

**ASSUMPTIONS:**

Eastern's proposed Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 2015 will continue the University's emphasis on prudent fiscal management. As in the past, conservative financial management practices will allow Eastern to work within the realities of Connecticut's economy and the limits of the State Budget. Eastern continues to adhere to its conservative spending practices so that any savings realized can be directed to instructional and academic support services that drive improvements in Eastern's retention and graduation rates.

The Fiscal Year 2015 Spending Plan was developed in anticipation that cost savings ideas and appropriate actions must continue. The plan is based on the assumption our enrollment will continue to be challenged by the decline in the number of graduating high school students and the increased competition within Connecticut to attract the best students.

Eastern will continue to focus our resources on the services that directly impact our students and enjoy a strong relationship with our students and their Student Government Association. We share the concern of Eastern's ability to continue to provide the current level of student services following the limited 2.0 percent tuition increase if the supplemental funding from the State is not extended past FY 2015.

**CHALLENGES:**

While we are confident that Eastern can manage its budget so that the University can balance projected expenditures with anticipated revenues again in FY 2015, there are several continuing budget challenges that are noteworthy.

We have included the additional \$1,472,050 in state funding for FY 2015 with the concern based on the reality funds are currently not part of the state general fund base allocation. This one time fund source is intended to fill the gap between the 2% tuition and fee increase and the revenue that would have been created by a 5% tuition and fee increase. It is important to note this assistance allows the university to meet the needs of our students while operating within our revenues and without this additional funding, the services provided to our students would have been negatively impacted.

The upcoming budget includes contractual increases agreed to in the SEBAC agreement which had held prior years' pay without increases for FY 2012 and FY 2013. The increase in FY 2015 is projected to be 5.5%, the same overall percent impact as the FY 2014 pay increases. The state general fund appropriation will cover a portion of the increase and the revenues of the university will be required for the remainder of the increase.

Beginning in in FY 2013 Eastern experienced a large number of employees electing to move from the Alternative Retirement Plan (ALTR) to the State Employee Retirement Plan (SERS), which has a significant impact to our personal service expenses. The increase in retirement cost was offset in part by increased Fringe Benefits Paid by State. It is important to note that in the current budget allocation model (BAM), the Fringe Benefits Paid by State are distributed primarily on

FTE and not on the related increased cost to the university. While Eastern's FTE is smaller in comparison to the larger state universities, our conversion and increased cost was at par with the larger state universities. This resulted in a lower share of cost recovery when comparing to the actual increased cost. There is potential for continued conversion, as the election is open until 90 days after the Internal Revenue Service has ruled on the change in plans. There is no schedule for when the IRS ruling will occur.

Another challenge will be relatively flat enrollment projections. In Fiscal Year 2015, it is projected that Eastern's fall full-time 2014 enrollments will be up 0.5 percent from fall 2013. This is due to a relatively slight increase for our major student group, full-time undergraduates, which is expected to grow in fall 2014 by 41 students or 0.9 percent, to 4,436. Our part-time undergraduates are expected to continue to decline slightly.

Enrollment alone will not yield the increased revenue stream that Eastern has experienced in past years, now that our full-time undergraduate enrollment has reached a level that is appropriate for a Liberal Arts University. Therefore, while the 2.0 percent increase in tuition for Fiscal Year 2015 will generate additional revenues, we must continue to be cautious in allocating those additional resources. Careful management of existing resources, cost-savings and other efficiencies will be the way to achieving a balanced budget in Fiscal Year 2015.

**FISCAL MANAGEMENT:**

- We were able to fill several critical faculty positions as tenure track positions.
- Grants continue to support tutoring, advising, and other Academic Services Center services.
- Eastern continues to practice a strict budget review to identify and earmark operating savings. In these efforts, departments have adjusted their paces of spending and prioritized their most compelling needs.
- Sound fiscal management has also allowed the University to continue to support its diversity and Affirmative Action goals; Eastern has the highest percentage of minority faculty of any college or university in Connecticut.
- The University continues to benefit from the work of the Ad Hoc Budget Committee. Composed of representatives from every bargaining unit, the student body, the University Senate and the faculty ranks, the Committee plays an active role in communicating information and proposals for budgeting efficiencies throughout the campus. It has helped develop campus-wide awareness of and appreciation for economies that reduce prospects for layoffs, drastic budget curbs, or program elimination. Best of all, the Committee has built a successful record of communicating regularly to the University community so it is kept informed of major budget adjustments.

**LAUNCHING THE 2013-18 STRATEGIC PLAN:**

In 2013-14, Eastern began implementing the 2013-18 Strategic Plan, following a campus-wide, inclusive planning process that took place in 2012-13. While the Plan is only months old, progress is being made and a clear path is in place for institutional success.

**Academics.**

- “Eastern in Four” seeks to increase the number of students graduating in four years.
  - Majors and core curriculum are being evaluated to reduce barriers to completion.
  - “Undeclared” status is being replaced with an “exploratory” program.
  - Advising services will help students create individualized four-year academic plans.
- The Exemplary Program Review Committee will continue to recommend additional resource allocations to departments conducting voluntary reviews when need/merit is demonstrated.
- Majors in the approval process include Health Science, New Media, Liberal Studies and Philosophy. A finance major was approved in 13-14 and will be offered beginning Fall 2014.
- A system of permanent study abroad options for students is being explored, as is a commitment to increase global field study scholarships for students with financial need.

**Supporting an Affordable Education for Students.**

- Goal of increasing need-based aid over the five-year cycle.
- Goal of increasing merit-based aid.
- Investigation of payment options and payment planning.
- Financial and debt management seminars for students.

**Retention.**

- Expand use of the Academic Services Center.
- Develop a predictive model to assess at-risk students, including non-cognitive variables.
- Providing tutoring services in the residence halls.
- Purchase “GradesFirst,” a single database for all support service interactions with students.
- Enhance support for students’ mental health through Counseling and Psychological Services.

**Experiential Learning.**

- Increase on- and off-campus internships through alumni, employer, and faculty networking.
- Increase internships and other experiential learning for freshmen and sophomores.
- Use employer advisory boards to enhance experiential learning and job placement.
- Expand activities at the on-campus Work Hub.
- Develop better assessment tools for evaluating experiential learning activities.

**Community Engagement.**

- Replace VISTA volunteer with permanent SOUAF position.
- Expand Faculty Fellows program in support of service learning.
- Increase level of Eastern tutors in Windham schools.
- Seek opportunities for Eastern students to support local wellness and recreational programs.

**Faculty.**

- The milestone of 201 full-time faculty was reached in fall 2013.
- Twenty-nine tenured track positions are being searched for fall 2014 appointments.

- The University is committed to increasing support for faculty research.

**Facilities.**

- New Fine Arts Instructional Center under construction; slated for 2015-16 completion.
- Strategic Plan includes renovations of Goddard Hall and the Communication Building.
- Turning Shafer Hall into a residence hall (2016-17) is also part of the plan.

**Technology.**

- Accelerate instructional computer replacement schedule.
- Development of smart classrooms and labs.

**Alumni.**

- Increase opportunities for alumni to return to campus to support student career development.
- Use i-Modules platform to create and support online community of alumni.

**Marketing/Recruitment.**

- Expand recruitment activities to include Junior Preview Day and Ambassador Program.
- Use “search” resources to target high-achieving prospective students.
- Develop online virtual tour for desktop and mobile usage.
- Develop interactive viewbook.
- Implement mobile-friendly suite of functions/applications for internal and external users.

**INSTITUTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Eastern is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with events, historical displays, social media contests, a commemorative issue of the EASTERN alumni magazine, a poster contest among local schoolchildren, and a time capsule.
- The Encelium Lighting Project, which is saving \$114,000 and 600,000 kilowatts a year, was featured by Encelium’s manufacturer, OSRAM/Sylvania.
- The Women’s and Gender Studies major (opened fall 2012) has its first graduates.
- The new Finance major will begin in fall 2014.
- New minors were created in Costume/Fashion Design and Film Studies.
- Eastern is the only state university involved in the Board of Regent’s Health-Life Sciences Initiative. Eastern helped advance careers in the sciences by hosting the project’s Summer Undergraduate Research Program this past summer.
- The new 118,000-square foot Fine Arts Instructional Center is under construction; it is expected to be completed in the 2015-16 academic year.
- The Center for Early Childhood Education won its fourth national Telly Award for its educational videos showcasing the work of faculty, students, and staff in Eastern’s Child and Family Development Resource Center.
- In the past year, Eastern student-athletes won regional championships (men’s basketball ECAC, spring 2013); academic awards (women’s swimming team earned Division III Scholar

All-America status from the Collegiate Swimming Coaches Association of America for the third straight year); and men's soccer initiated a national bone marrow drive in support of a teammate with cancer. (He is now cancer free and the ongoing drive has found bone marrow matches for 11 other cancer patients across the United States.)

- Eastern's Concert Chorale returned to Carnegie for the third time to perform in March 2014 at that legendary venue.
- Eastern's "Reverse Internship" program received **UPCEA's 2014 Outstanding Program Award**

### INDIVIDUAL HIGHLIGHTS

The ultimate measure of whether or not the University is accomplishing its mission is the success of its students, faculty, and graduates.

- Eastern alumni making news this past year included Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie '01, whose third novel, "Americanah," was named a "2013 Top 10 Book" by The New York Times; Marc Freeman '93, who is the recipient of a lifetime annual grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute for his neurobiology work at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center; Jeff Benedict '91, whose 10<sup>th</sup> book, "The System," is receiving critical acclaim for its examination of Division 1 college football; and McKenzie Hyde '13, who is in a master's program at the London School of Economics as the sole recipient of this year's Friends of LSE Scholarship.
- Eastern's first Undergraduate Fellow, Ricky Magner, presented his research at two national conferences over the summer; is being published in the American Mathematical Monthly; and received honorable mention in the Goldwater Scholarship Program.
- Eric Cerino '14 is presenting his research on senior citizens at a national conference in April 2014 in Washington, D.C.
- History major Christos Stravoravdis was selected as one of only 10 students to participate in the Council of Public Liberal Arts College's national "Century America" Project.
- At the annual Kennedy Center American Theater Festival in Hyannis, MA, theatre student Joseph Staffa won first place for Scenic Design Excellence for his work in the production of "Once on this Island"; Kerri Smart won a one-week scholarship to the Las Vegas-based Stagecraft Institute for her costume design work on "The Birds"; and the cast of "Once on this Island," under the direction of Professor Alycia Bright-Holland, won a Regional Merit Award.
- Faculty authors in the past year include French Professor Michele Boskovic; English Professor Reggie Flood; Sociology Professor James Russell; Health and Physical Education Professor Nanette Tummers; Sociology Professor Nicholas Parsons, History Professor Anna Kirchmann and others.
- Student Center Director Michele Delaney received the National Association for Campus Activities "Founders Award," the highest award given by the association.