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Focus Group Discussion: Sample Group of Student Leaders in Recognized Student Organizations at Eastern Illinois University (part 1)

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FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION:
Sample Group of Student Leaders
In Recognized Student Organizations
At Eastern Illinois University

North Central Association of College,
University and Secondary Schools
Project Paper

Submitted by:
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John Biernbaum
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EDG 5760
Dr. Charles Eberly
11-19-93
Purpose: The purpose of this project is to assist in making a campus assessment regarding the policies and practices of Eastern Illinois University and its relation to our current mission statement. This focus group, made up of student leaders from across campus, answered questions taken from the text, "Involving Colleges". Our intent is to examine how involved student leaders, currently on campus, perceive these policies and practices that effect involvement. The results of our study will be submitted to Dr. Charles Eberly to augment the re-accreditation process that Eastern Illinois is currently undergoing by the North Central Association of College, University and Secondary Schools. Additionally, this project will satisfy a requirement for Educational Guidance 5760 during the fall term.

Demographics: The demographics of this group include four involved student leaders from various recognized on-campus student organizations. The study involved three males and one female. Of these four students, one was a graduate student and three were undergraduate students. Furthermore, one of the students had previously attended a different institution than Eastern Illinois University. The organizations that these student leaders had played significant roles in encompassed a wide scope, including: Greek community, Residence Life, Student Action Team, BACCHUS, Student Senate, March of Dimes Collegiate Board. In addition, one student resides off campus, one lives in Greek housing, while the remaining two live in the residence halls.

Major Themes and Key Points:

A. Positive Aspects

1. Orientation Process: Skits, simulating real-life college experiences, performed during summer orientation for new students were perceived to be beneficial. The Office of Orientation gives many new students their first impression of campus life. Thus, the socialization that occurs during the first week is a vital part of involving new students.

2. Residence Halls: The residence hall play a vital role in involving new students by disseminating information to new students, and providing both educational and social programs.
3. **Pro-active Attitude and follow up:** Scan-tron sheets are handed out during orientation week surveying interest in different campus organizations. Both, the greek community and student government have found success by utilizing this information and following through with it to get students involved in their organizations.

4. **Student enthusiasm:** The group seemed to believe that the best way to involve students in the university community was by word of mouth and taking pride in their involvement.

B. **Negative Aspects:**

1. **Over-exaggeration:** The group believed that Eastern Illinois University tries to make perspective students think that the campus is like Disney World through beautiful pictures and graphics.

2. **Money:** If more money were funneled through student organizations, bigger and better programs attracting more students could be put on in order to involve more students.

3. **Follow up:** Follow up has shown positive results for those groups that do it, but unfortunately not all organizations have taken heed. This inconsistency has kept many students from becoming involved at all.

4. **Lack of Student Ambassador Program:** This group felt as students can best get students involved. They also felt that this had to begin during high school visits. Yet, no comprehensive strategy currently exists involving college students in the recruitment process that this group was aware of at the time.
Summary Of Student Response To Questions

1. Do institutional policies and practices promote student learning in ways that are consistent with the mission and student characteristics?

Positive Responses

a. Smaller offices offer more personable services.
b. Offices are supportive—which is an asset to the program.
c. Departments stick to mission of university.

Negative Responses

a. Larger offices are less personable and helpful.

2. How are newcomers made to feel welcome and how are the institutions values articulated? And by whom?

Positive Responses

a. Residence Halls inform students on campus.
b. Orientation Office makes biggest impact on new students.
c. Panther Preview Week really helps students get involved.
d. LEAD program is helpful.
e. Greek community recruit and follow up well.

Negative Responses

a. Lack of follow through on scan-trons by several student organizations.

3. Do pre-admissions contacts clearly and accurately describe what it is like to be a student here?

Positive Responses

a. Campus visits really benefit perspective students.
b. Skits at orientation are beneficial to new students.

Negative Responses

a. Pre-admission applications do not adequately express the college experience.
4. **What role do current students play in these anticipatory socialization efforts?**

Positive Responses

a. Peer education—students perform in skits and help move in new students

Negative Responses

a. Literature makes Eastern look like Disney World.
b. Lack of student participation in ambassador program.

5. **Do you think current students sell Eastern to potential students?**

Positive Responses

a. Yes, not directly, but through association.
b. Through casual conversation.
c. Administrative enthusiasm at conferences.

Negative Responses

a. N/A

6. **How are newcomers formally and informally made to feel like full members of the institution?**

Positive Responses

a. Students taking an initiative to get involved.
b. Development of scan-tron sheets for student organizations.
c. Simply ask students to get involved.
d. Organizational tables.
e. Informational Sessions.
f. Informal conversations.
g. Word of mouth.
h. Programs.
i. General support.
j. Variety of organizations to choose from.
Negative Responses

a. Some people choose not to get involved right away.
b. Some students don’t feel part of the process.
c. Some students are/feel apathetic.
d. Some people are scared to get involved.
e. Some are afraid that being involved will take away from their education.
f. Some people are turned off from already set cliques.
g. To break through the established set rules of order is intimidating.

7. What are some of the activities that the students are getting involved in specifically on this campus?

Positive Responses

a. Rise from 13% to 22% in the Greek System.
b. Attracted more minority organizations.
c. LBGAU has made more people open-minded.
d. Rec-center has propelled more growth in intramural sports.

Negative Responses

a. N/A

8. Are there any organizations that you think are struggling right now or that you think have a huge problem?

Positive Responses

a. N/A

Negative Responses

a. Not many people want to remain with SAT.
b. Many Students think there is nothing out there for them.
c. Its hard to make people aware of what’s going on in student organizations.
d. Hard to obtain membership for organizations with a non-alcohol message.
e. Hard to get people work towards a cause.
f. Students are really not making the connection to stick with an organizations mission.
9. What are some of the ways that you think Eastern can do to combat these problems?

Positive Responses

a. Take student fees to fund student organizations.
b. Give tuition waivers to more organizations.

Negative Responses

a. Eastern does not currently do any of this.

10. What role do you think administration play in the distribution of funds? Do you think they play a big part in the fact that Eastern's organizations don't get any money?

Positive Responses

a. There are steps being addressed on campus to combat this issue.

Negative Responses

a. Yes, administration plays a big role but it is negative and not student-oriented.
b. Administration raised fees and did not improve services or facilities.
c. There is not enough funds available and when the students ask they receive no money.
d. They have been talking about cutting graduation ceremonies and other student-based programs.
e. They are talking about cancelling many graduate programs and recently the MBA program.

11. What roles do academic administrators encourage active participation in the campus community?

Positive Responses

a. N/A

Negative Responses

a. They only invite students that are active in student organizations.
FOCUS GROUP

TRANSCRIPTION
I'm Denise Schindler, I'm Joe Cantona and I'm Bobby Smith.

We are going to ask you some questions about policies and practices. The first question is: Do institutional policies and practices promote student learning in ways that are consistent with the mission and student characteristics?

Bobby: I would say that some offices do

Do you think some more than others?

Bobby: In the departments I am involved in, education, I feel stick to that mission. What I have seen was the, um, EIU TV station, for instance, um, with the educational codes.

What about you Joe?

Joe: Like you said, it does depend on the office that you are working with cause, they seem to, with larger office you seem to be more of a person with a number, whereas like in the smaller office with your major or whatever they seem to be more personal with you and they work towards what you want to work towards and they help you with your goals.

Denise?

Denise: Being a graduate student I would have to say yes, I feel that they are pretty supportive as far as trying to get you in the field and to be an asset to the campus.

The next question we are going to ask you is, um, how are newcomers made to feel welcome and how are the institution's values articulated and by whom?

Denise: I think the residence halls play a big part in there, um, definitely, um, different student groups, but the residence halls usually provide the information for the other student groups on campus.

Bobby: I think the office of orientation. That's the first key, for when students come to campus on visitation days, that's the first people will usually meet, so that plays a pivotal role with the tours and the information they are given there. I'd like it to be said the most pivotal one and especially in Carmen Hall, which is predominately all freshman. I think that the residence halls play the biggest impact on the things that happen.

Joe: I believe it also starts in the orientation office, like, uh, they get you on the ball and then it is also up to the student to actually work towards getting involved. Halls put on programs and they tell all about the different organizations, newspaper informs you, but I think it is also the students who needs to takes a real initiative to get involved and get really oriented with the school.
Bobby: Was part of the question about what else can be done and how?

The last part was how are the institutions values articulated and by whom?

Bobby: My point was that as fine a job as Eastern facilities do, in fact, I think there are areas that can be better.

What areas?

Bobby: Along the lines of orientation, I have been talking to a lot of folks lately about the first time somebody comes to campus and they give them a scantron sheet, that says please fill in any blanks that you find of interest that you know will help you get involved: Black Student Union, Greek Organizations, Student Government, RHA, you know whatever is on the list, they have the chance to fill that out. I think there could be an accelerated attempt on the part of those organizations who receive that information to get in contact with those people. I know that student government, we have done that, I am sure other organizations do as well, but when I have talked to people who come into campus and said I filled this out and never heard anything. If there is follow-up on the things that are initiated when they first come to visit, I think it will make people be more active on campus.

Do you feel it has been successful, the people that you have initiated, you know, made the effort to go and see...

Bobby: Sure

... have they stayed with Student Senate and become an integral part of it?

Bobby: I think its, uh, I am trying to think of a specific incident, but with Alec’s help, we have initiated a LEAD program, a new student leadership program and yea those people have stuck around and are new people to campus that’s who it is geared towards and they become an integral part of Student Senate. As far as other organizations, I am sure if they are contacted to begin with and then what they see matched up with what they think, then naturally you’ll find that they inclined to stick around.

What do you think about sorority and fraternity as far as what follow up and whether or not they remain active?

Denise: Yes, I think the greek organizations on this campus once they plant a seed in somebody through information tables and rush are real consistent in going and contacting these people with the hope to bring them out, there is a lot of information provided before rush actually occurs, there’s information provided through the mail, there’s information provided to families and parents, uh, to encourage people to get involved in them and once they are
involved as an active member, uh, the involvement is right there and then as an alumni the communication continues. So, it is kind of real full circle.

Do the other two have anything to say?

Alec: Well, my name is Alec Nevalainen, and, um, I was gonna say the orientation program, but as far as people tapping into that, that's where the big problem is. When I first got to campus I had no idea there were this many organizations, I believe that I when I first come to school at the very first tour, there should be an hour set aside, to say hey, this is what goes on on campus, this is what, um, if you're interested in student government go to this table, if student black student union go to that table, I think something like that needs to be instilled in people's minds whenever they come to campus.

Ok, next question, do pre-admissions contacts clearly and accurately describe what it's like to be a student here?

Denise: No, I don't think any pre-admission contact from any university, speaking from my experiences through different applications clearly gives you a feeling of what you are going to feel like as a student, I don't think that is something you can define on paper, I think that is something you define through experience?

Do you think that like a campus visit helps to define what it is like to be a student here?

Denise: I think it helps, I think it is a much more three dimensional experience then something that would be in an application or a brochure because you actually get to feel yourself in an environment and if you have never been a student before having a applicant visit when the campus is moving and is alive, there is change in between classes and things like that will help the student really feel where they are going to fit in or not fit in. So I think that helps, but it still doesn't define it.

Were any of you, um, part of the process, um, that went on this summer, the skits and such programs?

Alec: I wasn't part of it, but I did witness it.

You did witness it, what was feeling regarding that?

Alec: I felt it was a good change, um, that I admire some of the different people that act?

Correct

Alec: Yea, I think it was something innovative and that, uh, was positive. Certainly different from the past, but I think is has gotten better in the past several years. I didn't witness it
before, so I could say.

The next question I guess would be two fold, could you explain for someone that would be reading this typed discussion what exactly happened during that time and if you heard any response from the students about that.

Alec: About the skit?

Yea

Alec: I think the response was more of a laughter than anything else. As far as the skit, I think the students enjoyed it, it took their mind out it for a while and they it was fun, you know, a great time I am sure, they study a while, but I think it gave a very positive image.

Do you think that helped, um, what was talked about, maybe realize what a little bit more what is involved in college life?

Alec: Yea, but you can’t really define college in a skit. I mean it comes close, its a far away kind of thing.

What has been done between admissions and matriculation to teach new students what it means to be responsible, self-directed members of the institutional community?

Denise: Do you mean between applying and being accepted to the institution?

Yes

Denise: Say that again.

Actually what I think what the question is asking is that, what is done between admissions and other areas, well, never mind. Let’s skip this one. What role do current students play in these anticipatory socialization efforts?

Denise: They play a key factor because it is peer education and peer facilitation right at work as far as having, um, student in plays like we talked about, having students be the ones to move you into your residence hall, to take you on tours of the campus, I think they play a real key.

Bobby: I think we, um, send out great brochure and great literature that just makes Eastern look like the best place since Disney World, not Disney World like it is just for fun, but a great place to come to, but in the end it is the student who sell the campus. It is the students who make other students feel accepted.

How do you think they do that?

Bobby: How do I think they do that? I think it’s one through
socialization, whether it comes from the people moving people in, a friendly face that says hey I'm a student too, I know what it is like to go through this. We hear teacher, and administrators and faculty always say, "I remember when I did this", well sure ya did pops, but that was thirty years ago, give me somebody I can talk to. So when a student sees another student they can relate better. I would like to see a mentor program or an ambassador program where students go out into the high schools to sell Eastern.

Do you think like current students when they go back to their high schools, sell Eastern?

Bobby: I can't speak for everybody, but when I came up here there were 4 people from Centralia and now there are over 20, I am not saying that I sold this University, but I know there are a lot of people that knew me who knew me that came here for whatever reason.

Do you guys feel the same way, do you think that students that go to Eastern promote the school?

Alec: Yea, but they don't necessarily mean to promote it, I think they bring it up in casual conversion Yea, I'm getting good grades, um, just casual conversation, but when I go home I don't say "Wow, you really need to go to Eastern", I would never force anybody, I like them to find out on their own what's best.

Joe: Also, I think that, like, if you go back to your home town or wherever and talk it up, I think it just sparks an interest in the person and then they seek out if Eastern is for me. It is not like to say go to Eastern because I go and I love it and you'll love it too. If the person goes and thinks about and looks into and decides for themselves, you know, if they happen to like it then they may spread it on, it is kind of like a change thing. It is an interest and then, you know.

Bobby: I had never even heard of Eastern until my senior year.

Denise: I never heard.

Can you elaborate on that?

Denise: I had never heard of Eastern, well I from New York sweetheart, we never talked Eastern.

What brought you here to Graduate School?

Denise: Oshkosh Placement Exchange, I went and interviewed with representatives of Eastern there and their enthusiasm about the school, their warmth as far as communicating directly with me, um, and, um, the informative nature and to be honest the success of their residence hall program was a real key for me to want to take part in. It was, it showed through, when people talk about Eastern, who are happy here, its, um, like their enthusiasm it contagious and that was how I felt.
The next question is, how are newcomers formally and informally made to feel like full members of the institution?

Bobby: I didn't feel like a full member of the campus for a year and a half.

What made you feel like a full member or why weren't you?

Bobby: I came to school telling myself that well I was so I did so much in high school that I was burnt out and than when I finally woke one and said "You're not doing anything", I was bored out of my mind and I finally came to the conclusion to start new program and get involved then I felt like I was getting involved, but it wasn't until 2 summers ago that I walked through campus and said, "This is my school". You know Eastern was mine. And Joe touched on it earlier, the key is to get into the activities, I think we have made positive movements in that direction, when I came here I don't remember fill out any scan-tron sheet throughout orientation, that's a step, it's not the last step hopefully, we hear about skits, that's a good thing. There is an individual commitment that has to be made by people who want to get involved, but I think that if you are put into a new situation it scares the daylights out of some of them.

What do we do for students that are like yourself are not wanting to get involved or don't know how to get involved or are so shy that they won't ask the questions?

Bobby: If one person, cause I ask the questions when I first came for orientation, if one person, one student would have said, "Bobby, walk down the hallway with me, let me show you something," they won. I think it goes back to what Alec was say about the room where organizations are there to talk directly with students who have like interests.

I see a lot of heads shaking, anyone else?

Alec: I was going to comment on myself. The minute my Mom and Dad dropped me off I thought I was a part of the process. I think that if you don’t feel you are a part of the process, you are valuing really why you are here. If you are going to class and getting an education, you are a part of the process. You don’t have to be involved to be Joe College. My first year, um, I wasn’t involved in a single thing here in college. How do you get people involved? I mean I might have gotten involved if someone had asked me.

Joe: When you come in you always see come to this, come to that, there is also some organization, um, tables and that they do have, I have been in one for RHA, where there is a time set aside where there is a whole bunch of organizations and information about the organization and if you want you can feel free to walk up to them, even if don't talk to somebody you can have some sort of information or brochure that you can take and read about for yourself, if it interest you, you may find out more about when it
is, where it is, um, I hadn’t intended on getting involved, I just heard through word of mouth about like within RHA, I went to Hall Council, one meeting and it was like la la it didn’t really, but then you know you go and see what it is about and that’s what gets you interest. I had, you know, like you said, just came originally for an education, but when you see there is other things beside your education, not to detract from your education, but to add to your education. Those programs do help and I think it helped make myself a better person by getting involved and trying to make a difference for others on campus.

Denise: I think Alec brought out a really good point too though that, um, we are talking about how is about being an individual and it’s about the student and I don’t think there is gonna be, there is not one theory of development that we can put everybody in and say everybody needs to do these things at the following times and the following steps and this is what is best of everybody and how do we get people involved? You know, we leave the doors open and let them make the chooses to and people do it, you know, and you’re there and your supportive of them when there a student, when there living in your hall, when there satisfied watching the sunset and reading a book and just adapting to being away from home, that is the same student you are going to support when they go to their first RHA meeting or when they start rushing or whatever and you let them do what they want to do and support them regardless of what the chooses are and I think that is what makes them feel a part of the campus.

Is Eastern doing that?

Denise: Sure, they have great grads.

Anyone? Does anyone have anything? Do you feel Eastern is doing this?

Alec: Do I think they need to get people?

Both actively getting people involved and also stepping back and letting others take their time to develop?

Alec: I think it is hard to say that people really keep the door open, it is almost like you have to take the initiative to get people involved. I mean it is hard to make people welcome, I have noticed in student government, RHA, a lot of organizations there is cliques, that you gotta figure out when you go to these organizations and be a part of it without getting upset about these cliques. But that is a whole other series of discussions.

Bobby: There are so many variables that play into this, like I said, I didn’t get involved for a year and a half. But first, I thought I would come to college and join a fraternity, but if I would have joined a fraternity at that stage of my life that would have been the worst mistake I could have ever made. You know, I consider myself a well rounded individual four years later. So
being left along to develop has it's attractive sides. Alec, what did you just say? The cliques, yea. That is one thing and he is so right about that, I mean, I don't care what organization you get involved with there is a set established order of rule there and to break through that is very intimidating.

But is it happening, are people breaking through them?

Bobby: Occasionally, maybe, yes, no.

Denise: Well everytime somebody new enters adds to an organization. Unfortunately, I think cliques and groups are a part of every stage of life, they are going to be there when you walk into the office on the first day, they are going to be there at family occasions, they are just there and I don't necessarily like it and it is not necessarily a welcoming factor, but there are ways to be, to assimilate into groups and that is kind the best you can hope for.

Bobby: We have over 120 student, recognized student organizations on campus, you know, there is a lot of things to do out there...

Denise: ...and they are growing.

Bobby: Yea

Denise: ...so people must be breaking through.

Bobby: So are they breaking through with the ones that are there now? If not they are making there own.

What are so of these inductive activities such as orientation or convocations?

Bobby: Convocation meaning what?

I am sorry, what are some of the organizations or activities that the students are getting involved in specifically on this campus? You mentioned student government, what else?

Alec: What is involved in is that what you are asking?

Sure

Bobby: I think the greek system has gone up. I see a couple new houses, fraternity and sorority houses since I, I guess fraternity houses, since have been here, so I assume those have gone up, I don't know if other houses increased their numbers.

Denise: From what I understand and what I have been taught since Greek Court was put on campus, the population has gone from 13%, the greek population, to like 23% or something like that. So it has be good.

Bobby: And I think the more minority students we attract to campus
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Bobby: And I think the more minority students we attract to campus
the more the minority organizations will grow, um, BSU...

Alec: ... LBGAU, because of this organization more people have come out of the closet.

Bobby: Intermural athletics has taken off real well since we got the Rec. Center.

Are there any organizations that you think are struggling right now or ones that you think have a huge problem on this campus?

Joe: Being a member of the Student Action Team, I am the secretary and it is hard to get students involved in, you know, all campus type of things cause we are there, you know, to provide awareness for AIDS, drugs, alcohol and all this stuff, but not many, we try to get the word out, but not many people want to stick with it, they come, see what it is about and they’re like well there is nothing for me. It is kind of finding people who are really interested in doing specifics for your organizations, um, and getting them to do, not to like change the minds of other people, but make other people aware, other people, you know, are like oh you are doing this, they kind of shy away our group because, you know, we are quoting non-alcoholic programs and around here, you know, not in school, it seems to be quite alcohol oriented. You know, where are you going tonight, Stu’s or Mom’s or wherever. We try and alter that, and many people are like, you know, why should I do that when I can go out and have a great time with my friends at the bar all the time. So I think it is getting people to be interested in an organization and work towards a cause, you know, that organization puts forth. That seems to be a real problem that many people here don’t know or aren’t really making the connection or really wanting to stick with something to keep the organization really going.

Bobby: A lot of perceptions become involved, you know, some folks might look at the greek system and say, "I wouldn’t want to be involved with ‘those’ kinds of people," whereas student government got me back on the track of involvement. Sure, we have our problems, I mean, there is public perceptions that people in student government just want to go to law school and just wanna put it on their resume or whatever. In actuality that is not true. I think ever organization has it’s own internal problems that they need to resolve and sometimes those present a public problem to get people to want to get involved.

What are some ways that you think Eastern can, specific things that the students here Eastern can do to combat theses problems?

Alec: Something that is done on other campuses and I think the University needs to do here is take student fees and fund student organizations. Eastern does not do that. RHA at ISU gets $13,000 dollars a year, every year, even if they have a large surplus of money, um, LBGAU, they have a different name for it at ISU, they get ten grand a year, every year, even if they have, you know, a
hundred grand, they still get their ten grand. It is something that Eastern needs, to re-channel some of their money to get going on some of these organizations and possibly give tuition waivers for executives, I mean we are giving tuition waivers for the BOG rep, I think we ought to give them to the BSU president.

What role do you think administration play in, you know, in the distribution of the funds, do you think they play a big part in the fact that Eastern organizations don't get any money?

Alec: Yea, if you got money to work with you can do wonderful things. I don't like it, but that's how reality is and when you are talking about tuition waiver, you are talking money for speaker to generate more profit.

Bobby: There are steps that are being taken to address that, you know, I don't know if when we begin to fund recognized student organizations or even if it will happen or whatever. You know, we just got kicked in the teeth last year, because of raising our fees for things that were supposed to benefit the University. Well sure, some of those things we might be able to see, but you know it is very difficult to keep coming to the table and keep getting kicked in the gut again saying, "We need more money, we need more money, we need more money from."

From the point of view of someone who was not here last year, can you please explain why?

Bobby: Yea, or explain...

What happened?

Bobby: What happened? The administration came to us and said "The state is not giving us any more money..."

Who?

Bobby: The students, or, uh, us as the University, the state is not giving the University more money, we need to upgrade, uh, institutional equipment, we need T.V.'s, VCR's, we need to buy new books, we need to buy new computers, we need to upgrade our health service, health service, which is predominantly paid for through student fees. So, we raise our student fees by sixty dollars, by sixty-six dollars offsetting money that was originally allocated by the University to meet their needs, so we free up general revenue with our raise in fees, so now this money is freed up to a) to faculty salaries increases from the strike that they were involved with earlier, the possibility of a strike from the year before, you know, students have continually been asked to come back and foot the bill for programs that the state, when the University has put upon the institution and says well we don't have the money to give so go find it someplace else. We closed down four colleges last, or two colleges last year, we closed down two college last year that gets back to that first question about the educational goals and
desires. Sure, we streamline...

Alec: Now, we want to cut our ceremonies

Bobby: Yea, now they say cut our graduation ceremony.

Alec: They want to cancel our MBA program. Where does it stop? Money makes the world go round!

Bobby: Yea, I was in Springfield today meeting with people who do these things and they looked at me like I just fell out the boat, because students are finally getting pissed off about getting hit everytime the state or the University says, "Well we gotta save more money," and Alec’s right money makes the world go round. It is a sad thing that it keeps going back and rolling over us. Sorry.

That’s all the questions we have, do you want to add anything?

Alec: Free the nation!!

Bobby: How much tape do you have on there?

What roles to academic administrators, for example, president, provost, academic deans, do they invite and encourage students' active participation in the campus community? So in other words do you think the University as a whole encourages students to participate as active participation in the campus community?

Bobby: I think they invite people who are already involved to participate in the campus community.

How?

Bobby: How? Administrators will call me and say, "Bobby, this or that’s going on," the faculty will say, "Bobby, I know you are involved in this or that, what do you think about this, would you mind coming to this lecture, to this thing, I want your opinion on whatever." That’s what I mean when I say I think if your involved you have a niche in there, they go to people who are already involved. I don’t see the administration, the faculty, which I don’t know if it’s their place, you know maybe that’s the Office of Student Activities, you know, I don’t wanna slam the administration, but I don’t see them going out and saying, "Ok, all you student’s that aren’t involved, give me your opinion."

Well that’s all we have.
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH A SAMPLE GROUP OF EIU MAP STUDENT-ATHLETES: NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PROJECT REPORT: EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE 5760

EIU

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the focus group was to discover what issues had to be addressed concerning Eastern Illinois University as a public institution. The purpose is to help Eastern Illinois University become stronger and more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The students interviewed were a select group who were chosen to discuss the reasons why they like Eastern and why they do not and what campus activities are available to them as students.

The study focused on what Eastern has to offer and if Eastern personnel are communicating these specific needs to the students, whether they be high school or Eastern students. The questions selected were very precise in what was asked and described exactly what Eastern needs to know about its internal operating scheme.
DEMOGRAPHICS

The target population was chosen from the Minority Admissions Program (MAP) and consisted of five Eastern Illinois University male student-athletes. The five student-athletes consisted of a wrestler, a track team member, a soccer player, a men's basketball player and a football player. The breakdown in school classification was there were three freshman and two sophomores.
The major theme discussed throughout this particular focus group was the process of communication and changes that need to be made of Eastern's campus. Each member of the group expressed their concerns. They all agreed on two key issues. These issues range from the lack of promotion (advertisement) about Eastern Illinois University to the low number of student organizations. There seems to be a communication gap between the university and the public as well as private high schools.

Another major point was the lack of cultural diversity within the Charleston community. There aren't very many activities provided for African-American, Hispanic-American and Asian-American students. The lack of homecoming activities for non-greek students is a concern of the group, they seemed to think that greek organizations control homecoming. Students felt unless they were individual in a fraternity then they could be easily be excluded from homecoming activities.

We found out that this group of students have professors who really believe care about them as people and not just another student or number. This is encouraging to have all the group members agree that they have at least one teacher who cares about their concerns and problems.

The integrated core curriculum caused concerns to the members of the focus group, they think some of the courses are unnecessary. If a student knows what major they want to pursue, they should be allowed to take classes in that area as soon as possible.

A general concensus was decided upon as to why the members of
the focus group chose to attend Eastern Illinois University. The professors, students, civil service workers and administrators make Eastern Illinois University the friendly, helpful and kind atmosphere it is today.
To what degree or extent is EIU committed to the enhancement and growth of multiculturalism in race, gender, physical abilities, lifestyles and opinions of the whole society both on campus and in the Charleston community? Are there groups or individuals who feel that they are not acknowledged as full members of the community? If so, why?

D: Do you want to see more people coming through admissions?

H: The MAP program.

T: Do you want to see more organizations started?

A: They could start a union for every race.

J: I think it's good that the gays have a support group (Gay, Lesbian Support Group) because they're trying to be fair to everyone, no matter what you like. Race, whatever, they're trying to open things up to all races and sexes. Whatever, they're trying to open things up to everybody. Including programs or whatever, everybody speaks their mind.

J: Charleston does not have any barbers for black people. We need some people who know how to cut black peoples hair. They also don't have any hair stylist or anything, lady's beauticians or barbershops or nothing like that either. They need to get more cultural to take care of the needs.

D: Are there groups or individuals who feel that they are not acknowledged as full members of the community? If so, why?

J: The only thing I heard about was bashing people who are gay and stuff like that. They don't appreciate that around the area I'm around, they don't like that. The area is Thomas Hall and they don't approve of all that stuff, I mean that's their
What opportunities exist to celebrate the campus community? Homecoming, etc....?

E: It was alright (homecoming) I just didn’t go to the homecoming part but I did go to the stepshow and that was straight. I liked the togetherness it was you no basically all the black people together doing their thing.

D: What would you like to see happen at homecoming? What changes?

H: Homecoming is basically geared towards the fraternities and sororities. There was basically a lot of parties for the fraternities and sororities. I’m sure others attended but it’s basically for greeks. I don’t exactly feel excluded, we just need more to do.

D: What role do students play in these celebrations? Are there any groups that are excluded?

J: No, as an athlete, not really excluded.
E: No.
M: No.
A: No.
H: No.

T: How is student life communicated about to prospective students?

A: I didn’t talk to anybody.
J: Coach, that’s all.
A: I talked to people on the team and nobody from orientation.
E: I didn’t talk to anybody, but Coach Moore.
D: Did you receive admission tours?
A: I saw, like a dorm and that was it.
I saw a play with some of the students, seniors were in it, it was about AIDS.

How is student behavior expectations communicated at orientation activities and by whom? Was a student handbook issued?

I got it after I got here to campus this fall.

Do preadmission contacts clearly and accurately describe "What it's like to be a student here"?

Yes, I had my high school coach tell me a lot about Eastern. A lot of people from my high school came down here from Peoria Manual.

My high school coach and a couple of my teachers from my high school, Lincolnwood.

Were there any recruiters that came to your school from Eastern?

I found out about Eastern from sports. I found out how it was through the players. They said it was good but make sure you get your degree there and the coaches and stuff stressed education. I went to high school at Concord in Elkhart, Indiana.

My high school coach came here, he asked my coach to watch a few of my games. He stressed a lot about the school and heard about it from the players at Barrington.

Would you be here if your coach did not talk to you?

No, I would not be here if it were not for my coach and teachers telling me about EIU.

No, I definitely would not be here if my coach did not tell me
Coach talked to track coach and found out about the MAP program and he reserved me a spot. Other than that I wouldn't have been there.

T: How does the institution communicate what is considered to be responsible behavior in the collegiate community?

T: Has everyone had Freshman Seminar, EIU 1004?

E: Yes.

H: Yes.

M: Yes.

J: Yes.

A: Yes.

T: Did you have guest speakers?

E: Yes, people from BACCUS, Johnetta Jones, a girl from the basketball team, students who were seniors and a few other people.

T: Did Judicial Affairs come?

E: No.

T: To what extent do athletics and greek organizations promote or inhibit student learning?

A: By being an athlete the coach makes you put in the time to study at study table, athletics promotes you to get a 2.5 GPA, they make you get up at 6:00 am if you do not comply with study table rules.

H: Coaches get your midterm grades and stress using tutors.

D: Is anyone in a fraterity?

D: No one is.
Do you know if the greek organizations promote or inhibit student learning?

You do not know?

Does your sport promote learning?

Sports educate you about life and promotes you to do well in school.

What is the price of failure?

You need the grades in order to be eligible to play, my coach stresses student learning through hard work.

My coach stresses student-athlete, stressing student first. Not everyone can be an athlete and participate.

By having study tables and tutoring learning is promoted to the student to want to learn.

The price of failure is to go to community college, which to me is a step backwards.

To what extent is your culture encouraged to understand, celebrate and share their heritage?

BSU, (Black Student Union) have pagents, dances, do a lot and let people know how to get involved, I think its great.

Does question have to do with my heritage here at EIU or at home?

It can be either or better yet, anywhere.

Besides M. are anyone of you in BSU and have gone to the pagent.

Yes, I have not attended the pagent but have seen the stepshow.

No, not yet.

How visible is the President to the students?
I do not know his name.

I do not know his name also.

I do not think he is visible to the students at all.

I agree with A., he is not visible at all anywhere that I know.

Not visible.

How do students go about getting his visibility?

Get involved more with athletics, by encouraging the athletes and showing up to a meet or event, to show us he cares and he is trying to help make things better.

Should make himself more visible so people know he is the President, he should be everywhere on campus, be out campus wide.

visit individual groups (MAP program) such as fraternities and sororities and club organizations.

He does not show his support, like he's behind us, he should encourage us.

To what extent do students perceive that faculty members are available and personally involved in their learning?

They carry on conversations with you and they are interested in what you are saying. Always talking to you and always willing to help and they tell you to stop in after class and they are there. They take attendance and they have the attitude that they care and thats how they let you know that they really do care, when they look at you while they are talking to you instead of lecturing with their back to you.

You can tell that they care by the way they look at you and
that they are not just here to pick up a pay check.

T: Does the instructors at EIU display a caring attitude?

M: Two of my professors really do care, they want me to do well, they want me to call them collect at home, any time I have a problem. My English teacher said if I need help on a paper that's due just call her anytime and she will be there or just leave a message on her answering machine and come in early and she says I can take a day off if I am having problems with it because I need to get some more information from the library and my math teacher, she comes in early to her office because I don't have a 10:00 class. I go see her for an hour and she helps me a lot before the class starts. There are some teachers out there that care.

A: I told one of my instructors, I had to stay here for thanksgiving and she invited me to her house for dinner and a couple of my teachers really don't care, they just walk in class and lecture and if I ask a question they only say yes or no and they don't explain their answer.

E: The MAP program has a required class called freshman seminar. It's a study class and the instructor is rarely in class and when she is she rarely speaks to us. Her assistant, she is not the type of person that should be teaching the class. Everyone is class except one or two people that get along with her.

D: Why did you choose this institution? Eastern?

A: Scholarships and the physical education major.

M: Scholarship, major and my mom liked it cause I was close to home and I visited and I like it too and I knew a few people
from my school that went here and they said it was pretty good, so then I chose Eastern.

J: The size of campus and my teammates are cool, they seem down to earth and I like that, they were nice.

E: I knew a lot of upperclassmen and they told me that it was good. The size and scholarship, the bigger schools did not offer me a scholarship.

D: Did you find what you expected? Did you find some things disappointing to you?

A: No, I am not disappointed, it's a little easier than I expected, cause you have teachers and most of them care and they wanna see you succeed, so they want to help you.

D: Would you make the same choice again?

M: No, it's just the people as a whole are great, but people over there (football) like certain individuals. No, I should of went somewhere else or did a different sport. The coaches on the football, some of them show favoritism, and if you are not a favorite you won't play no matter how much talent you have and I don't think that's fair.

D: Just like when you are in the classroom and you are a teacher's pet?

M: Yeah and that's not fair at all. I would not make the same decision again.

T: If students could change anything they wanted about the institution, what would they change and what would they not change?

A: I would change. Last year I lived in the dorms and I didn't
like it because they didn't have heat or cool air and the rooms are too small but everything else here is o.k.

I would change the classes we have to take for the MAP program, it's not really helping me at all and I would change that.

The same here, I would change the class structure.

I would change the dorm food and that's all.

I would change some of those core classes towards my major.

I think most of those classes that I have taken, like for my industrial tech. class I have to take 1263, it's like a mechanical graphing and drawing class and I wanna design houses and that has nothing to do with what I wanna do. So if I wasn't on a scholarship (athletic) I'd be wasting my money, it's a lot of classes that do not have anything to do with my major.

D: What is the number one thing you like about EIU?

A: Wrestling.

E: Track, the coaches, they're easy to get along with, the practice is usually fun, it's what I expected, but a little more than I expected.

J: The same thing he (E:) said, it's fun to come to practice, it's a little bit different from what I expected but it's fun because it's surprising and not as hard as I expected it to be so far.

H: The togetherness, the coaches, the coming together as a whole team.

M: The players, the football team, you can talk to each other, the 4 to 1 ratio girls to guys, you can discuss anything with the
team members.
What about academics?
I have tutors for every subject.
Academics are great, but the campus and Charleston community are too strict and not diverse.
What do you mean by strict?
When the campus disbanded the canes, the fraternities last year did not have any violence so I don't see why they were taken away this year. I don't know, I guess it's Eastern, I guess.
SUMMARY

In conclusion the group believed that the focus group was a good idea. The focus group can be expanded to have females, upperclass students and former MAP students who have graduated. A variety of questions dealing with Eastern Illinois University should be asked to get a feeling on where a student's interest and concerns about college are. The focus group like most interest groups want their opinion heard. The opinions were varied in terms of getting concerns off of their chest but the general consensus of the group was for EIU to have a better educational system, change has to take place.

The focus group was concerned about Eastern's image and how they should make their image better. The image of EIU also needs to be published and publicly spread better throughout the state of Illinois. The members of the group are from middle class to lower class families. The information about Eastern seems to get around the public schools mainly geared towards middle to upper class students. Thus, EIU needs to draw resources from within the university and create a pipeline to school districts throughout the state and reach out and tell everyone about EIU.

We as a group felt that the students interviewed were being real about their concerns and were not harboring any ill feelings toward EIU for shortcomings. The major changes that have to take place by the 21st century are communication related. Eastern needs to be aggressively pursuing students from all backgrounds and areas of the midwest. If EIU wants to be a regional public ivy university then they to start recruiting like one.
Finally, in conclusion Eastern has the resources to become a major midwest regional university but it must take steps in using its resources to attract all types of students, not just the middle upper class suburban yuppies.

What opportunities should be available? How will these opportunities be communicated about to potential students? What behavior expectations exist on campus for students and by whom?

Do preadmission contacts include people who ask "It's like to be a student here?"

How does the institution communicate what is expected of responsible behavior in the college community?

To what extent do athletics and extracurricular activities inhibit student learning? What is the price of failure?

To what extent is your college encouraged to celebrate and share the successes?

How visible is the president to the students?

To what extent do students perceive that faculty care?
Appendix A - Focus Group Questions

1. To what degree or extent is EIU committed to the enhancement and growth of multiculturalism in race, gender, physical abilities, lifestyles and opinions of the whole society both on campus and in the Charleston Community? Are there groups or individuals who feel that they are not acknowledged as full members of the community? If so, why?

2. What opportunities exist to celebrate the campus community? What role do students play in these celebrations? Are there groups of the campus community who feel that they are excluded from participating in such celebrations? How is student life communicated about to prospective students? How is student behavior expectations communicated at orientation activities and by whom?

3. Do preadmission contacts clearly and accurately describe "What it's like to be a student here"?

4. How does the institution communicate what is considered to be responsible behavior in the collegiate community?

5. To what extent do athletics and greek organizations promote or inhibit student learning? What is the price of failure?

6. To what extent is your culture encouraged to understand, celebrate and share the heritage?

7. How visible is the president to the students?

8. To what extent do students perceive that faculty members are available and personally involved in their learning?

9. Why did you as a student choose this institution? Did you find what you expected? Why or Why not? Would you make the same
choice again? Would you make the same choice again? Why or Why not?

10. If students could change anything they wanted about the institution, what would they change and what would they not change?
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A Focus Group Discussion for the
North Central Association of College,
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Introduction to Student Development Theory
Department of Educational Guidance

Eastern Illinois University
Charleston, Illinois
December 1993
The authors would like to acknowledge Mr. Keith Kohanzo for inspiring this project.
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CHAPTER I
PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this project is to assist in the gathering of information which may be used in making a campus assessment of Eastern Illinois University, as it relates to the current mission statement and the policies and practices of the University. Specifically, this project is aimed at examining how student leaders, actively involved on campus, perceive the campus environment and to what extent their perceptions of the campus environment effects their involvement.
CHAPTER II
FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY

The demographics of the this focus group included four on-campus undergraduate student leaders who are actively involved in various recognized student organizations. The composition of the individuals were two males and two females. One of the individuals had previously attend a four-year institution of Higher Education.

The four students represented a wide range of different student organizations. Their membership included: American Marketing Association, Residence Hall Association, Ford Hall Council, Epsilon Sigma Alpha Service Sorority, Phi Alpha Eta Women’s Academic Honorary, National Residence Hall Honorary, University Board, and a member of the Resident Assistant Staff.

By interviewing this group of active student leaders, a focus group was created to explore a group of questions derived from the audit protocol found in the text book entitled Involving Colleges. Dr. Charles Eberly, Associate Professor in the Educational Guidance
Department, is coordinating efforts through his Introduction to Student Development Theory course to interview several focus groups using the audit protocol model. The results from the focus groups is submitted to augment the reaccreditation process which is in the preparation stage at Eastern Illinois University. Reaccreditation is award by the North Central Association of College, University, and Secondary Schools.
CHAPTER III
MAJOR THEMES AND KEY POINTS

Positive Aspects

Leadership opportunities: Based on the perception of the focus group, there is an apparent and abundant amount of leadership opportunity on the campus of Eastern Illinois University. There are many diverse student organizations on campus which provide students with the opportunity to grow and learn. The student acknowledged the efforts of the Student Activities Office and the Office of University Housing and Dining Services as two major "producers" of leadership opportunities.

Residence Halls: The residence halls is a major contributor in how the campus environment is perceived by students. The residence halls serves to disseminate information, provide leadership opportunities, and to offer educational opportunities to the students. These opportunities exist due to programming activities and events, individual and group interaction, and through the diverse atmosphere which each of the residence hall offers to it’s students.
Proximity of Campus: Students are attracted to Eastern Illinois University's "compact" campus. All residence halls, academic buildings, administrative offices, and student services offices are within walking distance from one another. This is extremely convenient.

Out of the Classroom Educational Experiences: The students perceived a primary contributor to out of the classroom educational experiences derives from the various and diverse student organizations on campus. These organizations offer leadership positions, campus speakers, and programs which work toward improving the campus environment.

Negative Aspects

Money: It is perceived money which is appropriated for improvement projects is not well spent. It is also perceived that money is spent on projects offering only temporary solutions to long-range problems. There are concerns from students about the financial accountability of the university. Other fiscal concerns
center around the financial support of student organizations.

Similarly, is the concern and perception for the apparent lack of funding for successful campus activities.

Interior Conditions of Facilities: It is perceived that Eastern Illinois University has a great deal of instructional equipment which is outdated and the physical structure of many campus buildings are poor. Improvements are needed in lighting classrooms, purchasing new student desks, updating instructional equipment, repairing sidewalks and water drains. It is also perceived that there is a lack of lounge and meeting facilities. Also a concern is the accessibility of students who are physically challenged.

Exclusion from Leadership Opportunities and Campus Events: It was the perception of the students that although there are many opportunities for student involvement in campus organizations, there are some which limit participation. It was expressed that intimidation in some of the student groups was a reason for limited involvement. The students felt there are experienced leaders
involved heavily in more than one organization and involved in more that one aspect of the leadership roles. This "recycling" of student leaders and the intimidating factors mentioned earlier, adversely effects the encouragement of student involvement.

Student Services: The focus group expressed many positive aspects regarding the student services provided on campus. However, they seemed dissatisfied with the office hours of departments. Example are the hour of the Library, Dining Services, Computer Labs, and the Recreational Center. There is no questions these perceptions may have a negatively profound effect on the campus environment for students.
CHAPTER IV
SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

1. In what ways does the institution’s setting influence its missions and practices?

Positive Responses
   a. Professors tailor to students’ needs
   b. College provides a conducive atmosphere for learning
   c. Proximity of buildings is convenient
   d. Classes are conducted in a "relaxed" atmosphere

Negative Responses
   a. Physical characteristics of the buildings are poor
   b. Instructional equipment is outdated
   c. A great deal of tension in class

2. What cultural, political, social, or service opportunities are available to students? Do students take advantage of these opportunities? Why or why not? Which opportunities are most attractive to students? and why?

Positive Responses
   a. There are many social opportunities
   b. Cultural diversity is addressed
   c. There are many cultural opportunities

Negative Responses
   a. Opportunities are limited due to intimidating factors
   b. Could use more diversity events
   c. Political opportunities do not exist
3. Do students take advantage of the educational opportunities that Eastern offers?

Positive Responses
   a. Educational opportunities are abundant

Negative Responses
   a. Students do not take advantage of these educational opportunities
      b. These opportunities are not required
      c. Students will stereotype other students as nerds if they join organizations such as the Economics Club
      d. Tutors need to be available for all academic disciplines

4. So do you think Eastern covers educational opportunities and that there are plenty of opportunities out there?

Positive Responses
   a. There are a great deal incorporated in the integrated curriculum

Negative Responses
   a. Students do not take advantage of these opportunities

5. Are local graduates, community leaders, and other friends of the institution used as resources by students?

Positive Responses
   a. Teachers use these resources for classes
   b. The mayor attends campus meetings
Negative Responses

a. Students do not use these resources

6. In what ways does the campus make you feel more comfortable and confident with where you live and work? The first example is the Physical Plant. Do you think the campus is attractive and well maintained?

Positive Responses

a. Campus is maintained well
b. There is very little litter on campus
c. Grounds are attractive throughout the four seasons
d. Repairs in residence halls are usually taken care of in good time
e. The academic setting is adequate

Negative Responses

a. During the winter, the grounds crew needs to clear off the sidewalks better
b. Building are old
c. Desks are in poor condition
d. Poor lighting in classrooms
e. Sidewalks are in terrible shape
f. Poor drainage on campus
g. Money should go toward academic buildings and not to areas such as the Rec Center

7. Here at Eastern, are the facilities accessible to students? and at the times convenient to student schedules?
Positive Responses
a. Library hours are convenient
b. Rec Center support students’ needs
c. Building centered well on campus

Negative Responses
a. Weekend library hours should change
b. Rec Center should be open longer as an alternative to bars
   c. Dining Services should be open longer
d. Computer Labs should be open longer
e. Need more computer lab facilities

8. How are common campus issues communicated? Do students have access to this information?

Positive Responses
a. Daily Eastern News is a good source for student communications
b. Organizational advertising is a good way to communicate campus issues and events
c. R.A.s do a good job of disseminating information

Negative Responses
a. Off-campus students do not receive information as much as on-campus students
b. Daily Eastern News has a lot of misquotes and biases
c. Daily Eastern News gets information out to students when it is too late
9. What central meeting places are available? and to what extent are they being used? and by what organization?

Positive Responses
a. The Union, library, and McDonald’s are popular meeting places
b. Residence Hall provide adequate meeting space.

Negative Responses
a. Vending lounge allows smoking
b. Some academic building lack meeting rooms and lounges

10. Can students find personal space when need? Where, when, and how can students be alone if they desire?

Positive Responses
a. Stacks in the library is a good place to study alone
b. Residence hall basements and student rooms are good for studying
c. Residence hall rooms can sometimes provide a place to be alone
d. Go for a walk on campus
e. Fast Food Restaurants can provide good places to study alone
f. Morton Park, Fox Ridge State Park, and the Campus Pond provide good places to get away

Negative Responses
a. Friends can interrupt you in your room or residence hall
11. How do students get involved? To what extent are students welcomed and encouraged, even "rushed" to become actively involved in the life of the community?

Positive Responses
a. Residence assistants build a sense of community and involvement in the residence halls
b. Panthers Preview and the Orientation office provide many opportunities to students
c. Student Organization Day provides student with opportunities to get involved with an organization on campus

Negative Responses
(None)

12A. To what extent are interested students excluded from participation such as by membership limits, special qualifications, dues or fees, or narrow interests?

Positive Responses
(None)

Negative Responses
a. Fraternities and sororities limit participation through rush activities and fees
b. Joining some organizations, such as Student Government or greek organizations can be intimidating
c. Some events exclude certain group from participating
12B. Are there enough leadership positions to meet the needs of students for leadership experience? Are leadership roles widely distributed? or are a few students "in charge of everything"? What, if any, students are most likely to fill these role and why?

Positive Responses
  a. There are many leadership positions on campus
  b. Residence halls promote leadership positions

Negative Responses
  a. The leadership positions are not equally distributed
APPENDIX A:  
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Interviewer: To begin, please state your names:

Davin: I’m Davin Bernardi.

Kathleen: ...I’m Kathleen Scully...

Heidi: ...I’m Heidi Polchow...

Rick: ...and I’m Rick Casevechia.

Interviewer: Let’s begin with the question, In what ways does the institution’s settings influence its mission and practices?

Kathy: I think that it is really hard in some of the older buildings. I know that they like to keep the old or traditional look, but a lot of them have been neglected and much of the equipment has not been updated. So in that aspect the learning experience suffers.

Interviewer: Davin?

Davin: As far as the professors, um, here at Eastern, they tailor to the students needs. Some teachers use the competitive style grading system where you compete for grades, but the majority grade on an individual basis. That’s good for me because I prefer that type of educational setting.

Interviewer: Heidi, What do you think?

Heidi: I think coming out of high school, um, college provides a
conducive atmosphere for learning because you get to pick your own classes and a schedule that fits you. School is close so you don’t have to worry about transportation to class. There is also a great deal less pressure at the college level; for example, attendance isn’t mandatory, there is no pressure to be at class on time, and uh, it’s more relaxed.

Rick: I disagree with Heidi’s statement about pressure, I feel that there is a lot more pressure at the college level to succeed. Attendance isn’t mandatory but you need good grades to get a good job so attending classes is essential and important. I do agree with the idea that I don’t have to travel far to go to school. Classes are only a couple of blocks away.

Interviewer: The next question is, What cultural, political, social, or service opportunities are available to students? Do students take advantage of these opportunities? Why or Why not? Which opportunities are most attractive to students and why? ...Davin?

Davin: As far as social opportunities go there is a ton of social opportunities for students to get involved in some way or another. I mean there is fraternities, sororities, different campus organizations; organizations and places like the campus house... I mean the lighthouse for example... I know a lot of people who go there. Um, Uh as far as being available to everyone, It’s completely available to anyone who wants to join they can. And, if you’re not in a fraternity, it’d not like you are an outcast there are a lot of people not in frats. Bars, there also a different social aspect of this school. Many people have their own favorite bar that they go to. I think that they are a great place to meet people. No one bar is the best, they all have their own identity.

Interviewer: Kathy, What do you think about this subject?
Kathy: I think there is a lot of opportunities, even in the political and other groups that were mentioned in the question, there is still room for social umm, involvement in any group that you are in, there is social interaction in the residence halls there is social interaction available if you live off campus, I think that a lot of organizations mainly student government might be intimidating to some people who want to get involved, and I think that some people won’t get involved because they are intimidated. So in one way I think that yes they are available to everyone, but in some aspects they are limited to certain types of people.

Interviewer: Heidi?

Heidi: Umm, I think that there is Uh, a lot of activities that go on here at the university, but Uh, a lot of times people don’t take advantage of these activities. For example, some things or parties that go on in the union are open to all students, and they could be more diverse. Like a lot of times these activities are dances which are black-orientated and there is never many or any white people who go because no other white people will be in attendance, just like you never see a large amount of black people at the Bars. The opportunity is there, however, it’s up to students to take advantage of diversity on Eastern’s campus. I don’t think that the campus over-emphasizes diversity though.

Interviewer: Rick, What do you think?

Rick: I think that there is a lot of cultural and social activities available to students. And they go for those, but the political ones they don’t go for, unless they Uh, really want to do that.

Interviewer: Next, Do students take advantage of the educational opportunities that Eastern offers? How?...Kathy?
Kathy: I would say that the majority of Uhh, the students that I have had experiences with outside of uhh lecture, including workshops and projects/seminars in different departments; they only went or participated in these if they were getting extra credit or something for going to these, unless they were really, really interested. or if they can get something useful out of the presentation... like how to make a resume or cover letter for a job search. Or like I said some type of extra-credit.

Interviewer: Rick?

Rick: I think that as a freshmen or sophomore you don’t care so much about these things... Cause they aren’t gonna help you yet. These are your minor classes so they don’t require it. I mean when you’re a senior or junior, it’s more important because you’re in it for the long haul.. you know to graduate.

Interviewer: Davin?

Davin: As far as like college goes, they are scared to join up because they don’t want to be stereotyped for belonging to the economics club or something that is considered to make you a loser or book worm, or nerd. People don’t want to be picked on or singled out for belonging. Uhh, it’s hard to join when those prejudices are there.

Interviewer: Heidi, Do you agree?

Heidi: Uhh, umm, for example, how many of us take classes because they are required for their major instead of classes that educate about other cultures. Rather than just the ones you have to have. Second of all, how about tutors, for example how many are available in other subjects than math. I needed one for math but are they available in other areas for students. Also, I needed a tutor
and I know that many are available, but how many students really take advantage of these people...

Interviewer: So do you think that Eastern covers educational opportunities, and that there is plenty of opportunities out there?

Davin: I think that a lot of that is incorporated in the integrated core, Like you know you got so many math requirements and so many english requirements, you know they make you do things.

Rick (interrupts): They’re there but you don’t take advantage of them, you don’t really use them as much.

Interviewer: You mean there is a lot there, but you don’t always take full advantage of the resources.

Davin: Plus you only have so many elective hours available to take classes outside of your major so it’s hard to take advantage of other opportunities.

Interviewer: Umm, Are local graduates, community leaders, and other friends of the institution used as resources by students?

Rick: I don’t know if they are used by students, but I know that my business law teacher is Chris Freese. He practices law outside I don’t know what town, but he teaches his own business law class here on campus. He’s an excellent example of a community leader working here on Eastern’s campus. So I’d say so...

Interviewer: Davin?

Davin: I would have to say no because, I have never seen anyone
do anything from off-campus. Except for like you know, Mayor Cougill... Or someone who like gives a speech. But I've never seen or heard of anyone that I could actually like get involved with.

**Interviewer: Kathy?**

**Kathy:** In one of the organizations that I am involved in, we had Mayor Cougill come to speak to us about leadership, and about his views on Charleston and Eastern. And also, in a lot of the classes in the Business department, we have people from off-campus come talk to us about how to build a good resume... interviewing skills... and what exactly employers are looking for today... They also do that in the Speech department too.

**Heidi:** I think its available to students, I just think the students need to make the effort to take advantage of these resources. I just don't think students make the effort.

**Interviewer:** The next question is, In what ways does the campus make you feel more comfortable and confident with where you live and work? The first example is like the Physical Plant? Do you think the campus is attractive and well-maintained?

**Rick:** Yeah I'd say so... cause like you don't see garbage cans and trash laying all around.

**Davin:** Um I think they maintain it well. If you compare it to other campuses its really well kept up. Eastern is probably about average. I have seen campuses that have looked better and I have seen campuses that look worse, so I think its pretty average. In the summer the lawns look nice and they trim the bushes quite often. In the winter when it snows they clean off the snow and ice so in those respects they keep the campus well maintained.
Kathy: I kind of got to disagree with the winter because I think it's hard to get around especially with all of the ice around. I really think they need to do something to improve that. Also, the quality of the buildings are lacking. I know that the desks are old and it is not that comfortable to sit in class with desks that wobble. Its hard to look at your instructor with the lights out above you and that happens quite often. Probably more than what people would like to admit. In the Residence Halls, when we have a complaint about something that is broken or needs to be fixed it usually gets fixed rather quickly. So, it's not that bad in some of the Residence Halls, but the academic buildings are in bad shape.

Rick: I have to disagree because I went to Circle Campus (UIC Campus) and the place up there is a mess. This is a fine institution compared to Circle. They had really bad lighting in all of the classrooms which made it hard to see the boards and the heating and air conditioning never worked. So, Eastern's academic setting is alot better. To me it is a lot more acceptable.

Heidi: Sometimes, um, the money Eastern puts into their buildings isn't used well. The sidewalks are all messed up and buckled. When it rains we have flash flooding in certain spots. There is really poor drainage on this campus. The equipment we use in chemistry classes isn't kept up to date but however we do have a beautiful recreation center. The Recreation Center does not help our educational needs.

Interviewer: Okay. Here at Eastern are the facilities accessible to students and at times convenient to students' schedules?

Kathy: I would say that the facility of the library is pretty convenient in the fact that it is open until midnight during the week. I think I have a problem with their weekend hours because they do not accommodate. Because they think everyone likes to sleep in
until one and this is not the case for most students.

Davin: I agree with the thing about the library, but as far as the Rec Center goes the Rec Center is open from eight in the morning till twelve at night. So, this is accommodating to the fact that you can go between classes. The Rec Center definitely serves students’ needs.

Rick: I think the Rec Center should be open later. It would be a real good alternative to the bars and stuff.

Interviewer: Heidi, what are your feelings?

Heidi: I think that um, the food service for instance isn’t convenient because they do not take into consideration that some students not only have classes but also jobs. They just don’t offer enough time to eat. For example, you only have an hour or so to get there and eat meals. Basically, the campus is centered very well, therefore it is easy to get to each building within walking distance. It is pretty convenient because it is not a mile away. And I think.....

Davin (interrupts): ...As far as computer labs goes I think it could be open a little bit later. There is like three computers to every printer. This causes a backlog and can be pretty inconvenient. If you are trying to get done in a hurry and there is someone using your printer you have to wait till their done. You could use more space in the computer labs and it would help to have a few more on campus. I know that Bradley University has a computer in every room which is hooked up to one system. Something like that would be nice at Eastern.

Interviewer: Rick?
Rick: My biggest "beef" is with food service because dinner is closed at 6:45 p.m. and I am hungry again by 10:00 p.m. I think that there should be something open on campus to serve food to students late at night. I know I don’t use all of my food service meals during the week and I spend money on fast food at night. I think it would be more convenient to eat on campus at one of the dining services.

Heidi: I think also that I don’t use all the meals on the meal plan that I am on. I think I should get a refund because it is a waste and I think that my parents should be able to use my extra meals when they come to visit. I think that this was false advertisement because they haven’t let us do that when they said that they would.

Interviewer: The next question is how are common campus issues communicated? Do students have access to this information?

Heidi: I think that the Eastern News is one good way students can communicate on campus because students don’t have a lot of time to watch the news or the Eastern channel. So the Eastern News is a pretty good way to communicate.

Interviewer: Rick, what do you think about the communication?

Rick: One way students can communicate is through organizations because they put flyers up all over the damn place.

Davin: Also the R.A.’s do a pretty good job with keeping students informed on what’s going on. They give you ideas of things to do.

Interviewer: Do you have any thoughts about this Kathy?
Kathy: I think that as a Resident Assistant, I get a lot of information to pass down to my residents so I am not concerned about those students. I think that students off-campus suffer because they don’t have the benefits of the students that live on campus. And, I don’t know if they feel that they are a part of the campus community due to being off-campus. And I also want to talk about the Daily Eastern News. I think that a lot of times information in there such as the campus clips is good cause they give meeting times and things going on. But sometimes the articles written have a lot of misquotes and biases. Whenever I read it with a grain of salt.

Interviewer: What do you think about the issues the Daily Eastern News presents?

Davin: At times the issues are bias, but I think you have to expect that because there are no ways around it sometimes.

Rick: I think the campus clips are kind of short and people skip over them. Sororities and Fraternities seem to be the only organizations that get any use out of them.

Interviewer: Anyone else want to comment before we go on?

Kathy: I also think that the paper reports on activities that have already taken place. How can you go to activities if you do not know about them ahead of time? It should be advertised the day before.

Interviewer: Let’s go on to the next question. What central meeting places are available and to what extent are they being used? And by what organizations?

(The group did not understand the question so we had to stop and
Interviewer: To reiterate that first question, what sort of out of the classroom meeting places are available to you guys and other social groups?

Davin: Whenever you have a project to do, your group can usually go to union, library, or McDonald’s has a meeting room...those places are perfect because you can sit at a big table or booth.

Kathy (interrupts): I think McDonald’s is a pretty popular place to have meetings however I also have meetings in residence hall lobbies or basements. Um... I think that one place that is kinda available to some people is the vending lounge. The problem I have with that is that it is all smoking and I don’t think they cater to non-smoking students. And in some of the academic buildings there are meeting places where students can gather and talk about things you might be doing in class or projects that you might be working on. And those are kinda helpful, but in a lot of buildings they are not there. So, I think that a few more academic lounges would be ideal.

Heidi: In groups that I have been in we have met in the Library Quad or in places that are quiet. We have also used McDonald’s to practice our speeches.

Interviewer: Can students find personal space when needed? Where, when, and how can students be alone if they desire?

Kathy: One example that comes to mind is the stacks in the library. I bet most people wouldn’t even know that you were there unless someone really looked hard to find you.

Davin: I know that in residence halls people use basements and
study rooms to get away from people. These places are usually quiet and a good place to study.

Rick: I don't know, um, sometimes when I want to be alone I go to my room, but you always have friends around that can interrupt you. So, the best place to go for me is out on the Quad or I just go for a walk.

Kathy: Are we talking about off-campus?

Interviewer: Yes, anywhere on or off-campus.

Kathy: Well off-campus you can go to a fast food restaurant when there is nobody there at night or to Morton Park or Fox Ridge State Park. There is ....

Interviewer: Heidi?

Heidi: A good place to use is the Union. There are a lot of rooms and lounges in the union, but I don't think students take advantage of it. There are picnic tables available in most of the Quad areas and at the Campus Pond. You can also go to the Rec Center to be by yourself.

Interviewer: The next focus would be, How do students get involved? To what extent are students welcomed and encouraged—even "rushed" to become actively involved in the life of the community?

Kathy: I think that as a Resident Assistant you are encouraged to make everyone in the residence halls feel welcome, also to instill community of a floor. Panther Preview activities are sponsored through the Orientation Office to promote get togethers. Hall Councils also help get people involved. As long as you are on
campus there are opportunities for you to join organizations. Student Organization Day is a good program which tries to get students involved and to participate in campus activities.

Davin: Some of the things the campus does real well is some of the orientation stuff. I know personally, I met a lot of people through freshmen orientation and I think that Panther Preview was a great opportunity to meet new friends. As an executive member of my hall council I feel that many of the activities that we sponsor offer other opportunities for students to get involved.

Heidi: The R.A.’s do a pretty good job with advertising on the walls.

Interviewer: To what extent are interested students excluded from participation, such as by membership limits, special qualifications, dues or fees, or narrow interests?

Rick: I would say for instance fraternities limit people because of the fees. If you don’t have the money you can’t join. I think it’s like having to buy your friends.

Davin: Another thing about rushing you don’t know if you are going to get in or not. Um, it’s kinda hard, say you got a friend in a certain fraternity or sorority and they don’t want you then you gotta problem.

Interviewer: Ladies?...

Kathy: I think that, umm, one reason why I was afraid to rush a social sorority is because that number one, it is a lot of money. Many of them are $250 a semester or $500 a year. That’s a lot of money just to be spending on a sorority. It is really intimidating to go through rush because you are judged. I didn’t want to go
through rush and be judged by others. And there are alternatives to that kind of thing if you want to be a part of them. I spoke a little earlier about Student Government and that it excludes some people because it is intimidating in that people think that they have to be able to produce legislation and know parliamentary procedures. They also think that they have to speak in front of a large group of people. Intimidation is a big factor which excludes people. However, intimidation comes about because you may be ignorant to what really goes on in the organization. If people would take the time to really get to know something, they probably would not be as intimidated.

Heidi: I think also events that happen on campus sometimes exclude certain groups. For example, homecoming is a good event, but you can’t get involved because you are not in a sorority or fraternity. A lot of the dances are just for people who belong to fraternities or sororities. You never see dances for people who are not in these fraternities or sororities.

Kathy (interrupts): Yeah, I totally agree. Many other organizations try to get involved with homecoming, but they are excluded because their organizations do not have as much money as other organizations do.

Interviewer: Guys, do you have anything else to add?

Davin: No, I agree with the girls.

Rick: Umm, what did you say?

Interviewer: Do you have anything to add?

Rick: Nah.
Interviewer: Okay. Now we are ready for our last question. Are there enough leadership positions to meet the needs of students for leadership experiences? Are leadership roles widely distributed or are a few students "in charge of everything." What, if any, students are most likely to fill these roles and why?

Davin: As far as leadership roles, there are quite a bit of them but I do not think that there is enough. You know being an R.A. or Hall Counselor you are a leader. All of the other organizations on campus give you the opportunity to be president or vice-president or even secretary, but there are quite a bit of other opportunities that are not taken advantage of.

Kathy: I think that they are not equally distributed. For example, we talked about homecoming and the people that are in charge of those activities are also the leaders in their own fraternities and sororities and maybe some other groups on campus. So, there leaders are just transferring their roles from one organization to the next. A lot of these people also serve on University Board and the Apportionment Board. These leaders are constantly being "recycled" and they are used in many different aspects.

Rick: I agree with her.

Interviewer: Well, we would like to thank you for your time and we think the answers you gave will be quite helpful.
APPENDIX B
THE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN
WORKING TOWARD IMPROVING
CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

In August of 1993, Eastern Illinois University President David Jorns created a Strategic Plan for the year 2000. We felt that it would be interesting to discuss how the Strategic Plan is aimed toward the campus environment.

In section I, part b, you will find that the Strategic Plan includes achieving and maintaining small class size. This will definitely influence the educational aspects of the campus environment. Small class size has been known to be one of the strengths of Eastern Illinois University’s campus environment.

In section III, part d, the plan mentions enhancing the university/community environment in order to enrich the quality of student life. This section also mentions maintaining the current campus size of 10,000 students and to upgrade the academic standards of admitting students.

The final section addresses obtaining state-of-the-art
instructional equipment and to develop an aesthetically pleasing, safe, physically accessible, environmentally responsible campus.

There is no doubt that the President’s Strategic Plan will influence some changes in the campus environment. A campus environment is much like the hidden curriculum at a public high school. Many college students will go through college not realizing the effects the campus environment had on their education. The President’s Strategic Plan continues to strive for improvements in the campus environment at Eastern Illinois University.
August 24, 1993

To: The University Community

From: David L. Jorns

Re: Strategic Planning for the Year 2000

I am pleased to submit for your review the proposed University Strategic Plan for the year 2000. The Council for University Planning and Budget worked diligently throughout the Spring semester to complete this project. It is my belief that this document provides a new direction for Eastern Illinois University and will prepare us to enter a new century as an even stronger, more competitive institution of higher learning.

Each unit on this campus will utilize the Strategic Plan as a blueprint upon which its own "articulated" plan for the year 2000 will be developed. During the next two years, strategic planning at the dean/director and unit/department level will become more and more important. Budgeting decisions and funding priorities will be based upon strategic planning efforts. The attached President’s Council Articulated Plan, for example, follows the format to be used by all units in the University.

As every member of the university community will be involved in the planning process, your reaction to the Strategic Plan is requested. I have asked Faculty Senate, Student Senate, and Staff Senate to review the document and return their comments to me by September 15. The document has also been forwarded to the Council of Deans, the Council of Chairs, the Council for Academic Affairs, Council for Graduate Studies, and the Council for Teacher Education for review and response. I am also interested in your personal reaction. Your written commentary on the Strategic Plan, as well as the President’s Council Articulated Plan, can be forwarded to me by September 15.

Join me at one of two "campus meetings" later this week (Thursday and Friday at 12 noon in the Charleston/Mattoon Room of the MLK Union). I plan to outline for you the strategic planning process and respond to your questions and concerns. I look forward to your involvement in this most important project.
Eastern Illinois University will enter the twenty-first century as a comprehensive institution responsive to change, dedicated to quality, and committed to an educational philosophy centered on a global perspective. A pioneer in delivering cultural and educational opportunities to the region, EIU will continue to champion a tradition of distinguished teaching in both undergraduate and graduate programs of study. Furthermore, the university recognizes its place in the human family and celebrates a faculty and student body which reflects our nation in all its diversity. Ultimately, the university is entrusted with the responsibility of graduating culturally literate, technologically sophisticated citizens who are prepared to lead, to inspire, and to preserve the great traditions of our democracy. The University commits itself, and all its resources, to this trust and this responsibility.

In support of the vision statement, EIU will implement the following goals and objectives by the year 2000:

I. Improve the quality of education in both undergraduate and graduate programs of study by
   a. Delivering classroom instruction by full-time professors.
   b. Achieving and maintaining small class sizes.
   c. Building and maintaining an outstanding library collection.
   d. Providing greater support and greater rewards for research.

II. Improve university service and outreach by
   a. Enhancing service delivery methods to the region.
   b. Building a strong alumni association.
   c. Developing a nationally recognized endowment.
   d. Expanding visibility as a cultural center.
   e. Developing intervention programs with community colleges and other appropriate organizations.

III. Enhance the quality of students and the quality of student life by
   a. Maintaining an on-campus size of approximately 10,000 students.
   b. Upgrading the academic standards used to admit students.
   c. Increasing the number of non-traditional students.
   d. Enhancing the university/community environment in order to enrich the quality of student life.
   e. Delivering broad and effective customer-oriented support services for students.

IV. Increase the availability of university resources by
   a. Securing competitive salaries for faculty and staff.
   b. Providing adequate support budgets for all departments.
   c. Obtaining state-of-the-art instructional equipment.
   d. Obtaining technologically advanced administrative systems.
   e. Developing an aesthetically pleasing, safe, physically accessible, environmentally responsible campus.
   f. Building an infrastructure that will support the needs of the future.
FOCUS GROUP: CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

DECEMBER 1993

EDG 5760

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

CINDY CAMPBELL
BRIAN HOOSER
DONNA STRICKLIN
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PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the feelings of Eastern Illinois students on the campus environment. The findings will be utilized for the North Central Accreditation process of Eastern Illinois University in 1995.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

There were five sophomores (4 - females and 1 - male).

There was one freshmen (1 - male).

There was one junior (1 - female).

There were three seniors (2 - females and 1 - male).

Within the group of 10 students, there was a mixture of students involved in activities, such as, student senate, university board, greeks, etc. Also, there were two students who work as RAs in the Residence Halls.
FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Campus Environment

A) In what ways does the institution's setting influence its mission and practices?

B) What are the "special" circumstances or resources that the setting provides?

1) Are the circumstances and resources used to promote student learning?
   a) in the Charleston area
   b) in the surrounding county

2) What cultural, political, social or service opportunities are available to students?
   a) Do the students take advantage of these opportunities? Why or why not?
   b) Which opportunities are most attractive to students and why?

3) Do students take advantage of the educational opportunities the setting provides and, if so, how?

4) Is transportation available for students to take advantage of off-campus opportunities?

5) Are local graduates, community leaders, and other "friends" of the institution used as resources by the students?
Major Themes and Key Points

1) In what ways do the institution's setting influence its mission and practices: immediately surrounding community, location in city of Charleston, surrounding county, location in State.

Positive:
- comfortiveness of small town (homier)
- professors are very approachable (knows students by name)
- class size is under 35

Negatives:
- lack of cultural and multicultural awareness, the diversity of art and all those facilities are not nearly available
- larger town have more available
- money is spend in areas that should be spend in other areas (such as library periodicals)
- very limited in theater and arts

2) Are the circumstances and resources used to promote student learning in the Charleston community or in the surrounding county wide area?

Positive:
- faculty are easy to work with
- class size is 20 to 30
- professors take time to know each other
- professors take time to answer questions
- plays, even though not good facilities, are really good

Negatives:
- library could be modernized
- art/theater classes are limited
- facilities for theater are not very good
- more growth as far as people getting involved in theater

3) What cultural, political, social or service opportunities are there available to students, (in regards to community or here on campus) and do students take advantage of these opportunities, how if so?

Positive:
- a cultural diversity panel at Eastern (that put on 13 or 14 panels this semester)
- various clubs, such as LASO or BSU for cultural diversity (these organization educate other people and are open)
- various organizations and groups (such as the greek system, housing office, residence halls, university board)
go above and beyond trying to educate
- you will not be a number at Eastern
- it is easy to get involved here
- lots of activities here in Charleston (not publicized enough)
- Lantz Gym - Recreation Center is open to everyone (provides a lot of courts and aerobic classes)
- university does a good job programming activities
- everyone at Eastern goes beyond the call of trying to program as alternatives to bars
- Lighthouse (Wesley Foundation) is fun - but not big enough
- the greek system is good way to get involved
- religious groups have several activities planned

Negatives:
- no one knows where Charleston is
- not a lot of connections and opportunities through this place
- some students don't take advantage of getting involved (Ex. Student Senate Elections)
- maybe things are not publicized enough
- community needs to open up something in community (e.g. ice rink)
- majority of students drink because they don't have access to a lot of things to do
- for group things - there is not a lot of things to do
- over program during orientation (bombardment), then nothing to do
- the lack of things to do - it makes students more likely to drink
- town needs to stop complaining about EIU students and give more things for students to do
- going greek is expensive (not reasonable for some students)

4) Is transportation available to students to take advantage of off-campus opportunities?

Positive:
- taxi service that takes you to Mattoon
- bus that takes students to Chicago
- train station in Mattoon

Negatives:
- should be a little bus system
- if we have a Gus Bus to take you to bars, there should be a bus system to take you to Wal-Mart
- freshmen and sophomores can't keep cars on campus - if they do, it is $215 and then you must park at stadium
- parking spots are not available
- city is against us
- we help community with various service projects as an example, but we get nothing in return
- we are the reason why a lot of places (e.g. bars) exist, but still no support from community

5) Are local graduates, community leaders, and other "friends" of the institution used as resources by the students?

Positive:
- if you are from Eastern - you have it made for position (e.g. internships) in Springfield, because of Edgar
- fraternities have strong alumni support

Negatives:
- community leaders are afraid to get involved because of bad publicity from mayor
- publicity of alcohol on Eastern hurts Eastern
- frustrating as an Resident Assistant to deal with drunken students
- Mayor is very frustrating to many students (contradicts himself, has no alternatives for bars)
- Daily Eastern News needs to be more well-rounded
- Bars keep paper going by paying ads

Additional Comments:
- Daily Eastern News doesn't cover a lot of community service projects
- one person to change lightbulbs in residence halls
- whites and blacks are segregated on campus
- there are efforts to build gap between minorities and majorities with things such as, unity games
RECOMMENDATIONS

* The university needs to work with community leaders to provide opportunities for business in transportation and sport activities, not just restaurants and bars.

* The university needs to develop relationships with existing businesses in the area to promote opportunities in internships and student employment.

* Academic Advisors need to be educated about all of the organizations and activities on Eastern's campus so that they can provide one-on-one information to each freshmen.

* Funding needs to be obtained to increase the current resources of Booth Library.

* Public relations should inform the community about the benefits Eastern's organizational groups and students bring to the community. Include community projects by student organizations and economic statistics of students benefits to area businesses.

* The university needs to publicize events in some way other than just the newspapers and posters.

* Organizations on campus should hold informational meetings to let people know what they do.

* Money from parking tickets should be utilized to build parking lots.

* If the university is growing so much, they should provide services to accommodate the new numbers.
Hi, I'm Tracy, I'm a sophomore. Hi, I'm Alice. I'm a sophomore. I'm Nicki, I'm a sophomore. Stan and I'm a freshman. Shelly, I'm a senior. Chris and I'm a senior.

LEADER: Okay, we are going to be talking a little bit about the campus environment and how it relates to the mission statement. I think you've all had a chance to look over that. The first question that we're going to ask is in regard to what ways did the institution setting influence the mission of practices and we're talking about the area around the surrounding community, location in the City of Charleston, where we're located in this state. How does that affect the mission statement, do you feel?

TRACY: Maybe, I think it's good, it's kind of a good area but it's kind of far-fetched where it's farther down, where we're away from a lot of city things that go on as far as ... like I'm in the theater department too. It's a small program and it's not very sophisticated and it's not very oriented in the fact that it's very professional, I think.

LEADER: So you think we're in too rural of an area possibly?

TRACY: Yes.

LEADER: Does anybody else have any feelings about that, or agree or disagree?

STAN: I think that the rural setting's good, actually, because I'm from a smaller town and if it was bigger, I think, it would overwhelm me, personally. So, the smaller city is better for me.

TRACY: Same here. I'm from the same town he is and so is Nicki. We're from right there, so, it's like 45 minutes away so this really isn't any different.

LEADER: So you feel that it makes it a little bit homier?

STAN: Yeah, exactly. I felt more comfortable here.

LEADER: How does that feeling help you as far as being able to learn better or maybe growth-wise or something like that?
SHELLY: Well, part of the missions statement says it will try to create an educational and cultural environment, and cultural really sticks out to me. I think that I love the fact that there are 10,000 teachers on this campus and that we can walk into any professors' office and they'll know you by your first name and that the class size is under 35 for most classes. However, in the same token because we are not from such a large place, the lack of cultural and multi-cultural awareness, the diversity of art and all those facilities are not nearly available to us as they would be if we went to a different school. So, it's got pros and cons.

CHRIS: Yeah, I'm from the Chicago area. I'm used to the larger schools. When I came down here, I liked the atmosphere of how small it is. It doesn't feel like being drowned like at a bigger school, which was good for me, but as far as we're talking resources, larger schools, just the larger towns, have more places you can go to. As far as further education, as far as just comparing this town to Champaign, there's always, it has a lot of similarities to Chicago. More resources, transportation, or classes, I think that's what it lacks here.

LEADER: What kind of things can we do on campus to provide that cultural feeling that you think it's lacking here on campus? I mean, is there anything that we can do as far as the community or even here on campus that maybe we can promote more, a little bit more, and still have the homey feeling on campus that would relate to your needs as far as more to get out and culturally centered in something?

TRACY: Well, I do agree with the fact that it's homey here at Charleston, but just, I mean, I have two separate majors. I am a health major also, and just getting farther into my education, I've realized as far as we spend money on things that maybe it shouldn't be spent on. For instances, we build, we just build a thing in front of Lumpkin, a monument or something. But then I go into the library, we don't have periodicals that we need or they're ripped out. There's very little resources here, and I think spending should go maybe towards things that we really need
right away because seniors are always complaining about the library.

**LEADER:** So maybe instead of more cultural things, we're talking about maybe cultural things such as better books, better access to magazines, is that what you mean by that?

**TRACY:** Yeah, if we had the money to spend on things like that, yes. We want to make this campus appealing but we're lacking in important things as of right now where our money should go towards.

**LEADER:** Okay, does anybody else agree or disagree with Tracy?

**SHELLY:** I think a lot of things are out of our hands as far as eulogy and what we can do and where the money goes because everything is allocated throughout the state to difference places and because we're the smallest state funded school, we're going to get the least amount and all that jazz. But our facilities as far as our auditorium, if you go to ISU and compare ISU's auditorium and the Braden Auditorium compared to what we have. As far as the theater and arts, we're very limited and this is something, we can't say we'd like a huge new arena, we know, but to bring in people, but I think that's definitely when people come here and they compare that to a place like ISU, they're going to go to ISU.

**LEADER:** Anybody else have anything to add? We'll move on to the next question. Are the circumstances and resources used to promote student learning in the Charleston community or in the surrounding county wide area? I think we've touched on a little bit of it, but do the resources we have, does the campus use in the Charleston community or in the surrounding county area to help you in your education endeavors? Do you feel like they do, and we can even be talking in a classroom situation. Do you feel like they do? Are there things you can do?

**CHRIS:** The teachers, as far as the faculty, I found are a lot easier to work with. I've had a limited number of larger lecture hall classes. I'm an economics major, and my classes range from 20 to 30 people. That's a good size. I know my professors, they know me. It's easier for me to get help because I'm not the typical person to go out and get help or ask.
Teachers usually do look. If they see that confused look on your face, they usually talk to you and try to answer your questions. That you need a far as faculty goes, I think as far as like principles at the library, this is something that can really improve. I found that when I looked for material on, I did a paper on Russia theory and the economy now, and they do have textbooks out on how it is now, and I could only find books in the 70s that have hardly been touched. They could modernize things I should say.

LEADER: Chris, about something you said, you were talking about the instructors. Do you feel they ever have a caring environment and a campus environment where, how would you call it, as far as in the classroom is friendly or is that what you're saying?

CHRIS: I think it's friendly when you find a direction, as far as where we're going in your education, as far as in your general classes you take, there's sometimes, kind of a lose. The teachers aren't really there to help. It seems more like some classes I took, business related, my accounting teachers were accountants, not teachers. My business law teachers were lawyers, not teachers, and they just more as, "Let's get you out of there." It's a requirement class, and you have to take it. And that atmosphere it's tough for me to find a . . . but once you found it, I was really happy. It's just the original finding that with some of the teachers was a little bit tough.

LEADER: Anybody else have any comment on that?

ALICE: I'm going to major in graphic arts. I was at Southern a year ago, and they have like in your art program, they have all kinds of classes for it, and then I came down here. There's only two intro to graphic design and four other classes after that. So, I think your art class is really limited down here. I mean, I agree that if I was going to pick something, it would be Southern or ISU or something like that.

LEADER: Does anybody else have anything else to add?

TRACY: That's how it is with the theater department too. There's one class for each, like say, if you can't get into one class, you have an opportunity to get into another. There's only
one class. The theater department isn't very big, and that's why I've moved on to another degree also. But it is very limited. There's not very much experience as far as the arts, I feel, down here, but again, this school isn't noted for that. It's more towards education. So, it depends on what you're geared towards.

LEADER: The theater building that you're in, do you feel like the facilities inside it are enough or . . .?

TRACY: No, no.

LEADER: Okay, can you tell me more about that?

TRACY: I just think that the funding they have, the very little budget they have to spend on materials, the access to the theater is very small, very little plays that can be put on, but the plays that are put on, most of them are pretty good. It's just not a very big field and not a lot of people are going into it. It's increased, but as far as facilities, I don't see that it has.

LEADER: Do you have any, a lot of people coming to the theater productions?

TRACY: Ah huh, it's become more popular.

LEADER: Do you see a growth in that area?

TRACY: Yeah, a growth toward people getting more involved with it but as in spending and things like that, no, it's very limited.

LEADER: Anybody else have any comments on that last question that we talked about? Okay, we'll take a moment and let you two introduce yourselves. We were asking just your first name then what grade level you are, whether you're a freshman, sophomore, junior or senior.

Christina, I'm a senior. I'll be here until next December. Krista, I'm a junior.

LEADER: What we're doing is asking a few questions about the campus environment and how you feel about it, and it can be negative or positive. We want you to jump in with whatever you're feeling. We want to hear the truth from everyone. So, just jump in whenever you feel like you have something to say about a particular subject. We're going to go on to the next question. What cultural, political, social or service opportunity are
available to students, and we're talking about in the community or here on campus or even in the county, and be thinking about how students take advantage of those and why or why not they take advantage of them. Do you want me to repeat it or.

CHRIS: Please. Sorry, they were lost back there.

LEADER: There's a couple of chairs there too. We'll pause again and for the newcomers just mention your first name and what grade level you are.

Jerry, a sophomore. Leslie, I'm a sophomore also.

LEADER: What we're doing is asking questions about campus environment and feel free to jump in any time you would like to. We're not going around the room or anything like that. Just when you have an opinion about something, just jump in, okay?

CAMERA PERSON: I think we're going to tell them about the tape. It's not going to be used.

LEADER: The tape will not be used; it's only for our purposes. We're going to take the information that all of you have given us, and we're going to use it in the North Central Association Accreditation Study so we can find out what students feel are right and wrong about the campus and maybe do something about that.

JERRY: So, you're a part of that organization?

LEADER: No, we're graduate students and the guidance and counseling student personnel, and this is the class project for us up here at Eastern. My name is Cindy and I'm Donna.

JERRY: Are you going to any other colleges?

LEADER: This is just for Eastern. We are looking at how students feel, how students at Eastern feel about Eastern. Any hopefully, they will take some suggestions and maybe utilize them in a productive manner to get some things either changed or keep what's right here. Any time you have any comment or opinions just be sure to jump in. Don't feel shy about it, but I'll restate that last question. It's kind of a long one. What cultural, political, social, or service opportunities are available to students, and that could be in the community, that could be here at Eastern, that could be in the county, in the surrounding area.

JERRY: They do have a cultural diversity panel at Eastern.
LEADER: Okay.

JERRY: It's been going on for about a year now. I think they put on what 13 or 14 panels so far this semester or altogether or something like that. There's also different clubs like LOS or BSU that's for cultural diversity. It's pretty wide ranged, I think.

LEADER: Can you tell me more about the clubs and the cultural diversity.

JERRY: My understanding is that it's really for say, say you're Latino, and you come to the university such as this. You're a minority, and you're not going to just go back home, you see, and just be able to express your feelings among other people, other Latinos. Talk about what's going on, how you're dealing with any kind of discrimination walking on this campus, or anything like that. They can also turn and jump on those panels and kind of educate everybody else about that. I think one good thing about the organizations is that they're open and what people are allowed to come in and learn about that culture or whatever.

LEADER: Does anybody else...

SHELLY: I would say on the university level that if I would go as far to say, it's outstanding or at least it's attempting to be. I think that through the residence halls, university board, and through the Greek system and also through the housing office I think that they go above and beyond trying to educate, whether or not people come, or whether the primary reason to come to Eastern is if you want to be involved. You're not going to be a number here, and that's good. However, I think that being in Coles County and Charleston, I think that if Eastern with what we have, if we were like Boston, it would be just great, but I think, that what we have as far as we have, we have corn fields and we have hicks. But you know, it's great we have a movie theater but this is as far as it goes. As far as what kind of museums or people who would come in and perform that kind of thing. You know it's very difficult. Who's going to. Nobody knows where Charleston is. We're both on the university board, and when we say we'd like Bill Cosby to come down, they are going to be like, where? But if
we say Boston or something like that, they're going to know. So, I think there's going to be a difference.

**CHRISTINA:** I agree with that, especially in Coles County and Charleston. The number of connections you can get through for a job and even little internships. The side things, if you want to work in the hospital part-time, Sarah Bush isn't exactly a prime place to work. You really don't have a lot of connections or opportunities through this area, but as far as student senate and all the boards you can get on, it's so easy to get involved here. These clubs and organizations are practically begging people to join. Everything you see in the paper is everyone welcome. If you've got the time, there's so much you can do and it's open to everyone. And I think it's great, but it's got its up and downs.

**LEADER:** In the surrounding community maybe it needs some work out there in providing things, but as far as campus, you feel that there's quite a bit to offer? Do the students take advantage of what is offered?

**CHRISTINA:** I think it's as far as, well, student for example, I sat at the election table and maybe three people came and voted, and there was seven positions open and four people running. So, it's pretty pathetic, I think, but I don't know if its maybe not publicized enough or I don't know what, but that's one organization I see suffering. But there's definitely opportunities if people are interested.

**TRACY:** I think that too, but I think in a sense there are a lot of activities here at Charleston and either some of them aren't publicized enough, and I know one because we had to do it in my class. It's called the Student Assistance Program. We had to look up information on it and nobody ever heard of it, and it's like a counseling program that's available, and nobody knew about it. Either things aren't publicized enough or there's just so much that is available that it's so overwhelming. Because just being a part of the Greek system and then trying to get into a service sorority or fraternity, I should say as part of your major and then if you want to be in UB or whatever. Some things that are so overwhelming and with the little bit of students that do go
here, I mean 10,000, that's not too much, that there's so much you can do, but you can only spread yourself so far. I think that's why there's not a lot of participation in some of the activities, but I do think too, that a lot of them are not, there's probably a lot more that I don't even know, and I'm a senior and I've never heard of half the organizations that are here.

**LEADER:** Is there something on campus that we can do as a campus, maybe as administration, or whatever to maybe promote some of these or get the word out that they're available?

**TRACY:** I don't know, maybe, as far as the Greek system, we're always concerned about getting our names better or getting rid of our stereotype. As far as the faculty and everything, getting the support from them or maybe if we'd get some more support towards the faculty or to be honest, I don't know, but with the organization I was talking about, the Student Assistance Program, maybe publicize it more, get more people involved, because we had to do this whole write up, do surveys, things like that, you ad to find what your target audience is. And find if there's need, if not, why bother with the organization?

**CHRISTINA:** Maybe if we can educate academic counselors, then have them suggest to students the clubs or organizations that would be beneficial for them to put on their resumes or something because if you don't know it's there, you can't do it. I mean, if you educate the faculty advisers, they can pass it on, on a one on one basis to the students, to the target audience, that are going to be interested in that club that their faculty advisers can suggest it to them. But I don't even know if they know about it, the advisers know about it.

**LESLIE:** As an RA, we receive a lot of signs and posters to publicized things and we do hang them up, and all over the floor. It's in newspapers, but I think there needs to be another way to get it through because I'll have something up for a month and it comes time for it, they're like, "Oh, what are you talking about? I don't remember you talking about it," and I'm like, "Well, it's right here on your door." And residents just a lot of time they don't take care or they'll see it and just ignore it. So, maybe
if there's some different way to get it through than posters and paper.

**JERRY:** I'm also an RA. I think the big thing that they gave us as RAs, they gave us a high orientation like J board and counseling center. All these came in and spoke with us and they informed us about what's going on. I think maybe the clubs need to take initiative and go out and give information on meetings, you know, say, "Hey, we're going to have . . ." Let's just do five informational meetings this semester. Reserve a room in the union or in a hall or something like that, and you call an RA. RAs should be calling you anyway, but sometimes we get booked up with work but call and say, "Hey, I'd like to come speak in Stevenson Tower." So, they're talking in Stevenson Tower and people walk by and say, "Hey that suits me," instead of something by mouth, so they don't have to sit there and read something on a wall.

**CHRI S:** I think freshmen come in can be the prospect of orientation as far as what's out there in the small explanation. I'm the president for the econ society here and we have informational meetings and it's a problem just to get people to come to it. They don't know much about the organizations and what they do when you post something up or put ads in the magazine or newspaper. It's hard for them to actually commit to reading it. If you can kind of give it a word of mouth, we've gotten more quality members in the econ society just by talking to them than from advertising. So, if you can get someone at the freshman level, you know when they're all there going on tours. Even having the tour guides holding information around here to tell them about things, student center, UB. We're on the university board. I'm the subway chair. People think I make sandwiches down on 16th Street, and I hire comedians like Air Top.

**LESLIE:** I think the university is doing a great job of doing those kinds of things, of programming but I think that Charleston may need to help out too, but maybe opening up something in the community itself. We've talked about it before, that maybe an ice rink just for the students to do something else. I know you're not going to stop students from hanging out at the
bars every night, but if you had something else to do around here, it gets old. They keep going and going. They may not want to go to things the university offers but if Charleston offers something like that they maybe . . .

JERRY: It's going to take an investment by someone, and it is a big gamble, but I mean, for like Tammy and Nicki and Stan and Leslie and I coming to Charleston wasn't a big shock not doing anything cause there's not much around, cause where we come from there's not much around, but the majority of this population is usually from up north and there's usually more hopping and bopping going around up there. They come down here and everything's laid back. Hey, it is a shock and I understand that. I can see that, and it is just going to take someone. . .

TRACY: There's such an investment that can be made with opening up a new place down here. You can make so much money nine months out of the year except for restaurants, we have every restaurant.

LESLIE: It wouldn't even need to be open for the nine months. Even if it's just for two months.

TRACY: They had a thing in the paper. It was an article about when the whole bar issue was a problem, and there's so much you can do on the campus. There's the movie, the plays. There's the movies they show up here. There's clubs or whatever they were talking about. I'm not trying to say that when you go to college it's a whole drinking scene, but that's what a majority of the students are doing if they don't have the access to a lot of other things. They get old after a while, and that's what they choose to do. I think if there's a lot more opportunities for them to do things, like you said, an ice rink, we wanted to, part of my organization wanted to do a nonalcoholic activity, and we were going to go roller skating in Mattoon, and the Mattoon roller rink closed down. So, we're like, all right, so now its like bowling is about the only thing you can do as far as activity really, unless you all go see a play or something, but to do a group thing, there's not a lot of access down here.

SHELLY: In Carman Hall, it's all freshmen, and it's really frustrating because I feel that we really overprogrammed the
beginning of the year with orientations week. We must have bombarded them with programming and then, now, well, in the last month, it's frustrating to them. It's Friday night. They're 17 years old. They can't get in anywhere, and they're lost and they're frustrated. You don't have to be busy every day of your life. Watch Dallas. It's okay to just stay home and I understand that maybe it's just my old age, but they want to go out and they want to meet people, and they want to be social. I don't think a lot of them were heavy alcohol drinkers in high school or at least as heavy as they become when they come here, and my dad always says, "No one's putting the beer in their hand." Which is true, but I think that the temptation and the lack of anything, is making them more likely to drink if there's nothing else. On the same side, you can't have a program every weekend. It's . . . we can't do that. We're not going to appease everybody. So, it's difficult. But I think everybody's saying Eastern has gone above and beyond the call of trying, but I think that the town needs to get its act together and stop complaining about its students.

LESLIE: The Lighthouse that opened up, I've been there a couple of times. It's fun if you can get a bunch of people to go, but it's just not big enough. I think they need to offer some more things like that, a bigger place because it's okay to go watch a concert or play or something but a lot of times people just want to socialize--like you said--and here they can and I know if they don't drink or if they're too young or whatever, they have more options, and some of the people that do drink realizing that it's getting old and want to go to something like that.

LEADER: So, what are all of you saying is that if there's more opportunity or more activities or more things to do in the community that there might be less of the drinking problem, I don't want to say . . .

STAN: A lot of people that drink, drink because they like it. They're not forced to drink, like your dad said, they're not.

JERRY: Seems like the only drinking problem that's out there is the problem. The big issue right now is underage drinking. I don't think everybody is an alcoholic on Eastern's campus or anything like that, and exactly what you said, it's the
people who are underage. Like Shelly said, they all just want to do something, and everybody going to the bars. So, that's where I want to go to meet people. It's understandable.

**TRACY:** And too, because when you're a freshman, I'm not saying freshman's are bad, but you're more naive. Like being a senior, if I find the time to eat, I'm lucky. I have no social life. It seems like the more you get older, you have tougher classes, obviously, but then when you're a freshman you are new here, and that's where everybody going.

**LEADER:** Let me ask you this. What are the most attractive opportunities to students, do you think?

**STAN:** I think it's probably a personal thing. Granted the budget isn't the greatest thing in the world, but once you get into it and get something to do, people just need to get involved with something like that because, I mean, I don't drink a lot. I don't go out every weekend and get smashed or anything, but being involved in that, I've met 125 great guys that's just getting started. I'm a freshman and that's just getting me started right there.

**LEADER:** Do you all agree with that or . . .

**TAMMY:** Well, I went through rush twice and finally pledged this year, and then I found out I really didn't have the time and money because I work, and then I go to school. So, that isn't an option for everyone, to get involved in something like that because it is expensive.

**ALICE:** A lot don't have the money. I had to give up pledging too because I didn't have enough money. It's so expensive.

**LEADER:** What other opportunities are available to those who are not interested in Greeks?

**STAN:** Things like student center and stuff like that, just get involved in something.

**CHRIS:** There's an organization for everyone. There is if you live in Taylor Hall, there's Taylor Hall counseling, you can do something like be on the senate, university board, I mean everywhere you walk into there's always something there. Greeks obviously costs money, but there are things you can join. I think
every major has a club or organization. For every major there is something different.

LESLIE: There's also ministries, because I go to the Campus House, and I've met a lot of friends that way too. The Newman Center always has something going on, the Wesley Foundation, the Lighthouse, they have something going on.

TRACY: Another facility that I think is really good here that has nothing to do with organizations is in Lance. They put in a new gym facility like a whole area, and I think that's wonderful for students to be able to work out. And it's very big, and there's so much to do there. It's not an organization but it's open to everyone.

LEADER: Do you feel that the students take advantage of all of these?

JERRY: Yes, especially the rec center. The rec center is new, and they had a demand for aerobic classes. How many aerobic classes are there at night, like five a day. They've met that need, you know what I'm saying? There may be other needs like maybe another court or something but they're new, and I think things are gradually being improved over here.

TAMMY: Well, me and her have the exact same lifestyle pretty much, and a lot of the things we're talking about, like the university has tried but it also depends on the student if they want to get involved. I'm lazy. I go to class, I go to work. If not, I sometimes go out. Other than that, I'm glued to my couch.

ANOTHER GIRL: Sometimes go out, huh?

TAMMY: But the university has tried, like talking about if the people knowing what there is out there, I know of a lot out there, it just totally depends on the student if they are going to get involved.

LEADER: Can you tell me what the difference is in you . . .

TAMMY: I'm lazy. I'm happy with the way I am.

LEADER: Is there anything that they could do to get you involved, or are you just saying this is a personality thing that you're saying? A lot of people just don't want to get involved, not necessarily involved, but that just some people don't particularly enjoy it.