

## **EIU/Charleston Optimal College Town Survey Results Summary**

(Just shy of 900 complete and incomplete responses)

### **Demographic Description of Surveyed Population**

Q2. 89% of respondents live in Charleston, Ashmore, Mattoon, or Outside of the 60-mile radius.

Q3. 67% of respondents have lived in their identified area of residence for 10 years or more.

Q4. 82% are currently employed

Q5. 90% work in Charleston or Mattoon

Q6. 48.5% were members of the community and 51.5% were members of the campus

Q7. 66% have taken classes on campus

Q8. 89% of campus respondents were faculty, staff, or students with students making up the largest percentage at 35%.

Q9. 76% of community respondents either did not fit a category or were an employee of local schools. 25% identify as an employee of local schools.

### **University and Community Assessment**

Q10. 60% of respondents believed that EIU and the community had minimal to no alignment in shared goals.

Q11. 91% of respondents indicated that ideally at least half of the goals and concerns should align for EIU and the community at some point in the future.

Q12. 25% of respondents believed all populations are adequately contributing to the well-being of the Community as a whole and campus staff were identified as the population most likely to actively contribute.

Q13. 37% of respondents believed that Students were the least actively contributing to the well-being of the community as a whole.

Q14. 22% of respondents believed all populations are adequately contributing to the well-being of the Campus Community as a whole and Business/Industry leaders were identified as the population most likely to actively contribute.

Q15. 52% of respondents believed that City Officials or Business/Industry Leaders were the least actively contributing to the well-being of the campus community as a whole.

Q16. 1. 31% agreed to some degree that student behavior in the community is a real problem.

2. 43% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 14% strongly disagreed with the statement that it's easy to know what's happening on campus.

!3. 49% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 13% strongly disagreed with the statement that there are enough activities in the Community that interest them.

4. 35% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 12% strongly disagreed with the statement that there are enough services in the community that meet their needs.

!5. 48% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed with the statement that it is easy to know what is happening in the community.

6. 31% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed with the statement that the campus contributes as much as it can to the local economy.

7. 37% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 10% strongly disagreed with the statement that there are enough events on campus that interest them.

8. 33% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed with the statement that campus representatives are well-connected to the school districts.

9. 33% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 9% strongly disagreed with the statement that campus representatives are very visible at community events.

10. 20% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 8% strongly disagreed with the statement that the campus is accessible

11. 32% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed with the statement that campus representatives readily share their expertise with the community.

12. 22% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed with the statement that people from the campus get involved in volunteer efforts in the community.

13. 33% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 7% strongly disagreed with the statement that the community is welcoming to the EIU student population.

!14. 49% of respondents at minimum somewhat agreed, and 21% strongly agreed with the statement that not enough people employed on EIU's campus live in our community.

15. 19% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 5% strongly disagreed with the statement that enough classes and degrees are offered on campus that meet the campus and community's needs.

16. 20% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed with the statement that they feel safe in the Charleston community.

17. 12% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed with the statement that coursework on campus is a good value.

18. 13% of respondents at minimum somewhat disagreed, and 3% strongly disagreed with the statement that they felt safe on EIU's campus.

Q19. The greatest lack of awareness of services on campus encompassing 10% of respondents or more include the Academy of Life Long Learning, the Adult Fitness program, Camps and Conferences, and Lectures and Speakers.

Q20 and Q21. The majority of responses indicate that at minimum press outlets portray the campus and community in a neutral to positive manner.

### Qualitative Data

Q22. Recalling the answers you gave regarding your perspective on campus-community relationships, do you have any thoughts to share about what Eastern Illinois University could do to improve its relationship with the community?

- **Economic Development:** There is a strong emphasis on fostering economic growth through collaboration with local businesses and government.
- **Community Integration:** Both EIU and the community need to work together to create a more integrated and supportive environment.
- **Visibility and Communication:** Better marketing and communication strategies are needed to make the community aware of the resources and events available at EIU.
- **Faculty and Staff Engagement:** Encouraging faculty and staff to live locally and participate in community activities is seen as crucial for improving relationships.
- **Student Involvement:** Increasing student engagement in the community through volunteerism and local events is highlighted as a key area for improvement.

Q23. Recalling the answers you gave regarding your perspective on community-campus relationships, do you have any thoughts to share about what the community could do to improve its relationship with Eastern Illinois University?

- **Community Involvement:** There is a strong emphasis on increasing community involvement in EIU activities and fostering a sense of belonging among students.

- **Economic Growth:** Attracting businesses that cater to students and improving the downtown area are seen as crucial for making Charleston more appealing.
- **Inclusivity and Diversity:** Addressing racism and promoting inclusivity are highlighted as important steps for creating a supportive environment for all students.
- **Communication:** Better communication and collaboration between EIU and the community are necessary to coordinate efforts and keep everyone informed.
- **Infrastructure:** Improving public transportation and town amenities are seen as ways to enhance the overall experience for students and residents.

Q24. Is there anything else you would like to share before ending this survey?

1. **Community Engagement and Support:**

- Increase community involvement in EIU events and activities.
- Develop programs to integrate students into the local community, such as volunteerism and mentorship.

2. **Economic and Business Development:**

- Attract businesses that cater to students' needs, such as diverse restaurants, grocery stores, and recreational facilities.
- Support local businesses and encourage them to offer discounts to EIU students and staff.

3. **Inclusivity and Diversity:**

- Address internal biases within the community and promote diversity and inclusivity.
- Create a more welcoming environment for all students, including international students and students of color.

4. **Infrastructure and Amenities:**

- Improve public transportation options, especially for international students who do not have cars.
- Enhance the appearance of the town by addressing run-down buildings and improving amenities.

5. **Safety and Welcoming Environment:**

- Ensure the safety of students within the community, particularly students of color.
- Create a more welcoming environment for all students and address concerns about housing costs and availability.

6. **Faculty and Staff Engagement:**

- Encourage faculty and staff to live closer to Charleston and get involved in the community.
- Provide incentives for faculty and staff to live in Coles County.

7. **Educational and Recreational Opportunities:**

- Increase recreational opportunities for students and community members.
- Develop partnerships with local schools and organizations to provide educational and recreational programs.

**Potential Major Issues of Focus for Action or Further Assessment Based on the Data**

- 1. Focus on greater perceived and actual alignment of goals and concerns for the City and the University.**
- 2. Encourage a greater diversity of activities in the community to interest campus and community populations.**
- 3. Make it easier for the campus and community populations to know what is going on in the community and campus.**
- 4. Do more as a University and Community to ensure that more of the folks employed on EIU's campus live in the community.**
- 5. Find more ways to promote awareness for the Adult Fitness program, Camps and Conferences, and Lectures and Speakers.**
- 6. Continue to explore opportunities for marketing current public transportation options and the potential for the development of additional public transportation options.**
- 7. Increase collaboration with EIU and local businesses.**
- 8. Find more ways to get students involved in the community through the Office of Leadership and Engagement.**
- 9. Potential joint digital billboard for EIU/Community events.**
- 10. Present/Distribute relevant information to University and Community leadership.**