

ASSUMPTIONS:

Eastern’s proposed Spending Plan for Fiscal Year 2016 will continue the University’s emphasis on prudent fiscal management. As in the past, conservative financial management practices will allow Eastern to work within the realities of Connecticut’s economy and the limits of the state budget. Eastern continues to adhere to conservative spending practices, so that any savings realized can be directed to instructional and academic support services that drive improvements in Eastern’s retention and graduation rates.

The Fiscal Year 2016 Spending Plan was developed with the understanding that our cost savings practices must continue. Considering the ongoing concerns over the state budget and related revenue funding requirements, the Spending Plan as submitted provides for a balanced budget while serving the needs of our students. The plan is based on the assumption that current initiatives undertaken to enhance enrollment will result in a 1.7 percent increase in full-time equivalence (FTE) of full-time students. This increase will be partly offset by continuing reductions in FTE for part-time students. Our projected overall increase in FTE of 1.5 percent is significant as we continue to be challenged by the decline in the number of graduating high school students and increased competition within Connecticut to attract the best students.

Eastern will continue to focus our resources on services that directly impact students. The University enjoys a strong relationship with our students and their Student Government Association. We share their concern about Eastern’s ability to continue to provide the current level of student services, following the limited level of state funding included in the budget for FY 2016.

CHALLENGES:

While we remain confident that Eastern can manage its budget such that the University can balance projected expenditures with anticipated revenues again in FY 2016, there are several continuing budget challenges that are noteworthy.

The upcoming budget includes contractual increases stipulated in the SEBAC agreement, with an increase in FY 2016 projected to be 5.5 percent — the same overall percent impact as the FY 2015 pay increases. The state general fund appropriation will cover a portion of the increase and student revenues (tuition, fees, room and board) will be required to fund the remainder.

Beginning in FY 2013, Eastern experienced a large number of employees electing to move from the Alternative Retirement Plan (ARP) to the State Employee Retirement Plan (SERS), which has had a significant impact on our Personal Service expenses. The increase in retirement cost was offset in part by increased fringe benefits paid by the state. It is important to note that in the current budget allocation model, the fringe benefits paid by the state are distributed primarily on FTE and not on the related increased cost to the University. While Eastern’s FTE is smaller in comparison to the larger state universities, our conversion and increased cost was equal to that of the larger state universities. This resulted in a lower share of cost recovery when compared to the actual increased cost. There is still potential for continued conversion, as the election is open

until 90 days after the Internal Revenue Service has ruled on the change in plans; no schedule for the IRS ruling has been released.

Another challenge will be achieving our enrollment projections. In Fiscal Year 2016, it is projected that Eastern's fall full-time 2015 enrollments will be up 1.5 percent from fall 2014. This reflects a projected increase for our major student group, full-time undergraduates, which is expected to grow in fall 2015 by 61 students or 1.4 percent, to 4,349. Our part-time undergraduates are expected to continue to decline slightly.

Enrollment alone will not yield the increased revenue stream that Eastern has experienced in past years, now that our full-time undergraduate enrollment has reached a level that is appropriate for a liberal arts university. We must continue to be cautious in allocating additional resources. Careful management of existing resources, cost savings and other efficiencies continue to be the way to achieving a balanced budget again in Fiscal Year 2016.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT:

- We were able to fill several critical faculty positions as tenure track positions.
- Grants continue to support tutoring, advising, and other Academic Services Center services.
- Eastern continues to practice a strict budget review to identify and earmark operating savings. In these efforts, departments have adjusted their paces of spending and prioritized their most compelling needs.
- Sound fiscal management has also allowed the University to continue to support its diversity and Affirmative Action goals; Eastern has the highest percentage of minority faculty of any college or university in Connecticut. Twenty-seven percent of the Eastern's full-time faculty is composed of minorities. Among members of COPLAC (Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges), Eastern has the most diverse faculty. Thirty-three percent of new faculty hires for 2014-15 were minorities and 56 percent were female.
- The University continues to benefit from the work of the Ad Hoc Budget Committee. Composed of representatives from every bargaining unit, the student body, the University Senate and the faculty ranks, the Committee plays an active role in communicating information and proposals for budgeting efficiencies throughout the campus. It has helped develop campus-wide awareness of and appreciation for economies that reduce prospects for layoffs, drastic budget curbs or program elimination. Best of all, the Committee has built a successful record of communicating regularly to the University community so it is kept informed of major budget adjustments.

LAUNCHING THE 2013-18 STRATEGIC PLAN:

In 2013-14, Eastern began implementing the 2013-18 Strategic Plan, following a campus-wide, inclusive planning process that took place in 2012-13. We have now completed the first full year, and we are seeing significant progress being made and a clear direction for institutional success.

Academic Emphasis:

- Five new majors were approved in summer 2014 and began enrolling students in fall 2014: New Media, Finance, Liberal Studies, Philosophy and Health Science. We now have 481 declared students in these majors.
- We have reinstated the Master's Degree in Accounting for fall 2015.
- Undeclared status was replaced with five exploratory options to promote enrollment in courses most likely to apply to Liberal Arts Core and major requirements.
- Developmental Mathematics courses were revised to ensure that all full-time students entering through the regular admission cycle complete college-level mathematics requirements within their first year.
- Changes were made in several academic policies (course withdrawal and use of the Credit/No Credit option in the Liberal Arts Core) to promote timely graduation.
- "Eastern in Four" plan process was fully implemented with 95.3 percent completion rate.
- The Exemplary Program Review process continued to be used to allocate resources to those program activities that were most effective in advancing Eastern's strategic goals.
- Created an Eastern Scholars Program to provide special opportunities and incentives for highly-prepared students.
- Modified Theatre, Music, Psychology, and English major programs to streamline requirements and focus on critical skills.
- Criminology major proposal will complete the approval process in fall 2015.

Affordable Education for Students:

- Significantly increased scholarship support for incoming students.
 - 530 students were awarded non-need based aid, up from 398 the year before.
 - 1,451 students were awarded need-based, up from 1,353 the year before.
- Need-based aid rose from \$3,708,054 to \$4,397,034
- Non-need-based aid rose from \$1,035,118 to \$1,418,090
- Modified procedures for awarding scholarships to continuing students to allow for better financial planning for students and families
- Implemented a new financial aid leveraging strategy to attract students well-suited for Eastern's curriculum and to maximize net revenue
- Offered new financial education and planning sessions for students in Orientation
- By increasing four-year graduation rates and decreasing time-to-degree, reduced students' total expenditures

Retention:

- Expanded use of Supplemental Instruction in the Academic Services Center.
- Refined the predictive model to assess at-risk students to include non-cognitive variables including time of deposit.
- Purchased and began use of "GradesFirst," a single database for all support service interactions with students.

Experiential Learning:

- Expanded on-campus internships offered through the Work Hub by adding three new clients and collaborating with Cigna to expand their on-campus internship program in a larger facility.
- Expanded Undergraduate Research through increased funding for faculty mentoring of independent student research and creative projects, for Summer Research Fellows, and through funding of student presentations at national and international research conferences.
- Increased the number of credit-earning and non-credit opportunities for students to obtain the Liberal Arts Work designation.
- Increased the number of students participating in Global Field Courses or Study Abroad from 126 to 168.

Community Engagement:

- Created online volunteer registration and enrollment system that provides students with an easier method to engage with the Center for Community Engagement.
- Instituted Jumpstart program, and early childhood literacy program at three sites serving 42 children. We have 19 Eastern students completing the 300-hour program and upon completion they will each receive a \$1,100 AmeriCorps education award.
- Experienced a 66 percent increase of total Eastern population who volunteered through the Center for Community Engagement from AY 2012 to AY 2014.

Faculty:

- Conducted 19 searches for new tenure-track faculty and reduced reliance on temporary faculty

Academic year	Teaching Faculty	Tenured/Tenure Track Faculty	Temporary Faculty
2014-15	201	194	7
2013-14	201	175	26
2012-13	195	171	24

- Added new faculty lines in Health Science
- Reduced reliance on part-time faculty (down to approximately 17 percent)
- Significantly increased reported resources allocated to support faculty research from \$133,385 to \$1,375,193
- The number of faculty publications rose from 207 to 244.

Facilities:

- New Fine Arts Instructional Center will open for classes in January 2016.
- Programming for renovations of Goddard Hall and the Communication Building will complete this summer and we will move into the design phase in FY 2016.
- Design phase to turn Shafer Hall into a residence hall began in April 2015 and will continue into the fall of 2016.

- Academic Quad project is complete and students are enjoying the newly renovated space.

Technology:

- Accelerated instructional computer replacement completed in FY 2015.
- Majority of infrastructure and wireless technology for residence halls completed.
- Design of two lecture capture classrooms to allow for the flipped classroom teaching modality with completion of the installation scheduled prior to fall 2015.

Alumni:

- Supported student career development through 32 networking events over past two years, 1,500 students, faculty and alumni participating.
- i-Modules platform for online community of alumni to launch in fall 2015.

Marketing/Recruitment:

- Online virtual tour has seen 16,000 visitors and a 12 percent yield rate since launch; both figures are twice the industry average. Only college fairs are yielding more applicants.
- Interactive viewbook is now online: very popular during recruiting season: 23:54 minutes average time on site is 5-6 times the industry average.
- “Eastern Mobile” app launched in fall 2014; major upgrade due in June 2015.
- Aerial video of campus in production.

INSTITUTIONAL HIGHLIGHTS AND INDIVIDUAL AWARDS:

- In August 2014, Eastern was ranked by U.S. News and World Report as one of the top 30 public universities in the North (from Maine to Maryland; west to Pennsylvania). This is the highest ranking of the CSUs. Eastern is also the most selective of the CSUs, according to U.S. News & World Report.
- Eastern has the highest four-year graduation rate in our history; Eastern’s four-year graduation rate of 41 percent is the highest in the CSCU system, as is our six-year graduation rate of 56 percent. Of note, the six-year graduation rate of African American students increased from 42 percent to 55 percent over the past three years.
- Eastern is the only state university involved in the Board of Regent’s Health-Life Sciences Initiative. As part of its role in the initiative, Eastern hosts the project’s Summer Undergraduate Research Program for the third year in a row this coming summer.
- Eastern’s Institute for Sustainable Energy received the 2014 Energy Star Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy.
- In January 2015, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching awarded Eastern its coveted Community Engagement Classification.

- The U.S. Green Building Council and the Princeton Review have named Eastern one of the nation's top "Green Colleges" six years in a row.
- Eastern senior Ricky Magner presented at the Posters on the Hill competition at the U.S. Capitol in April 2015. Eastern has represented Connecticut four of the past nine years; no other public university in Connecticut has represented the state at all during that time.
- Krystalyn Salters-Pednault, associate professor of psychology, received the system-wide faculty award for research, presented by the Board of Regents on April 15, 2015. At that same meeting, Kevin Donahue of the Business Administration Department received one of two system-wide awards given to adjunct faculty for their teaching.
- Through the new Office of Professional Development, more than 500 faculty and staff have received training in the past year, including mandated training in sexual assault; campus-wide workshops on social media; and targeted programs in FERPA and Cyber-Security.
- To support the alignment of students' residential life and classroom experiences, 15 "Themed Housing" living/learning communities have been established involving 200 students.
- Greater linkages between classroom instruction and student activities were introduced, with 133 student activity programs tailored to academic issues; 48 cultural events tied to classroom curriculum; 22 faculty mentors supporting the LEAP Leadership program; and 22 student clubs directly linked to academic majors.
- A Faculty Fellowship program was established to support faculty interested in developing service learning courses.
- The women's basketball team made it to the NCAA Division III's "Sweet Sixteen."