meeting minutes](#) from the councils demonstrate the range of university policies addressed. Faculty Senate leadership meets monthly with the president and provost.

[Committees](#) of the [Staff Senate](#) facilitate communication, solicit feedback, and make recommendations on matters of concern to the staff as a whole, except in matters within the scope of collective bargaining. Staff Senate executive officers meet with the president monthly.

The Student Senate ([constitution](#), [bylaws](#)) represents the student body and works to improve student life through the passage of bills and resolutions. A representative of Student Senate serves on Faculty Senate.

Finally, the [Civil Service Council](#) serves in an advisory capacity to the administration and makes recommendations to the university regarding personnel matters that involve non-negotiated civil service employees. Eastern also has an elected representative on the Employee Advisory Committee of the State Universities Civil Service Advisory Committee; this committee advises the Civil Service Merit Board regarding the general interest and welfare of civil service employees.

Campus governance organizations review academic requirements, university internal governing policies, and campus processes by seeking feedback from their constituents and making recommendations to senior-level administrators. The president actively seeks feedback and recommendations from these organizations. Additionally, each governing group is assigned a liaison from President's Council who attends senate and council meetings. See attached lists of [faculty senate subcommittees](#), [elected university committees](#), and [appointed university committees](#).

5.A.2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

Budgeting

The administration uses data in the budgeting process, which is outlined in the [June 2023 BOT report](#). In June of each year, the preliminary budget is prepared and [presented to the BOT](#) for their consideration. Approval is needed to begin the fiscal year. Census (10th-day) numbers are available in early September and inform the revenue projections for the year. By late fall, a final all funds budget is [presented to the BOT for their approval](#). A full budget is presented and discussed with the Finance/Audit Sub-Committee with official action taken at the [full board meeting](#).

The VPBA led [campus-wide budget information sessions](#) in Fall 2023. A principal source of data that informs the budget process is the Resource Allocation Management Program (RAMP) report. This report contains financial and institutional data used for requests for state appropriations every year. The [FY23-25 report](#) recaps FY23 including a detailed analysis of revenue and expenses, a review of credit hours, utility expenses, wages, sick and vacation leaves, the collective bargaining agreement summary, and more. It also includes Eastern's FY25 state appropriation request.

Program Review

Eastern also uses data to assess program viability in accordance with IBHE standards. The annual [Academic Program Efficiency and Effectiveness Report](#) (APEER) assesses IBHE review criteria and institutional priorities to determine which programs are under-enrolled. The university can make a case for continued review for programs that meet critical educational needs or it can sunset low-enrolled programs.

Enrollment Management

Enrollment Management regularly analyzes student performance and enrollment data to inform decision-making and meet enrollment goals, using over 100 individual reports throughout the year. This data helps to best serve Eastern's current and prospective student populations and helps the university adapt to changing student needs and markets. The continual review and analysis of data improves effectiveness, ensuring maximum return on investment of university resources.

Aside from standard reporting, multiple members of the division—including the Vice President for Enrollment Management—are proficient in structured query language and able to pull data and perform analysis as needed. Raw data, reports, assessment output, and dashboards are key to supporting regular and circumstance-specific decision-making.

Some 2023 examples of Enrollment Management projects using data include: 1) evaluating high schools and community colleges to visit based on historical data; 2) evaluating the orientation and registration process for committed new students, with a special focus on equity issues; 3) evaluating scholarship programs and resources (institutional aid and state-funded aid) for enrollment; 4) looking at trends in campus visits (Open Houses, Admitted Student Events, etc.); and 5) optimizing recruitment territories for efficiency and workload balance.

Student Support Services

Analysis of student retention data resulted in investment in and reorganization of student support services. In FY22, the university re-envisioned the Academic Support Center, named a Dean of Student Success, and brought together constituents from across the academic and student life offices to provide more effective [student support services](#). The Student Success area uses data to provide support to students at greatest risk of failing. The office reviews DFW (D-grades, failures, and withdrawals) reports and Early Alerts to identify courses where students may need supplemental

instruction, departmental tutoring, or peer-to-peer tutoring. In addition, the president, along with the FDIC, has launched a new [course redesign initiative](#) targeting general education courses with high DFW rates. The Dean of Student Success reviews demographic data from the freshman profile and 10th-day roster to identify first-generation, ethnic minority, and/or low-income students to target for programming. The Student Success division also assesses retention reports to determine which student populations are retained and which groups are at greatest risk of attrition.

5.A.3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

The Council on Academic Affairs (CAA) has the responsibility and authority for [making recommendations](#) to the president relative to undergraduate academic regulations; CAA consists of five faculty members from four academic colleges elected by the faculty of the respective colleges, and three elected members from the faculty at large, one student member with voting privileges appointed by Student Senate, and one member with voting privileges from the Academic Advising Center selected by the Center's staff representing the Campus Advising Network. In addition, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs serves as an ex officio member without vote.

Through the Dean of the Graduate School and the provost, the Council on Graduate Studies (CGS) [approves curriculum and recommends policies](#) pertaining to graduate programs and graduate students to the president. The Dean of the Graduate School and/or other appropriate administrators and faculty members monitor and enforce adopted policies. CGS voting members include faculty members representing each of the four colleges, the dean's appointment, and a graduate student representative.

The Council on Teacher Education (COTE) [oversees curriculum](#) and academic regulations and requirements that affect undergraduate and graduate programs leading to certification by the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board and/or those accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Members include representatives from each of the educator preparation programs areas at Eastern, a K-12 partner, two student members, and the Associate Dean of the College of Education and provost as ex officio members.

Advisory groups on campus provide important oversight and guidance over specific academic areas of campus. Advisory boards and committees made up of employees and students help Eastern address priority issues, current practices, and emerging trends. Examples of such committees are provided below:

- The [Intercollegiate Athletic Board \(IAB\)](#), established in accordance with NCAA regulations and federal law, serves in an advisory capacity to Eastern's Department of Athletics. The IAB monitors the integrity of the academic, athletic, and personal development of student athletes. Voting members include—at minimum—six faculty members or administrators and four students.
- The [Textbook Rental Committee](#) proposes any policy changes and recommends cost limits on textbook purchases. Faculty members submit ideas for policy changes to the committee. Membership includes faculty and student representatives from across the university.

The [Committee on Retention Efforts \(CORE\)](#), established in 2006, ensures a cross-section of employees regularly assesses retention and related data (retention, withdrawal, campus climate, student satisfaction, etc.). CORE meetings include discussions addressing plans for supporting

students, such as [Early Alerts and campus tutoring](#). CORE committee members include the Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Dean of Student Success, the Dean of Students and Director of Student Accountability & Support, the Director of Academic Advising, the Director of New Student & Family Programs, and faculty representatives.

The faculty-elected Academic Program Elimination Review Committee provides recommendations to the provost concerning academic programs being considered for elimination or reorganization resulting in any layoff(s) ([EIU-UIP Contract, page 60](#)).

As evidenced through committee membership, Eastern values student engagement in setting academic requirements and policy. In addition to the Student Senate, student representatives serve on the BOT, university councils—including those responsible for academic programs—and advisory committees.

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5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

5.B.1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

Employment practices for tenured/tenure-track faculty are outlined in [IGP 14](#) and [IGP 14.1](#), setting clear requirements for qualifications and hiring procedures. About 92% of the [tenured/tenure-track faculty](#) at Eastern have terminal degrees. Each academic department hires for competence and has established degree requirements for tenure. The Faculty Development and Innovation Center (FDIC) provides training and professional development opportunities for faculty. Retention, tenure, and promotion processes are multi-level reviews that are guided by standards outlined in the [collective bargaining agreement](#) with specific criteria outlined in departmental documents. Under university policy, Graduate Teaching Assistants (GAs) must be supervised by a faculty mentor.

The process for hiring civil service employees is outlined in Criterion 2.A. The application and hiring process for Civil Service positions differs from processes used to recruit Administrative and Professional (A/P) or Faculty candidates. The Department of Human Resources is responsible for all civil service positions. HR coordinates the recruitment (including advertising), determines if minimum qualifications of an individual are met, coordinates interviews, maintains registers, and processes all employment transactions in accordance with BOT regulations, Eastern's Internal Governing Policies (see [IGP 13](#)), the State Universities Civil Service System (SUCSS) and other [state and federal laws](#). Eastern administers exams, credential assessments, and employment services in accordance with SUCSS as outlined in detail on the [SUCSS website](#). Civil service employees in the trades are part of their trade unions, which ensure levels of expertise for positions such as electricians and plumbers. Civil service positions include full status, extra-help, and temporary help.

Qualifications and hiring procedures for administrative and professional employees are outlined in [IGP 12](#). Administrative and professional employees are hired through a national-search process, and performance reviews are required annually for the first six years; a comprehensive "360-degree" review is conducted every three years. A/P positions typically require a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree as specified by the position description, and are managed by the EIU President's office or the Vice President's office overseeing the position. In addition, qualified candidates for A/P positions are screened, interviewed, and selected by the hiring supervisor.

Dual credit instructors must “hold a qualified master’s degree or any master’s degree with 18 graduate credit hours of coursework in the desired discipline” to comply with ISBE regulations. Department chairs review the transcripts of any high school instructor who plans to teach a dual-credit course. The chair ensures the teacher’s master’s degree includes relevant coursework and meets state criteria.

Sufficiency of Physical Infrastructure

Eastern’s campus has more than 100 buildings on 320 acres. Eastern has maintained and invested in infrastructure to support fundamental operations, including:

- **Residence Halls:** Student housing capacity on campus can accommodate 4,052 students. Over many years, significant investments have been made to enhance housing for students on campus. Plans have been drawn for additional gender-neutral bathroom renovations, which will be folded into the plan for future building usage as funds become available. Eastern has recently completed updating Wi-Fi access for all residents. Eastern also upgraded the South Campus dining center and closed Thomas Hall dining, resulting in expanded menus and hours in Taylor Hall, which increased budget efficiency and resident satisfaction. Eastern has partnered with faculty to enhance and expand the Living/Learning Communities. Carman Hall, now closed to students, has been used since 2023 by the University of Illinois Fire Institute for fire service training in high-rise buildings. It will eventually be decommissioned and removed when funds are available. As the university master plan evolves, Eastern will continue to modify housing inventory. [In Fall 2022](#), 92% of residents provided a positive response to “I enjoy living in the residence halls.”
- **Textbook Rental:** This \$3-million facility houses the long-standing university textbook rental program. The facility, constructed with geothermal wells, recycled materials, and high-energy lighting, contains storage for 210,000 volumes; RFID technology is used for quick check out and return of textbooks.
- **Booth Library:** The Booth Library collection includes more than 1 million physical items, including monographs, media, serials, maps, music scores, and government documents. In addition, electronic systems provide online access to 310 online research periodical and subject databases providing access to over 465,000 e-books and 95,000 unique serials. Booth Library also provides students and faculty with direct access to materials from 90 Illinois academic and research libraries through the online public catalog, I-Share. In addition to specialized services, students have access to study carrels equipped for independent viewing and listening in the library, as well as 13 rooms for collaboration and group studying, and meditation and lactation/child feeding rooms.
- **Center for Student Innovation:** Booth Library's Center for Student Innovation provides consultations and instruction on emerging technology supporting learning and research, and offers student and faculty access to equipment such as a podcasting studio, virtual reality stations, gaming computers, 3D printers, large computer monitors, and a green screen. Instructors and students can use the active learning classroom to support active learning, and class-based or student-initiated projects.
- **Doudna Fine Arts Center:** Home to the Art, Music, and Theatre Departments, Doudna's performance spaces include a 600-seat concert hall, 175-seat recital hall, 300-seat proscenium-stage theater, and 150-seat black-box theater.
- **Athletic Facilities:** Recent investments in Athletics and facilities that support our Kinesiology program include a renovated weight room, new LED lighting in Groniger Arena, a renovated women’s basketball locker room, and turf on the football field. Eastern is in the planning

stages for a new roof on the field house and arena, a new generator for the arena, and renovations to the baseball stadium.

- **Nursing Simulation Labs:** Constructed in the 7th Street Building for the new Nursing program that began in Spring 2021.
- **Life Sciences:** In 2023, Eastern completed a \$7.4M renovation to the Life Science Building. This renovation addresses building infrastructure, systems, bathrooms, teaching spaces, and laboratories, enhancing the overall experience for students in science programs.
- **New Science Building:** In 2019, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Rebuild Illinois Capital Program and as a part of that bill, Eastern Illinois was appropriated \$119M to construct a new Science Building that will house the departments of Biology and Chemistry. The project is in the design phase and the expected opening date is 2027 or 2028.
- **Cencere Building:** In 2023, the state of Illinois—through the Illinois Innovation Network—authorized \$1M to fund the renovation of the Cencere facility to assist with community collaboration. The Sustainability graduate program will also use the space.

Other buildings and physical resources are upgraded and improved as appropriate.

Technological Infrastructure

Eastern has invested in the enhancement, diversification, and expansion of its technological infrastructure in support of the academic mission. Attention has been given to educational delivery systems, equipment, software, digital and multimedia services, instructional capabilities in graphic design and electronic publishing, and support for mobile technology.

Campus-wide software licensing exists for statistical packages, publishing and creative software, programming, and more. All Eastern students and employees are provided access to Microsoft Office 365, Adobe Creative Suite, Qualtrics, Zoom, and much more.

In 2024, EIU began migrating the traditional phone system and equipment to Microsoft Teams Voice, which uses the existing Teams platform. This project provides needed technological advances, improved functionality for users, and budget efficiencies.

Information Technology Services (ITS) is responsible for the wired and wireless infrastructure, servers, security, and administrative computing, as well as the academic applications of technology and multimedia, computer labs, and classroom equipment. The FDIC supports and trains faculty on the D2L learning management system, as well as the suite of instructional technology including Turnitin, Respondus, Office 365, Kaltura, Qualtrics, and Zoom. A dedicated web office ensures the university's published web resources are compliant with accessibility standards and provides custom web application development that supports both university business processes and academic instruction. [FY22 technology expenditures](#) were \$2,082,227 for Personal Services, \$2,055,130 for Operating Expenses, and \$307,687 for Equipment.

To support academic excellence, all 205 classrooms are technology-enhanced with a variety of equipment configurations and seating capacities. These rooms create teaching and learning opportunities by integrating computer, multimedia, and network technology. Classroom technology is on a six-year refresh cycle that includes computer, projector, document camera, wiring, etc. Students have access to two general-use computer labs and 22 discipline-specific computer labs. In addition, Booth Library offers more than 100 computer workstations for its patrons and collaboration spaces where students can bring their own device. Booth Library also offers many items to check out, including digital cameras, video cameras and accessories, card readers, headphones, cables,

webcams, and 270 laptops.

Eastern leverages technology to obtain operational efficiencies through Banner, online course catalogs, and a one-stop resource for students and employees known as Panther Access to Web Services (PAWS). PAWS provides real-time access to registration, advising, financial aid, payroll, financial services, and other resources. Additionally, the university, in partnership with IT and Web Services, maintains MyEIU—a web-based admissions and enrollment management communication tool.

Students and faculty use the Brightspace Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system for completing traditional, hybrid, and online classes. Individual technology support is available through ITS, FDIC, D2L, and PantherTech online support.

ITS is also responsible for leading cybersecurity efforts at Eastern utilizing the CIS Critical Security Control as the university's cybersecurity framework. The CIS Critical Security Controls are a recommended set of prioritized cyber-defense best practices, which aligns well to recent regulatory requirements including the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA).

5.B.2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

The [Council on University Planning and Budget \(CUPB\)](#) is responsible for reviewing the university mission statement every three years. In its current form, our mission statement articulates the following goals:

EIU will offer superior, accessible undergraduate and graduate education.

Academic Affairs at Eastern accounts for 61% of the state appropriation income fund in fiscal year 2023, aligning budget with mission. Eastern maintains its status as **accessible** by keeping tuition costs below most regional peer institutions. [Increases in graduate enrollment](#), especially from international graduate students, testify to Eastern's attractiveness in terms of quality and accessibility. According to the [2023 National Survey of Academic Engagement \(NSSE\)](#), Eastern students reported that the quality of student-faculty interactions, and overall campus interactions, is significantly higher than those of peer institutions.

Eastern attracts faculty known for its excellence in teaching, research, creative activity, and service. Academic Affairs supports faculty excellence through budgetary allocation. [New grants](#) for faculty research and creative activity and for collaborative pedagogical work from the FDIC, as well as internal grants from Eastern's [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#) show dedication to faculty distinction. The most-recent collective bargaining contract (2023) continues to stress faculty merit through evaluation processes documented in Departmental Applications of Criteria (DACs). Each DAC stresses three areas noted in Eastern's mission statement: ***teaching, research and creative activity, and service***. All faculty are evaluated and held to high standards in each of these categories for tenure, promotion, and Professional Advancement Increases (PAIs). Achievement & Contribution Awards are codified in the Agreement, also aligned with these three categories. The newly-created [Community Service Leave](#) demonstrates enhanced commitment to volunteer work in the community.

Eastern is committed to diversity and inclusion, codified in its [Internal Governing Policy 174-Diversity, Nondiscrimination, and Affirmative Action](#). According to [NSSE \(2023\)](#), Eastern students reported higher levels of "discussions with diverse others" than Great Lakes and Carnegie Class peers. Of the 27 questions in the NSSE module "Inclusiveness & Engagement with Diversity," the

mean rating of Eastern's first-year students was statistically higher than the mean of peer institutions on 9 questions (33%). Similarly, Eastern's seniors scored higher than students from peer institutions on 10 of the questions (37%).

Eastern has systems in place to support students from diverse backgrounds including the Student Success Center, a comprehensive federally-funded TRiO program, an alternative pathway to admission through the Gateway Program, and the Early Alert System for student retention.

Eastern stresses refining the ability to reason and communicate clearly, and the importance of ***responsible citizenship***. Each of these qualities is emphasized in the General Education program and assessed through the [University Learning Goals](#), the ability to reason subdivided into "quantitative reasoning" and "critical thinking," and communication into "writing" and "speaking." ***Leadership*** is fostered through a new Student Success and Engagement Award. Students who do not meet the GPA requirements for the [Automatic Merit Scholarships](#), but showcase leadership and involvement, can receive \$4,000 (\$1,000 annually).

Eastern provides a student-centered campus culture. Eastern has over 130 registered student organizations ([RSOs](#)). RSOs can access funds through Student Senate (collected via semester student fees). [NSSE \(2023\)](#) data depicts a student-centered culture, with statistically higher evaluations of the "quality of interactions with academic advisors" (+13%), "student services staff" (+10%), as well as higher rates of discussions about "course topics," "academic performance" and "career plans" outside of class with faculty (+10-11%), in comparison to Great Lakes Public peer institutions.

5.B.3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

[IGP 99](#) outlines Eastern's budget process. Operating budgets are decentralized and flexible so that financial managers may move funds across operating lines. Personnel budgets are typically centralized at the dean or vice-presidential level. Budget Office personnel assist units with reallocating unused personnel dollars to address unit priorities. Purchasing limits are set by [IGP 108](#).

Fiscal transparency ensures that resources are allocated in alignment with Eastern's academic mission. A number of safeguards are in place to ensure elective resource allocation is reasonable, equitable, and strategic. The BOT established Eastern's [CUBP](#) to review annual and mid-year budget reports from the president and VPs and advise the president on university planning and budget processes. It is composed of administrators, faculty, students, and staff. A subcommittee of the university-wide CUPB reviews any fund transfers of \$250,000 and above. CUPB also provides periodic recommendations to the president with respect to budget review and program priorities. The university's BOT must approve in advance any expenditure more than \$250,000 and must be informed of any expenditure in the \$100,000–\$249,999 range (see [IGP 108](#) and [BOT Regulations](#)). [Legislative Audit Commission guidelines](#) prohibit cross-subsidies across auxiliary enterprises and prohibit transfer of appropriated funds to non-appropriated accounts. The IBHE maintains a searchable database of employee salaries.

The [Business Office](#) monitors purchases and cash flow, negotiates contract terms, and ensures that procurements are in accordance with state law. The [Budget Office](#) reviews budgets and personnel authorization requests. Both offices track year-to-date expenses relative to established budgets, monitor the university's expenditure trends, and forecast expected current and multi-year revenue and expenditure trends.

Current [Composite Financial Indicator \(CFI\)](#) reports demonstrate a significant improvement from FY20 (0.96) to FY23 (3.33). [Plan 2028](#) sets a goal to maintain a CFI above 1.0. The VPBA provides financial reports to the BOT, CUPB, and the campus community on a regular basis to ensure transparency when monitoring its finances. The Business Office prepares monthly expense reports, which all financial managers can access to help monitor relevant expenditures and project the year-end balances for their unit.

5.B.4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Assets and Revenues

[Eastern's annual audited financial statements](#) are on the [Illinois Auditor General's website](#). The audited financial statements show that the university's capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation, were \$222.6 million in 2022 versus \$255.8 in 2018.

The university's revenues are classified into appropriated and non-appropriated funds. [Appropriated revenues](#) consist of state funding from taxpayers and tuition dollars from students; these funds are used to support all areas of the university but are focused on academic operations. Non-appropriated revenues are from other sources, including student fees, sales and services, and gifts and grants. Non-appropriated revenues are collected to support student services operations (e.g., health center, student insurance, athletics) and auxiliary operations (e.g., housing and dining and textbook rental).

[State appropriation trends](#) demonstrate consistency in recent years. Most recently, FY24 state appropriations increased by 7%. Eastern also earns revenue from [tuition and fees](#). This data demonstrates that Eastern has responsibly pursued other avenues of raising revenue such as dual-credit tuition and other income-producing camps and contracts in recent years, acknowledging the needs of the university and students' financial constraints.

Enrollments

Between [Fall 2018 and Fall 2023](#), enrollment has risen by 17%. In Fall 2023, there were 8,804 students enrolled at Eastern compared to 7,526 in FA18. Eastern's Fall 2023 full-time equivalent (FTE) combined graduate and undergraduate enrollment is 5,877 students compared to 5,892 in FA18. Eastern, along with the state, has maintained previously-implemented strategies and programs for increasing recruitment and retention. Additionally, Eastern has prioritized student scholarship programs that target specific student populations, which increases revenue potential.

Expenditures

The FY22 university operations were based on a BOT-approved [annual all-funds revenue budget](#) (page 11) of approximately \$165 million. University expenses do not include payments made by the state on behalf of the university for pension and health benefits or depreciation. In [FY22](#), expenses in the academic area (instruction, research, public service, and academic support) totaled \$59.9 million and represented 49.7% of all expenditures. Although Eastern's current fiscal resources are sufficient to sustain operations, the university continues to budget conservatively and to seek funding that will help achieve future sustainability. Moreover, Eastern continues to replenish financial reserves to manage unforeseen situations that arise.

Sufficiency of Human Resources

Eastern's full- and part-time [total employee headcount](#) is sufficient to support the needs of our

institution and remains stable. Eastern plans to reach a more sustainable student-to-faculty ratio of 17:1 from the current ratio of 15:1. Tenured and tenure-track faculty represent 42% of all faculty; 61% of the non-tenure-track faculty members are full-time employees, 53% of the total faculty are female, and 74% of the total faculty are white, while 6% are Asian, 5% are Black, 2% Hispanic, 7% international, and the remainder are unclassified racially or ethnically. Eastern has succeeded in recruiting and retaining highly-qualified faculty to sustain its academic mission.

The university has renewed efforts to fund research and travel. In Fall 2023, Eastern allocated \$20,000 in [one-time funds](#) and resources to expand professional development through the FDIC; announced plans for a proposal development program for early career faculty to increase the overall competitiveness of faculty research and increase extramural grants; and authorized the transfer of \$75,000 in one-time dollars from the Office of the President's gift account to be distributed across the colleges and Booth Library to support tenured and tenure-track faculty registration fees at national and international conferences.

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5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

Long-range planning initiatives integrate with annual budget development and completion of the [RAMP report](#) that is submitted yearly to the IBHE. Financial audits consistently demonstrate that Eastern, in accordance with its mission of providing “superior, accessible undergraduate and graduate education,” devotes the bulk of its resources to teaching, as evidenced in 5.B.4.

Eastern's major planning initiatives are guided by the university's mission, as highlighted by these recent resource allocations:

- For the HLC Quality Initiative (QI), Eastern chose to pursue “increas[ing] student success by increasing the diversity of Eastern's faculty and staff to levels that are representative of the increasing diversity in our student population.” To that end, [a campus climate survey](#) (discussed in 1.C.2) was conducted in Fall 2022 as part of the QI, underscoring our mission statement's emphasis on diversity and inclusion and the importance of campus climate survey feedback for successfully implementing programs and identifying additional needs.
- As a key part of the HLC Quality Initiative, the position of Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer (SDIO) was created to advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), establish metrics and a system of assessment and accountability, identify gaps in DEI awareness, and assist and support university actors to further DEI initiatives on campus. The [inaugural SDIO](#) began in January 2024. Additionally, Eastern has created three new student hubs since 2020 for the Latinx, Asian and Pacific Islander, and African-American communities on campus. Each has a faculty mentor, providing space from former classrooms for student and community organizations. A further Family Hub is planned for Booth Library.

- The [General Education Assessment Work Group](#) convened in Fall 2022 to address the need for continual improvement in general education at Eastern. The work group first asked the question, “How do our Learning Goals and General Education Curriculum align with the mission?”
- Eastern’s five-year strategic plan developed during AY22–23, [Plan 2028](#), seeks to advance Eastern’s mission, the region, and the state by focusing on four interconnected themes: Achieve, Engage, Create, and Resource. Every step of that process kept Eastern’s mission front and center. The first slide of a [presentation](#) given during a strategic planning town hall meeting in October 2022 highlighted Eastern’s mission and vision statements.
- Housed in Booth Library, the [Center for Student Innovation \(CSI\)](#) was established in 2018 as a joint venture between the Faculty Development and Innovation Center (FDIC), Booth Library and the Humanities Center. The CSI houses active-learning space for workshops and classes, a podcast studio, VR and 3D-printing equipment, and loans out technologies to students, testifying to Eastern’s commitment to a student-centered campus culture. It was funded through a grant from the Charleston Area Charitable Foundation and donor funds.
- Interim [Assistant Vice President for Student Learning & Assessment](#): This position filled a critical need in conducting the assessment of student learning, administering IBHE program reviews, managing the electronic writing portfolio (EWP), and supporting the assessment of University Learning Goals in partnership with CAA’s General Education Committee. The creation of this role aligns with Eastern’s mission to refine student abilities to reason and to communicate clearly and become responsible citizens and leaders.

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

Planning at Eastern is assisted by the Office of Institutional Research and the Budget Office, which provide detailed, accurate information concerning Eastern’s student body, programs, finances, and employees. These offices are responsible for monitoring the financial health of the university in consultation with external and internal stakeholders, including all five vice presidential areas, the IBHE, the state legislature, the BOT, and the Council on University Planning and Budget (CUPB).

[IGP 99](#) dictates allocation of the operating budget, prioritizing student learning. Specifically, the policy states: “The process for developing the University’s annual operating budget is designed to provide allocations of available funds which best promote the accomplishment of stated University goals and priorities in a manner which motivates units of the University to operate in an effective, efficient, and economical manner.” Established principles include: 1) “the best interests of the total University shall guide all recommendations/allocations” and 2) “the highest priority shall be assigned to meeting the instructional needs of students.” These principles highlight the direct link between student needs and outcomes and budget allocations.

Student success data plays a central role in the university’s planning and budgeting. In 2022, Eastern redesigned the Academic Success Center into the [Student Success Center](#) in an effort to boost retention and academic outcomes. This redesign included the appointment of a Dean of Student Success, a name change, and the integration of existing student support roles to allow for better cross-collaboration. Specifically, the Student Success Center uses enrollment management data to identify barriers to student retention and graduation to target for intervention.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

The strategic planning steering committee, consisting of faculty, staff, student, and administrative members, adopted the Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence (BFPE) to develop and implement a campus-wide [strategic plan](#). BFPE methodologies provide systematic assessment tools for measuring the extent to which an institution defines key processes and how well these processes are managed. In the planning stages, feedback was sought from [external](#) and [internal](#) stakeholders through a Stakeholder Survey (Summer 2022), with 153 participants from select off-campus constituencies, and 121 participants from faculty, staff, and students. Results of these surveys were presented during a series of [town hall meetings](#), with feedback documented. The campus also provided written feedback through the strategic planning website. A further series of town halls presented a structural framework for the plan, focusing on four key priorities. A set of metrics for assessing the strategic plan was developed in Spring 2023. The final draft was presented to the Board of Trustees and approved in June 2023.

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

Demographic changes in Illinois and state funding decisions are at the forefront of the many fluctuations to which the university is attentive in its planning. Eastern monitors cash reserves to account for minor fluctuations in revenue. One lever for increasing revenue is through tuition increases, including over the past five years from FY19 at \$8,880 to FY23 at \$9,709. The average annual rate increase was 2.08% over the past five years, striking a balance between increasing revenue without jeopardizing enrollment. As a result, this primary source of revenue increased from \$37.96M in FY19 to \$48.02M in FY23.

Diversifying revenue is a part of [Plan 2028](#), including strategies to increase external grants and contracts, conducting a comprehensive campaign, and increasing international enrollment. Current alternative sources of revenue include: dual enrollment, summer camps and conferences, and courses offered through the Danville Correctional Center. Notably, high school dual enrollment has grown from 1,274 students in the Fall 2018 to 2,447 in the Fall 2023. Dual-enrollment credit hours during this same period increased from 4,230 to 9,556. Camps and conferences [gross revenue](#) (page 39) in fiscal year 2023 was \$2,499,110. These existing revenue alternatives are aligned to increase the pipeline of traditional students.

Strategic Enrollment Plan

Because environmental factors are constantly changing, including the habits and preferences of our prospective students, we annually assess prospective student populations through our College Choice Survey. The Enrollment Worx group and the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management use the College Choice Survey results and several other data/information sources to create annual action plans to support overall goals. The current [2023 Strategic Enrollment Plan](#) aligns with the IBHE's strategic plan, "A Thriving Illinois," and is informed by external data sources including National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), and current Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) data sets and projections to determine viable enrollment goals for future academic years.

Enrollment strategy and practices are guided by two primary interdisciplinary teams with leadership represented across the university, the [Committee on Retention Efforts \(CORE\)](#) and Enrollment Worx.

The Office of the Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions, Enrollment Support, Marketing and Communications now report to the Vice President for Enrollment Management, so that all units work closely to recruit students and share one reporting line. The annual plans for each enrollment cycle detail the action planned to reach annual goals, and serve to support the university mission, the overall strategic enrollment plan, and the associated overarching goals. These plans are reviewed and approved by the President's Council and the Board of Trustees in June of each year.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

Eastern administrators and community allies regularly engage with representatives and state lawmakers. The IBHE is the central conduit for the start of the budget appropriations process, demonstrating Eastern's proactive approach to accounting for state support in its fiscal decision-making. Eastern also employs a Director of Government Relations, who is located in Springfield at the State Capitol to interact on our behalf on anything that affects higher education. Eastern follows the IBHE standards and submits regular [APEER reports](#) in order to assess the continuing viability of programs (see 5.A.2).

The university has a [strategic technology plan](#) for investing substantially in technologies that are increasingly critical to facilitating academic, social, and operational aspects of the university.

Eastern continues to invest in technology projects that create digital equity for its students. In Fall 2023, for example, all incoming freshmen received a laptop, and Eastern became an [Adobe Creative Campus](#), providing all students access to Adobe products at no additional cost.

Other upgrades to address evolving technological advances include upgrades to Wi-Fi 6 in residence halls with individual access points in each student's room. All Eastern students also have access to a virtual desktop that will run advanced software on any device that has a web browser.

Plan 2028 contains many references to ways the university will evolve to meet students' and employees' technological needs. The university's IT and Faculty Development departments are engaging with the campus community in order to learn how to best create new active-learning spaces that provide more dynamic learning opportunities and accommodate blended learning coursework. The university is also creating a more sustainable "refresh cycle" plan for employee and lab computers to account for future computing needs.

Eastern has demonstrated adaptability in its program offerings by evaluating student demand and contemporary directions of the fields. For example, assessment of course offerings in Family and Consumer Sciences demonstrated a better fit for some courses to be in other departments and resulted in a new vision of the program under Human Services. This change allowed for growth in enrollment. This change is one example of Eastern's ability to meet student needs and market demands with existing resources. Since 2015, Eastern has approved 11 new programs, as well as 16 standalone reasonable and moderate extensions (RMEs) of prior programs as new degrees based on existing tracks or specializations. These curricular initiatives have had a significant and positive impact on enrollment. Specifically, [new programs launched since Fall 2016](#) now account for nearly 13% of total campus enrollment and a combined 24.4% of enrollment (both new programs and RMEs).

Eastern targeted graduate programs for growth, resulting in increased student enrollment from 1,514 students in FY19 to 1,955 in FY24—a striking 29% increase. Additionally, the university has

developed many successful and growing online programs, reflecting the realities of current student demand, whether traditional undergraduates, international students, or working adults interested in completing graduate programs online.

After growing enrollment by 13.4% (>1,000 students) from Fall 2019 to Fall 2022, enrollment held steady from Fall 2022 to 2023 at 8,804 total student enrollments. Key growth areas included international, online, graduate, and dual-credit enrollments. Specifically, graduate enrollment was at its highest point in Eastern's history. In response to the predicted decline in statewide and national high school graduates, Eastern enrolled international students from 60 countries in Fall 2023—a record high. High school dual-credit partnerships also played a part in the enrollment increase as partnerships were strategically established in regions of the state where significant market share has been lost and dual enrollment was established to meet the needs of rural regional high schools where dual-credit offerings are scarce. Eastern's [Admissions Office](#) offers Spanish-language tours. Students can sign up online for any time they request. Admissions provides Spanish-language materials and has bilingual student ambassadors that conduct tours, two bilingual Graduate Assistants, and one campus-based bilingual admissions counselor providing the daily presentations and individual meetings with students and families. The university also employs a Chicago Regional Admissions Recruiter dedicated to high schools with a high percentage of Latinx students. At all Open Houses and Admitted Student Events, Eastern provides presentations in Spanish and at large-scale events bilingual staff wear "Hablo Espanol" buttons next to their nametag so guests who prefer information in Spanish can easily identify staff who speak Spanish.

Annual strategic enrollment plans respond to changing environmental factors, including the habits and preferences of prospective students. Per the Fall 2023 College Choice results, cost of attendance continues to be the primary factor of influence. To meet the dynamic and changing needs of the university's population of students, Eastern has created some exceptionally innovative programs funded through the state of [Illinois AIM HIGH grant program](#). Eastern boasts the most individual programs through AIM HIGH of any of the state universities and these programs can significantly reduce—and in some cases completely offset—tuition and fee costs for qualified Illinois students who enroll at Eastern. Four program categories meet the needs of both incoming freshman and transfer students. The Local Scholars Program provides the remaining balance of a student's tuition and fee costs for resident families in the direct service region who have a family income of \$100,000 or less. The EIU Promise Program provides the remaining balance of a student's tuition and fee costs for resident families demonstrating a family income of \$61,000 or less. The EIU COST Match equals the out-of-pocket cost of attendance of any regionally accredited public university. To qualify, Illinois students can submit their financial aid award letters from the qualifying institutions. The Textbook Rental Grant covers the cost of textbook rental.

Eastern's online scholarship search engine supports 750 active scholarship opportunities. Over 300 opportunities have been updated to auto-match to allow a seamless review and selection process. An advisor role has been created to allow access to advisors seeking to assist applicants. Yearly enhancements to the scholarship system have allowed new import fields, renewable opportunities, auto-fill and reference options, expanded file options, text reminders, and more. Supplemental communication to incoming and current students has been provided through MyEIU and automated email. The latest scholarship cycle had 6,316 complete general applications, with 1,708 awards given through the scholarship search engine in the last completed aid year.

5.C.6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

As an essential aspect of systematic planning, Eastern documents evidence of performance in operations for the sake of improvement. A well-established performance-evaluation system examines the performance of employees. Employees' performance evaluations are compared to benchmarks for measuring the degree of effectiveness to identify areas of strength and weakness, and to ensure their continuous improvement.

Faculty Evaluation and Professional Development Opportunities

Criteria for the evaluation of faculty performance in teaching, research, and service are outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. The evaluation benchmarks undergo periodic reviews. The agreement covers tenured/tenure-track faculty ([Unit A](#)) and annually contracted faculty and academic support professionals ([Unit B](#)) and stipulates the evaluation criteria and measures of improvement of faculty performance. Performance evaluations are kept in employee personnel records.

Civil Service Evaluation

Civil service performance appraisal is governed by conditions set forth by [IGP 39](#). Evaluation of civil service employees is designed to "identify and evaluate employee contributions and workplace behaviors. The appraisal process is designed to provide a consistent method of communication that promotes quality, continuing dialogue between supervisors and employees regarding job performance, job descriptions, work environment and opportunities for career growth." Civil service performance appraisals are used for individual improvement and not for comparing employees.

Administrative Evaluation

[IGP 31](#) and [IGP 29](#) specify the processes for evaluating administrative employees and department chairs, respectively, addressing both annual and continuing appointments. The policies stipulate that "at least every three years, the supervisor will utilize the [Administrative Performance Appraisal Instrument](#) to collect feedback from colleagues and peers." The appraisal process requires the supervisor and employee to jointly determine who will provide feedback and what supporting materials will be used. The supervisor and employee discuss the feedback and supporting materials before the written performance evaluation is prepared by the supervisor, thus giving the opportunity for both parties to discuss any strengths, concerns, and areas of improvement.

Internal and External Audits

Eastern's Office of Internal Auditing (office) systematically and objectively assesses the university's operations, as outlined in [IGP 132](#) and the [Internal Audit Charter](#). By state statute, the Director of Internal Auditing (director) reports functionally to the president and BOT and has direct communications with the BOT. The office adheres to the professional standards and ethics mandated by the State Internal Audit Advisory Board established under the Fiscal Control and Internal Auditing Act. Each year, the director develops and implements a plan for internal audits to be completed during the year to ensure that Eastern's fiscal and administrative operations meet publicly stated expectations and to provide assurance that internal controls are operating effectively and efficiently. The plan is approved by the president and the board. Reports are issued to the audited units ([sample audit](#)) and to the president and the board ([Annual Audit Plan](#) and [Annual Audit Report](#), which include the audit results). These reports inform management of any opportunities for improvement identified during the audit. Management is then responsible for responding with an appropriate action plan. Follow-up is later conducted by the office to determine whether appropriate action has been taken.

The treasurer serves as Eastern's liaison to the Office of the Illinois Auditor General. This office arranges for external audits of the university's financial and/or compliance processes as required by the Illinois State Auditing Act. The results of these audits are shared with the university, as well as the general public, legislators, and other state officials and provide the university with recommendations to ensure compliance with all applicable policies and statutes.

Eastern's Alumni Association and EIU Foundation also have annual audits conducted by external auditors, the results of which are shared with the university and the Office of the Auditor General. Additional information on Eastern's internal and external auditing processes can be found in Criterion 2.A.

Improvement of Operations

Eastern continually learns from and uses its experiences to improve effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability. For example, Housing and Dining collects annual resident surveys and input from the Residence Hall Association to evaluate all aspects of its operations, implement changes, improve performance, and set major project priorities.

Prior experience with funding challenges guides current decision-making. Appropriate strategies have been created to manage the potential reductions in state appropriations and enrollments. [Plan 2028](#), [Program Analyses](#), and the [Strategic Enrollment Plan](#) exemplify Eastern's ability to plan based on prior operational experience.

Student Outcomes

CORE supports the institution's mission to retain and graduate students while encouraging them to achieve their fullest academic and personal potential. CORE analyzes data related to retention, withdrawal, housing, campus climate, and student satisfaction to recommend strategies to enhance the university's retention and graduation rates. Recognizing that retention improves as the quality of student learning and life is enhanced, the committee also recommends long-range strategies to address the ongoing needs of all students.

Building on the HLC Assessing General Education Seminar (FA22), a [GE assessment workgroup](#) began the process of evaluating Eastern's GE program. A new chair of the CAA General Education Committee was elected, in tandem with revisions to the CAA bylaws (detailed in C.4). In Fall 2023, the [GE Committee planned](#) a systematic review of GE curriculum to ensure courses are delivering on proposed student outcomes. This [review](#) requires programs to report on data from each GE course and provide pertinent information such as course syllabi, enrollment numbers, and alignment of course assignments with the CAA-approved course proposals.

Student outcomes are adversely impacted by mental-health challenges, housing precarity, and food insecurity. Eastern has identified these as priority areas for improving student outcomes, planning and executing initiatives such as a centralized food bank on campus, successful grant proposals to address housing insecurity, and hiring mental-health professionals.

Sources

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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

Eastern has maintained the fiscal, personnel, and infrastructure resources necessary to support its operations. Eastern's significantly improved CFI demonstrates the stable financial health of the institution. Employees are qualified and there are established processes for providing feedback for employee improvement. Physical and technological upgrades have continued on a rolling basis, demonstrating continued investment in the resources needed for the university to operate. The provided financial data shows responsible allocation of funds to maintain existing and new endeavors in support of Eastern's mission, including faculty development and diversity and inclusion.

Plan 2028 and other recent projects demonstrate that Eastern is investing in efforts that support its mission and is prepared for potential fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenues. *Plan 2028* and other recent projects were developed with the input of a range of university stakeholders, alongside existing collaborative structures for setting university policy and procedures. Eastern is led by a BOT with ties to Eastern and its constituents, and students and employees are engaged with university governance. The university has proved responsive and resourceful to annual adjustments in state appropriations. Rolling forecasts are used for administrative decision-making, and automated deficit reports provide early warning reminders to financial managers and senior leadership.

Eastern engages in proactive, data- and mission-driven planning to improve performance. Eastern embraces transparency: a concerted effort has been made to make data—financial, recruitment, retention, assessment, and more—widely available to guide operations and decision-making. Eastern will continue to explore alternative sources of funding as well, such as through development activities, partnerships, and grants. To address the need for strong enrollments, Eastern has developed the Strategic Enrollment Plan, a collaborative, comprehensive, data-driven process, designed to enhance recruitment, persistence, and completion.

Sources

There are no sources.