

A UNIVERSITY *of* FIRST CHOICE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013



EASTERN
CONNECTICUT
STATE UNIVERSITY



A photograph of a young man with curly hair, wearing a white t-shirt with a blue collar, focused on sculpting a bust of a man's head. He is using a chisel to work on the bust, which is made of a light-colored material. The background is dark and out of focus.

A UNIVERSITY *of* FIRST CHOICE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013

Vision Statement

ASPIRING TO BE A PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE OF FIRST CHOICE, EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY WILL CREATE AN UNPARALLELED COLLEGE EXPERIENCE FOR ITS STUDENTS AND ACHIEVE NATIONAL DISTINCTION FOR ITS ACADEMIC PROGRAMS. EASTERN'S FACULTY, STUDENTS AND STAFF WILL ENHANCE THE UNIVERSITY'S POSITION AS AN INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY, ACKNOWLEDGED FOR ITS ENGAGED TEACHING, LEARNING, RESEARCH, AND CREATIVE WORK. ADVANCING ITS POSITION AS A MODEL FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, AND EDUCATIONAL ACCESS, THE UNIVERSITY WILL BE RECOGNIZED AS A RESOURCE THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND THE STATE.



Mission Statement

WITHIN THE CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM, EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY IS THE STATE'S DESIGNATED PUBLIC LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE. AS A PREDOMINANTLY UNDERGRADUATE INSTITUTION, EASTERN ATTRACTS AND WELCOMES A DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS, SUPPORTED BY A TEACHING FACULTY, STAFF, ADMINISTRATORS, AND A RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS, ALL OF WHICH PROMOTE INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY, INTEGRITY, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

EASTERN'S COMMITMENT TO A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION IS EXEMPLIFIED IN ITS LIBERAL ARTS CORE CURRICULUM, A SEQUENCED, INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM THAT ALL STUDENTS SHARE, INDEPENDENT OF THEIR MAJORS AND CAREER ASPIRATIONS. IN ITS ROLE AS A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY, EASTERN DEVELOPS STUDENTS WHO CAN BECOME PRODUCTIVE, ENGAGED COMMUNITY LEADERS. EASTERN ALSO SERVES AS A SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC CATALYST FOR THE REGION AND THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.





◀ CORE VALUES ▶

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE: Eastern embraces rigorous academic standards and intellectual inquiry as a benchmark for educational achievement for all of its students, faculty, and staff. This expectation informs every mode of learning on campus, from individual courses and degree programs to university presentations and cultural events.

ENGAGEMENT: Members of the university community develop intellectually, creatively, and socially through active and reflective learning in and outside the classroom, interdisciplinary studies, and individual and collaborative research.

INCLUSION: Eastern is committed to providing educational access while building a campus community that embraces diversity and differences, enriched by a global perspective.

INTEGRITY: Members of the university community are expected to behave ethically and honorably. Learning encompasses both intellectual and character development.

EMPOWERMENT: Eastern fosters a safe, nurturing environment that promotes intellectual curiosity, student achievement, and lifelong learning. Through rigorous inquiry and personal interaction, members of the community grow confident as independent, critical thinkers.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: Social responsibility is promoted and encouraged at Eastern through service to those in need, being active in the community, protecting our natural resources, engaging in the democratic political process, and other socially responsible actions. Social responsibility includes an ethical commitment to oneself and the community at large.

As members of a learning and teaching community committed to academic excellence, we, the faculty, students, staff, and administration of Eastern Connecticut State University, the state's public liberal arts institution, share this set of values:



◀ INTRODUCTION ▶

A UNIVERSITY *of* FIRST CHOICE

The world of higher education is changing rapidly. The extraordinary technological developments of the last decade are spawning new models of competition and academic engagement for institutions of higher education. Constrained federal and state budgets leave state colleges and universities underfunded in the face of growing stakeholder expectations. As a public liberal arts university in this new environment, Eastern must significantly transform its knowledge and research base, its curricula, its modes of delivery and academic support, and its campus culture, while aggressively seeking new funding sources in order to secure its place among its peer institutions.



A HISTORY MARKED BY STEADY GROWTH

For its first 50 years, Eastern Connecticut State University was a small but highly respected teacher training institution, or “normal school,” serving the eastern portion of Connecticut. In 1937, the normal school became a teacher’s college, granting four-year degrees. By the 1960s, the college had its first graduate program (in education) and had expanded its programmatic offerings to introduce the study of the liberal arts and

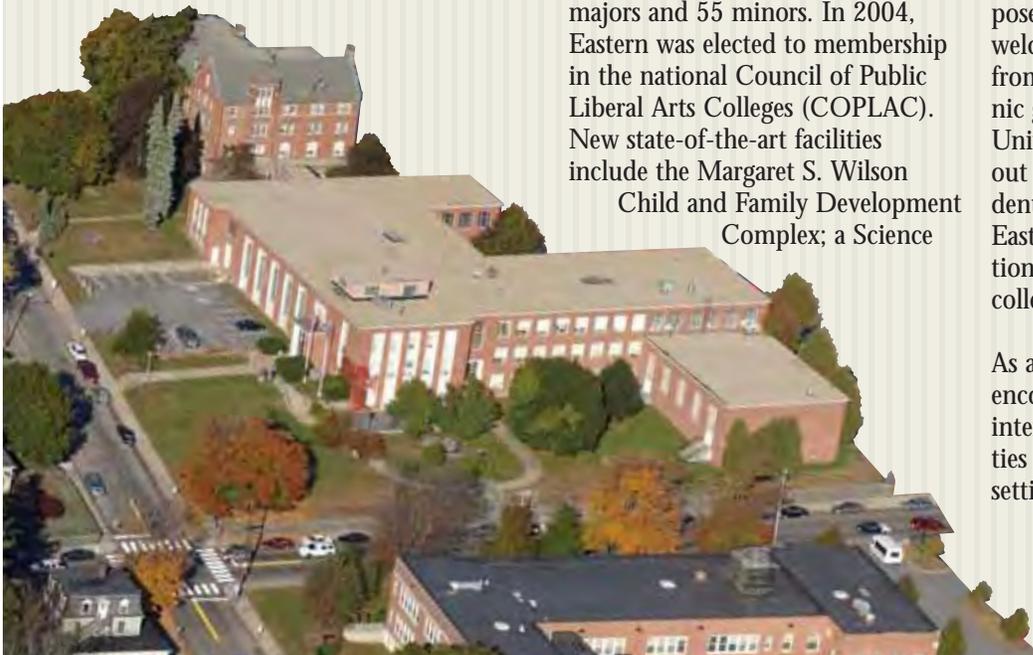
sciences, at the same time continuing its teacher education traditions. In 1998, the Connecticut State University System, of which Eastern is one of four universities, refined Eastern’s mission while enlarging its role as an undergraduate, liberal arts institution.

Since 1999, change has been even more dramatic. Undergraduate and graduate enrollment has grown to more than 5,000 students, from increasingly diverse backgrounds. Academic offerings include a vibrant mixture of liberal arts, sciences and professional programs, featuring 33 majors and 55 minors. In 2004, Eastern was elected to membership in the national Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). New state-of-the-art facilities include the Margaret S. Wilson Child and Family Development Complex; a Science

Building slated to open in fall 2008; the South Residential Village; and a newly renovated Student Center. A new fine arts center is in the design phase.

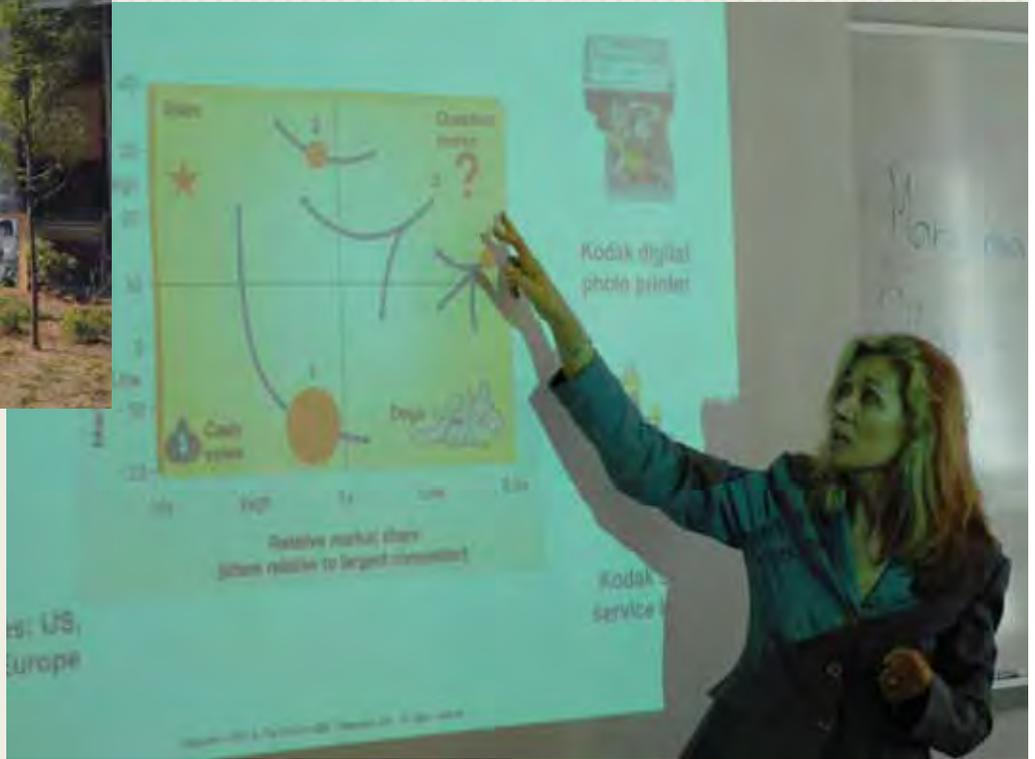
Eastern draws students from 161 of Connecticut’s 169 towns; from 26 states (Hawaii to Maine); and from 34 countries (Albania to Zambia). The academic qualifications of students beginning their studies in 2007 exceed that for all previous entering classes. Eastern has become an increasingly selective university, based on the quality of its entering freshman class. In fulfilling its purpose as a public university, Eastern welcomes students, faculty, and staff from a variety of nationalities, ethnic groups, and traditions. The University has a history of seeking out and admitting all qualified students; approximately 50 percent of Eastern students are the first generation in their families to pursue a college degree.

As a liberal arts college, Eastern encourages and supports personal interaction with faculty; opportunities to engage in active learning settings (e.g., independent research,





Academic Excellence



internships); and exposure to a broad range of theoretical approaches in a variety of academic disciplines. The University boasts an innovative residential system; expanded extracurricular clubs and activities; athletic coaches committed to academics; and a culture of support and growth that reaches across all sectors of campus. Eastern is primarily a residential university with more than 60 percent of all full-time undergraduates living on campus.

FACULTY DRIVE EASTERN'S REPUTATION

For most higher education institutions, sustainable competitive advantage derives primarily from intangible assets, such as faculty knowledge, reputation, and competencies, rather than from tangible assets, such as land, buildings, and equipment. Eastern faculty members, 95 percent of whom hold terminal degrees, combine excellence in teaching with exceptional scholarship.

In the last eight years, the University has attracted 84 new faculty members from among the world's premier research institu-

tions, each selected for excellence in teaching and research, and an ability to advance Eastern's academic mission. Faculty distinctions at Eastern include Fulbright Fellowships; a National Professor of the Year for Master's Universities and Colleges; distinguished professorships; and an endowed chair. The strength of the faculty is perhaps the institution's most significant strategic advantage.





21ST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES THE UNIVERSITY

Eastern must prepare its students to become leaders in an economy driven by globalization and technology. The rapidity and volatility of technical, knowledge, and economic changes require Eastern graduates to be highly adaptive and receptive to new and complex information. They must understand the value of harnessing, managing, and applying technology to innovate and achieve a competitive advantage in their careers.

Engagement





STRATEGIC PLANNING GUIDES THE UNIVERSITY

In January 2007, Eastern embarked on an ambitious strategic planning process in which more than 250 campus (e.g., faculty, students, alumni) and community volunteers (e.g., First Selectman of the Town of Windham, Senior Budget Specialist from the Connecticut Department of Operations and Management) served on the Committee on the Future of Eastern (COFE) and its four subcommittees. Using an inclusive process, COFE began with the University's core mission — the education of students; charted a course for the institution that better aligns Eastern with the external community it serves; and created a vision of excellence that increases external knowledge of Eastern's mission and strengths.

The University must now link its planning, assessment, and resource allocation activities in a manner consistent with its commitment to quality in all of its programs and to regional/national stature in select programs. By identifying programmatic distinctiveness, Eastern intends to build on its established academic program strengths and characteristics to create a competitive advantage.

Generously supported by alumni, the Governor, and the General Assembly; encouraged by the Connecticut State University System Board of Trustees; distinguished by world-class faculty; led by dedicated administrators and staff; and inspired by extraordinary students, we are confident that Eastern Connecticut State University can become a premier liberal arts college, a University of First Choice.

◀ STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ▶

FOUR INITIATIVES THAT PROVIDE A COMPLETE LIBERAL ARTS EXPERIENCE

1 Fully implement and integrate the Liberal Arts Core and the First-Year Program.

All Eastern students, independent of their majors and career aspirations, share a sequenced, interdisciplinary curriculum that serves as a foundation for their future learning. Through the allocation of appropriate faculty staffing and other resources, all incoming freshmen will enroll in the First-Year Program, and all graduating seniors will complete the requirements of the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum.



2 Develop and implement an Expanding Horizons requirement.

Exposure to diverse viewpoints and artistic expression, discovering unfamiliar cultures, and participating in co-curricular activities broaden a student's academic experience. All students will complete an Expanding Horizons course requirement, which may range from service learning to study abroad; to planning, coordinating, and participating in on-campus events.

Vision



Integrity

3 Promote involvement in the local community engagement through the creation of a Center for Community Engagement.

Through service learning and volunteer projects in nonprofit organizations, social agencies, and business enterprises, Eastern students can gain valuable leadership skills, develop their commitment to social responsibility, and become stewards of their local and regional communities.

4 Fully implement the “Liberal Arts Work!” requirement.

Each Eastern student will complete a structured pre-professional experience — e.g., internship, co-op, or other field experience off-campus or intensive faculty-mentored research or creative activity on campus. This experiential learning will help students clarify their careers goals, develop their skills in real-world settings, and better prepare them for graduate school, employment, or other options.





◀ STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ▶

THREE INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT EXEMPLARY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

1 Develop and implement an academic plan.

The excellence of a college's academic offerings is fundamental to its reputation. Eastern will achieve distinction through the achievements of its student and graduates, and by the outstanding teaching, research, and scholarly accomplishments of its faculty. Through the implementation of a comprehensive academic plan, the University will promote academic rigor; support student research and creativity; recruit and support a talented faculty; foster innovation in instructional approaches; and assess the quality of its programs. Eastern will achieve a dominant regional position in broad academic areas within the arts and sciences while continuing program accreditation in such areas as social work, education, and business.

2 Implement a process to identify and support distinctive academic programs.

World-class universities are known for their distinctive programs. Using a faculty-created assessment rubric, programs will be carefully analyzed for their potential and achievement. At least three programs each year will be identified for enhancement and/or expansion and provided with additional resources — e.g., funding, physical space and equipment, staffing, release time, and other assistance. The Exemplary Program process also will be used to evaluate progress made by targeted programs, and external funding will be sought to provide additional support.





3 Develop and implement an enrollment management plan in support of academic excellence.

By identifying students likely to persist; better coordination of academic and support programs; and the leveraging of financial aid, the University will recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse student body that will perceive Eastern as a liberal arts college of first choice.

First Choice





◀ STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ▶

SIX INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT A LEARNING-CENTERED CAMPUS

1 Create a Student Success Center that emphasizes advising and support.

Students depend on expert advice to achieve success in their major and throughout their experience at Eastern. Creating a Student Success Center will focus the University's resources on advising and student support, increasing retention and graduation rates, and success for both full- and part-time students. A stage-based advising model will be used to impact students (1) prior to enrollment, (2) during their first year, (3) during experiential learning, and (4) in support of their academic majors. In addition to significantly improving graduation rates, the University also seeks to increase the number of students graduating within four years.

2 Develop and implement a digital portfolio/experiential transcript requirement.

All students will use technology to digitally document their learning experiences, as well as their own reflections on their academic and professional accomplishments. Such documentation will support student persistence; job and graduate school placement; and students' self-assessment.

Inclusion







◀ STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ▶

3 Promote Eastern's campus culture.

Serving a predominantly residential student community, Eastern's liberal arts campus helps students build close relationships with each other and with faculty and staff members, while developing a long-term affinity with the University. Providing leadership training and opportunities seven days a week for full- and part-time students will improve Eastern's campus culture.

4 Utilize the Student Center to promote Eastern's cultural and academic objectives.

To foster students' academic and personal growth, the University's newly expanded Student

Center will be the hub of co-curricular activity on campus. Day and evening access will be expanded in support of resident and commuting students, and student participation in programming decisions will be increased.





5 Expand intramural and recreation offerings.

Eastern will promote a healthy lifestyle for all students by expanding wellness and fitness options, including formal recreational competitions between student clubs and residence halls; men's, women's and intramural activities; club sports; and increased "open hour" use of the Sports Center.

6 Establish a residential environment that promotes Eastern's culture and supports its emphasis on academic excellence.

Using innovative approaches, the University's housing and residential life staff will increase the number of students who live on campus throughout their academic career at Eastern, while also increasing the number of students who stay on campus on weekends. These efforts will promote social and personal responsibility, build relationships, improve students' academic success, and promote school spirit.

Values





◀ STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ▶

FIVE INITIATIVES THAT PROVIDE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

1 Support Eastern's 2008–2013 Strategic Plan through development and implementation of a Physical Master Plan.

Eastern's vision to become a premier residential, undergraduate liberal arts college and the fulfillment of the University's Strategic Plan require additional space and infrastructure enhancements. Construction of a new residential facility to replace the Low Rise complex; renovation of such facilities as Shafer, Goddard, and Winthrop halls, and the Media Building; expansion of the Sports Center; and construction of a new fine arts instructional facility are all elements of a new Physical Master Plan. These enhancements to the campus will enrich student life, promote academic excellence, and align with the University's Green Campus initiatives.

2 Develop and implement an Information Technology Plan.

Using state-of-the-art technology and methods, the University will create a secure, robust, yet cost-effective information technology infrastructure in support of student, faculty, and staff innovation. The use of technology in the classroom will be enhanced, while information technology will be promoted as a core competency across the campus.



Mission





◀ STRATEGIC INITIATIVES ▶

3 Develop and implement an Institutional Advancement Plan to generate assets in support of the University Mission.

By building new relationships with alumni, parents, businesses, foundations, faculty, and staff while cultivating existing donors, Eastern will provide for additional funds for student scholarships and the capital needs of the University. Annual fundraising goals will be met or exceeded while the alumni donor base also will grow.

4 Develop and implement a University Relations Plan that supports the University Mission.

To become a university of first choice, it is critical that Eastern improve its public reputation in Connecticut, the New England region, and the nation. Using traditional and new media technologies, the University will increase public awareness and approval of Eastern's mission and accomplishments among core constituencies, as well as among new audiences.

Social Responsibility



5 Develop and implement a Comprehensive Diversity Plan.

Diversity will be promoted and supported throughout the University environment, including recruiting a diverse workforce; welcoming and fostering a diverse student body; and promoting diversity through cultural and co-curricula programming.





EASTERN

Connecticut's Public Liberal Arts University