

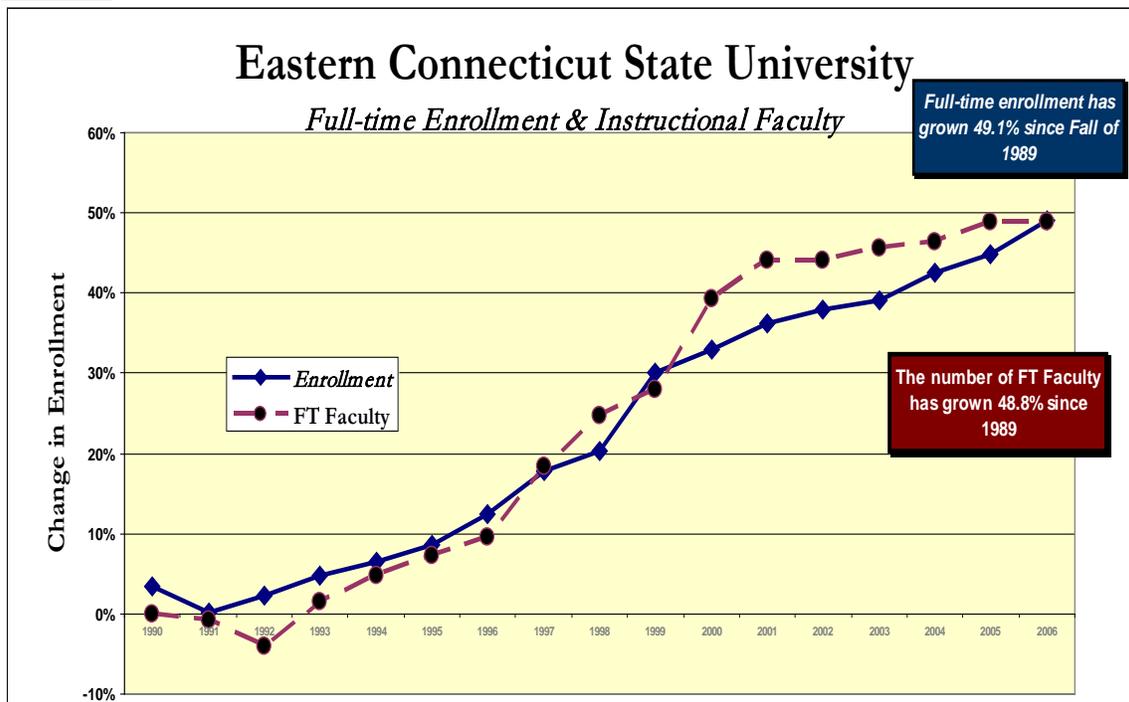
# Eastern Connecticut State University Fiscal Year 2008 Spending Plan Narrative

The Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 2008 is designed to meet the instructional demand caused by growing enrollments, to provide for the safety and security of our University community, and to fulfill our mission as Connecticut's Public Liberal Arts University by supporting students with appropriate programming in and out of the classroom. For the past four months, more than 200 members of the Eastern Community have been involved in the initial stages of a strategic planning process. Under the leadership of the Committee on the Future of Eastern (COFE), the University is exploring ways to enhance student success, improve service to the State and the community and make Eastern a place that values and promotes a liberal arts education. The University expects to complete the Strategic Plan by the end of the Fall 2007 semester and will include these recommendations as part of the Fiscal Year 2009 Spending Plan Process.

## *Growing Enrollment, Faculty Hiring*

Design of the Fiscal Year 2008 Spending Plan was an enormous challenge. Eastern has received 4,247 applications for fall admissions, an increase of 15% over last year. Current freshman deposits are running 9% over last year and retention of current students is likely to be higher than past years. We have already begun to see an increase in the graduation rate. We are preparing for the expected enrollment increase while hampered by severely limited resources. As in the past, Eastern will try to match the growth in enrollment with the addition of full-time faculty. The interaction of students with our dedicated full-time faculty is the key to creating the environment that fulfills our mission as Connecticut's Public Liberal Arts University. Figure I shows how full-time faculty levels have followed enrollment.

**Figure I**



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To continue to provide students with access to courses, Eastern will seek to fill the following faculty positions for the Fall 2007 semester:

- Conservation Biology;
- Biology & Plant Ecology;
- Biochemistry;
- Reading & Language Arts (2 positions);
- Education Research & Assessment;
- History -- Foreign Relations.

The positions will allow Eastern fully to offer courses in these critical areas and permit the continued expansion of the First Year Experience. The First Year Experience seeks to bring together Eastern's most talented and experienced faculty members in interdisciplinary modality courses targeted to incoming freshman. This program is part of Eastern's effort to improve student retention and ultimately student success rates. To further aid this effort, Eastern will redirect resources to hire a Student Success Center Director. This position will bring together advising, academic counseling, tutoring and career services into a more coordinated student support model.

### ***Enriching Student Life, Opening of the new Student Center***

The attached plan for Fiscal Year 2007 includes funding for the hire of an additional Student Activities Coordinator and two custodians to properly staff the renovated and expanded Student Center. Funding for its utilities and other operating costs are also included in the Spending Plan. Funding for the additional student workforce associated with the Center will come from internal reallocations. The new Student Center will provide the entire University Community with the facilities to host and celebrate the vibrant extracurricular life at Eastern.

### ***Focus on Safety and Security, Additional Police Officers and Permanent Counseling Staff***

Eastern has a long tradition of providing for the safety and security of the University Community. The University conducted a comprehensive campus safety and security review in 2002. Using that report as the basis for security improvements, the University currently operates a system of 248 security cameras that can be viewed in real time or can be used at a later date for investigative activities. Eastern has a fully automated door system which automatically alerts the University Police Department when a door is not secure. In addition to the electronic monitoring, the University Police manually check every external building door on a daily basis. To continue this commitment, the Spending Plan provides for the hire of a Police Officer and Sergeant position as well as the permanent hire of the Director of Student Counseling Services.

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### *Significant Needs and Limited Resources, Positions go unfilled*

The University has identified 36 critical vacancies, most of which have been filled at some point during the current year. The salaries of these positions total \$2,136,746 annually. The University plans to make selective hires from this list. Some positions will remain vacant throughout the year; other positions will be filled on a delayed basis. The total impact of this activity will be to reduce spending on personal services and keep Fiscal Year 2008 spending for these positions below last year's levels. The University has made significant sacrifices by keeping positions such as the Director of University Planning and Institutional Research and Associate Vice President for Human Resources vacant through most of Fiscal Year 2007. Unless there is a major change in resources, these positions are expected to remain unfilled during Fiscal Year 2008. While the objective is to fill as many faculty lines and student support positions as possible, reporting, regulatory and administrative functions are becoming more complex and cannot be neglected beyond the short term. Eastern will carefully monitor its compliance and security needs and act accordingly.

### *Budget Busters, Fringe Benefits and Energy Deplete Budget*

#### Fringe Benefits

Since 2002, the University has been forced to use more student tuition and fee support to cover fringe benefits formerly paid for by the state. The fringe benefit gap is caused by

- Inadequate funding of the operational costs of new facilities;
- Direct charges for medical insurance started during the CoreCT implementation;
- Increase cost of employee benefits; and,
- Redistribution of state funding within CSU.

Figure II shows the growing gap in funding of fringe benefit costs.

<u>Figure II.</u>	Fringes Paid By Tuition/Fees	Portion of Tuition/Fee Hike Consumed By Increase in Fringes
FY 2002	\$ 782,219	
FY 2003	\$ 1,571,076	43.5%
FY 2004	\$ 2,966,519	58.3%
FY 2005	\$ 3,783,678	31.2%
FY 2006	\$ 4,424,974	28.6%
FY 2007	\$ 4,923,553	18.8%
<b>Period Change</b>	<b>\$ 4,141,334</b>	<b>35.3%</b>

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The cost of employee benefits for some job classification has grown so much that what Eastern pays for benefits now nearly equals an employee's annual pay. Figure III shows the actual fringe benefit rate for some full-time employees. With the cost of health insurance increasing between 6.5% and 7.5% next year, it is reasonable to expect that Eastern may have a full-time employee whose benefit costs exceed wages.

**Figure III.**

**Five Highest  
Fringe Rates for  
Full-time Employees**

91.8%  
91.2%  
86.2%  
85.8%  
84.1%

***Energy Costs***

Eastern, like many other institutions in Connecticut, is dealing with utility charges that are draining significant resources from other University programs. The impact of the rising cost for energy has almost completely been borne by student tuition and fees. Despite separate surplus appropriations by the General Assembly to cover state agency energy costs, the state made the decision not to include any of the institutions of higher education in the distribution of these funds.

Since Fiscal Year 2005, electric costs for Eastern have grown more than 67%. Eastern expects to spend \$1.1 million more on electricity in Fiscal Year 2007 than it did in Fiscal Year 2005. The higher spending is due to higher rates and, to a much lesser extent, new facilities. Eastern has embarked on a number of conservation efforts including the grant funded project to install separate meters on each building. This will allow Eastern to target conservation efforts. Figure IV shows the impact of rising costs for electricity and other utilities.

**Figure IV.**

<b>Energy Costs</b>		
<b>Total Spent on Utilities (projected 2007):</b>	<b>\$ 4,940,651</b>	
<b>In Academic &amp; Support Halls:</b>	<b>\$ 2,546,485</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>In Residence Halls</b>	<b>\$ 2,394,166</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>Utilities Expenses per Full-time Student:</b>	<b>\$ 1,287</b>	
		<b>\$</b>
<b>Percent of Tuition going towards utilities:</b>	<b>20.8%</b>	<b>\$ 663</b>
<b>Percent of Room Rate going towards utilities:</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>\$ 1,041</b>

## Eastern Connecticut State University Fiscal Year 2008 Spending Plan Narrative

### *Conclusion*

The engagement of the University Community in the campus' Strategic Planning process offers great hope for the continued success for Eastern. The strong commitment by faculty, staff and students to a process which will help shape the future of Eastern is a testament to their deep respect for the Liberal Arts Mission and its role in serving the State of Connecticut. Fiscal Year 2008 will be a great challenge as we attempt to reach new heights of student success, academic and scholarly activity and public service within an environment of limited fiscal resources. Operating with limited resources is not new to Eastern and as in the past, we will not let that keep us from being successful.

### *Retention & Graduation Figures*

**Figure V.**

<u>Cohort</u>	<u>1-Year</u>	<u>2-Year</u>	<u>3-Year</u>	<u>6-Year Graduation Rate</u>
1995	71%	57%	52%	43%
1996	73%	59%	52%	41%
1997	69%	57%	52%	42%
1998	71%	56%	52%	40%
1999	70%	58%	53%	43%
2000	74%	60%	56%	48%
2001	76%	61%	56%	
2002	75%	58%	54%	
2003	75%	62%	60%	
2004	78%	66%		
2005	75%			