You asked the President!

During the fall semester President Nuñez visited with the residents in each of the six upper class residence halls. During those visits you were engaged in great dialog and asked many excellent questions. As promised here are the questions you asked and the University’s answers.

1. **Can it be changed so that international students don’t have to move out over winter break?**

   In order to better utilize our resources and staff time, we consolidate all students wishing to live on campus during the winter break into one building. International students are not required to live on campus during the break, but those that do will be relocated to another building. They are not required to move all of their belongings out of their normal assignment. International students who choose not to live on campus during the break do not have to move their belongings out.

2. **There’s been discussion about upperclassmen’s “squatter rights” being eliminated. What’s going to happen?**

   The Office of Housing and Residence Life has used the last year to collect information from other colleges and universities regarding best practices for room selection processes. This initiative is as a result of concerns from students and parents about the current practice and has become a directive of the University’s Strategic Plan.

   A Priority Point system was developed and vetted on campus this semester. The feedback provided will be considered and a final policy will be vetted and approved during the spring semester 2010 and implemented for the 2010/2011 academic year.

3. **Some people have expressed concerns about not feeling safe in the residence halls—particularly Low Rise. What can be done?**

   The University is committed to ensuring a safe environment and communicating with students about the campus’s safety systems and how they can be part of a safety-conscious campus. Rooms and apartments should be kept secure when unoccupied. Elements of our campus safety system include:

   - We have more than 290 surveillance cameras on campus.
   - We have an emergency notification system (e-mail, text messaging, voice mail)
   - We have a full-time Police Department with a staff of 18 sworn officers.
- We have a Crisis Intervention Team that addresses the various needs of students.
- We follow the State’s Zero Tolerance Policy for workplace violence and weapons on State property.
- We work closely with the Willimantic Police Department and the Connecticut State Police to provide them with information to enhance their knowledge of our campus.
- We have safety lighting at bus stops and in our parking lots.
- Our dormitories are key fob access.
- During the freshman orientation process, which occurs before students even arrive on campus, we inform them of the various safety systems on campus and what they can do to be part of a safety-conscious campus.
- We also have similar safety education programs throughout the year, both by RAs as well as by Campus Police staff.
- We assign police officers and security officers to student events such as dances.
- Metal detectors at dances for more than 15 years.
- Regular bike and vehicular patrols for more than 50 buildings, during day and night.
- We have 54 “Blue Emergency Phones” located throughout the campus.
- We provide a service to escort students from classrooms to dorms at night.
- 2,700 students living on campus.
- We have a shuttle bus service to provide safe transportation on campus. The shuttle schedule is:
  - Monday - Wednesday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 a.m.
  - Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 a.m.
  - Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.
  - Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.
  - Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.

It is important to understand that even with these systems in place and a campus community that is committed to maintaining a safe environment; we cannot guarantee the safety of everyone on campus. What we can do and are doing is to provide as much security and safety as we can and ensure that everyone on campus is aware of our safety systems and is committed to being part of a safety-conscious campus community.

It is important to note, that while Low Rise is more of an open environment, we have had no security issues there that are different in nature to the other residence halls.
4. **Given what happened recently at UCONN after the homecoming game will the dance policy at Eastern change?**

Our policy has been very well developed with participation of students, staff and our University Police Department. The policy we started the semester with has changed just slightly in that we now provide an outside security management company to assist the organizations sponsoring the dance with signing in guests and operating the metal detector. We allow students to have one guest who they are responsible for.

We have added more camera surveillance equipment in the Student Center and University police officers at the events.

5. **How does the University deal with it students who get in trouble in the community?**

The Willimantic Police Department shares the names of the students who get in trouble in the community with Eastern’s Police Department. The Vice President for Student Affairs meets with these students to discuss their misbehavior in order to assist the students to better understand their role in the community and to provide incentive for the student to not engage in any future such behavior.

6. **Why is alcohol not allowed in the residence halls?**

While Eastern is not a “dry campus”, alcohol is not allowed in our residence halls. We understand that some colleges and universities do allow alcohol in the residence halls. Of the almost 2,700 students living on campus, 83% are under 21 and not legally able to consume alcoholic beverages. Allowing alcohol in the residence halls would not be in the best interest of the vast majority of students living in them.

Since the residence halls adopted this policy the amount of vandalism has decreased significantly and is considerably less than those of campuses that do allow alcohol in the residence halls.

7. **How much did we spend on the new mascot?**

The University did not spend any funds on the development and purchase of the costume that symbolizes the new logo for Athletics. The University Foundation used its monies to purchase it and those monies are raised by private donations.
8. Graduating on time is a major concern of students but it appears that professors aren’t always on the same page, particularly in the Education Department. Can anything be done about this?

Eastern’s 2008-2013 strategic plan contains several initiatives that focus on improving four-year graduation rates. A Task Force on Retention and Graduation has been meeting this semester to identify factors that keep students from graduating in four years. Some of these factors cut across all students and some relate to specific majors. We are hoping to address all of these factors by working with department chairs to ensure that course offerings are adequate and are scheduled to promote timely graduation; by enhancing advising services so that students develop plans to graduate in four years; and by offering intersession and summer courses that allow students to catch up if they have had semesters in which they did not complete 15 credits.

In terms of Education majors, the department is aware of the difficulty faced by students. Graduating in 4 years with certification to teach is a challenge at any of our state institutions unless students plan carefully from the time they enter the university. One major reason for this is that the State of CT requires teacher candidates to have 2 majors: one in an academic area and one in education. In addition, some of the academic majors, such as Biology and Environmental Earth Science, carry many credits and it can be difficult for students to finish everything in 4 years without taking courses in the summer or intersession. Another example of this challenge is for English majors who also major in Elementary or Secondary Education because they have 2 semesters of senior seminar and this can seriously impact when these teacher candidates can student teach.

Another reason why many students can have difficulty graduating in 4 years, besides the issues outlined above, is that they come in as Undeclared students and do not take the “right” courses in their early semesters. Education faculty strongly urge students at Open House and New Student Reception who want to be teachers to declare a major by Day 1. The Education Department has Advisement Sheets outlining the LAC requirements that overlap with State Certification, such as US History, Math 139/140 (for Elementary Ed. students), Biology and EES for science, etc. The department has a website with these Advisement Sheets posted and the sheets are posted outside the Education Office in WH. It is strongly recommended that students consult with Mrs. Diane Cerreto in the Education Department (she is the Department advisor), or with the Education Department Chair. Department faculty are all well versed in the requirements and want to provide students with accurate information. State certification is a “moving target” right now and many things are changing. Besides Praxis I and Praxis II for all candidates, there is a Foundations of Reading Test as the newest requirement for ECE and ELE students and a Math test is coming some time soon. It’s vital that any student wanting to be a
teacher come to the Education Department EARLY so that he/she can be aware of the many facets of what it takes to become a teacher in CT.

9. When can we receive more graduation information for the up-coming campus?

The graduation web site will be updated beginning in January to allow students 5 months to plan for the events.

10. Biology has 80 seniors and only 15 spots in the senior seminars, what can be done to make sure all the seniors take the required class and graduate on time?

The faculty in the Biology department have been taking steps to ensure that seniors can take required classes and graduate on time but it is challenging, given the number of biology majors.

Biology Senior Seminar: There are 70 senior biology majors, based on number of credits. Only 9 students have filed for graduation in 2009 and 15 students for graduation in 2010. The department has overloaded senior seminar and offered two sections during some semesters. All full-time faculty are teaching with FLC overloads, so it is not possible to offer more sections. Since Senior Seminar is the capstone course, the department does not want to have part-time faculty teach the course. Offerings of Senior Seminar: Fall 2008 = 2 sections, Spring 2009 = 1 section, Fall 2009 = 1 section overloaded, Spring 2010 = 2 sections with the expectation of overloading.

Most biology courses are running at maximum or are overloaded, so it is unlikely that courses do not run due to low enrollment. Faculty are not obligated to teach in winter or summer. Sometimes this is their only opportunity to conduct substantive research. Classes are offered in their normal sequence, unless faculty have reassigned time, other duties, or are on sabbatical leave. When possible the University adds new faculty in those departments, like Biology, that have seen increased enrollment.

11. Along with the biology department, the biochemistry program does not have enough students to have required courses be offered because the minimum of 9 students is not met. Can something be done?

While the problem in Biology is that there are almost too many students given the number of full-time faculty, the problem is different in Biochemistry—there are not many students.

To ensure that biochemistry majors can graduate on time we have been approving Independent Studies so that students can complete graduation requirements even when there are not enough students to fill upper-level classes. We all acknowledge that this is not ideal. While we will continue to do this when we have to, the faculty in the biochemistry department have developed several strategies that will attract more incoming students to the major, attract continuing students to the major, and increase the persistence rate of students who enter the major. These strategies include the creation of a Biochemistry Scholars program with several
renewable merit scholarships, a Summer Laboratory program resulting in a certificate, and a special internship program; a day-long program for admitted biochemistry students and parents to encourage admitted students to enroll at Eastern and to declare the biochemistry major; enhancing the department web page; developing an LAP 130 course that would attract students to the major; and considering other curricular changes to enhance student success and interest in the program. The department and the administration are committed to increasing enrollment in the biochemistry major.

12. What can be done about the poor selection of intersession and summer courses?

The School of Continuing Education (SCE) views intersession and summer session classes as important in helping students achieve timely graduation and tries to offer a good selection of courses. Scheduling of undergraduate courses for Summer and Intersession is handled collaboratively by the academic departments and the School of Continuing Education. The academic departments select the courses they will offer during intersession and summer sessions according to the availability of faculty and resources. School of Continuing Education staff review schedules from the previous academic semesters, looking for areas where there appears to be unmet need (e.g., several sections of a course that is a maximum enrollment in fall or spring). When SCE staff see that needed classes aren’t being offered, they ask the departments to add intersession and summer courses for which there is demand. Frequently the courses that students want to see offered are courses needed for the majors, often upper level courses. A number of Departments feel that such upper level courses cannot be taught in a shorter time frame than the academic semester. In other cases, full-time faculty are not available to teach during the summer or intersession and part-time faculty with requisite expertise may not be available. The School of Continuing Education would appreciate hearing from students who would like to take a specific class during Summer or Intersession.

13. Classes aren't available when they need to be and students aren't graduating in 4 years. What can be done?

Answer #1 above provides a partial answer to this question. We are working with department chairs to ensure that the right classes are offered at the right times to promote timely graduation.

14. Why is there a lot of spending on campus, yet there are not enough professors?

In 2007-2008, Eastern had 15.3 students per full-time faculty member. A national organization of public liberal arts colleges, COPLAC, provides information about schools comparable to Eastern. For schools that belong to this organization, the average number of full-time students
per faculty member was 16.4 to 1 in 2007-2008 (latest year for which data is available). Eastern has slightly fewer students per faculty member than average.

While our faculty to student ratio is favorable compared to the COPLAC average, there would be benefits to having even more professors—there could be more sections of classes offered, class offerings could be more diverse, and there would be more faculty to work as advisors and mentors to students. Eastern receives funding for different types of activities from different sources. Funding for construction comes from one source, funding for operating expenses comes from another, funding for student activities from yet another. The portion of the relevant funding source (tuition and state funds) that is spent on faculty has been maintained at the highest possible level. Administrative, technical, clerical and other positions have been left vacant in order to hire the maximum number of faculty possible. We will continue to hire more faculty when possible and will do this partly by sacrificing all other spending, except for student aid and employment.

15. Is there any more parking for South Campus and what is happening with the construction of the new parking garage?

The Master Plan does call for additional parking in the south campus area but funding is unlikely in the immediate future. However, the new garage, to be completed in the late fall of 2010, will offer 801 new parking spaces. Many of them will be used regularly by south campus residents.

16. When will the perimeter road be removed from the campus?

There is no plan to remove the Perimeter Road (near the garage) at any time in the future. It will continue to provide access and egress to both garages and the Arboretum parking lot.

17. Do meals on the block meal plans expire at the end of the semester?

Yes. All meal plans end at the end of the semester. Dining Dollars carry over into spring semester but will “zero” out at end of the academic year in May.

18. Is the pipe leak that caused the problems with the heat on south campus fixed now?

It is fixed, but additional work will need to be done in the spring after the heat season has ended. The extra work will guarantee that all piping in that areas is properly insulated and installed.
19. What is the new Fine Arts Center?

The Fine Arts Instructional Center is a replacement academic space for the Visual Arts and Performing Arts departments currently located in Shafer Hall. It will be a 134,000 square foot building on the main campus. The facility will contain state-of-the-art acoustics and sound and lighting systems in its large auditorium, the 300 seat concert hall and the “black box” theatre. The building will also contain several types of studio art forms, music and choral practice rooms, classrooms and an art gallery.

20. What will happen to Shafer?

Shafer will be converted into student housing. The project can not start until the Visual and Performing Arts departments are relocated to the new Fine Arts facility. The Shafer conversion will involve both significant renovations and additions adequate to provide apartment style accommodations with kitchens in similar arrangements as built in Nutmeg and Laurel Halls.

21. Can we buy Windham Tech if it came up?

The Tech facility, a state property, would only come available in the future if the state builds an expanded Tech School at a different location in Willimantic or Windham County.

22. Where did the shuttle stops go near High Rise?

The High Rise Shuttle Stop was removed during the summer of 2008. The narrow confines of travelling down Village Road with a vehicle the size of the shuttle made this a logistical hazard. We then added two shuttle stops (one southbound and one northbound) in the area of Constitution Hall on Clock Tower Road. This gave all students living in the South Residential area a convenient location to catch a shuttle in either direction, without having to be in a shuttle stuck behind cars blocking its way on Village Road.

23. When is the HBO channel going to come on out basic cable?

HBO was activated in the residence halls on October 15th and can be found on channel 97.

24. Are we going to get better internet service? Or at least get wireless

Internet service was increased from 80 Mbps to 150 Mbps this fall. Additionally, Plus new firewalls and packet shapers were installed to process transactions at a much faster rate, and prevent traffic delays. Finally, the University has installed wireless in the following locations:
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<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>ECSU Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hurly Hall Cafeteria</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media Building</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Center</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Services (SSC)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science Building</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Webb Hall</td>
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<td>Burnap Hall (RESNET)</td>
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<td>Burr Hall (RESNET)</td>
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<td>Crandall Hall (RESNET)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Access Points</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
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This year’s project will see wireless installed in the following locations:

1 AP Gelsi-Young CT room  <-- (Completed)
1 AP Antenna exterior Library to cover courtyard between Webb and Library.
1 AP Energy Institute (possible move to 392 High Street)
1 AP Wood Support Services (2nd Floor)
1 AP Webb Main Entrance
1 APs Webb 110 conference room
2 APs Gymnasium
4 APs Shafer Hall (1 for Akus, 2 for concert hall, 1 for lobby)
2 APs Nutmeg Hall (Common Areas designated by Hall Directors)
  2 APs Niejadlik (Multi-Purpose Basement Area)
2 APs Constitution Hall (Common Areas designated by Hall Directors)
2 AP Laurel Hall (Common Areas designated by Hall Directors)
1 AP Media (Large Classroom & North-Facing Covered Entrance Area)
2 AP Goddard (Large Classroom & Entrance/Common Sitting Area)
6 APs Noble Res Hall (Complete Coverage)
3 APs Burr Res Hall (Complete Coverage)
10 APs Low Rise (Two per Building, Initial Coverage)

The expected completion date for this year’s project is spring time.

25. Can Hurley extend the breakfast hours?

Hot Breakfast ends at its current time because all preparations have to begin for lunch. The omelet station stays open Tuesday and Thursday through lunch time. Cereal, breads, and waffle station are available all day long.

26. Can Hurley stay open more hours over the weekend?

Currently Hurley is open on the weekends from:
Continental Breakfast 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
Brunch 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Dinner 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Weekend meal counts are weakest on weekend days, so meal plan costs are kept low by limiting the times for each meal period on Saturday and Sunday.

27. How can the hazard of the outlets in Occum being on one side of the room causing wires to travel across the floor be corrected?

New wires for each room to correct this situation were ordered and delivered to the hall director on October 14th. They are available for your use immediately.

28. Will the Science Building be named?

Naming of a building is the role of the CSU Board of Trustees. Normally, a donor has to contribute an amount related to a portion of a building’s construction before a naming opportunity would be considered. Details regarding this policy can be viewed on the Connecticut State University System web-page: http://www.ctstateu.edu/
29. What's the deal with that statue in front of Hurley?

Each State construction project is required to set aside 1% of the construction cost for public art. The sculpture in front of Hurley is the public art that came with the Hurley Hall renovation done several years ago. Artists for these projects are selected by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.

30. Can something be done to reduce the speeding around the road behind Laurel and Nutmeg? Also, people drive the wrong way through there often.

Anyone travelling the wrong way on Village Road can be issued an infraction for $85.00. Officers routinely patrol the South Residential area and can issue infractions to drivers for traveling unreasonably fast or in some cases driving recklessly. All patrol shifts will be advised of this complaint and provide some directed patrols in this area. Anyone observing unsafe vehicle operation anywhere on campus should contact the University Police.

31. Can there be more trash cans are wanted on campus?

The University is converting to “single stream recycling” on campus and will be evaluating the number and location of dumpsters and trash cans on campus as part of that process.

32. The security cameras around Noble do not seem to be adequate, can we adding more cameras to the Noble parking lot?

There are currently no cameras in the Noble Parking Lot. Currently, six interior cameras cover the entrances of the building. The university’s “Year 1 Camera Replacement” project has listed cameras to be installed in that parking lot as well as other interior areas of the building. Last year to increase visibility and safety, lighting was improved in the Noble Lot.