



Introduction to the *Self-Study Report*

Introduction to Eastern Illinois University's 2004 *Self-Study Report*

Mission, Scope, and Profile

Eastern Illinois University is a mid-sized, comprehensive, residential institution whose educational mission is to offer high quality, liberal arts-based baccalaureate degree programs and selected graduate-level programs/programming that prepare students for doctoral study or provide continuing education opportunities to the region's practicing educators and business and industrial workforces. While it offers forty-four undergraduate and twenty-five graduate degree programs, its "normal school" heritage persists, such that Eastern continues to be one of the top three preparers of educators in the state. However, its largest majors for traditional undergraduates--elementary education, biological sciences, physical education, management, family and consumer sciences, psychology, and communication studies—suggest the range of its students' interests. The university also offers two programs to non-traditional students: the Board of Trustees' B.A. in General Studies and the B.S. in Career and Organizational Studies.

In Fall 2003, total headcount was 11,522, a 3.2% increase over the previous year. While new freshman enrollment stabilized at 1983 students, the previous year's freshman class totaled 2074, a staggering 38% increase since Fall 2001. Transfer students accounted for thirty-five percent of undergraduate enrollment in Fall 2003. Ninety-eight percent of Eastern students came from Illinois, the largest percentage of them (41%) hailing from Cook and adjacent counties. The university's top feeder high schools included Charleston, Carl Sandburg, Conant, Mother McAuley, and Lincoln-Way. Its top feeder transfer institutions included Lake Land, Illinois Eastern, Parkland, Danville, and Moraine Valley community colleges. Minority students represented 10.4% of undergraduates in Fall 2003; international students represented less than one percent. While these numbers are not large, Eastern is committed to perpetuating an environment that values diversity. This commitment is evident in the strong support systems provided by the Office of Minority Affairs; in the university's general education program, which embeds a cultural diversity requirement; in recruitment and hiring practices; in the wide variety of diversity programming the university offers; and in minority students' positive attitudes toward Eastern. About 10% of Eastern students were twenty-five or older; about 9% enrolled only in off-campus courses. Eastern also enrolled 166 students with disabilities in Fall 2003, ranging from learning disabilities (the most common issue) to Attention Deficit Disorder, physical and/or sensory impairments, psychological issues, and brain injuries.

In 2003, new freshmen entered Eastern with composite ACT scores that averaged 22.1, a figure that exceeded the statewide average (20.2). Historically, Eastern also has retained and graduated students at higher-than-average rates, and Fall 2003 was no exception: the overall retention rate was over 78%, while the six-year graduation rate was 60%. Similarly, Eastern retained and graduated minority students at rates that exceeded nationwide average: The minority student retention rate was 80%; their six-year graduation rate was 44%. These indicators of excellence are predicated on strong student advising and support systems and on a largely full-time, tenured/tenure-track faculty's commitment to providing Eastern students with a rich educational experience based on relatively small class sizes (twenty-three on average), small student-faculty ratios (17:1), and the active learning, mentoring, and collaboration they enable. For such reasons, alumni satisfaction with the university



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and its programs consistently is high, and for three years in a row, Eastern has earned a top tier ranking from *U.S. News & World Report*.¹

Organization and Governance

Eastern comprises four vice presidential areas--Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, External Relations, and Student Affairs—and is accountable to its Board of Trustees and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Campus governance is effected through a number of faculty, staff, and student committees, including the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Student Senate, the Council on University Planning and Budget, the Council on Academic Affairs, the Council on Graduate Studies, the Council on Teacher Education, and the President's Council. Eastern's faculty is represented by the University Professionals of Illinois, and in AY2003-2004, it negotiated and approved a new iteration of the employment contract. Eastern's clerical workers, building service/food service workers, carpenters, electrical workers, teamsters, engineers, painters, and plumbers/pipefitters also are represented by unions.

History of Accreditation at Eastern Illinois University

Eastern Illinois State Normal School was founded in 1895. It became, successively, Eastern Illinois State Teachers College (1921), Eastern Illinois State College (1947), and Eastern Illinois University (1957). The university was first accredited by the North Central Association in 1915; in 1920, it began offering the Bachelor of Education degree. In 1953, the university received accreditation as a master's degree-granting institution; in 1954, its mission was expanded to include Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degree programs. In 1965, it was granted preliminary accreditation for a sixth-year program leading to a Certificate of Advanced Study. At that time, Eastern also was advised to consider adopting the more common degree title of "Specialist in Education." In 1975, the Executive Board voted to grant continued accreditation at the specialist's degree level, with the next evaluation scheduled in 1985. It also required the institution to submit a mid-cycle report on issues of concern to the 1975 evaluation team: university autonomy, heavy faculty workloads, limited research and publication, committee structure, student services, budget support for graduate programs, and transitional administrative leadership of graduate study and research. In June 1980, the commission accepted the institutional progress report and commended the university for progress made. In 1985, Eastern was re-accredited, with no stipulations, reports, or focused evaluations requested. The university's most recent comprehensive evaluation occurred in 1994-95. It, too, resulted in Eastern's unqualified re-accreditation.

Summary of Responses to Issues Raised During the 1995 Visit

In its 1995 visit, the NCA team identified five areas of institutional concern. Over the last ten years, Eastern has made significant strides in all five areas:

- **Deferred Maintenance:** Recent studies estimate deferred maintenance at \$71 per square foot, which is a decrease from 1999. The decrease has resulted from a significant increase in annual funds devoted to deferred maintenance projects, but more importantly, from the completion of the Booth Library renovation project and the new Human Services building, the beginning of the Doudna Fine Arts Building renovation, and the Blair Hall fire. The



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development of a Campus Master Plan in 1999 also aided in the reduction of deferred maintenance. Reducing deferred maintenance remains a top priority. (Chapter 2, 2d)

The Doudna Fine Arts Building project, which will include renovations to the existing fine arts center and the construction of an additional 168,800 square feet of new space, originally had an estimated completion date of Fall 2005. From FY 2002-FY 2003, work proceeded on schedule. However, the project was stalled due to a lack of state funding. Only recently (November 2004) did the state's Capital Development Board announce plans to begin seeking bids for the long-awaited renovation.

On Wednesday, April 28, 2004, Blair Hall, the third oldest building on campus caught fire and was badly damaged by the fire and water used to extinguish it. Five units were housed in the building as well as four classrooms and related computer labs and meeting rooms. Plans for renovating Blair Hall began in the first weeks after the fire. They include reconstructing the roof, gutting the remaining interiors, drying, and cleaning all existing surfaces during the Fall 2004 term. Construction on the renovated interiors and exteriors is expected to begin in the Spring 2005 term, with completion expected in the Spring of 2006.

- **Equipment Replacement:** This is an area in which the university has made substantial progress, increasing equipment expenditures from \$817,000 to nearly \$3 million by FY 2001 through a combination of reallocation and a 15% operating budget increase provided from new state funds, efforts tied to President's Goal Eight, "Enhance technology and equipment." Decreases in state-appropriated funds subsequently stalled its upward trend in equipment expenditures, since these funds had to be directed to other financial obligations. However, Academic Affairs' equipment expenditures for FY 2003 and beyond were nonetheless significantly higher than they were at the time of the last self-study. (Chapter 2, 2b)
- **Professional Development:** The University has greatly enhanced faculty and staff development opportunities by creating a series of on-campus workshops, seminars, and related instructional opportunities, and by increasing the financial resources available to faculty through campus-wide competitions and departmental operating budgets. (Chapter 4, 4a)
- **General Education:** Eastern completed a major revision of its general education program in Fall 2000. The revisions included a new mission statement, structure, and curriculum. It is focused on the theme "Responsible Global Citizenship Through Mindful Scholarship." (Chapter 3, 3c)
- **Assessment:** Eastern has a rigorous, systematic assessment program in place which focuses on student learning outcomes and on using assessment results to inform programmatic and curricular changes. (Chapter 3, 3a)

The 1995 NCA Report also identified suggestions for institutional improvement. Eastern has addressed the majority of these suggestions as well:

- **University-City Liaison Committee:** Eastern has formed an External Relations Committee, which has had a tremendous impact on improving the university's relationships with the city



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of Charleston. It comprises student senators, faculty, administrators, city council members, and the Charleston mayor and is chaired by a member of the Student Senate. It has addressed ways to deal with minority student issues and ways to enhance the living/learning environment of all students. Examples include safer housing environments, noise factors, and providing more services to minority students.

- **Review the Placement of Academic Development in the Organization Structure:** At the time of the last Self-Study, Academic Development was headed by a dean who reported to the Provost. It comprised the Advising, Counseling, Disability Services, and Testing units, and though these units were scattered over three different buildings, their shared focus was student retention. In Spring 1998, the Counseling Center was transferred to Student Affairs, largely in recognition of its affiliation with Health Services. (Both of these units are housed now in the new Human Services Building). However, the university has no other plans to move former Academic Development units to Student Affairs: Changes in Eastern's organizational structure and reporting lines during the past seven years have made this recommendation unfeasible. Not long after the dean of Academic Development retired in 1996, Eastern began to reinvest in academic assessment. As a result, the Provost approved the creation of a Learning Assistance Center and the enlargement of Testing Office responsibilities to include assessment. When faculty rejected administrative plans to absorb these units in a new University College headed by a dean, the Academic Area approved renaming Academic Development as the Center for Academic Support and Achievement (CASA), and its units—Academic Advising, Assessment and Testing, Disability Services, and Learning Assistance—moved to a former residence hall. Headed by a director since 1999, CASA provided support services and leadership crucial to student learning, retention, and graduation. One other organizational change militates against moving former Academic Development units to Student Affairs. In 2001, then-Interim President Hencken transferred the Enrollment Management division from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs. As a result, Admissions, Records, Registration, and Transfer Student Relations now report to the Provost. This change in administration has resulted in stronger relationships between CASA and the former Enrollment Management units, and it moves Eastern closer to its long-term goal to centralize student support services in the academic area.
- **Institutional-Wide Development:** There has been much discussion of Eastern's approaches to strengthen and expand institutional-wide development, annual giving, and alumni development. The entire structure has been reviewed and revamped. Between 1997 and 2004, the total amount in private donations to the University Foundation increased by 106%. Work is continuing to insure the health of private donations and plans are outlined in the Vice President for External Relations's Focus Statement.
- **Equipment Replacement Schedules and Priorities:** Funds now are allocated to the colleges and they do develop regular equipment replacement schedules and priorities.
- **Equipment Software Upgrades for Financial Aid:** Financial Aid has upgraded computer equipment on a regular basis and it has implemented two significant changes: an automated Financial Aid Processing system, which enables it to process students' financial aid in a timely manner, and an electronic data imaging system, which will allow it to become a "paperless" office. The imaging system allows immediate access to documents. These



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improvements ensure that the Office of Financial Aid is able to serve students as accurately and efficiently as possible.

- Foster Collaboration between Academic and Student Affairs: Since the last NCA site visit, collaboration between these units has significantly increased:
 1. Academic Faculty and Student Affairs staff team-teach sections of the University Foundations classes offered to incoming freshmen.
 2. Faculty members serve as tour guides for prospective students participating in the Office of Orientation's Open House program.
 3. Led by the Office of Orientation, a Convocation Committee consisting of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs representatives has been developed and maintained to ensure that the ceremony provides students with a formal entry into both the university and the processes of higher education.
 4. Career Services and the TRIO Program have collaborated to provide specialized career development workshops to this traditionally underserved student population.
 5. To accommodate relocations during campus renovation projects, the Office of Housing and Dining has provided temporary office and classroom space to the College of Arts and Humanities, the Women's Resource Center, and the Athletic Academic Assistance Center.
 6. Several classrooms have been built in residence halls to accommodate all of the sections of the University Foundations class offered to incoming freshmen.
 7. The Office of Housing and Dining provides funding for math tutors in the residence halls and support for College Student Affairs faculty to travel to the annual Oshkosh Placement Exchange.
 8. To increase communication between academic departments and the Judicial Affairs Office, the Director of Judicial Affairs meets with every new faculty member to provide an overview of the University's processes for dealing with academic misconduct and a simplified form for reporting violations.
 9. The College of Education and Professional Studies, the School of Continuing Education, and the Office of Financial Aid have collaborated with Kaskaskia College to form a consortium agreement that financially assists elementary education students in completing their degrees and subsequently teaching in the underserved rural area of Kaskaskia.
 10. The Colleges of Sciences, the School of Continuing Education, and the Office of Financial Aid have formed a consortium with Lakeview College of Nursing to make more affordable the opportunity for students to secure a professional degree in nursing.
 11. Graduate students in both the Clinical Psychology and Counseling and Student Development Programs are trained and supervised by professional staff at the Counseling Center in fulfillment of their clinical internship requirements.
 12. The Department of Campus Recreation provides fieldwork and internship experiences to students from the Department of Recreation Administration.
 13. Faculty of the Lakeview College of Nursing utilizes the Health Service facility after normal operating hours to help students develop the basic skills required for the professional practice of nursing.



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14. The Health Education Resource Center and University Foundations instructors collaborate to expose freshman students to alcohol abuse prevention messages via the on-line program, MyStudentBody.com.
 15. The Alcohol and Drug Coalition has representatives from a number of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs departments working together to address the primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention of student substance abuse.
- Create a Process that Reviews Campus Committees and their Bylaws and Responsibilities: Eastern has not developed a process for reviewing and revising committee and council structures to more clearly distinguish their roles and responsibilities and eliminate duplicative functions. The institution should consider conducting a thorough examination of its committee structures to determine whether change is warranted, and if so, how it can ensure even more effective campus governance and curriculum oversight.
 - Course and Program Approval Processes: The institution has taken no action on extending the course and program approval processes to include library and media development staff.

The Review Process

Preparation for the 2005 Self-Study began in December 2002 with Provost Lord's selection of the co-chairs, Dr. Jill D. Owen and Dr. Robert M. Augustine. Dr. Mary Herrington-Perry was assigned as the liaison to the Office of the Provost. Drs. Owen, Augustine, and Herrington-Perry met in January of 2003 to recommend faculty members to serve on the Self-Study Steering Committee; others volunteered for service, based on solicitations issued directly to deans and directors and through the *University Newsletter*. Members ultimately were selected based on their history of service to the university in a manner that ensured that all four academic colleges were represented. Dr. Herrington-Perry established a tentative timeline for the self-study, and the co-chairs prepared the first article about the process, distributed electronically via *EIU Newsbits* on January 28, 2003. Following an initial meeting, the co-chairs recommended that faculty members Dr. Reed Benedict, Dr. Cheryl Noll, Dr. Shane Miller, Dr. Linda Simpson, and Dr. Linda Morford be named to the Steering Committee. Each was assigned responsibility for one of the five self-study criteria.

Meetings of the Steering Committee began in March 2003 and focused on three primary issues: preparation for the 2003 NCA Workshop and Annual Meeting of the Higher Learning Commission; final selection of subcommittee members; and education of the subcommittee members on the NCA self-study process. During the workshop, the Steering Committee developed four goals for the 2005 self-study: gaining comprehensive *participation* of the university community; developing electronic *profiles* of the data needed to verify the criteria and to document progress and planning; documenting the significant *progress* the university had made since the 1995 Self Study; and identifying a clear and well defined *plan* for the next decade that reflected the goals, values, and vision of Eastern in 2015. During and following the annual workshop, the Steering Committee developed the subcommittee teams, selecting members from each presidential/vice presidential area, each college/school, and from faculty, staff, student, and administration volunteer pools, with attention to members' special expertise and to diversity. Approximately ten to twelve volunteers were selected for each of the five subcommittees. The final lists were forwarded to Provost Lord, who shared his approval of the sixty-two members with the Faculty Senate, and to President Hencken, who sent members their letters of appointment.



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Preparation of the subcommittee members for conducting an effective self-study was the focus of the Steering Committee during the Summer 2003 meetings. The Steering Committee focused on developing a well focused orientation, organizing meetings for each of the subcommittees, and scheduling a monthly meeting at which all sixty-two members could gather to hear a presentation of interest to all. Orientation programs for the subcommittee members were held on July 8 and July 16, 2003. The orientation agenda included a study of the criteria, a review of the self-study goals, a review of the recommendations of the 1995 Self-Study, and a thorough discussion of the purposes of a self-study. The day-long orientation included a whole-group presentation in the morning followed by subcommittee meetings in the afternoon.

During the Fall 2003 term the Steering Committee heard updates from the subcommittees and reviewed progress. All of subcommittee members met for breakfast one morning each month to receive overviews on issues of general concern to all members and to aid them in remaining focused on the overall goals of the self-study. The Steering Committee focused on three of the four self-study goals during its weekly meetings in the Fall of 2003. To meet its participation goal, the committee received reports from representatives who met with university committees and boards and reviewed responses to summaries required of the chairs of the committees and boards. Dr. Herrington-Perry developed a web site for the self-study effort (www.eiu.edu/~acaffair/NCA), making timelines, agendas, drafts, data, the previous self-study report, and a variety of other items accessible to Eastern's many communities. The Steering Committee also developed a web-based survey for distribution to students, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni to be used to foster participation and to collect constituent input as to how Eastern met the NCA criteria, as well as a survey specifically for department chairs and deans. To aid it in developing "profiles" for the self-study, the Steering Committee worked in collaboration with the Center for Academic Technology Support to develop a web-based data warehouse to verify Eastern's support of NCA criteria. The third area of focus during the Fall 2003 term was to identify the "progress" made since the 1995 Self Study. To achieve this goal, Dr. Owen identified four consultants, one from each vice-presidential area, to review how the recommendations from the 1995 Self Study had been addressed. This information was then integrated into the report to ensure that all of the recommendations from the 1995 Self Study were carefully addressed in 2005. At the conclusion of the Fall 2003 term, all of the goals established by the Steering Committee had been accomplished with the exception of the chair/dean survey, which was not completed until the Spring 2004 term.

The primary goal of the meetings held during the Spring 2004 term was to begin creating drafts of the report that demonstrated how the university met the NCA criteria, how it was unique among its peers, and how it was planning for the future. The initial approach emphasized four themes that emerged from collection of data and campus discussion during the Fall 2003 term: "enriching university traditions," "cultivating innovation," "building communities of learners," and "assessing shared values." Initially the Steering Committee was convinced that the themed approach for writing the report would clearly define Eastern and its mission. After reading the first drafts of the reports, however, the co-chairs were concerned that it was difficult, using this approach, to verify how Eastern met the criteria. This general concern was echoed by NCA consultants at the Spring 2004 NCA workshop and annual meeting. Consequently, the themed approach was abandoned and replaced with chapters that focused specifically on each of the five criteria. As the chapters were revised, the committee determined that the criteria approach was more effective in demonstrating how Eastern was meeting the NCA criteria even though it was difficult to represent the university's unique features using this model. Changes in the focus and organization of the report delayed



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completion of the five chapters approximately one month. As a result, the final draft of the report was distributed campus-wide the first week of October 2004 rather than the first week of September.

During the Fall 2004 term, the Steering Committee met twice per month to review campus-wide feedback and revise the report. Members met with more than twenty different councils, committees, and boards to discuss the report, obtain feedback, and engage in discussion about the report and its ability to reflect Eastern accurately. The co-chairs also conducted three two-hour open sessions for the campus to ensure that anyone who wanted to provide feedback would have an opportunity. While campus reaction was positive, feedback from the NCA consultant suggested that the report now focused too heavily on the criteria and not enough on elements that reflected the uniqueness of Eastern. That feedback, while frustrating, was useful for revising various aspects of the report to tell Eastern's story better. Final feedback for the draft of the report was collected on November 1, 2004, and the month of November was used to make all of the recommended corrections, changes, and adjustments. The final version of the report was completed in early December 2004 and was forwarded to the North Central Association at that time. The months of December and January will be devoted to preparing for the on-campus visit and ensuring that the campus community is prepared for the visit.

Assessment of Eastern's self study process indicates that each of the four goals, participation, profiles, progress, and planning, has been achieved. The co-chairs received consistent feedback indicating that the campus was well aware of the process and understood how to participate. Data profiles created to support the self-study did provide the foundation the institution needed to write an effective report, while the ad hoc committee used to review progress since the 1995 self-study provided needed historical information. Finally, the process resulted in the identification of key issues and concerns critical to Eastern's future.

Materials summarizing the activities described in this section of the report are available in the NCA Resource Room.

Data Collection

Eastern's constituencies provided input for the *Self-Study Report* in a variety of ways. As was noted in the previous section of this chapter, deans, directors, other unit heads, and major councils and committees provided written responses to a series of questions regarding their perceptions of their units' achievements during the last decade and the challenges the future holds for them. Academic department chairs responded to an electronic questionnaire designed to collect additional information about departmental operations. Data pertinent to budgets, budget allocations, and budgeting processes were provided by the Budget Office and the Office of Academic Affairs. Institutional, divisional, and departmental web sites provided rich resources as well, including planning documents and student data available from the site developed by the Office of Planning and Institutional Studies; student learning assessment information made available by the Center for Academic Support and Achievement; program/departmental assessment information provided by the Office of Academic Affairs' Major Assessment Profiles; and Internal Governing Policies and the Business Process Guide maintained by Business Affairs.

The NCA Self-Study Survey enabled the largest number of individuals to participate in the self-study process. A total of 1296 individuals responded: 111 administrators, 163 civil service personnel, 53 external constituents, 208 faculty, and 761 students. Although the survey was made available online



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to all university constituents, it was not personally delivered to them, making it more difficult to calculate response rates accurately. However, based on the number of individuals who work and study at Eastern, these rates equal, and likely exceed, the following: students—7%; faculty—30%; civil service personnel—18%; and administrators—43%. In a survey of this magnitude, a response rate of 10% in each group is considered good. The larger the number of overall responses, the more likely it is that the opinions expressed represent those of the individual groups. The survey results thus provided sound data used by report writers to complement the many other resources that inform this study.

A majority of the survey items were structured to allow the following responses: don't know, strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree. Each of the constituencies—students, faculty, civil service, administrators, and members of the external community—responded to a common core of thirty-four items, as well as additional questions geared to the specific audience. Based on their aggregated responses, those surveyed expressed the strongest agreement with Item 6, “In my time at Eastern, I have seen improvement in the technology available to me,” with nearly 29% strongly agreeing. Close behind was Item 2, “Students are Eastern’s highest priority,” at almost 28%, and Item 12, “Overall, I am satisfied with Eastern,” at just over 26%. When all positive responses are considered (that is, all responses of strongly agree, agree, or somewhat agree), survey respondents expressed the most overall agreement with items 12 (over 92% indicated they were satisfied with the university); 10l (almost 92% indicated that “Eastern promotes academic excellence”); 10d (almost 92% indicated that “Eastern strives for continuous improvement”); and 2 (over 90% agreed that “students are the university’s highest priority”).

No significant, strongly negative responses to survey items were recorded. Aggregated data indicate that those surveyed expressed the strongest disagreement with Item 10e, “Eastern values my opinion,” with just under 4% strongly disagreeing. When all negative ratings are grouped (that is, strongly disagree, disagree, and somewhat disagree), Item 10e remains at the top of the list, with almost 20% of respondents indicating at least some level of disagreement with the notion that Eastern values their opinion. Reasonably high “don't know” responses occurred in three areas: 38% were unable to respond to Item 11e, “Shared governance has improved, declined, or remained the same during my time at EIU”; over 29% did not know whether collegiality had “improved, declined, or remained the same during [their] time at EIU” (Item 11a); and over 28% could not respond to Item 10m, “Eastern builds positive relationships with its alumni.”

When responses are disaggregated, they reveal that administrators hold the most strongly positive opinions about Eastern. For example, almost 58% of administrators strongly agreed that technology had improved at Eastern (Item 6); almost 57% strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the university (Item 12); and almost 55% strongly agreed that students are Eastern’s highest priority (Item 2). Of all the items they addressed, civil service personnel and external constituents expressed the most agreement with Item 2, “Students are Eastern’s highest priority,” with nearly 99% and 94%, respectively, agreeing at least somewhat. The item both civil service and external constituents expressed the most disagreement was with 10e, “Eastern values my opinion”: Almost 23% and over 9%, respectively, expressed at least some level of disagreement.

Like administrators and civil service personnel, Eastern’s faculty expressed the most agreement with Item 2, “Students are Eastern’s highest priority” (almost 96% agreed at least somewhat). Almost 96% agreed at least somewhat with Item 26a as well, “My department sets high academic standards.” Conversely, faculty disagreed most with Item 22, “The Faculty Activity Analysis Form accurately



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documents service,” with over 28% expressing some level of disagreement. Of all the items students addressed, they expressed the most agreement with Item 10l, “Eastern promotes academic excellence”: Nearly 93% agreed at least somewhat. Conversely, they expressed the most disagreement with Item 1, “I am familiar with Eastern’s mission”: Over 21% indicated at least some level of disagreement with this statement, while an additional 11% indicated they did not know. But perhaps the most important measure of Eastern’s commitment to teaching and learning is this: 80% of student respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “[f]aculty in my department care about teaching and student learning” (Item 21).

Survey respondents identified Eastern’s greatest strengths, in order, as its reasonable cost, small class size, safe campus, the close relationships students are able to build with faculty and staff, the small community, the university’s strong academic reputation, the quality of its faculty, the priority placed on students, high retention and graduation rates, and the attractive campus. When responses to this item are separated by group, results show that each group agreed on nine of these ten items. Administrators, for example, rated residential life as a greater strength than the attractive campus; faculty rated the university’s emphasis on tenured- and tenure-track faculty, opportunities for students to collaborate with faculty, and applied learning opportunities more highly than the attractive campus; and students rated residential life and applied learning as more important than retention and graduation rates. Eastern’s greatest challenges, according to all respondents, are continuing to improve technology and salaries, enhancing external funding, reducing deferred maintenance, sustaining academic quality, improving instructional equipment, maintaining reasonable costs, ensuring a sense of community, managing enrollments, and developing new programs. These responses suggest constituencies’ belief that some items currently identified as strengths may well become weaknesses if Eastern is unable to secure funds to continue to support them. Once again, all groups agreed on nine of ten challenges. Faculty included assessment rather than the development of new programs among identified challenges, while civil service personnel and administrators substituted professional development for enrollment management and new program development, respectively.

Structure of the Report

This report is organized according to the NCA Self-Study Criteria, each of which is the focus of its own chapter. While this approach ensured that Eastern Illinois University addressed each of the core components, it was less conducive to demonstrating the university’s distinctiveness. Members of the Steering Committee consequently analyzed the primary chapters of Eastern’s Self-Study Report to identify the most significant attributes contributing to Eastern’s success and distinctiveness as a teaching and learning institution. They are highlighted in the next chapter.

ⁱ Update: In Fall 2004, Eastern enrolls 11,651 students, including 9928 undergraduates and 1723 graduates. Over 82% of them are full-time students; over 9% are members of minority groups; and about 1% are international students. The ACT composite average decreased slightly, to 21.9.