

Eastern Connecticut State University
Fiscal Year 2007 Spending Plan
Narrative

Executive Summary

Fiscal Year 2006

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accepted the fifth-year interim report of Eastern at its November 3, 2005 meeting. NEASC commended the University for its strong commitment to its role as a public liberal arts institution. It noted that recent program additions in the arts and sciences coupled with the “lengthy and fruitful” dialogue on the general education requirements. It commended Eastern for its faculty based assessment efforts and the crucial information gained through that effort. NEASC noted its interest in learning more about the implementation of revised general education requirements. The adoption of the totally revamped General Education Requirements (GER), slated for Fall 2007 implementation, by the University Senate sets a clear path for the University. The University also undertook an extensive review of retention and graduation issues and has developed an expansion of first year programs which will begin in Fiscal Year 2008. The features of that program will be discussed in greater detail under the enrollment section.

The tight fiscal situation facing the University has made the delivery of administrative and support services a significant challenge. Efforts to reduce the overall shortfall have been hindered by energy costs that exceeded projections. The University has kept most departmental budgets at Fiscal Year 2005 levels. Selected investment in programs and externally mandated costs were the primary reason for any increase in departmental budgets. The University continues to hold more than seventy positions vacant. All positions, evenly newly vacated spots, must undergo a thorough review with final approval given by the President. The University has made many process improvements and continues to expand the automated processes in BANNER. The University implemented an Income Tax Refund Intercept Program in conjunction with the State Bureau of Collection Services and Department of Revenue Services. Eastern

Key FY 2006 Highlights

- ✓ **Revised General Education Requirement**
- ✓ **Completion of the Margaret S. Wilson Child & Family Development Complex and opened Preschool Program**
- ✓ **Opened two residence halls totaling 500 beds**
- ✓ **Increased full-time and maintained part-time enrollment**
- ✓ **Started Income Tax Refund Intercept Program**

has collected more than \$75,000 since the program started in mid February. The mostly automated program has permitted the University to collect on accounts going back more than two decades. In addition, the Refund Intercept Program has made contact with more than a third of all individuals owing money to Eastern. The program will be continuing throughout the year and in future years. Recent changes to the Connecticut Income tax are likely to produce more and larger returns for next year. The program is an integral part of collection activities. Information gathered as part of the program is being used to recalculate our allowance for doubtful accounts. The reassessment of collectable debts was recommended as part of the PricewaterhouseCoopers’ Report to Management, June 30, 2005.

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Fiscal Year 2006 has seen an unprecedented level of construction activity. The University completed the construction of 501 new beds. The University, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the contractor, Manafort/Perini, was able to secure a permanent Certificate of Occupancy rather than the usual Temporary Certificate.

Eastern's strong collaboration with DPW, the Office of the State Building Inspector and the State Fire Marshall's office help us accomplish this feat. It also demonstrates Eastern commitment to providing well constructed and safe facilities for our students and staff.

Simultaneous to the completion of the residence halls, the University opened the academic portion of the Margaret S. Wilson Child and Family Development Complex. The University also completed the installation of technology throughout the facility much of which was funded by a \$2.03 million grant from the federal Department of Housing and Early Development. The total facility occupies 39,407 square feet with extensive playground and exterior learning environments. The pre-school facility opened in February and is currently adding student sections for planned full operations for the Fall 2007. The pre-school program will operate 51 weeks a year and will be supported by student fees and public and private grants.

Eastern also completed the field work associated with its new 400 meter track located adjacent to the baseball complex on the Mansfield site. The track and field facility was fully operational for intercollegiate and intramural use during the Fall of 2005. The University managed the bidding and construction of two parking lots adding 135 spots to the core of the campus. Nearly half of the spots are dedicated to residential students living in Nutmeg Hall, Laurel Hall and the Windham Street Apartments.

Total full-time enrollment increased by 1.8% or an average of 65 students over Fiscal Year 2005 levels. This was slightly below budget targets of 2.2% or 67 students. Part-time headcount continued to decline, dropping 4.5% or 59 students from Fiscal Year 2005. Budget targets were a decline of 2.0% or 26 students. It should be noted that while headcount for part-time students dropped, overall credit hours are expected to increase by 3.3% or 690 credits over Fiscal Year 2005 levels.

The University Senate adopted a revised General Education Requirement which will begin with students entering the University during the Fall of 2007. This campus-wide dialogue has strengthened the University commitment and understanding of its Liberal Arts mission. In addition, a committee of faculty and student affairs staff have worked together to create a model first year program that will take existing programs and expand them to serve more students.

Major Facilities Projects

Completed Projects:

- The opening of Laurel Hall (255 beds) and Nutmeg Hall (246 beds) on-time and with permanent Certificate of Occupancy;
- The opening of the Wilson Child & Family Development Complex;
- Completion of Phase I of 400 Meter Track & Field;
- Managed the Design & Construction of two parking lots (a total of 135 spots).

New Construction Projects:

- Science Building
- Student Center Renovation & Expansion;
- Burr Hall Roof & Exterior Renovations.

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Fiscal Year 2007

The University's Operating Budget is expected to use \$440,637 of reserves to cover operating costs. The University has been forced to absorb current service pay increases and fringe hikes with only minimal increases in state support. System-wide limits on tuition and fee increases over the past several years have made it impossible for Eastern to re-align its revenue stream to deal with a state commitment that does not keep pace with collective bargaining increases, raises in fringe benefit costs and the opening of new facilities. In the report that follows, detailed expenditure and revenue trends are examined from Fiscal Year 2000 through the proposed Fiscal Year 2007 plan. The projections are built on a 1.5% increase in full-time enrollment, a leveling of undergraduate part-time credit hours and a slight decline in graduate part-time credits. Average housing occupancy is expected to increase 3.6% or by 81 beds.

The Fiscal Year 2007 Spending Plan includes the hire of four positions to begin the full implementation of the First Year Program. The request includes the hire of Director and three additional faculty members. The Plan also includes the hire of an additional patrol officer and staff to expand the operations of the Child and Development program. The request includes four master teachers and an Information Technology/Media support person. The full-time staff will be supported by part-time University Assistants and trained student workers.

The University remains at very low staffing levels for many support functions. The University is not requesting the refill of a number of maintenance, clerical and professional support positions at this time as a result of the operating shortfall. Several planning efforts including master and strategic planning are expected to be in full swing during Fiscal Year 2007. The University is also preparing to support a new president as the individual delineates staffing priorities.

The Spending Plan does not reflect the eventual operating needs of several major projects currently under construction or several that are expected to begin in Fiscal Year 2007.

The University does not expect any of those projects to be completed or fully operational during a significant portion of Fiscal Year 2007. In addition to the Student Center renovation and expansion and the construction of the Science Building, the University is expected to begin construction on a softball field, a new Public Safety building, and a new parking garage. Those new facilities will have significant operating costs in future years.

**Key FY 2007 Budget
Highlights**

- ✓ **Significant Operating Shortfall**
- ✓ **Expansion of First Year Program**
- ✓ **Expected increase in full-time enrollment while maintaining part-time levels**
- ✓ **Increased fall and spring housing occupancy rate**
- ✓ **Five major construction projects**

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Specific Areas of Interest

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan was established for the period of 2001 through 2006. The University is currently reviewing the plan and highlighting areas that were successfully completed, areas that are no longer valid and areas where the goals were not met. The process will continue into Fiscal Year 2007 to complete an update of goals and objectives.

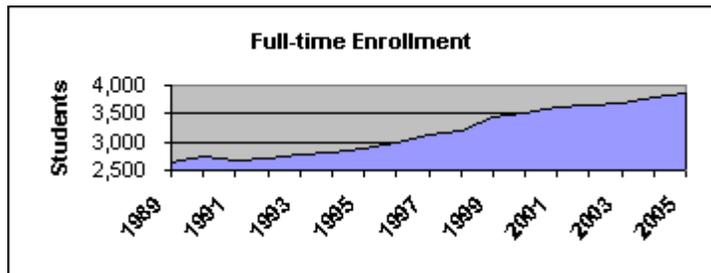
1. Enrollment

Eastern Connecticut State University experienced another year of enrollment growth in full-time students but saw a decline in part-time students. The following chart shows Eastern's dramatic growth in full-time enrollment over the past sixteen years.

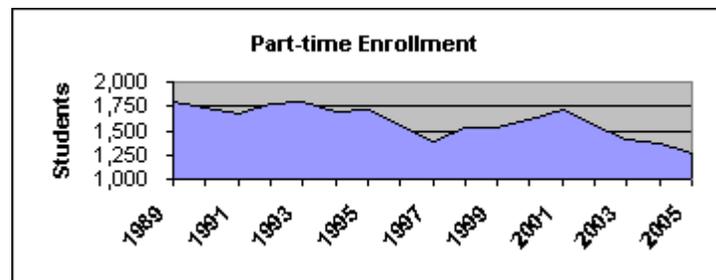
Enrollment Summary

	Fall 1989	Fall 2005	Change	
			#	%
Full-time	2,655	3,846	1,191	44.9%
Part-time	1,795	1,267	(528)	-29.4%
Head Count	4,450	5,113	663	14.9%

Full-time: Overall full-time enrollment has increased by 1,191 students between the period Fall 1989 to Fall 2005. The full-time enrollment has increased consistently during this period.



Part-time Enrollment: During this period part-time enrollment has experienced a decline of 528 students. This reduction in the part-time enrollment represents a decline of nearly 30% from Fall 1989 levels.



For Fiscal Year 2006, total full-time enrollment increased by 1.8% or an average of 65 students over Fiscal Year 2005 levels. This was slightly below budget targets of 2.2% or 67 students. Part-time headcount continued to decline, dropping 4.5% or 59 students from

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Fiscal Year 2005. The Fiscal Year 2006 Spending Plan projected a decline of 2.0% or 26 students. It should be noted that while headcount for part-time students dropped, overall credit hours are expected to increase by 3.3% or 690 credits over Fiscal Year 2005 levels.

The following table compares the original average enrollment projection with the actual results. It should be noted that headcount declines for part-time enrollment occurred at greater rates than declines in total credit hours.

Average Enrollment			
	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006
Full-time			
Projected	3,583	3,621	3,727
Actual	3,581	3,648	3,713
Over/(Under)	(2)	27	(14)
Part-time			
Projected	1,469	1,270	1,295
Actual	1,320	1,321	1,256
Over/(Under)	(149)	51	(39)
Total			
Projected	5,052	4,891	5,022
Actual	4,901	4,969	4,969
Over/(Under)	(151)	78	(53)

The University enrolled 869 full-time, first year students for the Fall of 2005. Nearly 88% or 765 of the entering students resided in on-campus housing. Females represented 56% of incoming students while males represented 44% of the cohort. The male percentage was a drop of two points from Fall 2004 figures. Students of color represented 17% of the incoming population or the same percentage of Fall 2004 figures. 22% of the incoming class ranked in the top quarter of their high school class. Eastern exceeded the national verbal SAT average by 6 points but lagged the math average by 13 points. The average combined score for the incoming class was 1021. Of the incoming class, 48% represented the first generation in their family to go to college.

Eastern is expected that the class rank for the Fall 2006 first-time students will be similar to Fall 2005 statistics but expects to see a drop in SAT scores. This is consistent with national and state trends as SAT scores are expected to be 5 to 15 points below last year's averages. Eastern is seeking to enroll an average of 55 more full-time students (1.5% increase) for Fiscal Year 2007, maintain undergraduate part-time enrollment, and experience an average drop in part-time graduate activity of 6 students (2.1% drop).

Eastern's programs in Groton and Vernon are increasing the part-time undergraduate activity. A new partnership with the Norwich Free Academy is expected to create opportunities for off-site graduate offerings. The Admissions Office has hired a new international admissions officer which is expected to increase recruitment for the Fall 2007 period.

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Eastern operates in a very competitive marketplace with two other public institutions within eight miles from the Willimantic campus. The University of Connecticut reduces its summer extension fee rates and has become very aggressive in marketing courses in the region. The approved Summer 2005 rates put the cost for an Eastern course above rates charged by the University of Connecticut. The Office of Continuing Education in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Research has conducted research on summer course preferences. From the research it was clear that cost, course availability and flexibility of schedule were key factors in determining enrollment in Summer courses. The Office of Continuing Education has worked closely with academic departments to design a schedule that meet outstanding student needs. Flexible times and locations are also being employed.

The University is aggressively increasing admission selectivity even as it is expanding its freshman class. Greater selectivity is critical in establishing the school as Connecticut's Public Liberal Arts University and is consistent with the Board's desire to improve academic excellence system-wide. Our effort to improve selectivity comes without any financial incentive. In fact, resource allocation is driven strictly by full-time enrollment with no consideration for outcome measures or improved selectivity. Choosing selectivity in the environment of state fund distribution based on enrollment and a lack of undergraduate tuition differential actually impairs the University's fiscal picture. Yet it is Eastern's belief that this choice will produce significant long-term benefits for the University, the System and the State of Connecticut.

Eastern has seen a dramatic improvement in both the class rank and SAT scores since 2000. The following admission selectivity table highlights the change for first-time, full-time students.

Admissions Selectivity

Measure	Fall 2000	Fall 2005
SAT Scores	983	1021
Top 25% of Class Rank	19%	22%

2. Student Retention and Graduation

Worksheet 10 includes detailed data on retention and graduation.

A key objective of the Strategic Plan's first priority, Promoting Academic Excellence, is to improve student retention and graduation by strengthening academic advising and support programs and by refining the first year program. The Academic and Student Affairs divisions have joined together to target improved rates of retention and graduation. The team has examined national models, reviewed research and assessed our own programs in an attempt to design a more effective approach for student retention and degree completion.

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Eastern's improvement of its retention and graduation rates was an area of focus for the NEASC reaccreditation team. The group stressed that for Eastern truly to establish itself as a public liberal arts university, it must understand the dynamics driving the rates and then make the necessary policy and programmatic improvements. The University is making progress in improving retention and expects to translate it into improved graduation rates. The University's ability to maintain course offerings despite constrained finances and limited state support will be a critical determinant in the graduate rate.

Recap of Retention and Graduation Rates:

Retention

- **The one-year retention rate for Fall 2004 enrollees is 78.4%, up more than thirteen percentage points from the rates for Fall 1993 (FY 1994) enrollees and eight percentage points higher than Fall 1999 (FY 2000) enrollees.**
- **Eastern's retention rate of 78.4% compares favorably to the average of 77% for other COPLAC institutions.**
- **The two-year rate for Fall 2002 students is 61.9%, up nine and a half percentage points from the rates for Fall 1993 enrollees and nearly three percentage points for Fall 1999 enrollees.**

Graduation

- **The six-year graduation rate for those entering in Fall 1999 was 42.9%, up more than seven percentage points from those entering in Fall 1993.**
 - **While graduation rates for public institutions throughout the country have dropped than 20% since the early 1980s, Eastern's graduation has improved.**
 - **The four-year graduation rate for Fall 2001 enrollees is 29%, almost five points higher than Fall 1999 enrollees.**
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For Summer 2006, Eastern will once again be offering a mandatory, over-night orientation program. The program will be tied closely into Fall 2006 engagement programs and the expansion of low enrollment colloquy type courses. The program also includes a parental program. Orientation sessions deal with academic expectations, advisement, and success; student responsibilities; campus health and safety; financial obligations and opportunities; student support services and activities; residential life and food service; commuter student services; transfer student issues; and familiarity with the campus as a whole. Faculty are available at all seven sessions to meet and advise the incoming students.

While the University is making progress towards a 52% six-year graduation rate, limited funding makes it difficult to invest in many of the programs that will enhance student progression. The addition of four faculty positions for the first year program is a start but it must be followed up by programs that serve years two through graduation. In addition, limited funds for need and merit financial aid also hinder Eastern's ability to assist students to finish their degree in four years.

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3. Affirmative Action/Diversity

Faculty, Staff and Student Diversity is a key component of the University's Strategic Plan. The Affirmative Action/Diversity priority has three objectives:

- Develop a common language for understanding diversity and for promoting ongoing dialogue within the campus community;
- Develop institutional accountability for diversity;
- Infuse curricular and co-curricular offerings and programs that represent diversity of thought, culture and experiences.

Diversity in faculty and staff is critical to creating an environment that encourages people of all color and backgrounds to understand cultural differences and therefore better understand our world. The University promotes equal opportunity throughout the employee recruitment and hiring process. The Office of Equity and Diversity reviews and approves all searches to ensure fair and open processes. Ensuring a diverse workforce will be especially critical during the extended period of significant refills due to vacancies created by the state's ERIP. While some refills will come from state-wide layoff lists which offer little opportunity for proactive efforts to diversify the workforce, the University will make every effort to broaden its employee base during the coming year.

The following chart breaks down the ethnic distribution of the University staff.

ECSU Full-Time Workforce by Ethnicity

Year	Total Employees					
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native	Total
2006	434 77.2%	50 8.9%	51 9.1%	25 4.4%	2 0.4%	562 100%
2005	421 77.8%	50 9.2%	46 8.5%	22 4.1%	2 0.4%	541 100%
2004	413 77.5%	49 9.2%	44 8.3%	25 4.7%	2 0.4%	533 100%
2003	426 77.7%	48 8.8%	46 8.4%	26 4.7%	2 0.4%	548 100%
2002	411 76.7%	44 8.2%	48 9.0%	31 5.8%	2 0.4%	536 100%
2001	403 76.8%	46 8.8%	47 9.0%	27 5.1%	2 0.4%	525 100%
2000	384 75.7%	41 8.1%	50 9.9%	30 5.9%	2 0.4%	507 100%
1999	360 77.1%	32 6.9%	47 10.1%	26 5.6%	2 0.4%	467 100%

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Charts of student and employee diversity have been provided as part of the Spending Plan package.

The University has achieved all Fiscal Year 2006 minority and small business purchasing set-aside goals within the first three quarters. Through the first three quarters, Eastern has achieved 122% of the small business goal and 294% of the minority business goal. The state-mandated program is operated by the Department of Administrative Services.

4. Development

Recap of Endowment Development:

- As of May 1, 2006, the ECSU Foundation has raised \$1.4 million and is 21% ahead of last year's rate;
- Alumni giving is 38% ahead of last year and faculty/staff giving is 15% ahead of last year;
- The Foundation has gifts of \$381,000 so far towards the \$500,000 endowment target;
- Four new fundraising initiatives were created including a 20 week student phonation, "Windows of Opportunities" naming program, Annual Fund Legacy Initiative and the President's Legacy Planned Giving Society.
- Alumni events were staged in Hartford, Boston, New York City, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco;
- New Parent's Association raised over \$10,000 for creation of of a new campus park;
- The Foundation's net assets increased to \$8.2 million at the close of Fiscal Year 2005, a 26.2% increase over the 2004 level of \$6.5 million;
- Final 2005 gifts, grants and other donations totaled \$2,350,401 – an increase of 17.3% or \$346,174 over 2004 levels.

5. Continuous Quality Improvement

The University has undertaken a number of efforts to improve the delivery of services to students and staff. The University has been able to achieve this success despite having fewer administrative positions than before the layoff and retirement program of Fiscal Year 2003. Over the past few years, Eastern has leveraged the information power of BANNER to produce automation that improves services will reducing demand on staff time. The University, for example, over the past year has made the following process improvements:

- Created automated income tax refund intercept program (three month revenue of \$65,000 versus mostly one-time, in-kind expenses of \$15,000 to start the program);

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- Automated DHE Quarterly Reporting Process (shared with the rest of CSU, saving of twelve staff days per year);
- Automated Annual NCAA Reporting Process (saved five staff days per year);
- Automated electronic bank feeds to update canceled checks (reduce reconciliation time by one week saving more than 36 staff days per year);
- Automated monthly postage feed process (reduced staff time by 12 staff days per year);
- Instituted document imaging to manage Financial Aid documentation.

The University received three comments related to procedures and controls in the PricewaterhouseCooper Report to Management, June 30, 2005. This total was a reduction of one finding from the previous report and PWC noted significant improvement in all areas of fiscal control. The Auditors of Public Accounts (APA) have begun their audit of the period of Fiscal Year 2004 through Fiscal Year 2005. The report will not be ready in the near future. An audit team from the Office of the State Comptroller visited the University in December of 2005. The team came to review progress on findings from the APA Report of Fiscal Year 2002 and Fiscal Year 2003. The team reported that all areas examined were in compliance and the group did not report any control concerns.

6. Administrative Costs

Eastern Connecticut State University realizes that in order to become Connecticut's Public Liberal Arts University, it must reallocate resources. Cost savings are an important way to expedite the reallocation process. The University continues to strengthen its campus wide energy conservation and recycling program. The Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Facilities Department are working closely to improve student and staff awareness of conservation matters and bring about a real reduction in energy consumption. Unfortunately, savings from the effort have been wiped out by the staggering increases in energy prices. The University has also begun an active vehicle replacement program. In addition to the purchase of two hybrid vehicles, the University is replacing older less energy efficient vehicles. The University is replacing some facility vans with smaller club car style vehicles. This effort has been hampered by the failure of the state to release Fiscal Year 2006 Equipment Funds. The University is also seeing a reduction in maintenance expenses as the fleet modernization program continues.

Eastern continues to reduce expenses by holding a disproportionate share of positions vacant. It is difficult to deliver top quality services with the shortage in personnel. Staff illnesses or retirement create enormous challenges to ongoing operations. The continual bumping due to statewide re-employment lists also presents hardship because it promotes staff turnover. We are finally seeing a stabilization of this trend.

Many of the savings identified under the CQI are producing direct savings. For example, Fiscal Affairs currently has five fewer full-time and five fewer part-time positions than it did in 2003. The annual savings in salary and fringes is approximately \$500,000 annually.

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For Fiscal Year 2007, the University is undertaking an initiative to review all University Assistant positions to determine the appropriateness of hours and semester schedule. The University is also implementing some modifications to the student employment that are expected to save 10% to 15% of projected expenditures. The modifications will include some cap on hours, limiting of pay increase to the minimum wage hike and the reassessment of the refill of positions vacated due to graduation and turnover.

7. Student Satisfaction/Learning

The University continues the effort to enhance student satisfaction by improving programming for students (e.g., weekend residence-hall programming); by the continuation of the popular Arts and Lecture series, which brings notable speakers and performers on campus and in the classroom; and by continuing to enhance student research conferences and expositions.

In 2004, seven new Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration Sessions were incorporated into the first-year experience. Orientation sessions now deal with academic expectations, advisement, and success; student responsibilities; campus health and safety; financial obligations and opportunities; student support services and activities; residential life and food service; commuter student services; transfer student issues; and familiarity with the campus as a whole.

For the past three years, the University has had a full-time judicial officer and a full-time substance abuse prevention coordinator bringing about significant improvements relative to substance abuse. In 2004, the Board of Trustees approved the revised student code of conduct ("Student Rights and Responsibilities"), and the Office of Judicial Affairs embarked on a program to raise awareness of academic misconduct. Additionally, town-gown relations have improved dramatically in recent years.

The University provides a well-rounded, broad-based athletics and recreational program, including club sports, recreational activities, and intramural, and intercollegiate competition. Student clubs and organizations have risen to the task of operating programs while the Student Center is under construction. The University community has been extraordinarily creative in using the remaining space to deliver attractive events and activities. For Fiscal Year 2007, student groups will face the same type of demands while the Student Center continues off-line.

The Financial Aid Office administers scholarships; student employment; state, federal, and institutional financial assistance programs; and veterans' services, which provides support to 300 veterans. Its staff has grown from 9 to 11 full-timers since 2000. Office renovations have brought use of space. The Student Employment Office manages the Federal Work-Study program, state work-study, and all other student employment programs. Approximately 750 student employees are expected to earn more than \$2,400,000 in Fiscal Year 2006. The Financial Aid Office also offers support for recruitment and retention

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efforts by providing financial aid packages to prospective students early in their decision process.

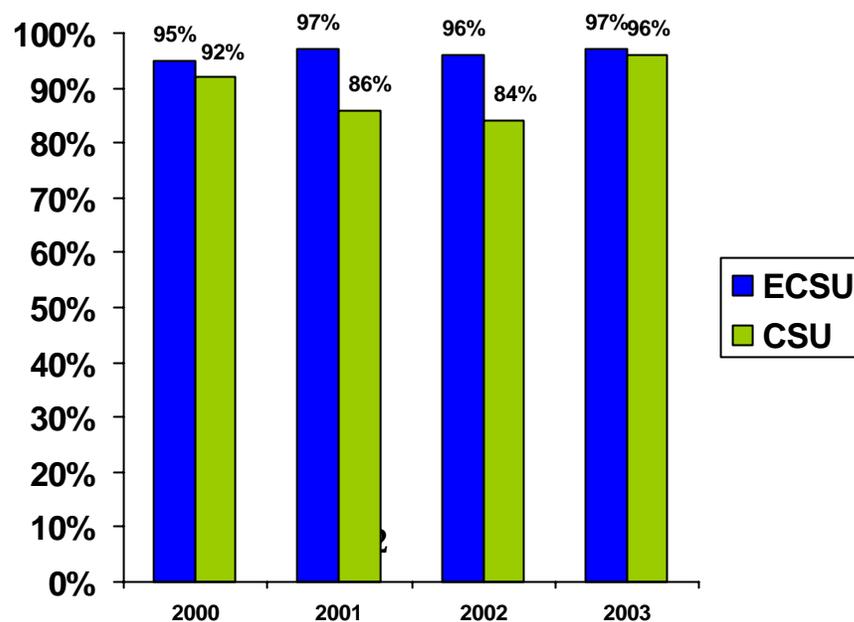
The University continues to enhance the developmental educational support program administered through the Learning Center. Currently, the Summer Transition at Eastern Program (STEP) and the Contract Admissions Program (CAP) include a required intensive, six-week summer in residence experience and requisite counseling, peer mentoring, tutorial assistance, and developmental course work. Within the past five years, the University has enhanced its programs and services in the area of multicultural and women-centered activities through the incorporation of themed centers (Women's Center and Unity Center), a full-time coordinator of multicultural student activities, and a part-time coordinator of Women's Center activities.

Future goals that span several areas of student services include the development of creative and effective retention strategies and expanded efforts related to diversity. For example, the Office of Career Services when fully staffed will be in a better position to involve more students in career development programs. The office will also be able to enhance and increase co-op, internship, and full-time opportunities for students and alumni. Additionally, Health Services and Counseling Services will move to a more comprehensive wellness model. Those positions are included in the Fiscal Year 2007 Spending Plan.

In order to assess student satisfaction, Eastern participates in the Graduation Rate Outcomes Study. The last available results were from the Graduation Rate Outcomes Study of 2004. The Study seeks to understand the elements of institutional intentionality, integration of efforts, and proactive intervention with students, leadership, and the extent to which driven processes contribute to success.

A great majority of Eastern graduates, as well as graduates from the other campuses, were either satisfied or very satisfied with their college experience. Of the total, 45% responded that they were "very" satisfied with their experience at Eastern.

Satisfaction with Education Experience



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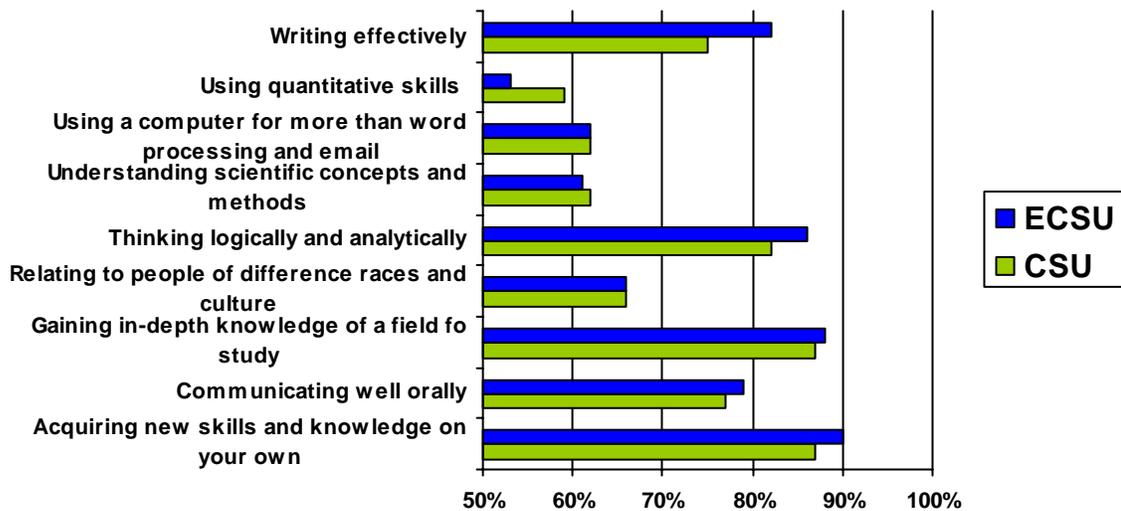
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Some other key findings from the survey of graduates:

- Nine of ten graduates were employed six months after commencement;
- 22% of Eastern graduates are attending graduate school full-time;
- 85% of graduates are employed in Connecticut;
- 96% of graduates were satisfied with how an Eastern education prepared them for their job;
- 98% of graduates continuing their education are satisfied with their preparation at Eastern.

The survey also identified areas that may need additional focus. In an examination of core areas, using quantitative skills, understanding scientific methods and enhanced uses of computing technology lagged other areas for skill enhancement.

Core Skills “Moderately or Greatly Enhanced” by College Experience



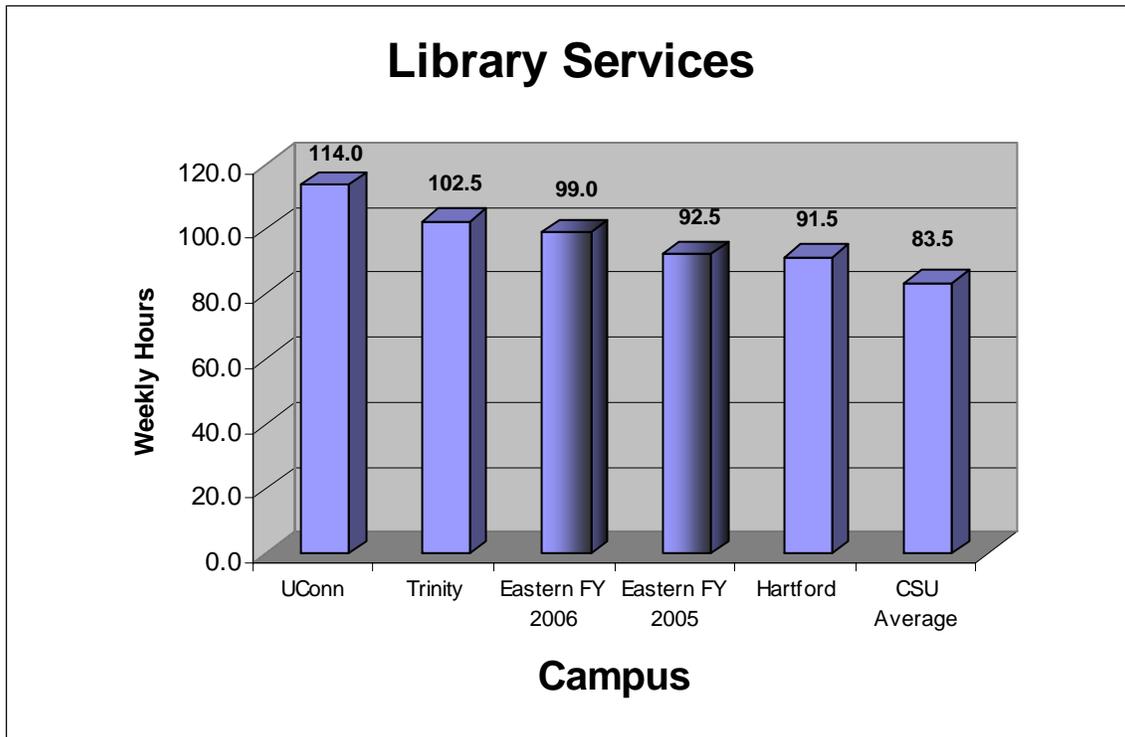
The survey, which had a response rate of 40% for Eastern, also examined financing issues. For our graduates, 64% accumulated debt while at Eastern. Of those borrowing money, 83% owed less than \$20,000 upon graduation. Of our graduates, 61% reported they owed less than \$10,000 upon graduation. By far the three largest sources of college financing for students were personal earnings/savings, parental support and student loans.

Eastern regards the development, revision, and assessment of “New Student” and “Current Student” surveys as instrumental in identifying the areas that students find most important and least satisfying. The Office of Institutional Research (OIR) analyzes data from these surveys and prepares a community-wide report. Increasing student satisfaction is an

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objective under the Strategic Plan's continuous quality improvement priority item. The new student data indicates that level of importance for specific items.

Since 2000 Eastern has improved services to the growing number of residential students on campus consistent with its mission of becoming the state public liberal arts university. In 2006, the number of full time librarians was 13; counselors, 4; and coaches, 9, out of a total of 214 full-time faculty members: this is a 30% increase in support faculty since 2000, when the University was served by 10 librarians, 3 counselors, and 7 coaches out of total of 193 full-time faculty members. The University increase library hours by 6.5 hours to bring weekly hours to 99 for the current year.



The student faculty ratio was 16.5:1 in 1998; and for 2005, it was 16:1. The average class size, twenty-five, has varied little in either direction in the past five years.

Since 2002, the Center for Instructional Technology (CIT), part of the Information Technology Division and the Media Center, has actively partnered with faculty in the use of the latest educational technology. IT features newly upgraded labs and educational software such as VISTA, WebCT and Tegrity. CIT is currently preparing for the wide-scale conversion to VISTA.

Eastern's David Chase Free Enterprise Institute plays an important role in bringing outstanding scholars and business and political notables to campus as guest speakers. Both the highly successful Arts and Lecture Series and the weekly University Hour Program attract distinguished artists and performers to Eastern to share their works and outlooks

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with faculty and students. The Library hosts an annual event promoting Eastern's cadre of faculty book authors.

Faculty commitment to the mission of Eastern is extraordinary and finds expression in every area of the campus. Faculty scholarship and creative activities manifest themselves abundantly in both quality and quantity. Their enthusiastic involvement in developing new curricula and raising academic standards bodes well for the University's future.

8. Consumer (Employer, Graduate School) Satisfaction

Priority #7 of University's Strategic Plan focuses on improving local, regional and national recognition for the fine programs at Eastern. The attainment of objectives within this priority involves the cooperation of such offices as University Relations, Institutional Advancement, Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management. Each group has a significant role in improving the reputation of the University. The improvement in University publications is just one item that prompts positive comments from our alumni, state leaders and the general public of the University.

Eastern has long been committed to assessment of student learning, but assessment assumed new priority in Fall 2001 when the University was awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Davis Educational Foundation. The Davis funds were awarded specifically to support assessment of student learning outcomes in majors and professional fields. To that end, an assessment coordinator was hired, and resources were made available for consultants, instruments, workshops, equipment, travel, and other assessment-related needs.

Beginning in January 2001, the assessment coordinator contacted faculty in every program and shared the parameters for assessment. These included the four steps of the assessment loop, which every program was expected to follow; the range of methods that could be employed to gather direct evidence of student learning; examples of the kinds of questions about learning that could be asked; and possible responses to problems that might be identified.

This funding allowed Eastern to begin a new chapter in assessment informed by prior experience and guided by a clear philosophy.

- The primary purpose of assessment would be to understand and improve student learning. Academic program review, faculty and course surveys, and other forms of evaluation were seen as separate and distinct from assessment.
- Second, assessment would be a faculty, not an administration, responsibility, although administration would provide financial and technical support for the assessment process.
- Third, assessment would focus on direct methods. That is, faculty would be asked to examine student work and performance for indications of student knowledge and skill levels. Indirect methods, reflecting perceptions of what students know and can do, and such surrogate indicators as time to degree or completion rates would not be emphasized.

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Consultants, suggested readings, and examples from other campuses were recommended. Attendance at regional and national conferences was funded; consultants were brought in; equipment and instruments were purchased; space was provided, and accomplishments were celebrated. That support continues to the present.

Since 2001, a report on assessment efforts has been required as part of every program's annual report. This ensures attention to assessment on a regular basis. Assessment reports are reviewed by the assessment coordinator, who provides feedback to faculty. The feedback takes two forms: a brief, descriptive response for public distribution, and a list of strengths, weaknesses, omissions, and recommendations for the private use of the dean, department, or program. Feedback from the dean is provided with the assistance of the assessment coordinator.

The "institutionalization" of assessment at Eastern has been a function of time and continuity. Four years of a consistent message, continued administrative support, the same assessment coordinator, and consistent expectations have made outcomes assessment an integral part of Eastern's academic routine.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in commenting on Eastern's fifth-year interim report made note of the progress Eastern has made on academic assessment.

9. Faculty and Staff Motivation

Faculty and staff motivation is a key part of the University transformation. The Strategic Plan's #1 priority is academic excellence. The further professional development of faculty and staff is critical to achieving academic excellence and an improved recognition.

The Center for Instructional Technology plays a key role in training faculty in the delivery of lectures and course materials in an electronic format. The University continues to provide faculty with the latest technical equipment with replacement of computers scheduled at a three to four year cycle. The University supports and encourages faculty to participate in their academic disciplines. Faculty engage their students in research and experiential learning.

A Spring 2005 survey of faculty showed that a majority believe that their career was heading in the right direction. Eastern's faculty were more satisfied with pay and benefits than COPLAC peers. The survey also showed that COPLAC faculty are more likely than Eastern's faculty to be engaged with students outside of the classroom. Creating opportunities for faculty and student interaction will be an important effort for the coming years.

Materials drawn from various University reports including NEASC Five-Year Report.

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Program Updates

 <p>U.S. Navy and Eastern's Partnership @ New London Submarine Base</p>	<p>Eastern received a \$975,000 appropriation from the Navy to develop technology-based staff training and a digital student portfolio assessment system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Final editing of the training video is on-going; the package includes interview with national experts, student interaction clips from the child care center and trainee activities. □ Portfolio training for teachers has been completed; the center now has the ability to package student material for viewing by active duty service personnel.
 <p>Institute for Sustainable Energy Partnership with Connecticut State and Local Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Wrote Connecticut's 2006 Comprehensive Energy Plan for the Connecticut Energy Advisory Board; □ Presented Energy Code Seminars for CT Building Inspectors and representatives of CT design and construction industry; □ Advised other CSU campuses and CT colleges on campus recycling and steps to creating a "green" campus; □ Created CT Energy Education website which offers online curriculum materials for high school teachers & students; □ Hosting (June 25-29) environmental sciences camp for students in connection with UN Conference on the Environment.
 <p>Margaret S. Wilson Child Development Complex</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Opened year-round preschool program for students on February 27, 2006; □ Average daily census of 16 is being expanded for full-operation by September 2006; □ Center is partnership with State departments of Education, Social Services, Public Health and Children & Families; □ Outside support for the Complex includes \$2.0 million in Federal HUD technology grant, \$1.4 million in State grants, a \$500,000 endowed chair donation and other private gifts totaling over \$450,000.