Part 2. Introduction

This Fifth-Year Report reviews how Eastern Connecticut State University continues to meet the Commission on Higher Education’s Standards for Accreditation, summarizes Eastern’s actions in response to the Commission’s 2011 Letter of Accreditation, and projects the institution’s areas of focus for the next five years. In June of 2014, a committee was formed to lead the preparation of this Report with two members appointed as co-chairs. The committee developed a first draft in the fall of 2014, shared that draft with the Eastern community in early spring 2015, and then revised the report to reflect the community’s response.

Interim Review Steering Committee
Rhona Free, Provost, co-chair
William Salka, Professor, Department of Political Science, co-chair
Jennifer Brown, Associate Professor, Department of Economics
Caitlin Carenen, Associate Professor, Department of History
Carmen Cid, Dean, School of Arts and Sciences
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Jeffrey Trawick-Smith, Professor and Endowed Chair in Early Childhood Education, Department of Education
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Part 3: Institutional Overview

The Connecticut General Assembly established the Willimantic State Normal School in 1889, and 13 students began preparation to become teachers in classes held on the third floor of the Willimantic Savings Institute. The first male student enrolled in 1893. A new Willimantic State Normal School was constructed in 1895 on six acres of land deeded to the State by the Town of Windham. In 1937, Willimantic State Normal School became Willimantic State Teachers College, as the college began offering a four-year curriculum and granting B.A. degrees. Twenty years later, the College established its first graduate program — in education. Willimantic State College became Eastern Connecticut State College in 1967, and was renamed Eastern Connecticut State University in 1983. A major change in the institution’s mission and purpose occurred in 1998 when it was designated as the state’s public liberal arts college, which provided Eastern with a distinctive position within the Connecticut State University (CSU) system.

Since 1998, Eastern has continued to prepare students for professions such as teaching and accounting, but that preparation is more explicitly placed in the context of a liberal education and more clearly linked to the close living-learning environment of the primarily residential campus. While this transition was gradual and organic, it resulted in a major curricular revision in 2007 that influenced the crafting of the 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, which marked a kind of watershed in Eastern’s institutional reinvention. Rather than simply clarifying the mission statement at the time, it was determined that Eastern needed to articulate a new statement, one that would more clearly explicate the University’s role as a publicly-funded liberal arts institution. The resulting Mission and Core Values Statements
served as the cornerstones for the entire strategic planning process, providing clear explanations of the University’s values and expectations for the future of the institution.

In spite of challenging economic times, the goals of the 2008 Plan were realized through innovative approaches to resource allocation and a strong sense of purpose shared by faculty, staff and students. The 2008 goals focused on increased academic rigor, internationalization, expanding engaged learning, and creating an intellectually stimulating living-learning environment. Eastern’s 2013 Strategic Plan extends and refines those initiatives, providing even greater support for undergraduate research and community engagement, promoting faculty research and creativity as key to outstanding teaching, and striking a balance between liberal learning and the imperative to address students’, parents’ and legislators’ concerns about careers and workforce needs. A re-wording of the mission statement for the 2013 Strategic Plan helped to clarify the community’s vision of what it means for Eastern to be a public liberal arts university:

The mission of Eastern Connecticut State University, the state’s designated public liberal arts university, is to provide high quality undergraduate and select graduate programs to a diverse population of talented students. Eastern’s inclusive residential campus, outstanding faculty, emphasis on teaching excellence and exceptional facilities raise students’ aspirations and cultivate engagement, inquiry, integrity and social responsibility. In the traditional arts and sciences, as well as in pre-professional programs that are grounded in the liberal arts, Eastern students apply theory in practical settings. Faculty research, scholarship, creative work, and community engagement inform teaching and learning, advance knowledge and enrich the liberal arts curriculum. The University is committed to serving the state of Connecticut and the nation by preparing its students for their future personal, professional and public roles, as leaders in both their communities and professional fields.

The significant changes on campus in the last five years reflect this vision: Applied learning has been strengthened through the Liberal Arts Work program, the expansion of the Center for Internships and Career Development and the Center for Community Engagement, the creation of the Work Hub, and significant growth in undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity. In order to maintain the values of the liberal education at the same time, a new Philosophy major was created, a Liberal Studies major was approved for Early Childhood and Elementary Education students, and the Theatre and Music programs were expanded with the addition of faculty lines and the anticipated opening of a new $78 million Fine Arts building. The Writing Requirement was revised, and as part of the 2013 Strategic Plan, all academic programs are streamlining curricular requirements so that essential skills of critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and communication are a focus. Residential Life has further strengthened its links to Academic Affairs to promote student success and stimulating intellectual co-curricular life.

Fundamental to the goals of the 2013 Strategic Plan was an increase in the number of tenure-track faculty and increased support for faculty research and creative activity. As this report details, these increases have been realized in spite of budget constraints. Faculty hired in the last few years have brought increased interest and expertise in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning, in mentoring undergraduate research and scholarship, and globalization of the curriculum. Structures have been created or adjusted to support these interests—an expanded Study Abroad office, an Undergraduate Research...
and Creative Activity Council, Global Citizenship Scholarships, and an Office of Professional Development.

While Eastern has grown and refined its programs, staffing, and structures to align with its mission as a public liberal arts college, it has done so within a changed system of higher education in the state. Effective July 1, 2011, the three distinct units of the state system of higher education, which includes four Connecticut State Universities (CSUs), 12 Community Colleges, and Charter Oak (the online college), were reorganized as the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU). A newly formed Board of Regents oversees the 17 campuses within CSCU, and the chief executive officer of the system is a president appointed by the governor. Campus presidents report directly to the CSCU president, who has the support of two Vice Presidents, one a president of a state community college and the other a president of one of the four universities. Eastern president Elsa Nunez was the first president appointed to the university vice presidency and she remains in that role. Throughout this transition, the Board of Regents has repeatedly expressed its commitment to preserving the unique missions and cultures of the 17 CSCU institutions, and Eastern has been strengthened by increased funds from the system office to support campus initiatives.

Part 4. Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis

In its May 31, 2011 letter affirming Eastern’s continued accreditation, five areas were identified for special emphasis in the fifth-year interim report.

1. Implement Assessment of the Liberal Arts Core curriculum and use results for improvement.
2. Ensure an appropriate mix of full-time, part-time, and temporary faculty to maintain and enhance the quality of the academic program.
3. Develop policies and practices to ensure and evaluate quality in on-line course offerings.
4. Ensure that multiple planning efforts and initiatives are coordinated and evaluated for effectiveness.
5. Ensure that board governance and budgetary systems enable the institution to continue to achieve its mission.

Since 2011, significant progress has been made on campus in addressing the first four areas. Concurrently, changes in governance and budgeting within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system have ensured Eastern’s ability to continue to achieve its mission.

4.1 Implement Assessment of the Liberal Arts Core curriculum and use results for improvement.

On March 27, 2012, Eastern’s University Senate approved Senate Bill 11/12-5, “University Assessment Plan.” This plan institutionalized assessment initiatives that were in place at the time of the university’s 2010 accreditation visit and incorporated new elements specifically related to assessment of the Liberal Arts Core. This new policy included:

- Bi-annual administration of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to approximately 100 first-year students in the fall semester and 100 seniors in the spring semester. The University Assessment Committee analyzes the results for each academic year and prior years, and meets with the Liberal Arts Program Committee (LAPC) and academic departments to determine if these analyses, along with other data, should lead to revisions of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum (LAC) and other academic programs.
• Annual participation in National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). NSSE results are analyzed by the University Assessment Committee and discussed with the LAPC and academic departments.
• Bi-annual participation in the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) Consortium survey. Survey results are analyzed by the University Assessment Committee and discussed with the LAPC and academic departments.
• Bi-annual administration of the James Madison University ILT (Information Literacy Test) to approximately 60 seniors in the spring semester. The Library uses these data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of student performance to determine the extent to which the LAC integrated curricular element covering information literacy is being effectively delivered.
• Annual analyses of the CSCU Annual Recent Graduate Surveys by Institutional Research. The report is reviewed by academic departments for implications for curriculum development and revision.
• Annual review on a rotating basis of courses in the liberal arts curriculum, evaluating the extent to which course syllabi, assignments, and assessments align with the learning goals of the liberal arts curriculum category and the Tier in which the course is assigned. These reviews are conducted by volunteers from the Liberal Arts Program Committee during the summer with stipends offered for faculty participants.
• Annual review of first-year and senior student portfolios to assess the extent to which work products demonstrate the learning goals of the LAC and whether the portfolios demonstrate desired growth from first to senior years. These reviews will be conducted by volunteers from the University Assessment Committee during the summer with stipends offered for faculty participants.

This Assessment plan has been implemented with six of the seven elements conducted as specified. The seventh element, portfolio review, was attempted but has been replaced with Eastern’s participation in the SHEEO/AACU Multistate Collaborative. The Multistate Collaborative entails faculty from other institutions using AAC&U Value Rubrics to conduct blind assessment of artifacts produced by Eastern students in their classes. Planning began in AY 2013-2014 and the pilot is underway with collection of artifacts in the fall of 2014.

In addition, the Liberal Arts Core is currently in the final phases of its 6-year Academic Program Review. The Liberal Arts Program Committee has spent two years gathering, reviewing, and synthesizing evidence and is preparing the draft of its self-study. External reviewers visited campus in March 2015, in accordance with Eastern’s Academic Program Review procedures.

Although the current APRC review of the Liberal Arts Core will evaluate the effectiveness of the overall program, there have been continuing modifications to the program over the last six years based on the assessment of various elements in promoting student learning and success. Two Senate Bills, SB 10/11-12 and SB 11/12-6, have altered the first year curriculum and program to better assist first-year students in becoming engaged in the intellectual life of the university. First year students now enroll in one of many discussion-oriented First Year Introduction (FYI) 100 sections that explore a broad, contemporary theme developed from the expertise and interests of Eastern’s faculty. Each FYI 100 consists of a small group of students who will become active learners working closely with a faculty mentor, a student peer mentor and each other to develop the skills of good scholarship – critical reading, logical thinking, and effective communication – that are the keys to a successful academic career and a productive life beyond the university.
As a gateway to the LAC, upon completion of the FYI 100, students will have gained experience in:

- Recognizing the multiple dimensions (approaches, goals, consequences) of the pursuit of understanding and truth in an academic environment;
- Understanding the role of logic, reason, and evidence in academic pursuits;
- Effectively communicating with others, orally, visually and in writing;
- Seeking, compiling and effectively using accurate and relevant evidence to support a position;
- Managing doubt and uncertainty in the pursuit of understanding;
- Demonstrating respect for others and points of view dissimilar from one’s own;
- Demonstrating essential intellectual traits such as integrity, perseverance, fairness, empathy and courage; and
- College survival skills

Additional LAC modifications were made via Senate Bill 12/13-10 which required students to take a health and wellness class in their first 60 credits; SB 11/12-7 which prohibited first year students from taking online courses during their first fall and spring semesters and restricting online courses to only two categories in the LAC’s Tier I; and a resolution allowing certain transfer students to waive the FYI 100 requirement.

Each of these changes was based on assessment data measuring the effectiveness of the LAC on student learning and success, along with consideration of resource requirements. Additional modifications are expected as a result of the six-year APRC review of the LAC which will be concluded by the end of spring 2015.

4.2 Ensure an appropriate mix of full-time, part-time, and temporary faculty to maintain and enhance the quality of the academic program.

At the time of Eastern’s 2010 NEASC accreditation team visit, the Connecticut State University System’s restrictions on hiring tenure-track faculty, implemented after the economic downturn of 2008, were still in place. As a result, Eastern had a high number of temporary faculty members. This situation has changed dramatically.

Since 2011, the number of full-time faculty has increased from 193 to 201, while total enrollment decreased from 5,610 in fall 2010 to 5,368 in fall 2014. Of the full-time faculty in 2011, 145 were tenured. That figure increased to 158 in fall 2014. More significant is the increase in the number of full-time faculty in tenure or tenure-track positions, relative to temporary one year appointments. Eastern has made significant advances in hiring tenure-track faculty, including 28 searches in AY 2013-14, to increase the number of tenure-track appointments from 195 in fall 2012 to 201 in fall 2014. Despite additional budget cuts expected for AY 2015-16, Eastern continued to conduct more than a dozen tenure-track searches with a goal of having 205 full-time faculty in fall 2015. As is indicated in the table below, the number of full-time teaching faculty has increased by 3% in the last three years, but the number of tenured or tenure-track faculty has increased by almost 12%. The number of temporary faculty has dropped by almost 71%.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic year</th>
<th>Teaching Faculty</th>
<th>Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty</th>
<th>Temporary Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>194 (96.5%)</td>
<td>7 (3.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>175 (87.1%)</td>
<td>26 (12.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>171 (87.7%)</td>
<td>24 (12.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hiring during a weak academic labor market has enabled Eastern to maintain high expectations for the academic qualifications of new faculty, most simply measured by the percentage with appropriate terminal degrees. That figure has remained at approximately 95%.

Faculty workload, which is governed by the collective bargaining agreement, has not changed since 2010, as faculty continue to teach 12 load credits per semester. The increased number of full-time faculty has, however, reduced the number of advisees assigned to each faculty member. Further, changes in advising procedures and an increase in the numbers of professional advisors have reduced some of the faculty’s advising burden.

As the number of full-time faculty has increased, reliance on part-time faculty has declined. Eastern employed 283 part-time faculty in AY 2011-12 and 2012-13, 282 in AY 2013-14, but only 267 in AY 2014-15. The percentage of credit hours taught by part-time faculty dropped from 21% in AY 2009-10 and 2012-13 to 17.29% in AY 2013-14. Although full-time tenure track faculty are vital to Eastern’s ability to advance its mission, part-time faculty play an important role by staffing unique niche courses or meeting temporary needs. Niche courses include those in areas such as business law or sports facilities management, where one or two sections in a sub-discipline are needed each semester, but there is not sufficient demand to justify a full-time faculty member. Other part-time faculty are hired to assist in theatre or musical productions that require a specific technique or skill. Some are hired to teach courses when full-time faculty members are on sabbatic leave. Eastern is fortunate to be in a geographic region where there are many professionals, graduate students, and academics who are well-qualified and interested in teaching part-time, and many of the university’s part-time faculty have been teaching at Eastern for 20 years or more.

4.3 Develop policies and practices to ensure and evaluate quality in on-line course offerings.

Eastern continues to offer a carefully balanced and limited number of online courses and one fully online program, the Master’s program in Educational Technology. In 2010, 1.6% of the total course sections were online. Since 2010, procedures to manage both the number and quality of online courses have been institutionalized. In spring 2012, the University Senate passed SB 11/12-7: Bill to Revise Eastern’s Online Course Policy. The bill’s preamble states: “In order to maintain our NEASC accreditation, it must not be possible for any student to complete a major, certificate, or degree program with 50% or more of the credit hours taken online. Since the cap must be enforced at the degree, major and certificate levels, it is not possible to enforce this prohibition through the Registrar’s Office and the Student Information System. The mechanisms outlined in the text of the bill were designed to maintain compliance with NEASC’s guidelines.”
Under SB 11/12-7, the University continues to offer courses or course sections which are classified as E-Learning courses. This classification includes the online and online-hybrid categories, but not courses that fall into the on-ground-hybrid and on-ground categories. A course or section is classified as an online course when 100% of the class contact hours are conducted via the internet. An online-hybrid course is one that combines online and on-ground sessions, but 50% or more of the class contact hours are conducted online. An on-ground-hybrid course also combines online and on-ground instruction, but less than 50% of contact hours are online. All first-year matriculated students, defined as full-time students with fewer than 30 credits, are prohibited from enrolling in online and online-hybrid courses during the fall and spring semesters. Also under SB 11/12-7, E-Learning programs are defined as degree, certificate, or major programs in which 50% or more of the course work is available for students to take online. Under NEASC guidelines, all E-Learning programs require separate accreditation.

Beginning in the fall of 2013, E-Learning courses (again, classified as online and online-hybrid) were no longer permitted in the Liberal Arts Core (LAC) with the exception of two categories in Tier II. Thus, any course offered by a department as an E-Learning course could not be included in the LAC outside of those two categories. The limit on LAC courses in SB 11/12-7, and the bill’s requirement that at least 51% of each major and certificate program be taken on ground, guarantees that all students will have at least 61 on ground credits. That is, 39 of the 46 LAC credits plus a minimum of 22 credits within each major can only be earned in the on ground format. This ensures that 61 credits, or more than half of the credits required for a degree, are not earned via E-Learning courses. Each department must ensure that at least 51% of its major requirements are on ground, even if the number of credits needed to meet this requirement exceeds 22. This blend of required on ground courses provides academic departments with greater flexibility to use E-Learning courses in their programs, while also ensuring that no student can complete a degree by taking a majority of their courses in the E-Learning format.

In addition to limiting the number of online and online hybrid courses that can be offered, the Senate implemented procedures and policies to ensure the quality of online courses. Upon the passage of SB 11/12-7, all existing E-Learning courses, as well as all on ground-hybrid courses, had to be reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and be reapproved with an online designation. All new E-Learning and on ground-hybrid courses also require this designation before being scheduled. Thus, any E-Learning or on ground-hybrid course must be approved or reapproved by the Curriculum Committee and the University Senate. SB 11/12-7 requires that proposed online courses demonstrate:

- Curricular goals and course objectives that reflect an understanding of the best uses of online learning in that discipline
- Course design and delivery that support student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction;
- Curriculum design and course management that enable active instructor contributions to the learning environment.

To operationalize these requirements, the University Senate passed SB 12/13-3: Bill to Create an Online Course Subcommittee of the University Curriculum Committee in October 2012. This subcommittee was charged with developing a process for approving online courses based on NEASC’s Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education and other
sources, implementing that process, and recommending E-Learning and on ground-hybrid courses to the Curriculum Committee for approval and designation as online courses.

The Online Course Subcommittee developed an online course approval form that requires proposed courses to include elements that align with a variety of sources on best practices in online education, including Quality Matters, WCET and the Instructional Technology Council, and NEASC Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education. This form requires all proposals to describe:

- how students will actively engage with the course content, other students, and the instructor;
- how the course design incorporates multiple instructional approaches;
- how the course meets copyright and fair use standards;
- and how the frequency of assessment and multiple assessment modalities are sufficient to gauge student progress and align with learning objectives.

The form also requires the instructor to describe the technology requirements of the course, procedures used to ensure online integrity and authorization, an explanation of the instructor’s qualifications to teach the course in an online format, and a justification for the proposed class size for the online format.

An additional form has been created by the Curriculum Committee, requiring all proposals to demonstrate that:

- the syllabus contains a statement regarding the rules and consequences of the University’s Academic Misconduct Policy;
- that there are embedded links to plagiarism and citation materials and tutorials;
- there is a description of the monitoring technology used in the operational system (currently Blackboard);
- written assignments require the submission of multiple drafts;
- time limits are used in exams; a variety of assessment tools are utilized;
- and that there will be periodic revision of topics and discussion points used in the course.

Student evaluations of the course must be conducted using procedures approved by the sponsoring academic department. Some departments use online course evaluation tools, while others provide hard copies of the standard student opinion surveys. For online only courses, these surveys may be mailed to each student with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

With all preexisting E-Learning and on ground-hybrid courses now reviewed, the full University Curriculum Committee has assumed the responsibilities of the Online Course Subcommittee and that subcommittee has been dissolved. Thus, the Curriculum Committee continues to review proposals for new online courses and submit recommendations for their approval and designation as an online course to the University Senate. Proposed online courses are carefully evaluated to ensure they comply with the requirements specified in Senate Bills 11/12-7 and 12/13-3 and that faculty who propose to teach online courses have appropriate training. The Center for Instructional Technology and the Office of Professional Development provide training and support for faculty to ensure they have the skills to teach effectively in an online environment.
4.4 Ensure that multiple planning efforts and initiatives are coordinated and evaluated for effectiveness.

NEASC’s letter of May 31, 2011 noted that coordination of Eastern’s multiple planning initiatives and evaluation of their effectiveness was essential and that these efforts would be facilitated by the appointment of a Strategic Plan Assessment Coordinator and development of an intranet site for collection and dissemination of evaluative data. Since 2011, Eastern’s planning initiatives have been simplified in all phases – development, approval, implementation and assessment, and have been supported by a widely used intranet.

At the time of Eastern’s 2010-2011 reaccreditation, the university was at the beginning stage of implementing its 2008 – 2013 Strategic Plan. This plan was developed and approved through an exceptionally democratic and transparent process involving over 250 individuals. While these qualities yielded broad support of the 18 initiatives, they also resulted in a complicated implementation and budgeting process, particularly at a time when funding was limited. Frustrations with the complicated implementation process and the limitations on resources were reflected in the narrative in Eastern’s 2010 Self-Study, and surfaced during the campus visit.

Ultimately, all of the eighteen initiatives of the 2008-2013 plan were implemented, but the lessons learned in the process led to a much simpler process for the 2013 Strategic Plan and a much closer alignment and coordination of all campus planning efforts. In 2012, the Committee on the Future of Eastern II (COFE II) was formed to lead the development of the 2013 Strategic Plan. At the same time, the Board of Regents was developing its own Strategic Plan. This allowed Eastern to consider the alignment of its own plan with that of the system during the development phase.

After initial discussions of COFE II, a set of five overarching Objectives were identified. Five COFE II working groups were created to ensure broad input as the goals and action steps that would support each of the five Objectives were identified, each containing several initiatives. Performance measures for each Objective were also incorporated in the plan. The plan was reviewed and approved by the University Senate via Senate Bill 12/13-11.

To simplify implementation, each Goal and Objective in the 2013 Strategic Plan was assigned to a Vice President who would be responsible for implementation, including funding. An implementation oversight committee was created with ten members from COFE II, co-chaired by the President and a faculty member. After approval of the Strategic Plan, COFE II returned to the action steps that had been identified in the process of formulating the five Objectives and the goals associated with each objective. Action steps for each Objective/Goal were organized and numbered and a spreadsheet designed that indicated which office and individual was responsible for implementation of each action step, when implementation should be complete, what the costs would be, what challenges were anticipated, and how success would be measured.

Vice Presidents report twice each semester to COFE II on their progress success in implementing each of the action steps. COFE II is broken into five teams, with each team having responsibility for reviewing progress on implementation of action steps associated with a specific Objective. COFE II meets twice each semester to review the updated implementation status reports and dashboards.
Progress on implementation of the Strategic Plan is based on evidence of progress made in the implementation of specific action steps, but also on improvement in the performance measures that were specified for each objective. A Dashboard using colored bullets to show the amount of progress made in implementing action steps associated with goals under each of the five Objectives is updated each semester and shared with the campus community at staff retreats, on the intranet, at meetings with faculty and staff and at an annual University Meeting. The effectiveness of the Plan is also assessed through use of a Performance Matrix that shows how metrics associated with each goal and objective have changed. The Performance Matrix is updated annually and is posted on the intranet site, reviewed by COFE II, and discussed by faculty and staff at meetings and retreats.

One of the five Strategic Plan objectives includes the development and implementation of operational plans that will support the Strategic Plan. Operating plans were developed in the Academic, Student Affairs, Development, Finance, Master Plan, and Information Technology areas. Each of these plans is developed by a Vice President who is also responsible for implementation of the Strategic Plan objectives, thereby ensuring alignment of all planning initiatives.

The development of the 2013 Strategic Plan was facilitated by information that is now readily available in the Office of Planning and Research’s Sharepoint intranet site and on its open web site. While staffing in that office remains at a reduced level, most requests for data and analysis can be met quickly.

4.5 Ensure that board governance and budgetary systems enable the institution to continue to achieve its mission.

Eastern’s 2010 Self-Study, prepared in 2009 and early 2010 stated, “It is projected that the trustees will continue to operate generally as they have in the previous ten years both in terms of organization, their relationship to Eastern and to the Department of Higher Education (DHE). Since there have not been any serious proposals advanced at the legislative, DHE or system levels to alter the current system of governance and management, it seems reasonable to expect that the current policies and procedures will remain in place.” By the time of the NEASC team visit in October 2010, however, the structure of higher education in Connecticut had become a matter of debate, especially in the race for governor. Uncertainty engendered by this debate was apparent during the NEASC team’s visit to campus and as a result, NEASC’s letter of May 31, 2011 noted, “We understand that there may be future changes in the structure of ECSU’s governing board.”

With the election of a new governor, changes were made in the structure of higher education in the state. On February 9, 2011, Governor Malloy introduced a reorganization plan, the core elements of which were:

- Eliminate the boards for the Connecticut State University System, the community colleges, Charter Oak State College and the Board of Governors for Higher Education and combine their authority into one Board of Regents for Higher Education.
- Consolidate the central offices of CSU and the community college system and the management of DHE and Charter Oak State College into one office reporting to one CEO.
- Direct the Board of Regents and CEO to develop a strategic plan with public and stakeholder participation to increase Connecticut’s educational attainment.
• Direct the Board of Regents to develop a formula to distribute taxpayer support to campuses on the basis of enrollment, attainment of identified policy goals and other factors.
• Require the Board to develop annual reports on:
  • Student outcomes such as retention and graduation
  • Financial issues including
    o Allocation of resources across functions (education, administration, etc.)
    o Analysis of costs and revenues on an academic program basis
    o An affordability index based on median Connecticut family household income
  • Enrollment and completions on a program basis
  • Transfer of credits across institutions
  • Employment and earning outcomes of graduates (in partnership with the state Department of Labor)

Effective July 1, 2011, the state system of higher education which had included three separate units: four Connecticut State Universities (CSUs), 12 Community Colleges, and Charter Oak (the online college), was reorganized to form the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU). A newly formed Board of Regents now oversees the 17 campuses within CSCU. The board sets statewide tuition and student fee policies; establishes financial aid policies; reviews, licenses, and accredits academic programs; and, in collaboration with institutional stakeholders, conducts searches for and selects campus presidents. In addition to governance responsibilities, the board also holds broad responsibilities for development and coordination of statewide higher education policy. The chief executive officer of CSCU is a president appointed by the governor. Campus presidents report directly to the CSCU president.

In spite of challenges and some missteps at the CSCU central office, which are inevitable with such a massive reorganization, Eastern has maintained its ability to function effectively and fulfill its mission. The Board of Regents has repeatedly expressed its commitment to preserving the unique missions and cultures of the 17 CSCU institutions. Eastern has been strengthened by the shift of funds from the system office to support campus initiatives. For example, the system office funded additional faculty lines to support Eastern’s new Health Science and New Media majors. The system office has also funded additional counseling and advising positions. Finally, both financial and administrative support have been provided to assist with legislatively mandated changes in developmental education and transfer and articulation. Despite the somewhat difficult evolution of this reorganization, Eastern is well positioned to continue the pursuit of its mission. This is particularly true given the close alignment between our 2013 Strategic Plan and the strategic plan being developed at the CSCU level, which is discussed in Section 7 of this report.

Section 5: Standards

Standard One: Mission and Purpose

Eastern Connecticut State University revised its mission statement as part of the 2013 Strategic Plan to reflect the continuing pursuit of providing a high quality public liberal arts education. This revision was drafted and approved independent of the Plan, receiving final approval by the University Senate on April 30, 2013. Future five year strategic plans will
continue to review and revise this mission to reflect ongoing development. The mission reflects Eastern’s unique position as Connecticut’s only public liberal arts institution. The University’s public mission separates it from the state’s private colleges, while the small class sizes, close-knit residential campus community, and emphasis on liberal arts education, grounded in applied learning, distinguish Eastern from larger public universities in the state. This evolving mission has driven our strategic planning process over the last decade; while the mission and strategic plans serve as touchstones for all decisions made at the University. To ensure that academic departments are aligned with this mission, the Academic Program Review Process has been merged with the Exemplary Program Review process from the 2008 Strategic Plan, and resource allocation decisions are now determined by each program’s assessment and affirmation of the University’s mission.

Eastern’s revised mission is woven through the campus culture, as can be seen in several initiatives in the 2013 Strategic Plan, and in the University’s well-established Liberal Arts Core, Liberal Arts Work, Global Citizenship, and Undergraduate Research programs. The LAC is a three-tiered system, which includes a revised First Year Experience. This program was purposefully designed to extend exposure to the liberal arts core across each student’s four years of study. This tiered system, combined with the other initiatives noted above, ensures that throughout their undergraduate career, students must contemplate how their major disciplines are linked to the broader traditions of the liberal arts, while also considering how the knowledge they acquire in the classroom can be connected to life in their professions, their communities, and the world around them.

**Standard Two: Planning and Evaluation**

Overall, planning and evaluation at Eastern are systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and focused on achieving the University’s mission. Shortly after the arrival of President Nunez, Eastern began to more effectively use strategic planning to articulate the University’s mission, identify potential problems and opportunities, develop concrete initiatives to improve our academic programs and student support, and track progress across all of these endeavors. The 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, which was discussed at length in the 2010 self-study, involved a comprehensive and collaborative planning and implementation process that not only produced an effective roadmap for the future of Eastern, but also created ongoing connections among the various departments on campus. The 2008 Plan entailed a comprehensive review of the entire University, with initiatives affecting virtually every office on campus. Building on the success of that Plan, the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan was more focused on improving the University’s academic programs and ensuring student success, all aimed at achieving our mission of providing a high quality liberal arts education that can be practically applied in the real world.

As can be seen from the final review, the initiatives in of the 2008 Plan have been largely completed ([http://www.easternct.edu/president/strategicplanning.html](http://www.easternct.edu/president/strategicplanning.html)). Implementation of that Plan was overseen by the President’s Advisory Committee, which made implementation and resource allocation recommendations directly to the President. A few initiatives, such as a donor recognition display, were not implemented due to funding constraints, while others, like the use of digital portfolios, were difficult to implement and were replaced by other proposals. Implementation of the more recent 2013 Strategic Plan utilizes a more streamlined process. All of the Plan’s initiatives have been assigned to the Provost or a Vice President for implementation and funding, and their progress is overseen by COFE II. This committee, which is co-chaired by the President and a faculty member,
meets twice each semester to review the progress that has been made on implementation, and keeps the campus community informed of that progress through implementation reports and dashboards posted on the website, and through reports to the University Senate and department chairs.

Overall, Eastern's strategic planning process engages faculty, staff, administrators, and students in a discussion of important initiatives that seek to achieve our mission and accomplish the goals of improving the quality of academic programs and enhancing student success. The expanded role of COFE II to oversee implementation of the 2013 Plan ensures that progress continues, and the annual reports and Academic Program Reviews conducted by the departments ensure the initiatives in the Plan are being incorporated into the academic programs. Finally, information from all of these sources is used to make resource allocation decisions, ensuring that scarce resources are being effectively used to accomplish the goals of the Plan and that those allocations are aligned with the University's mission.

In spring 2012, the University Senate approved a University Assessment Plan. The highlights of this plan are discussed in Part 4.1: "Implement Assessment of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum." Academic departments are evaluated each year based on their annual reports. These reports are required to demonstrate the department's alignment with the mission of the University, and they must also include assessment data that detail the degree to which students are meeting the established learning objectives of the program. The six year Academic Program Review, which now contains the Exemplary Program Review process, also provides an opportunity for each academic department to engage in a comprehensive examination of its programs so as to identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. Departmental annual reports for non-academic units are also being reinstated after a hiatus to ensure that the work of those departments is aligned with the Strategic Plan and mission of the University.

Noteworthy since the 2010 reaccreditation is the expanded use of data to inform decisions. While National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data have been collected at Eastern since 2006, the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs have begun disseminating the results of this annual survey to inform the departments they oversee. For example, key NSSE results are broken out by major and shared with department chairs who must then address these results in their annual reports. Staff in the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (PIR) have increased their efforts to track Eastern’s graduates by improving the Senior Exit Survey and working with the Directors of Alumni Affairs and Enrollment Management to conduct an alumni survey. PIR staff have also taken advantage of data provided through a new system-wide initiative called Preschool through 20 & Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN), which allows the office to calculate employment rates and earnings for Eastern graduates by major. Eastern has also completed work with the consulting firm McGuire & Associates to review admissions and financial aid practices. This project resulted in a series of recommendations that were implemented in the AY 2014-15 recruiting cycle, to better leverage the University's institutional aid in recruitment and retention.

**Standard Three: Organization and Governance**

Eastern's organizational structure and internal and external governance processes are student-centered, guided by its 1997 legislative designation as Connecticut's public liberal arts university, and the current Connecticut State Universities Mission Statement
Eastern incorporated its organizational structure and shared governance processes into its strategic planning process, developing a campus-wide collaboration that is focused on maintaining a balanced budget in the face of continuously declining state funding, while directing any savings realized to instructional and academic support services that drive improvements in Eastern's retention and graduation rates. Since the 2010 NEASC self-study report, Eastern has successfully met the goals of the previous 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, leading to improvements in academic success of its students and in the university reputation in national rankings.

Eastern's organizational structure and decision-making processes are well integrated with CSCU’s goals to provide a student-centered, affordable, accessible, and high quality educational experience. In July 2011, the Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), was established by legislative action of the Connecticut General Assembly to govern over seventeen state institutions, previously supervised by three separate governing boards (discussed in Part 4.5: Ensure that Board Governance and Budgetary Systems Enable the Institution to Continue to Achieve its Mission).

Organization and Governance with the new Board of Regents

The Board of Regents is in charge of setting tuition and establishing fees and fee policies, reviewing and accrediting academic programs, facilitating the development and implementation of statewide higher education policy, and conducting searches to select campus presidents. The BOR is composed of fifteen voting members (nine appointed by the Governor, four appointed by legislative leadership) and three alumni from the state institutions in the system. Additionally, there are six non-voting, ex-officio members who represent key state departments and BOR committees that interact closely with the policy development functions of the BOR. The chair of the Board of Directors of the Board of Regents is appointed by the Governor and the Board of Regents elects a vice-chair and other officers from among its membership. There are six BOR committees that set system rules and oversee information technology concerns, internal auditing, human resources, government relations, policy/research development, marketing and public affairs for the system. Additional ad hoc committees are established to assist with new system initiatives, involving system faculty and staff, such as the Early College Program Steering Committee, Transfer Articulation Program committee, and Faculty Advisory Committees to various BOR activities (such as the current Transform CSCU 2020 strategic plan).

Ultimately, the BOR searches for and recommends to the Governor the President for the CSCU system, who is the direct supervisor of the presidents of the seventeen institutions, and is hired on a 3-year contract with annual review by the BOR. The BOR has full meetings of all its members several times per semester and individual BOR committees also meet separately to propose items for action by the full BOR. Approvals of system-wide policies, campus presidential hires, academic program changes, system-wide new expenditures and planning all take place at the meetings of the full BOR.

The CSCU president requires that all campus presidents set their institutional goals in August, and that they are approved prior to the start of the upcoming academic year. These institutional goals must be in line with the system’s plans, and include metrics for measuring success. All campus presidents are then evaluated by the CSCU President separately, in meetings scheduled half-way through and at the end of the academic year.
The BOR requires that all institution presidents meet several times per academic semester with the President to discuss and provide updates on system-wide initiatives. The BOR also holds several meetings per semester of the various groups of Vice Presidents, deans, officers, and directors across the campuses, in order to discuss potential system changes and improve efficiency in the system’s initiatives.

Every spring semester, campus presidents present their budget plan for the upcoming fiscal year to the BOR for discussion and review. These proposed plans are prepared in consultation with the institution’s senior staff, and constrained by the BOR expectation of maintaining a balanced budget. Institutional plans for faculty searches, renovations, and other programs are expected to be built into the balanced budget proposed for the next fiscal year, and must be justified to the BOR in terms of the institution’s mission and the strategic plans of both the institution and the system.

The BOR governance and organizational structure has changed twice since the 2010 NEASC self-study. There have been two CSCU Presidents, with the latest, Dr. Gregory Gray, beginning his appointment in July 2013. A draft of a BOR Strategic Plan’s goals, which included metrics for measuring success, was introduced in spring 2013. During AY 2013-14 and AY 2014-15, the CSCU system office developed a draft of a long-term system-wide strategic plan, identified as Transform CSCU 2020. This draft preserved the BOR’s goals, and included 32 initiatives to achieve those goals, while also clarifying the metrics that will be used to measure success. Work on Transform CSCU 2020 continues, with system-wide Faculty Advisory Committees, campus liaisons to the executive planning committees at the system office, a town forum on each campus, and continued discussion with all interested stakeholders.

Organization and Governance within Eastern Connecticut State University

Since the 2010 NEASC self-study report, Eastern has continued to win national awards for its collaborative governance structure, including being named one of the best colleges to work for by the Chronicle of Higher Education for five years in a row. The current university organizational structure (see link to chart at http://www1.easternct.edu/pir/reports/) has changed slightly since 2010 due to retirements and changes in the system office staff, resulting in some redistribution of assigned duties to maximize efficiency in resource utilization, and maintain funding for faculty and student-centered initiatives. A Provost position was added to the President’s management team in February 2013, with the Provost also serving as Vice President of Academic Affairs. The management team also consists of the Vice Presidents of Student Affairs, Institutional Advancement, Human Resources, Finance and Administration, a Chief Information Officer and an Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity. Currently, the Vice President of Human Resources and the Chief Information Officer positions are filled by interim appointments, and several administrative positions are vacant. The organizational structure of the University is informed by each strategic plan and periodically reviewed through the implementation of those plans. While some positions remain unfilled as a cost cutting measure, the University continues to balance its budget and has increased the number of tenure track faculty since 2010.

As was true in 2010, Eastern’s President holds biweekly meetings with senior staff and the Extended Staff, to provide updates on system-wide issues, efforts to address new and existing university and system concerns, especially in terms of enrollment management and meeting the goals of the university strategic plan. Eastern’s President, Provost, and Vice
Presidents continue to share information regularly at Eastern’s biweekly University Senate meetings to update faculty and staff on all system-wide and campus-based initiatives. COFE II, which is overseeing the implementation of the 2013 Strategic Plan, meets twice each semester to review progress and update implementation reports and dashboards which are shared with the campus community. The President’s Ad Hoc Budget Committee, which was established in 2009 and is composed of faculty members, staff, union representatives and administrators, continues to meet with the President several times each semester to review budgets and financial reports. The President meets regularly with each academic department to discuss the university and system budgets, strategic planning matters, and to address faculty or departmental concerns. Deans also meet with their respective departments, and monthly with department chairs, and bring administrative and faculty guests to ensure departments are kept informed of various initiatives and aligning their efforts with the Strategic Plan and University mission.

The University Senate and the University Administration share a joint responsibility and authority for the development of University policies in the areas of curriculum, degree requirements, scholastic standards, admission policies, academic freedom, promotion, tenure and continuing appointments, and University organizational structure, in the selection of the President, Vice Presidents, and Deans, in budget and planning, and in other matters affecting the educational quality and mission of the University. Eastern’s Administration also continues to communicate all academic, budget-related and institutional administrative decisions with students through meetings with student government representatives and in the residence halls. There are student government representatives in the University Senate, on University Senate committees, and on the Ad Hoc Budget Committee, to provide a student perspective and a continuous flow of information to and from students.

**Standard 4: The Academic Program**

Since 2011 Eastern has expanded and further developed its academic programs in line with its mission as the state’s public liberal arts university and in an effort to prepare our students for a complex and evolving global economy. Eastern currently has 35 undergraduate majors and 54 minors, including five majors that have been approved since the 2010 reaccreditation: Philosophy, New Media, Health Sciences, Finance, Women and Gender Studies, and Liberal Studies. As part of the 2013 Strategic Plan’s initiatives requiring that academic programs ensure that students are acquiring the skills they will need to pursue successful careers, Eastern is currently working to develop new programs in Legal Studies and Criminal Justice, and working on modifications to existing programs in English, Computer Science, and Sports and Leisure Management. Eastern also has 11 Master’s degree programs, including a revived Masters of Science in Accounting. Programs are housed in the School of Arts & Sciences and the School of Education and Professional Studies/Graduate Division, each with a dean to oversee the academic departments within the school.

After several years of stability, Eastern’s enrollments declined slightly in fall 2014, falling from 5,041 students pursuing baccalaureate degrees in fall 2011 to 4,791 in fall 2014. Over the same period, the number of graduate students declined from 206 to 123. These declines reflect trends across all Connecticut State Universities. To address this issue, the University has made a number of changes in admissions policies, such as becoming “test-optional” and
completing work with the consulting firm McGuire & Associates to revise financial aid packaging strategies.

Between AY 2009-10 and AY 2013-14, the average class size at the 100 and 200 levels declined from 25.8 to 23.5, keeping Eastern comparable to its COP/LAC peers. The 2013 Strategic Plan calls for continued reduction in class sizes to better facilitate the use of high-impact practices within all academic programs. To achieve these goals, faculty development grants and workshops are being offered and the Provost is working with the academic deans and departments to identify opportunities for progress in these areas. Students are required to utilize information resources and information technology in most of their major and LAC courses. To ensure they possess the skills to do so, all first-time, first-year students are required to complete online embedded surveys as part of their required FYI 100 course, and the LAC second tier category of Applied Information Technology requires students to apply information technology in problem solving, the pursuit of knowledge, and the communication of ideas.

Academic programs and their assessment are the responsibility of the faculty in each department. Proposals for new majors, minors, and individual courses must be approved by the sponsoring department, University Curriculum Committee, and the University Senate. All majors, and minors consisting of more than 18 credits, must also be approved by the BOR. The faculty that are responsible for each academic major must develop learning objectives for students in that major, and assess student achievement of those objectives annually. Academic departments are also required to submit annual reports and conduct comprehensive Academic Program Reviews every six years, which involve external reviewers. As has been noted elsewhere, the Academic Program Review Process has been merged with the Exemplary Program Review process to ensure that resources are provided to academic programs that are contributing to the mission of the University. Further, Objective II of the 2013 Strategic Plan calls on academic departments to ensure that programs are relevant, effective, and challenging. One initiative under this objective calls for a revision of academic programs to focus on essential skills and emphasize the application of those skills in courses at all levels. This initiative is meant to encourage departments to shift away from a singular focus on curriculum requirements and focus instead on student outcomes, i.e. identifying what students should know at the end of the program and measuring how well they know it. Several steps have been taken to implement this initiative. The Provost has been meeting with the Deans and department chairs to provide information on this requirement and the AY 2014-15 Annual Report will require departments to identify these skills and explain how they are embedded in the courses throughout the major. Further, the Dean of Arts & Sciences is leading an initiative to encourage greater inclusion of quantitative reasoning skills across all programs. To assist departments in identifying the skills their graduates will need, the 2013 Strategic Plan also encourages the creation of Alumni and Professional Advisory Committees to each department, which will help faculty members and students connect with professionals in relevant fields to better understand the skills that are required in the workforce. Complete program requirements, course descriptions and the frequency with which courses are offered are made available to students online at department web pages and in the online course catalog. For ease of access and comprehension, all department descriptions of program requirements have the same online format.

In response to the 2008 Strategic Plan, Eastern sought to increase student participation in Eastern’s Global Citizenship and Liberal Arts Work (LAW) programs. In order to facilitate
participation in Global Citizenship opportunities, Eastern increased scholarship availability for students completing Global Field Courses. Efforts have also been made to increase the number of students who receive pre-professional experiences through the LAW program’s approved internship, service-learning, campus leadership, and co-op programs. As of fall 2014, there were 11 on-campus offices that provide LAW-approved paid internships, 17 credit-based internship courses, and 6 credit based research courses. The Center for Community Engagement has also developed the Service Learning Faculty Fellows Program to train faculty to conduct community based learning courses.

General Education

The Liberal Arts Core (LAC), which includes the First Year Program, constitutes the general education program at Eastern. Since the decennial report in 2010, the LAC and First Year Program have undergone significant revisions which are discussed in Part 4.1: Implement Assessment of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum. An assessment program has been created and was implemented in AY 2014-15. The First Year Program is now designated the First Year Experience to reflect the expansion of the program beyond the revised academic component, to incorporate additional programs in Student Affairs. The Liberal Arts Core is overseen by the Liberal Arts Program Committee, a standing committee of the University Senate. The academic component of the First Year Experience is overseen by the First Year Program Committee of the University Senate, with a broader First Year Experience Committee, led by the Dean of Students, overseeing the components of the program that fall under Student Affairs.

Graduate Degree Programs

Graduate education at Eastern entails eleven Master degree programs which are administered by the School of Education and Professional Studies, headed by the Dean of that school. The 2013 Strategic Plan placed special emphasis on graduate education with Initiative II.b: Enrich the Graduate Program Offerings at Eastern. Since Eastern is primarily an undergraduate institution, the goals of this initiative are to revitalize and improve the graduate programs that are offered by the University so that they better match the current needs of prospective students and provide additional resources to support Eastern’s academic core. This initiative requires the assessment and modification of existing graduate programs, including program curriculum, delivery modes, and graduate student support services, to ensure these programs are coherent, sufficiently supported, and meet current workforce demands. Significant progress was made on this initiative, even before the permanent Dean of Education and Professional Studies was hired in summer 2014.

Revisions were made to the masters programs in Education, and approved by the University Senate in spring 2014. An Early Start Elementary Education graduate program was created and submitted to the Curriculum Committee in the same semester. With the appointment of a permanent Dean of Education and Professional Studies, a Graduate Division Advisory Council was formed in fall 2014, consisting largely of faculty from departments offering graduate degrees, to assist in the development, revision, and oversight of existing and new graduate programs.

Integrity in the Award of Academic Credit

Eastern has taken several steps to enhance its procedures for ensuring the integrity of the academic credit it awards. Faculty and administrators share responsibility for developing
and enforcing all policies regarding the award of credit and for ensuring that there is demonstrable academic content for all experiences that result in students receiving academic credit. Where this process is not the primary responsibility of an academic department, a Standing Committee of the University Senate is charged with oversight.

In terms of the credit hour, Eastern’s course scheduling policy has always required that courses meet for at least 15 hours per credit per semester, with an additional expectation that students would do approximately two hours of out-of-class homework, readings, assignments or studying for each hour of class time. In 2013, to ensure that the course scheduling policy remains in compliance with Federal Regulations and to make explicit the expectation of student work outside the classroom, the University Senate passed Senate Bill 13/14-16, which states: “Consistent with the federal definition, a credit hour will be defined as not less than one clock hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two clock hours of out of class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time. At least the equivalent amount of work will be required for other credit-bearing academic activities, including studio, laboratory work, internships, practica, independent studies, and other academic work leading to the award of student credit hours. Example: A 3-credit course would require students to complete the equivalent of 45 hours of in-class work and 90 hours of out-of-class work, per semester.” Students are informed of this expectation by course instructors and on the Registrar’s website for Policies and Procedures.

Eastern’s policies related to the transfer of credits from other institutions are delineated in documents available at the Registrar’s web site and in the online catalog. The Admissions website contains an online Transfer Equivalency tool that allows students to immediately identify course equivalencies at institutions with which the university has articulation agreements. In 2012, CSCU began the development of a Transfer and Articulation Plan (TAP). This plan called for the creation of an agreement by which a student who earned an Associate degree at a Connecticut community college would automatically be determined to have completed 30 credits of General Education Requirements at any CSCU university. The details of the 30-credit competency-based “common core” are almost finalized. A second part of TAP is the development of Pathways from each Community College to each major program at a CSCU university. The Pathways ensure that students who complete the required courses at the community college can complete all of the requirements for a major at the university within four semesters. Work groups to develop these Pathways within each discipline have been formed, and it is anticipated that these pathways will be completed in 2015. The elements contained in TAP should facilitate transfer from the community colleges in the state to Eastern.

**Standard 5: Faculty**

Eastern has maintained and strengthened its faculty whose expertise, teaching competence, and numbers are sufficient to implement its academic programs and fulfill its mission. The roles and responsibilities of full time faculty ranks—professor, associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor—are clearly delineated (see the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, Articles 4 through 8, and the ECSU Faculty Handbook). Those currently holding these ranks are highly qualified: In 2013-2014, 94% of full time faculty held doctorates, up from 85% of faculty in 2010. The number of faculty holding the rank of full professor rose by 9% in the last three years.
Full time faculty are appointed to tenure track or one year temporary positions, with adjunct faculty hired where they are needed. In order to more effectively fulfill our unique mission as a public liberal arts university, increasing the percentage of full time, tenure track positions at the university has been a goal. Full time, tenure track faculty are better able to perform responsibilities that are a part of the liberal arts tradition—guiding undergraduate research, engaging students in the community, and developing and implementing interdisciplinary programs. The university has followed a systematic and open process to increase full time, tenure track faculty positions, with very positive results which are detailed in Part 4.2: Ensure an Appropriate Mix of Full-Time, Part-Time, and Temporary Faculty.

Full time faculty teach 12 credit hours per semester; a teaching load that is appropriate for the University's mission, which emphasizes high quality undergraduate education. Teaching loads, along with salaries and benefits, are specified in a Collective Bargaining Agreement that was modified in 2011 and which is now in effect until 2016, affording contractual security. Salaries and benefits continue to be sufficient to recruit highly competent new faculty. Other policies governing faculty workloads, promotion, tenure, and other matters may be found in the ECSU Faculty Handbook, which was updated in 2014, and on the University Senate SharePoint Site. Faculty are not only informed of policies, but have a strong voice in developing them through a shared governance model. The University Senate, composed of faculty, staff and student representatives, collaborates with the Administration in shaping the direction of the university and its programs.

Consistent with the mission of the university, faculty at Eastern are outstanding teacher-scholars. Prior to the award of tenure, faculty are evaluated annually on the quality of their teaching, scholarship, service, and professional development. Tenured, senior faculty are evaluated every six years in these areas. The evaluation process and expectations for performance are clearly described in the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, and University Senate policies that are posted on the University Senate SharePoint. Among the procedures to assure teaching quality are periodic classroom observations by department peers and student evaluations of teaching that are administered at the end of each course. Resulting documents may be reviewed by the department chair, a department evaluation committee, and the university Promotion and Tenure Committee. One change that has occurred since the 2010 reaccreditation is the creation of a Provost as the University's Chief Academic Officer. The Provost has replaced the President in the review and final decision, on campus, of all faculty applications for renewal, promotion, and tenure.

Opportunities for professional development are provided to faculty members through an equitable application process. Professional development, research, and curriculum development grants, travel funds, and reassigned time are awarded to support scholarship. Faculty may apply for a sabbatic leave every six years. As part of the 2013 Strategic Plan, a new Office of Professional Development was created in 2014 to provide training and educational programs in areas of need for faculty and staff. Funds for professional development have increased from $133,523 in AY 2012-13 to $137,799 for AY 2014-15. Research grants have increased during this time period from $148,359 to $153,110. Money allocated for travel has grown by this same amount, from $148,359 to $153,110, an increase of 3% in expenditures for each of these categories. An average of 12 sabbatic leaves have been awarded to faculty in each academic year since 2012-2013.
Academic integrity and freedom are foundational principles guiding the work of faculty at Eastern. The university continues to create a culture of ethical conduct, clearly articulating expectations for the professional behavior of faculty in the Faculty Handbook (Section A4, page 12) and the Connecticut State University Ethics Statement, which is posted on Eastern's web site. Academic freedom is protected by a statement of agreement and set of clear procedures and policies in the CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The university continues to provide opportunities for faculty to strengthen and vary their teaching methods. The new Office of Professional Development, created in 2014, provides faculty programs related to teaching excellence. The offices of Information Technology Services and the Center for Instructional Technology also offer 34 different workshops and numerous online training programs related to the use of technology on campus. Curriculum development grants are available to support the implementation of new teaching strategies or to design new courses and programs; funds for these grants have increased by 3% over the last three years. Retraining funds are also available for faculty who will be teaching in new content areas.

The increase in full time faculty positions has been accompanied by a 4% decline in student enrollment over the last three years. In addition, expanded services have been provided by the Advising Center to relieve some of the advising load on the faculty and provide them more time to work with individual students. The Advising Center has also provided new resources, such as templates for the Eastern in 4 graduation plans, to better inform faculty of academic requirements and strengthen their advising activities.

Eastern encourages and expects faculty to contribute to their disciplines and to stay up-to-date in their areas of teaching by conducting research. Such scholarship is weighed heavily in evaluation, promotion, and tenure decisions, second only to teaching. Grants and reassigned time for research have led to an increase in scholarly productivity: Nearly three times as many publications, exhibitions, and performances were produced by faculty in AY 2012-13 as in 2009-10.

**Standard Six: Students**

Admissions

Eastern has a total enrollment of approximately 5,400 students. Undergraduates represent 97% of the University's total enrollment (with 2.8% graduate enrollment). The majority of the University's students (81.8%) are enrolled full time. The University's recruiting plan includes attracting a student population that is ethnically, economically and geographically diverse. In fall 2014, 95% of the University's students were Connecticut residents, representing 161 of the state's 169 towns. The remainder of the University's students come to Eastern from 24 states and 18 countries. Almost 24% of the University's students belong to racial or ethnic minorities. Fully half of the students enrolled identify themselves as the first in their family to attend college, while the gender balance of 52% female and 48% male reflects national numbers.

In the fall of 2012, Eastern joined a growing number of public and private colleges that have adopted the Common Application process, and adopted a Test Optional Admission Policy for fall 2015. For the test optional process, students do not need to submit SAT or ACT scores when they apply for admission. Admission to Eastern is based primarily on a student’s achievement in a
strong high school curriculum, which is the best predictor of success at Eastern. As a general guideline, students who choose not to submit their SAT/ACT scores are expected to have an unweighted cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, where the GPA includes only English, Foreign Language, Math, Natural Science and Social Studies courses, a college preparatory curriculum that results in 18 academic units over four years of high school, a senior year course schedule that includes at least four academic courses resulting in four academic units, and a strong admissions essay.

Retention and Graduation

An increased focus on student success, retention and graduation pervades campus planning and action. Several initiatives in the 2013 Strategic Plan are aimed at developing concrete policies and procedures that will ensure students are retained at the University and are able to graduate in a timely manner. These efforts are detailed in Part 6: Reflective Essay on Assessment, Retention, and Student Success.

Student Services

Eastern provides a range of services to support students in their lives outside of the classroom. The function of the Division of Student Affairs is to advance the mission of the University through programs that embody Eastern’s Core Values. In 2013, the Division of Student Affairs established Divisional Strategic Initiatives that were aligned with the University’s strategic plan to include student learning outcomes, program outcomes and performance measures specific to each department’s mission. The Division’s Strategic Initiatives were required by the 2013 Strategic Plan, and served as an opportunity to examine the needs of Eastern’s student population, raise awareness of those needs in each office within Student Affairs, and create a process for assessing each initiative to determine their alignment and progress toward the Strategic Plan’s goals. Annual assessments are conducted to evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of the departments’ work to achieve intended outcomes. Significant progress has been made on assessment across the offices in Student Affairs with the implementation of the Campus Labs platform. Campus Labs is a tool used by over 750 colleges and universities to create a comprehensive, coordinated and centralized assessment approach for the delivery of services that enhance student success. All the offices in the Division of Student Affairs also submit yearly operating and assessment plans that are intentionally aligned with the University’s Strategic Plan.

In order to prepare incoming students for the transition to college life, all new first year students are required to attend Student Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR) during the summer before their first semester. SOAR is an overnight program designed to introduce incoming students to life on campus, help them meet other students, and complete course registration for the fall semester. Students attend a number of information sessions covering a host of topics. Orientation also includes a newly expanded Parents’ Program that comprises concurrent sessions for parents to attend, the recruitment of parents to serve on an advisory board, and two monthly parent newsletters, one sent to parents of first year students and the other to parents of upper class students. The SOAR program provides a separate session highlighting an expansion of commuter student offerings which include commuter specific events, designated commuter space in the Student Center, and club leadership opportunities. SOAR has also enhanced session offerings with regard to sexual assault prevention and awareness, as well as diversity training for all incoming students. Eastern also hosts a Fall Warrior Welcome for incoming students. Warrior Welcome is a two day program that takes place just before the start of
the fall semester, and is a continuation of the Orientation experience. Warrior Welcome includes workshops and networking events, as well as evening activities for students. These orientation activities are required of first-time students and transfer students. Another SOAR program is offered in January to accommodate new first-year and transfer students admitted in the middle of the academic year. The first page of the student portal on the University’s website clearly lists the links to the various student services that are available.

Eastern’s student financial aid program is being revised in consultation with McGuire & Associates. The project involved an analysis of significant amounts of our admission and financial aid data and resulted in a series of recommendations designed to improve our marketing to prospective students and parents, and to better leverage our institutional aid resources. These recommendations are being implemented in the recruitment cycle for fall 2015, and we expect to see a return on this investment with the incoming class of students. Students can easily access their online accounts and the staff and websites of the Financial Aid and Bursar’s Offices provided information as needed. Initiative I.c. in the 2013 Strategic Plan calls for increased efforts to educate students and families on debt accumulation. To implement this initiative, Student Affairs has expanded its educational offerings for students and parents during student orientation, and increased programming on debt awareness in the residence halls.

The Office of Student Activities has created several programs to help students explore and develop their leadership potential. Clubs and Organizations annually evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of their meetings using the Club Inventory Survey. Results are used to track both organizational success and areas for improvement. Survey results assist the Office of Student Activities in creating “The Tracks to Teamwork” series. This series is made up of four sessions per semester that focus on enhancing group leadership abilities in running an organization or any setting where students are working with others to achieve a common goal. Fifty-five students have attended these sessions representing over 30 clubs and 4 different offices on campus where they are student employees. LEAP into Leadership (LEAP) is a three-tiered program designated to encourage students to explore their individual leadership potential. Students engage in a series of sessions throughout the academic year that enhance their Liberal Arts experience by exploring topics in line with the University’s Core Values. The LEAP series is open to all students and includes five sessions each semester on topics such as Communication, Goal Setting, Time Management, Leadership styles and Public Speaking.

In February 2013, Athletics became a part of the Division of Student Affairs reporting directly to the Vice President of Student Affairs. Similar to other departments in the Division, yearly operating and assessment plans are now required from that department. Academic performance of student athletes and data collected has shown that the six-year and four-year graduation rates, first- and second-year retention rates, and average GPA for first-year and second-year student athletes are higher in each of these categories when compared to non-athletes. In 2012, the Athletics department initiated yearly program reviews of each sport and administrative unit within the department. Six sports and three departments have undergone these reviews.

Students’ physical and emotional needs are supported through various offices and program offerings on campus. Since the last accreditation report, many offices under the Division of Student Affairs have been moved from their respective locations to meet the growing demand for student services. The Office of AccessAbility Services (OAS), Counseling and
Psychological Services (CAPS) and Wellness Promotion Office moved to areas affording student’s with more anonymity while seeking services, and the Veterans Office moved to larger and more visible space. As a result of the 2013 Strategic Plan, CAPS has created a Wellness Warriors Support Network to assist the office in identifying students who may be in need of psychological services, and the office has also expanded their medication management services to 10 hours a week. The OAS has established an Eastern Prep Program to assist students transitioning to college, worked with the Psychology department to establish a Peer Mentor Program for students on the Autism spectrum, and is now offering psychological assessment for students registered with the office and requiring updated documentation. Mandated appointments were also reinstated in the Wellness Promotion Office for students.

The Office of Career Services has changed its name to the Center for Internships and Career Development (CICD) to better capture the many facets of career development offered to students and alumni. The CICD moved to a larger space on-campus and has realigned its services to better support students that utilize the center, and collaborate with employers. As part of the 2013 Strategic Plan, the Alumni Affairs office continues to coordinate panels of visiting alumni who speak to students about their own career paths and give advice on developing successful career trajectories.

Student rights and responsibilities are established in the Student Code of Conduct and Statement of Judicial Procedures. The Code of Conduct was amended in 2014 as a result of the federal Campus Sexual Assault Violence Elimination Act and Connecticut’s Public Act 14-11, An Act Concerning Sexual Assault, Stalking and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus. These changes bring the Code into compliance with the hearing and reporting processes for sexual misconduct, sexual intimate partners, domestic violence and stalking. Extensive training has been provided to the judicial staff, hearing officers, and the campus community regarding the handling of interpersonal violence and sexual misconduct cases. Eastern remains committed to providing a community that is safe and supportive of women, men, and students of all genders and sexual identities, with a focus on fostering healthy interpersonal relationships. In line with this mission, the Women’s Center has worked with the Sexual Assault & Interpersonal Violence Response Team (SAIV-RT), which was reorganized in 2014, to increase sexual misconduct awareness and prevention efforts, including advancing supportive services for victims of sexual misconduct. SAIV-RT is a multidisciplinary team of on-campus and off-campus professionals that is devoted to providing an accessible, comprehensive, coordinated, and supportive response to victims of sexual misconduct. A constituent of SAIV-RT is the University SAIV-Resource Team, which works to develop and implement campus policies, guidelines, protocols, and services that effectively identify and respond to crimes of sexual misconduct. The services of this team continue to expand – including financially accessible services for victims of sexual misconduct and a team of individuals devoted to working with victims to develop academic intervention plans as necessary.

The SAIV-RT conducts awareness trainings for faculty and staff members including coaches, facilities, and resident assistants at the University to provide specific information relevant to their role as educators and support persons for someone who reports an incident of sexual misconduct. The SAIV-Resource Team has expanded its awareness program through the adoption of an online course entitled “Haven: Understanding Sexual Assault” with Everfi. This course educates all students about healthy relationships, the importance of consent, and the vital role of bystanders in creating safe and healthy communities. In 2014,
68% of Eastern students completed Part I of the course. This online training is in addition to the programs offered during Student Orientation.

**Standard Seven: Library and other information resources**

Despite fiscally challenging times, the Library has continued to make progress on a number of fronts. The emphasis in collections is shifting toward electronic resources with the number of unique electronic journal holdings increasing from 41,000 in 2010 to 51,648 as of December 2014. Of these, 3,255 are the result of current online subscriptions and the rest are acquired through a variety of electronic databases. Although microforms are being de-emphasized, that collection grew modestly with the few remaining microform standing orders from 963,000 to over 975,000. Also significant was the growth in ebooks from a very small collection of under 5,000 to over 135,000 at the end of 2014. During this period, the library also added several large databases including ArtStor, the Complete Sage Collection (700 journals), Drama Online, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, 19th Century British Library Newspapers (I-III), Economist Historical Archive 1842-2008, London times Digital Archive 1785-2006, and the New York Times Historic collection. The print collections grew much more modestly from 390,000 to 406,000 due to a reduced collections budget ($982,628 FY 2010 to $811,846 in FY 2015) that gave priority to electronic formats, and to ongoing deaccessioning of redundant print (JSTOR print volumes), as well as an active collection review to winnow out obsolete materials.

Consistent with its 2008 Strategic Plan, the Library implemented several major initiatives since 2010: a new Library orientation program was launched for transfer students, our goal of offering information literacy instruction to 100% of the English 100 classes was reached and sustained at close to 100% in all succeeding years, LibGuides software was acquired and research webpages for each academic department were created, a federated search tool was implemented, the Library Research Award was launched with two awards given each year, a new reading room was created out of space reallocated from the reduction of the print journal collection, and compact shelving was installed to extend the growth space.

The Library has prepared a new 2014-2017 Strategic plan and has already made progress on acquiring a Discovery search tool (Summon) which is currently being configured for a spring 2015 launch, has added two touch screen digital scanners for student use, has purchased and implemented Archive-it software in collaboration with University Relations and Information Technology Services to continuously archive University web pages. Additional student computers were added and all existing student computers were replaced with new upgraded machines. A laptop loan program was implemented and six new Surface Pro devices are on order for spring 2015 deployment. The Library has begun a pilot project to provide a staff presence on our third floor to assist students in finding materials in the stacks and answering routine catalog questions.

In terms of assessment, the Library has offered the James Madison University Information Literacy Test (ILT) to a small cadre of graduating seniors for the past several years. This tool has provided evidence that some core aspects of information literacy need more attention, especially ACRL standard two. The Library also conducted a survey of student and faculty use and perceptions of the Library as part of the 2014-2017 strategic planning process. Data from 414 students and 92 faculty were analyzed. The students were generally satisfied with the library and the two major areas of comment pertained to more hours and more computers. The library was able to restore some additional Sunday hours (now noon to midnight) and add additional computers as mentioned above. The faculty survey data indicated a split of about half who considered the library extremely important or important to their class assignments ranging down to almost 30% of the respondents who said they had no library related assignments. This latter
The Library lost one full-time librarian at the beginning of FY 2010 due to a retirement and the open position was not filled. Another full time librarian position is currently filled with a temporary hire due to another retirement. The library has been able to sustain 94 weekly operating hours during the semester, a number that has fluctuated since 2010, but is now back at the level it was during the last accreditation visit.

Finally, in terms of collaboration, the library has been actively involved in Board of Regents system-wide initiatives. To this end, the seventeen library directors meet monthly and are in the process of writing an RFP for a new combined library system. We believe this new collaboration will benefit our students in that broader resources will be seamlessly available and transfer students will already be familiar with the shared library system once it is implemented. This is a promising new development and is expected to set the stage for further collaborations in a variety of new initiatives.

Instructional and Information Technology

As a System, several administrative changes have occurred since 2010 that have had significant impact on technology initiatives and goals.

In October, 2010 a new CIO was appointed to oversee technology for the Connecticut State Universities. Blackboard Vista was migrated from a locally hosted service at Eastern to a single system-wide Blackboard instance hosted and managed by the System Office, a change that proved less than optimal for students and faculty. Three years later, under the leadership of the new BOR, Eastern and the other members of the CSCU migrated to BlackBoard Learn 9 (BbL9) as a Blackboard Managed Hosted Service client in the cloud. Since the migration to the cloud, Eastern’s students and faculty have experienced improved performance, system availability and added services. Kaltura, a BbL9 integrated cloud based video streaming service was implemented in fall 2013. Kaltura allows faculty the ability to imbed video directly into Bb courses, providing students with a multi-platform, one click access to video content while ensuring compliance with fair use guidelines and copyright laws. In addition, Eastern has been awarded a $115,000 BOR grant to explore instructional technologies that support collaborative and active learning. One classroom and the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) training facility will be equipped with a variety of software including Panopoto lecture capture, Microsoft Mix PowerPoint recorder, and BlueJeans videoconference software. Hardware will include Microsoft Surface Pro tablet PCs, screen annotation, and multimedia projection systems. CIT is collaborating with a group of faculty to develop the pilot sections. Eastern anticipates that the furniture and software will be in place by the summer of 2015, with the first sections being offered in fall 2015.

In April, 2014, Eastern’s CIO, left the University to become the new BOR CIO and an interim was appointed. A search to fill the position is currently underway. As part of the Transform CSCU 2020 initiative, the BOR CIO has developed a five-year strategic plan for Information Technology Services. The overarching goal is to create strategic efficiencies and interdependency in technology among the BOR 17 member institutions. The priority and implementation of these initiatives has, and will, influence the technology projects pursued at Eastern. Despite the changes in leadership, both locally and at the BOR, Eastern continues to move forward with initiatives to improve services to our students, faculty and staff.

Over the past two years there has been emphasis placed on improving the University’s IT Help Desk operation. Two new University Assistant positions have been added, providing an IT support professional for the 39 most critical hours of the 45 weekly hours of operation.
Based on community feedback and as part of the 2013 Strategic Plan, a similar focus has been placed on revitalizing the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT). After several years of dwindling staff and visibility to faculty, one full-time staff, one trainee and a University Assistant have been hired, upping the number to five staff members dedicated to providing faculty assistance with instructional technology, guiding innovations with technology and providing workshops on a host of topics. Between marketing efforts and an open house hosted by CIT in November, 2014, the Center is seeing increased numbers of faculty seeking assistance. CIT is also collaborating with the Office of Professional Development to identify technology training opportunities for Eastern employees.

Despite the increased staffing levels in the Support Services group highlighted above, ITS continues to be understaffed in the area of Technical Services. There are two positions that for budgetary reasons have remained unfilled, a third that will soon be vacant due to retirement and a fourth position created as a temporary emergency hire that is unlikely to be renewed. These vacancies and cuts hinder the department’s ability to keep pace with the technology demands required for the plethora of projects being pursued both internally and by the BOR, not to mention routine maintenance and ResNet support.

Other projects on the horizon include piloting the implementation of Parchment, an electronic transcript exchange project that will automate delivery and articulation of transcript data between institutions; implementing WebFocus, the recently selected replacement tool for ad hoc reporting; implementing DegreeWorks, a publicly accessible degree audit and transfer articulation tool; all of which are system-wide initiatives that align with Eastern’s 2013 Strategic plan.

**Standard Eight: Physical and Technological Resources**

Eastern continues to focus on methodically planning and completing projects to improve, expand and enhance the University’s physical and technological resources as outlined in the campus’ Master Plan and IT strategic initiatives. The most prominent project currently underway, slated for completion January, 2016, with LEED Silver certification, is the construction of the new Fine Arts Instructional Center. The Fine Arts building will add an additional 70,000+/- square feet of assignable space and an additional 119,012 gross square feet to the campus footprint. Completion of this facility will alleviate the deficiencies that were cited in the 2010 report regarding instructional space for the arts.

While the construction of the Fine Arts building is by far the largest project currently underway, and can be seen from nearly every corner of the campus, it has not been the University’s only focus. In the past five years, the campus’ assignable square footage has increased 17% to 1,551,562 SF and the gross square footage has grown to 2,288,256 GSF, up 14%. Since 2010 Eastern has completed the construction of the softball field facility, the Athletic Support Building, and the Facilities Warehouse. The fit out of the Science building’s fifth floor was completed, providing office space for a portion of the IT staff and a state of the art data center which provides a secure environment for up to 26 server racks and a total of 100KW of redundant power and cooling capacity. Shell space on the fourth floor of the Science building was built out to house two new labs and a project/research room for the Environmental Earth Science Department. Renovations were made to Winthrop and the Planetarium, providing additional classroom space and creating the “Work Hub,” an area occupied by external corporations that provide internship opportunities to Eastern students, many of which lead to full-time employment. The Communication Department benefitted from the relocation of IT, as the vacated office space adjacent to their current area was completely renovated for their use, doubling the number of prime faculty offices and conference room space available for the department. Lastly, the ground floor of the library was renovated to expand the space available to support the
Academic Services Center, housing both the Advising and Learning Center staffs and collaboration space.

All new construction and renovations are designed using green initiatives and follow the Connecticut High Performance Building Standards, which align with LEED Silver guidelines. In FY 2011, Eastern began implementing the Encellyium system which provides the ability to control lighting and climate control based on day light, occupancy and brightness. The system is currently installed in Gelsi-Young, the J. Eugene Smith Library and the Student Center. To-date we have shown a reduction in electrical costs of $191,000 per year. The average ROI is anticipated to be 3.5 years.

As the University continues to complete projects and closely monitor the initiatives that are in progress, we are simultaneously planning for what is next. In the spring of 2014, an Academic Utilization Study was conducted to review classroom utilization and impacts of construction on the inventory of academic space. Currently in the programming phase are the renovations to Goddard Hall and the Communication building. The renovated academic space will strengthen the instructional arena for the Communication Department, Health and Physical Education Department and provide much needed lab space for the Psychology Department. Also included in the renovations will be the remaining IT offices and training space. The recently completed secondary data center that provides a secure location for up to 20 server racks and a total of 50 KW of redundant power and cooling will continue to be housed in the Communication building. The Goddard/Communication renovation project will be followed by the transformation of Shafer Hall, the soon to be former home of the Performing and Visual Arts departments and future residence hall with suite style apartments for 2, 4 and 6 person occupancy. The architect for the Shafer Hall renovations has been selected. The design phase of the project will kick off in the summer of 2015.

Two technology initiatives, totaling $513,000, directly impacting the Communication and Education programs have been completed. In the Communication Department, the TV Studio, Control Room, and the Editing and Field Production equipment were upgraded to high-definition format, giving students the opportunity to work with a state of the art, industry standard production system. In the Center for Early Childhood Education, the editing and asset management system was also upgraded to high-definition format, enhancing the Center’s teaching and research mission. Other classroom technology improvements included the installation of 4 Smartboards to support teacher training and the upgrade of 25% of Eastern’s general purpose classroom multimedia projection systems to support digital sources and high definition audio and video (summer 2015). In addition 657 computer lab PCs and 683 faculty/staff computers have been replaced and a new iMac lab that accommodates 14 students was added.

Less visible but equally important are the changes to the IT infrastructure. After several years of being unable to obtain funding for end-of-life (EOL) replacement of network equipment, and having to maintain several critical systems well beyond their EOL, the picture is improving. As the result of several system-wide BOR initiatives to upgrade the local and wide area networks (LAN/WAN) in conjunction with Transform CSCU 2020 money, ITS is beginning to address the much needed maintenance. During the summer of 2014, the residence hall network (RESNET) was replaced with new fiber, high performance and high availability network equipment, including wireless access to all residence hall rooms. Augmenting the wireless project is the installation of Cisco’s Identity Services Engine (ISE). ISE will provide streamlined control for the wireless and wired network access, allowing awareness and control over the network, but presenting a very user friendly interface. With ISE, students will be able to register all of their wireless devices once a year, eliminating the need to authenticate every time they want to access...
the network. In addition to upgrading RESNET and expanding the wireless footprint, the Virtual Private Network (VPN) server, Storage Area Network (SAN) equipment and personal network share storage (Z drives) were all replaced. The WAN, including the firewall and core routers, will be upgraded during spring 2015. Third party network monitoring tools and support will also be purchased and implemented to meet audit requirements. The fiber to the remaining buildings will be upgraded as needed in the summer 2015 and planning for the University's LAN replacement is underway. During the summer of 2015, ITS will also be upgrading Eastern’s faculty and staff email to Exchange 2013. The necessary equipment is on order.

A number of projects have been completed or initiated over the past five years to ensure the security of our physical resources, the integrity and security of data and networks and the privacy of our students, faculty and staff. Eastern has added 77 digital security cameras to residence halls, campus entrances, pathways, Mansfield Sports Complex and remote parking areas, increasing the overall number of cameras to 323, of which 173 still use Close Circuit TV and will be replaced digital IP cameras as funding becomes available. The Facilities staff continues to retrofit older classrooms with hardware that allows for remote lockdown of the building in case of an emergency, as well as providing the instructor the ability to lockdown their classroom with the push of a button. As part of a system-wide initiative, ITS implemented the new emergency notification system, Everbridge. In addition, a significant emphasis has been placed on raising awareness surrounding data security. DCL3 data has been scrubbed from local hard drives, Identity Finder has been deployed to all desktops to discover PII data stored locally on an ongoing basis, Data Management Coordinators, Data Stewards and Data Managers have been identified and trained. Most recently, the CIO launched the SANS Information Security Awareness training program, Securing the Human, that will be required for all individuals who have access to, or process, confidential information.

**Standard 9: Financial Resources**

Eastern Connecticut State University continues to be a financially-stable institution and has steadily improved its financial position as demonstrated by Net Assets of $255.1 million in FY 2012 increasing to $275.0 million in FY 2014. Current projections for FY 2015 and FY 2016 include limiting university operating expenses to projected revenue levels while significant increases in capital appropriations for the New Fine Arts Instructional Facility will increase the projected total Net Assets to $341.2 million by FY 2016.

From FY 2012 to FY 2014 the amount of state funding provided for operations increased from $38.8 million to $46.2 million including both general fund appropriations and fringe benefit recovery. The FY 2015 state funding for general fund appropriations and fringe benefit recovery was reduced from budget due to overall state budget reductions, however the combined value remained higher than FY 2014 amounts. Projected FY 2016 state funding is an increase from the FY 2015 level.

The financial records of the university continue to be audited annually by the audit firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, and the audit report is reviewed by the President’s staff and provided to the Board of Regents for review by their Audit Committee. The university is also subject to routine audits by the State Auditors of Public Accounts which include both financial reporting and audits specific to financial aid. On an annual basis, the activity related to CSCU 2020, a legislative program to provide capital funds for the four Connecticut State Universities, is subject to an independent audit. The Board of
The university’s budget process is continuous beginning with the original request made through each vice president for inclusion of their respective area’s requirements, review of the overall request by the President, and continuous monitoring and discussion of current operating trends during each senior staff meeting. In addition to the administrative budget review, an inclusive Ad Hoc Budget Committee provides the opportunity several times each year to review the current status of university finances as well as other non-financial topics important to the university. The Ad Hoc Budget Committee meets with the President, and membership includes administrators, faculty, union representatives, and a student selected by the Student Government Association. The committee provides the opportunity for members to gain insight into current issues and also provides an opportunity for them to express their views and offer suggestions for consideration.

Our overall direction remains guided by our Strategic Plan, as described in Part 7 Institutional Plans, and the university continues to utilize the Strategic Plan in the allocation of resources. Collaboration across all areas supports a common vision and allows the university to effectively utilize financial and human resources. As noted in Standard 4.2, the university continued to increase the number of full-time faculty from 195 in fall 2012 to 201 in fall 2014. In addition to the increased faculty, Standard 8 identified the many construction projects and general improvements being made to update classroom technology and IT infrastructures. Investments include construction of the Fine Arts Instructional Facility scheduled to open in January 2016. The university continues to provide students with financial aid and waivers at an increasing level each year. Financial aid provided by the university in FY 2012 of $6.6 million increased to $7.8 million in FY 2014, an increase of 18%. Over this same period, the tuition and fees for an in-state, undergraduate student increased from $8,555 to $9,560, an increase of 12%. University support of financial aid continued to exceed the annual increases for tuition and fees to our students.

The ECSU Foundation, a separate 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization, continues to provide support to students. The ECSU Foundation is audited by the accounting firm of Cohn Reznick, and the audited financial statements show an increase in net assets from FY 2012 of $16.9 million to $18.2 million for FY 2014. Over this same time period, their scholarships and awards increased from $155,195 to $607,794.

**Standard Ten: Public Disclosure**

As the state of Connecticut’s only public liberal arts university, Eastern Connecticut State University is committed to providing students, prospective students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and all interested constituencies with clear, accessible and accurate information about the university’s programs, activities and services.

The University’s website, which migrated to a new platform in 2014, provides the names and positions of administrative officers and faculty, and the names of the members of the Board of Regents. The website also contains access to the President’s annual report, as well as archived

Information about the student body, the campus setting, academic and co-curricular opportunities, student success, retention and graduation is updated annually.

The University’s abbreviated mission statement is clearly articulated on the homepage of the website and is also included in full in the 2013 Strategic Plan and in a unique link easily identified from the home page (http://www1.easternct.edu/connect-with-us/university-mission/).

The University’s catalogue is now available only in an online format. This helps to maintain accuracy and currency and makes it possible to include access to information about educational objectives and expected outcomes, requirements, procedures, and policies related to admission and transfer of credits. It is reviewed biannually to ensure accurate information about program, course and service offerings. The schedule of classes is available through Banner eWeb. This listing includes the attribute of “CSU Common Course” as a searchable term in order to provide transfer students accurate registration information for Eastern courses. It includes additional searchable terms that allow students to easily find courses that fulfill the Liberal Arts Core requirements. As the CSCU system’s transfer articulation policies evolve, Eastern will continue to provide accurate and timely information, including website links to and information about transfer credit equivalencies (http://www1.easternct.edu/advising/transfer-students/).

The cost of an Eastern education is posted on the university’s web site at https://easternct.studentaidcalculator.com/survey.aspx and the University’s homepage contains links that provide more information about financial aid and general costs (http://www1.easternct.edu/finaid/determining-need/#costs).

Eastern’s 2013 Strategic Plan calls for additional engagement with alumni through online social media. Alumni Affairs is working with departments to encourage programs that engage alumni using iModules On Line Community.

Systematic periodic review by the Office of Academic Affairs, Office of Planning and Research, Office of Institutional Relations, academic departments and other units ensures that print and electronic publications are complete, accurate and current and that the results of these reviews are used for improvements.

**Standard Eleven: Integrity**

Eastern continues to implement policies and practices that adhere to the highest standards of integrity and ethics. Policies and procedures of the Board of Regents of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities as well as state law and regulations govern aspects of this effort.

The CSUS Board of Regents adopted a revised Student Code of Conduct in 2014 (Approved 3/13/2014; amended 4/17/2014). Eastern’s Student Handbook was revised to reflect this Code. The Handbook and Code provide detailed information on definitions, policies and procedures related to student rights and responsibilities.

A revised Policy on Academic Misconduct (SB 12/13-08) added an appeals process for students and clarified the roles of students, faculty, and the Academic Misconduct Committee. University Senate bylaw 5.2.1 establishes the Academic Misconduct Committee as the body that “reviews all cases of academic misconduct brought under the University Policy on Academic Misconduct, hears appeals by students accused of academic misconduct and may impose additional sanctions when requested by the faculty member bringing the claim.”
The Student Handbook includes "Procedures for Students with Disabilities to Appeal for Modifications to Eastern Academic Requirements". Office of AccessAbility Services procedures related to student recording of course lectures were modified in 2012 to ensure protection of faculty intellectual property rights while still providing appropriate accommodation for students. A policy statement on recording of lectures was adopted in fall 2014, and was included in the Faculty Handbook with the objective of ensuring protection of faculty intellectual property and student privacy.

The Student Handbook also contains a link to the Uniform Campus Crime Report (currently at http://www1.easternct.edu/police/clery-crime-reports/). Eastern created a Sexual Assault & Interpersonal Violence Response Team (SAIV-RT) that works to provide care to victims of sexual misconduct and/or assault. New Board of Regents policies on Consensual Relationships and Regarding Reporting Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child promote respect and ethical behavior.

Collective bargaining agreements, state codes and employee handbooks continue to govern procedures for grievances brought by faculty and staff. The Connecticut State University — American Association of University Professors (CSU-AAUP) CBA contains a Statement on Professional Ethics (section 4.1.1.1). It spells out the expectation that faculty encourage the free pursuit of learning by students. Faculty are expected to meet scholarly standards, respect students as individuals, and adhere to a role of "intellectual guide(s) and counselor(s)." The faculty must foster honest academic conduct and evaluate students based on true merit. Academic freedom at Eastern is primarily assured by academic tenure for full-time faculty and is reinforced by policies and procedures in the CSU/AAUP Collective bargaining agreement.

To foster a diverse community, the position of chief diversity officer was reconfigured as the Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity (AVPED) where previously it was Special Executive Assistant to the President, The position is now advised by an at-large Senate-elected Diversity and Social Justice Committee which was reorganized as part of the 2013 Strategic Plan. Affirmative Action policies are in place at both the system and university levels. Senate bylaw 5.2.3 establishes the Diversity and Social Justice Committee as the body that "represent(s) the University community by providing input and advice to the AVPED on equity and diversity policies and their implications, and to assist the AVPED in periodically administering a campus climate survey to maintain data on diversity and inclusion at the University.

Part 6: Reflective Essay on Assessment, Retention, and Student Success

In this section, we have focused on the following issue: c. Measure of student success, including retention and graduation (Students, 6.5, 6.9)

In the last five years, consistent with both 2008 and 2013 Strategic Plans, Eastern has implemented a systematic and multi-dimensional approach to promoting student success. This approach has yielded significant increases in graduation rates and reduced racial/ethnic differences in graduation rates. Persistence after the second year has improved, but disappointingly, overall first-to-second year retention has not risen above 78%. Changes implemented in Fall 2014 are aimed at increasing the retention rate to 80% within the next two years and the four-year graduation rate to 50% beginning with the Fall 2014 cohort.
Retention and Persistence

Over the last fifteen years, the retention rate at Eastern increased from a low of 70% in 1999 to highs in 2003 and 2012 of 78%. However, in spite of significant efforts over the last five years, the rate has remained stubbornly below 79% (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 One Year Retention (First-Time, Full Time)

Table 6.1 shows that from the Fall of 2008 the overall rate has hovered between 76 and 78%. The rate for white students has remained quite stable but the rates for Black and Hispanic students fluctuate, likely due to relatively low numbers. The rate for all Minority students has been above that for White students in 5 of the last 7 years.

Table 6.1 Retention Rates of First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Entry Cohort</th>
<th>All FTFTF</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian American</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Total Minority</th>
<th>Minority-White Gap</th>
<th>Percent Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>N ≤ 10</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>N ≤ 10</td>
<td>N ≤ 10</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data for Native American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander omitted, N < 10.
Analysis of retention rates by Pell eligibility (Table 6.2) shows that Pell recipients generally have slightly lower retention rates than other students while subsidized Stafford Loan recipients have higher rates. The ability or willingness of students and their families to borrow appears to be linked to persistence (and ultimately to graduation, as subsidized Stafford Loan recipients also have higher graduation rates than Pell Grant recipients).

Table 6.2: Retention Rates of First-Time, Full-Time Degree-Seeking Freshman Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Entry Cohort</th>
<th>All Full-Time First-Time Freshmen</th>
<th>Pell Grant Recipients</th>
<th>Subsidized Federal Loan Recipients</th>
<th>Neither Pell nor Loan Recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% Retained</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>% Retained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2012</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given evidence that in the U.S. whites are more likely than Black or Hispanic students to be retained from first to second year, the somewhat surprising white/minority retention rates at Eastern point to the importance of careful analysis of attrition—what are the characteristics of students at Eastern who do not remain from the first to second year? While the traditional perspective on retention was that students who “dropped out” did so because of academic difficulties, closer analysis revealed that most students who leave are in good academic standing and transfer to another four-year institution.

As shown in Figure 6.2, of the 979 students in the fall 2012 cohort, 214 (21.9%) were not retained. Of those not retained, 66% transferred to another university or community college, while only 34% did not continue in an institution of higher learning according to National Student Clearinghouse records. Only 27 of the students who dropped out of college altogether had a GPA of 2.0 or lower.
To get a further understanding of why students leave before the second year, the Advising Center staff surveyed students in the Fall 2013 cohort who did not plan to return in the Fall of 2014. Sixty seven of 225 students responded to the inquiries. Table 6.3 categorizes their responses. Some students had more than one reason for leaving Eastern, thus the total of 93 responses. Survey results are consistent with the Clearinghouse data that suggests most students do not leave because of academic difficulties. Rather, they are most likely to state that they will leave to pursue an academic major not available at Eastern or because they prefer another geographic location. Table 6.3 Stated reasons for leaving Eastern after one year, Fall 2013 cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Programs/Offerings</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Culture</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical/Personal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not First Choice</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6.3 shows persistence rates. While the first to second year rate increased to 2004 and then stalled, both 2 and 3-year persistence rates have continued to climb.

**Figure 6.3: One, Two, and Three Year Retention Rates**

As faculty and staff reviewed data on retention and persistence, it was apparent that the traditional perspective on attrition (that students left because of academic difficulty) and traditional approaches to improving retention (advising and tutoring) would need to change. Although students’ stated reasons for leaving may not always reflect what is actually behind their decision, the survey results combined with Clearinghouse data confirm that most students were not leaving for the expected reasons. Since most students were not leaving Eastern because of academic difficulties, tutoring and academic support would not be sufficient to retain the majority to students who leave—students who have both academic records and financial ability that enable them to transfer to other two or four-year schools. New strategies targeted to these students had to be identified and implemented in order to improve retention even while advising and tutoring were enhanced to support the entire student body.

To identify effective strategies for increasing retention and persistence, student surveys and focus groups were conducted in 2009 and 2010. Students indicated they wanted help building relationships with advisors: freshmen wanted introduction to advisors in the summer and introductions to successful upper classmen. They also asked for coordinated, well-advertised tutoring services, preferably open in the evenings and attached to courses, including peer tutors and study group formation. Finally, they requested more outreach by Career Services and more assistance with Financial Aid processes. These student suggestions were integrated with strategies
identified in the literature as effective practices to develop a broad but integrated set of interventions implemented by both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

**Advising**

Several significant changes in academic advising have been implemented to improve services for all students and to increase retention. These include the creation of targeted advising cohorts (TACs), a four-stage advising program, new Freshman Preference Registration procedures, a Diversity Scholars Program, and Four Year Plans of Study. To support these initiatives, staffing in the Advising Center has increased from 3.5 FTE to 6.5 full-time equivalent employees complemented by 1.5 grant-funded positions supporting a Health and Life Science grant.

**Targeted Advising Cohorts:** A first step in targeting students with appropriate interventions was determining which students were at risk of leaving due to academic difficulties and which were likely to leave to transfer. Much of the data analysis in the past had focused on identification of first-time full-time students most at risk of not being retained by statistical models employing primarily “input” variables, such as SAT, gender, race, and household income. Additional data-tracking routines that were more actionable (i.e., that provide opportunities to implement student interventions earlier) were explored. This approach allowed sorting of students into groups to which different retention strategies would be applied.

Important differences emerged comparing students who remained versus those who dropped out. Compared to students who continued to the second year, students who dropped out were slightly more likely to be Pell recipients, to have more judicial infractions, and were less likely to be members of clubs or to engage in volunteer activities. In addition, drop-outs were less likely to earn GPAs above 2.0 in both their first and second semesters. Most importantly a greater likelihood of dropping out was predicted by a failure by first-time full-time students to attend a “mandatory” session of training in how to use the University library. Students who did not take the training or who took only the online assessment were almost twice as likely to drop out as students who attended a live session, regardless of level of predetermined academic risk.

A major change in the approach to advising occurred in AY 2011-12 as the approach to advising students and predictive modeling matured. Predictive analytics were used to estimate each student’s likelihood of withdrawing from Eastern or earning a GPA below 2.3, prior to their second year. Using pre-enrollment data, it classified students into four “Targeted Advising Cohorts” (or “TACs”). The model (see Figure 6.4) on campus became known as “The TAC Model.” The model charted students on one axis with regard to whether or not students would be at risk academically, and the other axis for whether or not they would be predisposed to leave the University through either their desire to transfer to another institution or drop out for a myriad of reasons. The quintiles were termed TAC 1, TAC 2, TAC 3 and TAC 4.
All first-time, full-time TAC students were assigned to professional advisors in the Advising Center, the Summer Transition at Eastern Program/Contract Admissions Program (STEP/CAP), the Office of AccessAbility Services, and the Intercollegiate Athletic Office. The professional advisors were charged with serving as primary advisors for TAC 1 and TAC 2 students and secondary advisors for TAC 3 and TAC 4 students. Alternatively, faculty advisors were charged to serve as primary advisors for TAC 3 and TAC 4 students and as secondary advisors for TAC 1 and TAC 2 students.

TAC 1 and TAC 2 students were predicted to earn less than a 2.3 GPA and possibly leave the University or be placed on academic probation. All TAC 3 and TAC 4 students were projected to earn a grade point average of 2.3 or higher. TAC 3 students were of particular concern; although they were predicted to be strong students academically, they were also viewed as likely to withdraw from Eastern and attend another college or university. It was determined these students could benefit from guidance and experiences that would bond them to their academic departments and to the University-at-large, making them less likely to transfer. The TAC 4 cohort was also predicted to be strong academically. However, the assumption was they were not likely to leave Eastern, but may have tended to over-commit themselves with heavy academic loads, participate in multiple student activities and/or jobs, and burn out.

The model proved accurate in placing students in each TAC (see Table 6.4). TAC 1 and TAC 3 students for whom there was concern for attrition did have lower retention rates than those in TAC 2 and TAC 4. In TAC 1 and TAC 2, the predictive model forecast that students’ GPAs would be lower than TAC 3 and TAC 4, which was the case.
Table 6.4 Retention Rates for 2012 Cohort by TAC Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FALL 2012</th>
<th>Registered for 2nd year</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC 1 (no. 210)</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC 2 (no. 171)</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC 3 (no. 256)</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC 4 (no. 339)</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (no. 976)</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 6.5, there are also marked differences in students who were contacted through the Advising Center and received advising from staff versus those that did not seek assistance. As mentioned earlier, the Advising Center made specific efforts to contact any students in TAC 1 and TAC 2, offering them assistance with questions or planning they may have had and encouraging them to complete four-year plans.

Table 6.5 TAC GROUPS RETAINED AFTER 1st YEAR WHEN MEETING WITH ADVISING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Met with AC?</th>
<th>TAC 1</th>
<th>TAC 2</th>
<th>TAC 3</th>
<th>TAC 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2010-2011</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>82.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AY 2011-2012</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While in the beginning years, use of the TAC model was based on students being “self-directed” in working with professional advisors, later cohorts would be “strongly encouraged” to seek the assistance of staff in the Advising Center by use of the word “requirement” in communications urging students to schedule appointments to see an advisor, although no real requirement or repercussions were in place for those who did not attend. Students who persisted at the University, aside from the assistance they were receiving from the professional advising staff in the Advising Center, already may have possessed just enough motivation to reach out and follow through on what was offered.

In fall 2011, Eastern implemented the Library Orientation key indicator with follow-up for all new students that did not participate, or only took the on-line library assessment. Students who completed the orientation were more likely to be retained than those who did not. Since Fall 2011, students who do not participate are automatically placed into a TAC with a higher “risk” level and receive more intrusive advising.

*Four-stage advising model:* A product of the 2008 Strategic Plan, the four-stage advising program (Figure 6.5) was designed to share the responsibility for advising between faculty and professional staff (Student Development Specialists) in the Advising Center. This model was intended to capitalize on the strengths of the two advising groups with faculty emphasizing
departmental orientation, major course selection, career mentoring, academic planning and individualized academic needs while the Student Development Specialists focused on placement testing, orientation, specialized services as needed, preliminary academic plans, developmental approaches to adjustment to college life, engagement on campus, selection of majors, probationary students and course selection.

**Figure 6.5: Four Stage Advising Program**

At Stage 1, “Pre-Enrollment,” primary advising is provided jointly by professional advisors and faculty advisors when a major had been declared. This stage’s focus was primarily set on orienting students to Eastern. Stage 1 was altered when the University adopted an online system called Freshman Preference Registration (FPR), which allowed incoming freshmen to register alongside the native student population at Eastern. New students were able to register online from their homes via FPR, which alleviated the requirement for students to wait to register for fall classes at an orientation session during the summer. With FPR, students were guided through an automated series of steps through which their first semester courses were selected. English and Math placement scores predetermined which beginning English or Math course a student was required to take, eliminating the need for students to make unguided decisions in this regard. All students were required to enroll in a First-Year Introduction class, and finally students were allowed to select two or three classes in the LAC. In the spring of 2013, changes were made to
the system to also include a course specifically required as a starting point for any selected major.

At Stage 2, “First-Year Stage,” primary comprehensive (developmental) advising was performed by the professional advising staff in the Advising Center, while faculty advisors were assigned to full-time students with declared majors. (Stage 2) At Stage 3, it was expected that undeclared students would work most closely with professional advising staff to focus on how to make choices regarding a major and how to schedule courses most effectively. At Stage 4, faculty advisors became the centerpiece of the advising model, as students at the stage of having selected and confirmed their majors are best served by faculty in the fields who are expected to help those students with academic planning, career mentoring and other aspects included in moving toward graduation.

*Freshmen Preference Registration (FPR):* The FPR registration was designed to improve the registration process for incoming first-year students. It allows them to register in a more thoughtful, deliberate way with few distractions and with automated guidance about registration. It ensures that students enroll in the correct math and English courses, in 15 credits, in a course recommended by the department of their intended major, and in an appropriate First Year program course.

*Diversity Scholars Program:* A Multicultural Advising Initiative was developed in 2012, modified to a Diversity Scholars Program (DSP) in 2013. The program addresses the needs of African American, Latino/a, Asian and Native American (ALANA) students who were not student athletes, honors or STEP/CAP students. The initial focus of the program was to invite students at-risk of not persisting to engage in intensive advising and mentoring. Sixty-five first-year students of color agreed to participate in the Diversity Scholars Program in AY 2013-14. The DSP offered peer mentoring services, student success workshops and academic support services to the program participants throughout the academic year. These support services included the following: DSP orientation, luncheons, Study Skills/Time Management Session, Financial Aid Workshop, Harvard Diversity Summer Program Presentation, Inroads Presentation, Inclusive Excellence Awards, and a DSP 2014-2015 Mentor Recruitment Workshop. A group of DSP students also participated in the Tour for Diversity in Medicine Program sponsored by AETNA. Of the 65 students participating in the Diversity Scholars Program, 78.5% were retained and the average GPA was 2.97. Among the 91 students who did not participate in the program, 73.6% were retained and the average GPA was 2.79.

*Four year plans of study:* To promote both retention and timely graduation, all students beginning in AY 2014-2015 prepare a four-year plan of study with their assigned Student Development Specialist. This plan of study is shared with the faculty advisor and, as of Spring 2015, put into the GradesFirst advising tool so that it can be accessed by any faculty member or advisor the student consults.

*Academic Policy and Procedure Changes to Promote Retention*

In addition to changes in Advising, academic policies and procedures were reviewed and modified to promote retention.

*Developmental mathematics:* In response to a state law requiring changes in developmental course offerings at public colleges and universities in Connecticut, Eastern modified placement standards and mathematics courses for incoming students. The model of embedded developmental support incorporated in Eastern’s Writing Program was extended to mathematics. Rather than taking a multi-course sequence, students requiring developmental mathematics coursework now complete that as part of their college-level math class. By allowing students to
earn more college level credits in their first year and make more progress to their degree, this change is aimed at improving retention.

Exploratory Major Designation: With evidence that students who do not declare a major are less likely to be retained or graduate, in Fall 2014 Eastern introduced a set of five “Exploratory” designations for students not ready to commit to a major. Based on the designation, Exploratory students are directed to the Mathematics class that is most appropriate for the general area they anticipate studying in. This, in turn, increases the chance that they are enrolled in classes with the students and faculty who will ultimately be in their area of study.

Academic Performance Notices (APN): The University strengthened use of its online Academic Performance Notice (APN) system to provide early warnings of students who need intervention services. Students identified by professors as having a need for additional academic or personal support are provided timely support and direction to different campus resources. Students are encouraged to use campus resources and to communicate with professors, advisors, and directors of support services. Through the system, a professor of any course notifies the student, the student’s faculty advisor, the student’s professional advisor (if applicable), Residence Life, the Dean of Students and the Bursar’s Office. Faculty and professional advisors reach out to their advisees and encourage them to address the issue(s) reported by professor. Professional advisors submit contact notes to APN coordinator. Approximately one week later the APN coordinator located in the Advising Center sends report with professional advisor contact notes to the Associate Director of Residential Life Services who distributes reports to Hall Director who, in turn, provide intervention services. The number of APNs has risen annually, reaching an all-time high in the fall of 2014.

GradesFirst: Faculty advisors and Student Development Specialists reported difficulty sharing up-to-date information on students for whom they shared advising responsibility. In Fall 2014 Eastern acquired a license for GradesFirst software to facilitate this sharing and also for use by students, faculty and staff to create appointments and keep shareable notes related to advising sessions.

First Year Program: Eastern has had a First Year Program for over a decade. In 2011-2012 the program was evaluated in terms of effectiveness and resource use. With little evidence that it had an effect on retention or student performance the program was significantly modified. From a program that required a 9-credit cluster of courses with low enrollment caps and a full-time director, the program was modified to include one 3-credit course (FYI 100) with a similar low enrollment and a peer mentor to support the faculty member. The courses focus on a theme reflecting the faculty member’s interest and expertise and include a significant element of orientation to the campus and to college and college study skills.

Integrate student support services in an Academic Services Center

In 2008, Eastern’s Strategic Plan included ambitious changes on campus to “…coordinate programs for student development, support, and engagement and a focus on nurturing an inclusive campus culture…to improve retention and graduation rates at Eastern.” One of its marquee challenges included centralization of academic support services and creating a Student Success Center to facilitate a comprehensive stage-based Advising and Support Program to foster student success.

In AY 2008-09, the Advising Center, the Writing Center, the Mathematics Achievement Center (MAC) and University bridge programs, the Summer Transition at Eastern Program/Contract Admissions Program (STEP/CAP) and Dual Enrollment Initiative (DCI), all moved their physical
locations to share a common office on the first floor of the J. Eugene Smith Library, a central campus location. The goal of centralizing these services into an Academic Services Center (ASC) was to (1) provide students with one place to receive help from all of the services and (2) allow staff members to work together to move students through their respective areas easily. The ASC was immediately successful with levels of student use requiring reconfiguration of the existing space and adding additional space after only one year.

**Mathematics Achievement Center (MAC):** The MAC provides mathematics support for developmental and Tier I LAC mathematics courses. It is a place where students do their math homework, work in study groups, work on on-line assignments/assessments, and get help from tutors. Acting upon information gleaned from focus groups, that some students felt there was a negative stigma associated with asking for help in a course, mathematics faculty assigned to the courses listed above incorporated MAC-assignments into the structure of their courses. By making visits to the MAC a routine practice for all mathematics students, it was hoped Eastern could eliminate any negative stigma associated with mathematics support services, the MAC was equipped with textbooks and software accommodating all classes.

**The Writing Center:** The Writing Center houses a Writing Director, a University Assistant Coordinator, 10 tutors, and a Writing Composition Faculty Coordinator. The Writing Center’s trained undergraduate peer tutors help students one-on-one to improve writing skills in any genre or class. They also help with writing done outside of class, such as application essays or letters. We provide feedback and guidance in a friendly, judgment-free zone, helping students to develop and refine ideas and communicate them in clear and appropriate ways.

**Subject Tutoring:** The Tutoring Center provides one-on-one tutoring by student tutors and professional tutors, supplemental instruction and skills development courses. In 2013, general tutoring services were utilized by 13% of first year students but most of these (68%). Although students who used tutoring did not earn higher GPAs or earn more credits than students who did not receive tutoring, they were more likely to be retained than the overall first year cohort (79.7% vs. 75.5%).

**Financial aid policies:** Eastern’s financial aid policies were modified in AY 2013 - 2014 to provide guaranteed aid/scholarship packages for four years assuming students met credit accumulation and GPA requirements. This change was aimed at ensuring that financial considerations to not contribute unnecessarily to attrition.

**Department-level focus on retention**

Recognizing that many students who leave Eastern are in good academic standing, increased emphasis has been placed on the role played by academic departments in retaining students. Department are given data each year on retention of students in their majors, both retention within the major and retention at Eastern. As Table 6.6 indicates rates of retention within the major and at Eastern vary significantly across academic majors. Of particular concern are those majors with low rates of retention at Eastern. A low rate of retention with the major may indicate that students clarify their interests and abilities while a low rate of retention at Eastern is more likely to indicate that the students had an overall poor experience in their first year. In spite of the fact that students have limited exposure to courses in their major in the first year, programs associated with high rates of attrition from Eastern are a concern.

Department chairs are asked to provide perspective on their programs’ retention rates in their annual reports and for information on tactics that are being employed to improve retention. Several departments have taken steps to improve retention. These include offering courses for
first-year students, having full-time faculty known to be effective teachers assigned to courses for first-year students, and having events for first-year students and upper classmen in the major.

Table 6.6: Retention within Major and Retention at Eastern by Academic Major, Full-Time Undergraduates Enrolled Fall 2012/Spring 2013: Status in AY 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Retained in Major</th>
<th>Changed Major</th>
<th>Dis-enrolled</th>
<th>1st to 2nd Yr in Major</th>
<th>1st to 2nd Yr at Eastern</th>
<th>2nd to 3rd Yr in Major</th>
<th>2nd to 3rd Yr at Eastern</th>
<th>3rd to 4th Yr in Major</th>
<th>3rd to 4th Yr at Eastern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business IS</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comm.</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Sci.</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English/Am. St.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Child. Ed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Ed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envtal ES</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen Studies, BGS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Program Cohort Development Grants:</td>
<td>In 2010, a faculty mini-grant competition to support student retention and success within major programs was initiated. It resulted in awards to several academic departments to fund activities to bond first-year students as a cohort and as members of a discipline-specific learning community. Theatre, Music and Psychology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
departments received multi-year funding. Although numbers of first-year students in Theatre and Music are too low to make a conclusion about the effectiveness of these activities, the Psychology program experienced an increase in retention.

New majors to meet student interest: In response to evidence that many students leave Eastern to pursue a specific academic major, several new majors have been developed in the last two years. These include Health Science, New Media Studies and Finance—all areas of increased student interest and workforce need.

Financial aid policies: Over the last three years financial aid strategies, both need and merit-based, have emphasized four-year awards. Students retain stable aid packages unless their academic or financial status changes significantly.

**Student life**

As a primarily residential campus, student life is critical in students’ decisions to remain at Eastern. Eastern’s retention initiatives begin each year with the Summer Orientation and Registration (SOAR) conducted by the Division of Student Affairs and extend through strategies designed to integrate and engage students while developing leadership and citizenship skills.

Evidence showed that Eastern students who are actively engaged in clubs and other extracurricular activities are more likely to be retained. This was especially true for Latino students. The Student Affairs division has actively promoted development of clubs to meet student interest and promoted student participation. Student Affairs activities to promote retention include clubs and intramurals, leadership opportunities, theme housing, a Dean’s Cup competition, counseling and psychological services and many wellness initiatives. Many of these initiatives aimed at improving retention improve persistence beyond the second year and contribute to increased 4- and 6-year graduation rates.

**Center for Internships and Career Development:** By providing career guidance to facilitate decision making in terms of selecting a major and connecting learning to experience the Center for Internships and Career Development (CICD) is an element of Eastern’s effort to improve retention and graduation. Students who use the services of the (CICD) demonstrated higher levels of success. In 2011, 80.1% of those receiving such services were retained vs. 72.1% of those not using these services. In 2012, students who used the services of the Center for Internships and Career Development also demonstrated higher levels of success. First year students (11% of incoming students) who used these services had retention rates of 85% vs. 73% of non-users of the service. They accumulated a greater number of credits (27.2 vs. 25.4) and earned higher GPAs (2.82 vs. 2.62). The differences for the low-income, first-generation or students of color were even more dramatic. Among this group, 87% of those who used CICD services were retained and achieved an average GPA of 2.75 for 26.5 credit hours earned, while for those who did not, 74% were retained with average GPA of 2.59 for 25.1 credit hours earned.

By 2014, the Center for Internships and Career Development assisted more than half of the first-year cohort. Over half (55.4%) of first-time full-time freshmen participated in TypeFocus, an online career development tool designed to assess students’ personality, interests and values. More than half (53.6%) of the Title III cohort students participated in the assessment. Early use of the Center for Internships and Career Development (CICD) is encouraged so that students will become more substantively engaged in their studies, declare a major early in their academic career, and persist at higher rates. Students that used CICD in their first year were more likely to have declared a major, a factor associated with a greater likelihood of retention. In addition, the Title III cohort students were more likely to have declared a major (88%) than their counterparts.
Housing: Retention initiatives in housing are critical elements of Eastern’s overall retention strategy with close to 90% of first year students living on campus. Initiatives in the Housing Programming Model/Residential Curriculum include:

- Housing Student Engagement Tracking
- Housing RA One-On-One Conversations
- Theme Housing Options
- First Year Residential Experience (F.Y.R.E.) Theme Housing
- Soph-MORE Theme Housing (coming Fall 2014)
- Dean’s Cup Competition (Housing)
- LEAP into Leadership Tier 1 (or Tier 2 for those who complete Tier 1 freshman year)
- LEAP into Leadership Themed Housing (coming Fall 2014)
- Dean’s Cup Competition (Housing)
- LEAP into Leadership Tier 1 (or Tier 2 for those who complete Tier 1 freshman year)
- LEAP into Leadership Themed Housing (coming Fall 2014)
- Campus Activities Board (CAB) events/Late Night Programs
- Friday After Dark (FAD) events
- Financial Literacy programs in residence halls
- Commuter student events (open to all commuters, including sophomores)
- Annual Leadership conference
- Student Organization Fair - encouraging club involvement
- Family Day events
- Intramural sports

Graduation rates

Although retention rates have not risen in recent years, 4-year and 6-year graduation rates improved at a rapid pace beginning with the Fall 2007 cohort as shown in Table 6.7. The four-year graduation rate for students who entered in fall 2007 semester and graduated in spring 2011 was 32.2%. For those starting in the fall 2010 semester and graduating in spring 2014 the rate was 41.4%. As with retention, the graduation rate for White students fluctuates less than the rates for Black and Hispanic students, probably due to the numbers of students in each population, Rates for Whites are consistently higher than those for Black or Hispanic students.

Table 6.7: Four-Year Graduation Rates of First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Entry Cohort/Graduation</th>
<th>All FTFTF</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian American</th>
<th>Two or More Races</th>
<th>Total Minority</th>
<th>Minority -White Gap</th>
<th>Percent Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010 / Grad in 2014</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009 / Grad in 2013</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>-23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008 / Grad in 2012</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>N ≤ 10</td>
<td>N ≤ 10</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007 / Grad in 2011</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>-2%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Six-year graduation rates have also risen over the last ten years, reaching an all-time high in 2014. Again, the rates for Black and Hispanic students vary more widely from year to year than the rate for Whites and are lower (except for the Fall 2006 cohort).

While strategies to promote retention will contribute to increased graduation rates and to persistence beyond the second year, additional strategies have been implement to increase persistence and ultimately graduation. Significant emphasis has been placed on increasing the four-year rate.
**Academic strategies**

*Curriculum:* High impact practices: In both 2008 and 2013 Strategic Plans, significant emphasis was placed on incorporation of high impact practices to engage students with their courses, faculty and classmates. Funding for programs to promote Undergraduate Research, service-learning, study abroad/global field courses and active learning has been provided through summer curriculum development grants, faculty development grants, a Global Citizenship Scholarship fund, funding for student undergraduate research and through the Exemplary Program process. Departments that incorporate these high impact practices (Environmental Earth Science, Biology, Psychology and Social Work, for example) tend to have relatively high graduation rates. Departments are provided annually with data on graduation rates (see Table 6.9) and, as with retention, are asked to provide perspective on their programs’ graduation rates and information on strategies to improve them.

**Table 6.9 Graduation rates by major**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th># FR Fall 07</th>
<th>Grad in 09-10</th>
<th>Grad in 10-11</th>
<th>4-yr Grad %</th>
<th>Grad in 11-12</th>
<th>Grad in 12-13</th>
<th>6-yr Grad %</th>
<th>Same Major %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undeclared</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochem</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business IS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communic.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp Sci.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environ. ES</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. St AS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. St BGS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History/AS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History/SS</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individ.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform Art</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-EC Edu</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-edu</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Elem.</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Soc. Ed</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Ed</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Sci</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Soc Wk</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport &amp; Leis</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Art</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exemplary Program Process:** Eastern has long had an Academic Program Review Process but it was not associated with resource allocation and, as a result, was not effective in generating program revision aimed at improvement. The Exemplary Program Process, in place since 2010 has replaced the prior process and is closely aligned with resource distribution. Retention and
graduation rates are among the factors that are considered in the process. Departments have been rewarded for making program revisions that resulted in higher retention and graduation rates.

**Bachelor of General Studies:** Eastern has offered a Bachelor of General Studies degree through the School of Continuing Education for many years but it was restricted to students over age 25. In 2013 this age requirement was lifted and as a result, many students became eligible. For students who are dismissed from majors with minimum GPA requirements above 2.0, the BGS became a means to complete graduation requirements and earn a degree.

**Academic policies and procedures:** The course withdrawal policy was changed from requiring an instructor-designated grade of Withdraw Pass or Withdraw Fail to a grade of Withdraw with advisor approval. Liberal Arts Core (LAC) policies were revised to permit two courses in the LAC to be taken on a credit/no-credit basis.

**Student Affairs (Ken, what should be added here?)**

Campus culture: Since 2008, Eastern has emphasized four-year degree completion through marketing and a cultural shift focusing on the expectation that students will graduate in four years. The School of Continuing Education has offered marketing plan emphasized the role of summer and intersession courses in enabling on-time graduation

**Financial management**

“OMG” (Occupancy Management Group)/Financial Review: The Occupancy Management Group (OMG) is a program overseen by the Dean of Students in collaboration with Housing & Residence life since the spring semester of 2011. Each semester in late September (for the fall) and late January (for the spring), the Bursar’s Office applies financial holds to students’ accounts that have a past due balance. Housing & Residential Life run a report to determine all students who have a financial hold and Residence Hall Directors meet one-on-one with the students who have holds who reside in their respective buildings. The one-on-one meetings consist of the Hall Directors helping the affected students to determine their plan for rectifying their bill. The meetings reinforce what students should have learned through the financial literacy programming. The one-on-one meetings are documented in database software so that all staff who interact with the student are aware of the progress being made in rectifying their financial situations. The OMG program has resulted in housing occupancy rates close to 100% for the past several academic years and has contributed to improving retention through a decline in the number of students who are prevented from registering due to financial holds.

**Financial Review Day:** “Financial Review Day” scheduled in late October (fall semester) and late March (spring semester), is a collaboration between the Dean of Students Office, Housing & Residential Life, the Bursar’s Office, and the Financial Aid Office. Students who have financial holds are strongly encouraged to attend. In many instances, parents also attend. The event spans approximately three to four hours and students are able to drop in at a time that is convenient for them. Refreshments are served at the event and a PowerPoint presentation continuously scrolls with pertinent financial information and resources. Staffs from the Bursar’s and Financial Aid Offices are present and they meet one-on-one with students to individually review each student’s financial situation. In most instances, financial situations are able to be resolved as staff are able to assist students with completing FAFSA deficiencies as well recommend payment plans, student employment, Parent Plus Loans, private loans, and other funding options. The Financial Review Days have yielded a 65% resolution rate.
Projections

In the summer of 2015, almost half way through the period of the 2013 Strategic Plan, an assessment of current retention and graduation initiatives will be conducted. In Fall 2014 several changes were made including replacing “Undeclared Major” status with one of five “Exploratory” designations, offering new majors including three that meet student career interests, redesigning developmental mathematics courses and encouraging the use of high impact practices. Sufficient data should be available to measure the impact of the TAC approach to advising, the Four-Stage Advising Process, theme-based housing, FYI 100, etc. Depending on the results of that assessment, over the next five years, existing student support services, academic policies and procedures, and student life strategies designed to promote academic success and retention will be maintained, modified, or abandoned. Increased emphasis will be placed on department activities that link students to department faculty and classmates, ensuring that first year students take major-related classes with the most effective teachers, financial aid strategies that encourage retention and four-year graduation and offering academic programs that meet student interests.

New strategies that will be considered include:

- increased emphasis on supplemental instruction in high-risk and critical entry-level courses  
  tutoring provided in academic department office areas
- assigning outstanding full-time faculty members to teach freshman level classes.
- offering increased incentives to faculty to incorporate high impact practices in courses  
  and program requirements and provide necessary faculty development.
- housing freshmen in residence halls with designs that are correlated with high retention

Through these existing and new strategies retention is targeted to rise to over 80% in the next two years and the four-year graduation rate to over 50% in the next five years.

PART 7: INSTITUTIONAL PLANS

Over the last several years, Eastern has made significant progress in our mission of providing an excellent liberal arts experience at a public university price. Our advancements have come largely through collaboration, as we have worked to develop and implement our strategic plans. For most of the last decade, Eastern has used strategic planning to drive the creation of new initiatives and determine resource allocations. Our most recent 2013 plan builds on the plan adopted in 2008, and we have invested considerable time and effort into both endeavors. We will continue to utilize these plans while we work over the next five years to enhance and articulate the quality of an Eastern degree, as we believe these efforts represent the most effective methods for meeting the challenges and opportunities we currently face.

While most of our work over the last decade has been focused on our own strategic vision, Eastern is also guided by the CSCU’s vision for the system, articulated in its Transform CSCU 2020. This system-wide plan consists of eleven initiatives that are intended to unite the seventeen CSCU institutions to increase affordability and accessibility for students, make the system an economic engine for the state, and improve the overall student experience. Fortuitously, the goals and initiatives contained in Transform CSCU 2020 are closely aligned with the goals and initiatives in our 2008 and 2013 strategic plans, and with the strategic
vision we have for our University. Given this alignment, our efforts over the next five years will be focused on the continued implementation of the 2013 strategic plan in ways that meet the goals and objectives of Transform 2020.

Eastern’s Strategic Plan and Transform CSCU 2020 Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 Strategic Plan Objectives</th>
<th>Transform CSCU 2020 Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Maximize the value of an Eastern Degree</td>
<td>1. Attracting &amp; Recruiting Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Ensure that Programs are Relevant, Effective, and Challenging</td>
<td>2. Student Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Enhance Learning through Campus and Community Engagement in Integrative Learning Experiences</td>
<td>3. Enhance Academic Offerings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Assist Students, Staff, and Faculty in Achieving their Full Potential</td>
<td>4. Transfer &amp; Articulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Increase Public Awareness of Eastern’s Unique Mission and Community</td>
<td>5. Instructional Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Student Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Workforce of Tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8. Transparency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. Revenue Management Efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10. IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11. Facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eastern’s 2013 strategic plan is comprised of five overarching objectives, each containing a number of initiatives and sub-initiatives. Objective I, “Maximize the Value of an Eastern Degree,” is aligned with the Transform 2020 initiatives: Attracting and Recruiting Students, Student Retention, Instructional Innovation, Workforce of Tomorrow, Revenue Management and Efficiency, IT, and Facilities. In an effort to Attract and Recruit Students, Eastern will continue to enhance its residential, liberal arts college experience while controlling costs to maintain the value of an Eastern degree. Student Retention will be increased as we continue to refine our new advising program to ensure that all students are working with professional and faculty advisors to develop and follow their Eastern in Four graduation plans. We are also developing new programs to educate students and their families about college debt. Our students will be better prepared to participate in the Workforce of Tomorrow as our academic departments develop ways to connect current students to alumni and other professionals in their fields, so those students can better understand the skills they will need to be competitive in the workforce. Objective I of our plan also focuses on Instructional Innovation, IT, and Facilities by seeking innovative modes of course delivery, such as online, hybrid, or off-hours classes, that match student needs, while reviewing classroom and library resources to make certain they effectively support teaching, learning, and research. Finally, Objective I strives to enhance Revenue Management and Efficiency by requiring every administrative unit to adhere to its own operational plan that ensures all initiatives and resource allocations match the strategic vision of the University.

Objective II, “Ensure that Programs are Relevant, Effective, and Challenging” fits with the Transform initiatives Enhance Academic Offerings, Instructional Innovation, and building a Workforce of Tomorrow. Our Academic Program Review process will be focused on reducing complexities in our majors and the Liberal Arts Core, and creating more integrative learning experiences that fit within our Liberal Arts Work program. The program review process and annual assessment will be used to revise our academic programs to ensure our students are developing the skills needed to compete in a global economy. Departments will be encouraged to focus on the quality of student learning.
outcomes, moving beyond the traditional focus on the sequence of courses required in the major. The hiring of a new Dean of Education and Professional Studies means we can now also turn our attention to developing new graduate programs and revising our existing programs so we better meet student needs and provide the skills sought by employers.

Objective III, “Enhance Learning through Campus and Community Engagement in Integrative Learning Experiences,” continues our efforts at Instructional Innovation, Enhancing Academic Offerings, and Workforce preparation by providing a liberal arts education with practical applications. The value of any college degree must be linked to career planning and preparation. As such, we will continue to increase the number and quality of our integrative pre-professional experiences and provide these experiences throughout students’ academic careers, so we can strengthen the link between student success in academic programs and their preparation for successful careers. To accomplish this goal, academic departments will again work to update academic offerings and provide new programs so that our curriculum aligns with changing employment trends and student interests. To make sure that our students are prepared to be leaders in their communities, several initiatives within Objective III also promote integrative learning through community engagement.

Objective IV is designed to assist students, staff and faculty in achieving their full potential and its initiatives align closely with the Transform initiatives of Student Retention and Student Services. Over the next five years, we will continue to build on our new advising program to refine the use of data and technology to more effectively identify individual student’s need for academic and financial aid support. More importantly, these efforts will track whether students take advantage of that support, and assist in determining if that support has had the intended effect. We will continue to develop our Parents’ Engagement Program, so parents can constructively assist in our efforts to support student success. Our newly created Office of Professional Development will also continue to provide more effective opportunities and incentives for faculty training in academic advising.

Finally, Objective V, “Increase Public Awareness of Eastern’s Unique Mission and Community” seeks to Attract and Recruit Students by working to enhance our reputation for providing an excellent liberal arts education that prepares students to succeed in a global economy. We will continue to refine our use of data, technology, and financial aid to attract diverse students who are well prepared to succeed at Eastern. Our Dean of Arts & Sciences will work with our science and mathematics departments to identify ways to attract more diverse students to the STEM fields. These recruitment programs can then serve as models for other academic departments. We will continue to participate fully in the creation CSCU’s Transfer and Articulation Policy, which will ease the path for students who transfer from Connecticut’s community colleges. And, we will continue to find ways to better target our marketing efforts to attract diverse and well-qualified students who are looking for the type of educational experience we offer.

The future of Eastern Connecticut State University is bright. As we work to fully implement our strategic plan and its vision, in alignment with the vision of the Board of Regents and Transform CSCU 2020, we will continue to provide a high quality liberal arts education that is accessible to students from across the state and region. Our efforts over the next five years will help ensure that our students successfully complete their education in a timely manner with limited debt, while acquiring the skills they will need to be leaders in their communities and professional fields.