EWU Strategic Planning Conference  
Breakout Session Report

On October 2-3, 2014, Eastern Washington University held the 3rd Annual Strategic Plan Conference, “Inspiring the Future – Living the Promise,” to once again celebrate the outstanding progress that has been made over the last two years of the Strategic Plan and look ahead at year three actions.

During Dr. Cullinan’s Presidential State of the University Address, she introduced a revised set of strategic plan goals that will carry EWU through the completion of its five-year strategic plan. While the foundation of the initial strategic plan remains the same, Dr. Cullinan has put her stamp on it by condensing the plan to three goals. The goals that will carry us forward include Student Success, Innovation and Opportunity, and Community Engagement. The introduction of the newly revised strategic plan set the tone for the rest of the conference, including the breakout sessions.

Dr. John Gardner and Dr. Betsy Barefoot, leading national scholars from the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, served as this year’s keynote speakers. They also met with a variety of on-campus constituency groups throughout their two-day visit. The breakout sessions that followed the keynote luncheon focused on ways that EWU can enhance student success and other goals within the strategic plan, beyond focusing on only the first year experience. Achieving student success involves all staff and faculty working together across the entire higher education continuum. The four breakout session topics included:

- Pre-college
- First year of college
- 2nd year of college – completion
- Post-college

Six case studies were selected from the book, “Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence for the First Year of College,” in which Dr. Gardner and Dr. Barefoot helped author. The cases selected described the first year at Appalachian State University, Ball State University, Texas A&M Corpus Christi, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Lehman College of the City University of New York, and the University of South Carolina. Facilitators asked that participants draw from the different case studies, but also draw from other sources of information and inspiration.
The breakout session questions included:

1) What things are we doing well at EWU during [enter your breakout session timeframe: pre-college, first year, second year – completion, post-college] that we want to feature in a case study?
2) Where do we, as a university, want to go that would make for the kinds of successful outcomes you would want to see reported in this case study?
3) How will EWU get there?
   a. What kind of resources do we need or already have?
   b. What are the steps to get there?
   c. Who will need to be involved?

The information gathered has been compiled and outlined below. Clear themes emerged that EWU will use to make future decisions and help develop new goals for the university.

**Emerging Themes Across All Breakout Sessions**

*Note: Not every group followed the questions above. The sessions appeared to be driven by the discussions. For example, the first year and post-college breakout sessions focused primarily on where EWU should go rather than spending part of the time on what EWU is doing well. Therefore, the themes below for “what is EWU doing well?” primarily stem from the pre-college and 2nd year through completion breakout sessions.*

- **What is EWU doing well?**
  - **Advising:**
    - 2 out of 4 groups mentioned that EWU’s advising program has improved over the past several years; however, many feel there is still a great amount of room for improvement.
      - “Mandatory advisor meetings for first year students.”
      - “There are places in the university where students can get their hands on advice – personal contact with a faculty advisor.”
  - **Collaboration across campus:**
    - 2 out of 4 groups mentioned that there is some effective collaboration going on around campus.
      - “Interdisciplinary studies”
      - “TRIO and Eastern Advantage have curriculum built around what makes students successful in their first year. It is a
great opportunity to really combine the resources of Critical Foundations and FYE.”
- “I see great opportunities with CF and FYE.”

- **Diversity focus:**
  - 2 out of 4 groups discussed diversity programs that are working well at EWU.
    - “‘Embrace your Diversity’ program with students of color from Yakima is something that is already going on.”
    - “We are doing something well for Chicano Studies.... They finish a language requirement here and they have a connection between the family and the university.”

- **Developmental math:**
  - 1 out of 4 groups discussed at great length the success of developmental math at EWU.
    - “I appreciate efforts of the math department to update, upgrade and change from the ALEKS program so that they can practice and be successful when they do register for math classes.”
    - “I echo the value of developmental math support. It took me almost 3 tries to pass math 104. ALEKS could have helped.”

- **McNair:**
  - 1 out of 4 groups discussed at great length the success of the McNair program and how the model could be applied in other areas of the university.
    - “To further explore the McNair model of developing a community, what that boils down to is getting to know these students, mentoring then, and taking them to conferences. McNair faculty and staff care about their students’ success and always invite them back to interact with new McNair students. Relationships and faculty mentorship create community.”
    - “As a federal program, McNair has money to support its students and they are a small group. So how can we take the McNair strategies and use them in broader contexts?”
As a university, where do we want to go?

- Know the mission and create a culture:
  - 3 out of 4 groups discussed the importance of knowing the mission at EWU and sharing it with students and the community. Attendees also discussed the importance of creating traditions at EWU that students will remember once they graduate, as well as the importance of creating a strong culture. Both of these things impact the experience a student has at EWU and whether they go on to support EWU once they graduate.
  - “We were asked what is Eastern’s identity. Do we know it? Do students know it?
    - This was in relation to ensuring potential students make informed choices about where they should attend college.
  - “I feel like I am the only person who knows the mission and the students don’t know the mission. We need to articulate it from the beginning... We are getting better, but we have a lot to move forward. For example, the Appalachian Way. It starts from the beginning. How do we take that, like the traditions? Ours is ‘First Thursday.’”
  - “The feeling is that we are losing contact with our alumni... Creating traditions now could lead to stronger connections later. These things take time.”

- Tracking Graduates:
  - 2 out of 4 groups discussed the importance of tracking graduates and what they go on to do. This will not only help find the stories that EWU wants to share to recruit future students, but it can also be used to help determine what EWU did right and what it did wrong to then inform changes.
    - “In the admissions guide, there are student stories. We could highlight our successful students more and our alumni – what our students and friends have done.”
    - “We need to rethink what questions might be asked here. Are the graduates happy and successful? What did we do right? What did we do wrong? That information could then be used to inform changes.”
Mentoring:
- 2 out of 4 groups talked about the need for stronger mentoring at EWU. This might involve upper level students mentoring lower level students, faculty and staff mentoring with students, community mentoring with students interested in their specific professions, and even faculty mentors for other faculty about how to mentor students. Both groups also mentioned the benefit of trainings for mentors so they know how to be effective mentors.
  - “I am a firm believe in mentoring, but with caveats. People need to be trained.”
  - “What about growing professional organizations within the campus? People in ‘the profession’ could get together with the freshman. Tradition and connection begin here.”
  - “If you call the professors mentors and give them access to mentoring workshops they really begin to see themselves as such. Deliberate, regular, informed, check-in meetings with students are an aspect of deep mentoring.”

Campus-wide focus on advising:
- 2 out of 4 groups talked about the importance of focusing more intensely on advising, beyond freshman advising. Most felt that thoughtful advising would aid students in being more successful during each transition.
  - “We have great advising already, but we need to get better... We should create a first year advising experience with the first year academic. If we are thoughtful and intentional about how we advise them, they will be more successful in their transitions.”
  - “We need a stronger culture of advising.”
    - There also seemed to be agreement in this group that EWU should require sophomore advising.

Transfer student focus:
- 2 out of 4 groups discussed the importance of focusing on transfer students more in the coming years.
  - “We need to do a better job with [transfer students] to make them feel welcome and incorporate them.”
  - “We want to be the transfer center in the state. We need to have more than one advocate in place that is thinking about transfers.”
“Being admitted to the university needs to be a more positive experience. Transfers shouldn’t have to do the same things as freshman.”

**Unique Themes Per Breakout Session**

The themes outlined below are **unique** to each specific breakout session and were discussed at length or mentioned a number of times. While these sessions discussed other ideas at length, these are the themes that were discussed only in that breakout session.

- **Pre-college:**
  - **EWU reputation:**
    - This breakout session discussed the importance of sharing EWU’s reputation with incoming potential students. This relates to the discussions around building a culture at EWU and understanding the mission so that students, faculty and staff all make positive impressions on potential students and the broader community.
    - “It would be helpful to know what pre-college students are saving and thinking about Eastern. Is there prejudice? We want to sell the school but don’t want to be disingenuous.”
      - Neil Woolf said that in many ways, incoming students have a higher impression than people who are already here.
    - “Tradition and culture. Those that we would like them to remember.”
      - This was an answer related to the question, “how are we unique?”
    - “We were asked, what is Eastern’s identity? Do we know it? Do students know it?”
      - This was discussed in relationship to helping potential students make informed choices.

- **1st year of college:**
  - **Focus on the middle achiever students:**
    - This breakout session talked about the importance of focusing on the “middle achiever” students. These are students who are average students and may want to get better.
• “There are a huge group of students who are not at the bottom but need tutoring. There is a lot of middle students who are average who want to get better and many times they don’t even know they need it. We don’t put the emphasis on the average student who wants to get better.”
• “We get higher students, then the lowest students. Yes the big void is the middle students. We have trouble getting them into the learning commons.”
• “The middle group of achievers are getting lost. A good idea is to have peer mentors which provides them a peer to assist.”

• **2nd year through completion:**
  
  o **Rewards for advising:**
    
    ▪ This breakout session discussed multiple times the need for rewarding faculty for student advising. They feel that most faculty need an incentive to be advisors.
    
    ▪ “People will do what they get rewarded for. There is no release time or reward for doing advising. There needs to be some reward to do that if you expect faculty to advise.”
    
    ▪ “You have to put rewards into advising. Research also needs to be done about the reward system.”

• **Post-college:**
  
  o **Tracking graduates:**
    
    ▪ While not unique to just this breakout session, this group discussed at length the need for tracking graduates after they leave EWU. They feel this is important for informing future changes at EWU, ensuring students stay connected once they leave EWU, for mentoring purposes, and even networking purposes.
    
    ▪ “A NSA grant in biology requires tracking of graduates. Can these types of data be accessed? Can logistic connections be made? Graduates with loyalty to their departments could serve as emissaries for networking out there in the larger world. Higher education, although huge, has a lot of networking going on.”
“Current students have expressed interest in what EWU graduates are doing. This is information that could be leveraged.”

“We need to rethink what questions might be asked here. Are the graduates happy and successful? What did we do right? What did we do wrong? That information could then be used to inform changes.”

- **Mentoring:**
  - Again, while not unique to just this breakout session, this group discussed at length the importance of all different types of mentoring at EWU because the tradition and connection begin on campus which lead them to stay connected to EWU.
  - “What about growing professional organizations within the campus? People in the profession could get together with the freshman. Tradition and connection begin here.”
  - “Relationship and faculty mentorship create community.”

**Compilation of Notes**

The comprehensive notes from each breakout session are below.

**Pre-college**

**Definitional issue:** the idea of pre-college is amorphous one. What does pre-college mean to you:

- Connecting with the high schools and community
- Activities that tie the person to Eastern, when they are in elementary, middle school, and high school
- Concurrent enrollment, not just on campus but when we take it to them at their high school setting in the safety of their microcosm; this means looking at more ideas than Running Start
- From a health science perspective it is middle school; high school is too late
- Curricular connection and coherency meaning a common core, smarter balance, themed values, skills and emphases from high school to college
- The period of discernment where the student even considers if college is for them and how do they prepare for that. High school and junior high when the student is even thinking about if college is for them; we should be planting the seed and support “college going” behavior. This idea ranges widely as by the
time the student does Running start or orientation, they have already made the decision to go to college.

Neil Woolf’s structure in Enrollment Services:

- We have a great foundation when we think in terms of pre college. College awareness and college preparation (academic).
- Elementary School: Admission counselors focus on awareness; put college on their radar. Talk to parents to get it on their radar. Parents are most interested in cost and safety.
- Middle School: The focus is a little bit on awareness and a little bit on academic components such as what classes they are taking.
- High School: At this point most students are considering college choice; studies show that students make the decision if they are going to college by 6th grade.
- EWU: Showing the strength’s of EWU. We are proud of what we do. Most admissions advisors are from EWU.

Quadrants Activity:

- One of the tools that the admissions advisors use during their college preparation presentations. Pros for higher ed; cons for higher ed; pros for no higher ed; cons of no higher ed
- Background: instead of doing the traditional come to EWU sales pitch, they do 4 workshops (financial literacy, paying for college, etc). Instead of giving a lecture, they do a workshop of how students can see if college is right for them. This is typically introduced to middle school.
- Pros of Higher Education: More money; exposure to ideas; study abroad (experience with different cultures and ideas; travel oversees); citizenship; wider array of choices of careers, mates, geographic choices; becoming a leader; upward mobility; follow your dream; finding new dreams
- Cons of Higher Education: Expensive; time; opportunity cost/lost time; short term; hard; intellectual confidence; have to go away from home; separation of family community; too many options; independence issue; feel as though they have lack of support; need for dependence while attending college; culture shock (having to live by different culture norms); big city small town and visa versa
- Pros of no Higher Education: Trade schools; more money right away because they start work right away; life starts now; immediate independence/freedom; no school associated debt; no homework; ability to enter the workforce immediately (not every job requires Higher Education); join the military
- Cons to no Higher Education: No money (immediate and over a lifetime); fewer opportunities; missing out on the HE experience; less enjoyable work
environments; poverty cycle (vote less, volunteer less, less support for community); less power.

- Neil: Understand that you represent EWU and now you can share this with children and parents.

What would you want a case study about EWU to look like?

- Common academic experience in terms of college preparation, example with robotics competition.
  - At USC: first year and sophomore in high school students had an overnight experience with a common precollege reading experience. Gave the students a brief reading when they came to campus.
- Office of Community Engagement working with elementary-high schools on campus contact
- “Embrace your Diversity” program with students of color from Yakima – this is something that is already going on.
- Become the campus that is able to get students to come visit campus because when people see and experience the campus it changes them.
- North Central High School has a phenomenal science lab; teaming up with EWU’s science department to team up with those students.
- Summer camps bring students to Eastern
- Students who are observing and student teaching in the classrooms in the Spokane area
- The lack of connection between the high school curriculum and the college curriculum. Discussing between teachers and professors. Lynn Briggs said that English is starting to do that as well. Betsy also mentioned that many seniors in other areas, if they had already passed the required classes – some students would stop going to classes senior year because they already new they were going to graduate and had already gotten into college. Discussion of WA state requirement for seniors to have to take a math class. Requirement of 2 years of foreign language. Teachers ask what they should teach, but how can they prepare students if we can’t agree on how they need to be prepared.
- It would be helpful to know what precollege students are saying and thinking about Eastern. Is there prejudice? Want to sell the school but don’t want to be disingenuous. Neil said that in many ways incoming students have a higher impression than people who are already here.
- Amy asked what is Eastern’s identity; do we know it; do students know it? In relation to Appalachian State. Making an informed choice.
  - Teachers college; explaining what alumni do for jobs, do in the community. There is an assumption if you go to Eastern you will be a teacher.
Needing to share our stories
Perception: Michelle Helmerick told a story about a student who works at NASA, now is an EWU Alum.

Perceptions: What gets in our way

- Focused on the wrong kinds of stories
- Commuter School
- Students have a lack of connection to the university
- We are seen as a low cost alternative
- Stan: In the admissions guide there are student stories. We could highlight our successful students more and our alumni. What our students and students friends have done.
- Sharing the average or core student story. There is a high focus on the stem fields.

How would you like EWU to look/How are we unique?

- We want to be students’ first choice.
- We don’t want first Thursday to be what students to think of first.
- Tradition and culture, those that we would like them remember
- Why do students choose Eastern: Cost/Cheap
- Students are missing our traditions
- Champion our size; for students who don’t want to be one of many; ability to make connections with professors; we might not be gigantic but we are small and a community. The University feels small.
- Personalized education
- When admissions went out of state people look at curriculum; in state people think that there is no way we can be better than UW or WSU; flip the code; Advertise the strength of the academic programs/reputations.
- TAs teaching versus Professors
- Welcoming atmosphere and personalized education: Neil read an email from someone at Lewis and Clark High School
- Visits are customizable
- Leaders in student communication strategies
- Diversity of academic programs
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Distance Learning classes/various pathways to degrees.

How do we get to case study worthy status?

- We need more stories; capture a wide variety of cool things our alumni are doing
- Bring community leaders to campus
• Bring prospective students here
• Marketing what amazing things we do; brand everything.
• Create more internships so you have a portfolio built and can have a job lined up when students graduate
• Highlighting the work career services is doing

How do we present that we are cost effective without students thinking we are cheap?

• Work with families; help them learn to find scholarships and write scholarship applications; educate them on how to do that and put the ball in their court.
• Express the value of the education; why is our degree more valuable than the degree from somewhere else?
• It would be helpful to have more placement statistics of where students in a given program are placed.
• What are you going to do with your $20,000; Don’t poke the bear.
• VOCAL: Value, Opportunities, Community, Academic, Location

Neil: Reflections from the keynote. We explain what we do and how cool it is. Students progressively understand. We give people the opportunity to change their life for the better. Think about why you got into Higher Education; there is a greater societal impact in what we do. As you go out and represent Eastern in everything we do, you are a living billboard.

1st year of college

What things are we doing well for a student?

• The activities before the fall quarter starts
• Mandatory advisor meetings for first year students
• Learning commons and all the constituencies, it's amazing and collaborative and it needs to keep it going
• Others have asked why we can’t extend this across campus; now there is an opportunity since the new president agrees -- the new Phase I of Riverpoint is positive for that
• Eagle lab, Eagle urban plunge, interaction of faculty and students
• Chuck Lopez, undergraduate studies, has done a tremendous amount of work to partner with other places to get people out of their seats; what are a couple of the things that have resulted? Partnerships, learning commons, advising for new pathway pilots, working for academic success center, more planning as a group, student success reminds us what are we doing for students
• What is athletics involvement in student success initiatives? Nothing at all, but we do minor things, not enough;
• One thing I want to jump in if we are really an institution then we need to have emphasis on service to create great leaders
• Eagle up at the veterans center, I don’t think they will forget, we need to do better at first Fridays, give parents a sense of easy, perhaps need a bouncy castle or bouncy house
• This applies to all services, career services to take assessment on what they need to do and help find their path, they access it by talking to Fini and Robin; and scheduling it, unless they know a particular area then they can forward to appropriate person, our challenge is to destabilize their thinking with a particular degree will lead to a certain degree, sometimes its repeated counseling on their environment, what they like, their interests
• I think it’s phenomenal that faculty have stepped up voluntarily to do this, by doing this in multiple years, building it across 4 years, SSRC and faculty senate took off and did a great job; not all faculty realized they need to do this, and it is very edifying that they do this, too much work for just a few to handle
• English department, comp, writing, not surprised first year pilot comes from English, since I have taught in it, it evolves and continually involves it, it would be a great case study, a premiere program that should be documented
• Residence halls there is a misconception that learning communities are only for those who want to learn, we changed one of our positions that was an administrative, now coordinates academic, we continue to build on it to change the structure
• SAIL brought in leadership speakers, leadership development, cross campus,
• Appreciate efforts of math department to update and upgrade and change from the ALEKS program so they can practice so they can be successful when they do register for math class; examples in TRIO and Eastern Advantage and curriculum built around what makes students successful in their first year; it is a vision of mind that trio and Eastern Advantage with first year; great opportunity to really combine the resources of critical foundations and first year
• Developmental math, we are going to have to make a commitment and realize that students are coming in unprepared, maybe making it self support because we can’t afford ALEKS
• Quantitative literacy campus or math campus? Speak to Tony Flinn if you have strong opinions about this difference; stats class for everyone man/woman, is a quantitative literacy and not a math class
• Echoing value of developmental math support, it took me almost 3 tries to pass 104, ALEKS could have helped, I’ve seen as a student, I see it from a lot of perspectives and needs to stay
• Because I worked at another university, our library is a fantastic change agent who is a state of the art center, I got to build the things I need, my lights off, they thwarted us at every step; EWU library is so welcoming and planning, they work with OIT, they stay up with new technologies, it is a pleasure who works with those who really want to do the best for students, the library is so forward
thinking and they are a pleasure to discuss and work with on partnerships and strives to stay pertinent.

- The digital commons rollout is coming soon
- ALEKS program, developmental support is important like English 100 and lab 197, the ability to write is so crucial
- Summer program possibility – a bridge program, also the reading program, students don’t love it

Where do we as a university want us to go as successful outcomes in a case study?

- More collaboration
- What areas of collaboration>
- I see great opportunities with CF and FYE
- Right now, 1 faculty to 25 students
- Lack of cooperative endeavors between Academic affairs and Student Affairs
- Mission, I feel like I am the only person who knows the mission and the students don’t the mission, we need to articulate it from the beginning, to a point of getting brainwashed because you will love it; we are getting better, but have a lot to move forward
- The culture of the students and the campus, the Appalachian way, it starts from the beginning, how do we take that, like the traditions – ours is “first Thursday”; we have geographical challenges where Appalachian doesn't but I think its important that they have that cultural experience
- The mission involves everything, and makes us look it with all of the things we do
- We have no visible campus culture and that is because we don’t have a time to not have to teach, like Geshe-la to speak, more culture, literally no one allowed to teach during a certain time each day or once a week; perhaps solution is a block schedule, helps minimize conflicts, it doesn’t cost anything and we could enrich so many students
- The types of the events, doesn’t matter, it's the bringing the people together
- Great advising already but need to get better, 1 advisor to 300 students so they can really get to know the students; most ratios are based on semester system; analysis of what the ratio should be for our quarter system; create a first year advising experiencing with first year academic, if we are thoughtful and intentional on how we advise them they will be more successful in their transitions
- Hear from students in the hall, a group of students we have tight programs, but huge group who need tutoring but are not at the bottom; there is a lot of the
middle students who are average who want to get better, and many times they
doesn’t even know they need it; we don’t put the emphasis for the average
student who wants to get better
• Support more opportunities for faculty and students outside the classroom;
students don’t have that, like summer orientation would be a great time, but
boost support
• We get higher students, then the lowest students, yes the big void is the middle
students, we have the trouble to get them into the learning commons, they are
not going to writers center, some it’s a stigma versus the norm
• Start in first year, robust and fully experiential programs, like Bennington college
does; Eagle up, you tell kids to read a paper and then they say done, versus
building it into their experience of what they are doing, students should be doing
internships whether they need it or not; do internships as experiential learning
that gives them skills outside the classroom; alum felt prepared intellectually but
not culturally for outside world
• All online, sequence of FYE in year 2, the more things we want to do we can test
out, the better off we will be
• Great in school, but general information needed like buying a car, financial
literacy, loan management
• Academically, the curriculum needs to be more accommodating for those so
they are not on a 4 year or 5 year plan; CF is 9 to 19 credits less than current
requirement; maybe is due to the lack of availability; EWU is trying to do this,
potentially use summer to get these done?
• An example is like music, if they don’t take first quarter theory in the first fall
then they are automatically on 5 year plan
• Creating large “trunks,” pathways to degree, first quarter, all these, plus these,
then a lot of the same classes are there so they are not behind, 5 big pathways,
allows them to do this then in 4 versus 5
• Middle group of achievers getting lost, impact of the student and notes story, a
good idea is to have peer mentors which provides them a peer to assist; put
responsibility on peer mentor may help faculty
• Outstanding successes in boutique programs, TRIO life program moving to a pilot
program
• Needs to be more communication between university FYEs and D-12, and
understanding what is happening with common core; the standards which
guides the instructions, that is the baseline to make them college ready, will help
us understand the skillsets, like the same terminology, the discussions with
schools who feed in, what does the high school faculty deal with those future students; Chris Valeo, advance that idea to take that forward

- How to interact with people on a day to day basis, how we reach out to peers, diversity with international, social
- Any conversation on dual enrollment students?; no, not yet, we have it, Running Start, those students need things; composition with high school and college level, we are doing that, without that conversations there is a lot of disparity, the more the convo the more prepared; we talked a lot about the FYE and the ways that academic success skills shouldn’t just be the responsibility for FYE but all the faculty, they need to read their syllabus and walk in to follow a calendar, opportunities to do this across the board to help the students; by adding studying skills into the disciplines then it is more valuable
- Life skills, research from Department of Education, cognitive skills and how do you incorporate these things, it is coming up; if we had a teaching academy we could go after those grants, the suggested name is Washington Teaching Academy, WTA
- Syllabus, I believe the faculty who are involved in the movement; others being dismissive for those who aren’t; some faculty participate in syllabus with a slice, syllabus with salsa in residence halls; there is a value, and sometimes faculty feels they don’t have time to do this; keep faculty who don’t teach first year aren’t as engaged to do this, maybe solution is teaching academy; the difficulty with balancing the mandatory things and the other things, like the Title 9 to see the production, but if you are an incoming freshman and you didn’t go then what is consequence, right now nothing
- “Nudge,” creating choice architecture to take the path that is better for them
- Establishing a firmer foundation for academic success at orientation, at this time it hasn’t been built in
- Betsy – orientation not really structured throughout the day, there is too much in one day, it doesn't do much for celebrating arrival, give introduction to university, sometimes its too long so it should be about the 3 days of celebratory and academic; issues on pay yes, but is a good investment
- FirstStep days are getting more academically focused, the expectations have been raised
- There is a 3 day period of orientation/celebration for residence halls, but don’t how the campus community understands the importance of that
- How are we supporting parents? Parent orientation just as long, ways to check in, how are they doing, what role does that play? for move in, we have a lot of parents who move in and get into car and drive back to work; there is a group of
parents who can’t do it because they have other things; the evening dinner is sometimes packed and like this year not well attended; Victor has data to look at? we need to do more with transfer center and include parent orientation

- Transfer students aren’t first year but they kind of are first year, we need to do a better job with them to make them feel welcome and incorporate them
- 60% of native students transfer in
- Buffet line of transfer credits from different institutions.
- Betsy: there’s a lot of suggestions up there, there is so much on what students need, so sometimes they will develop a course to include all of that; need to sit with list and figure out what to do and how to parse it out, not all with CF, residence halls, assigned to halls for commuters, advising perhaps, who, when and where are going to do all these things
- Maybe the summer before they need to be told, then perhaps again later on that year

2nd year of college through completion

How would we like Eastern to be described? What are we currently doing well during the second year to graduation?

- Regardless what retention – 2nd and 3rd has not changed until this year. Single data point doesn’t mean anything. What happened this year – new interest in student success, more intervention, etc. 65% better than the past 10 years. Part of that is quality of classes.
- Barefoot - Her understanding by talking to advisors – first year remedial or not taking classes they need to graduation.
- Cohort model and credit load model. Single biggest thing to 4-year graduation was whether or not they were Running Start.
- I came in as a college freshmen and not enough to be considered a sophomore. Some Running Start students may have a bunch of their gen ed done but they need to have stuff for their major still.
- Doing something well for Chicano Studies. A lot of them can’t take a language requirement because they already know the language. They finish a language requirement here and they have a connection between the family and the university. The connection is important so they will finish. There are studies that show if they don’t have a connection to the family to the university they may not complete the program.
• Meeting them and formalizing their knowledge in a more academic way. Take what they already know and put it in an academic setting. ---Biology/geology the change for research those are very important and we are doing them great.
• Providing financial aid in a more efficient way and sooner it is being a direct impact for the students. Doing things more efficiently. See mostly the 1%
• There are places in the university where students can get their hands on advice – personal contact with a faculty advisor. Used to be that way across the university but with the larger classes it isn’t as much. Faculty advice is very important. Really important and she really tries to hang onto that.
• Women’s Studies program has the HOME program where they provide support for students who are parents so they can stay in school. Women in need scholarship for students who are close to finishing and they need money to pay for a car repair or something so they can finish school.
• Increase of student opportunities. Peace Corp, etc. At least once a week she gets a student asking about Peace Corp, AmeriCorp, etc.
• They do a survey for graduates if they are still volunteering and it has been positive.
• I have seen an improvement in financial aid. They put a lot of stuff online and they can change it right away. It is very fast.
• They spend a lot of time on the retention, academic success discussion talking about bright, shiny things but one of the things they have been talking about is the talk about the behind the curtain things.
• In Engineering department all the faculty advise and then they get handed off to --- but people will do what they get rewarded for. There is no release time or reward for doing advising. There needs to be some reward to do that if you expect faculty to advise. Reward system, you have to compete in advising, training, he does it because he likes it but there needs to be reward for doing it. Gets more recognition for publishing papers rather than volunteering to help students.
• There needs to be something put together if you go over and above
• It isn’t hard to recognize it is part of our culture.
• Just yesterday I was in advising – but she had persistence and that needs to be recognized and celebrated. We could do a better job of tapping in their natural drive to persist in the face of adversity.
• As a person who went through general advising in 1971 with an ROTC general. We have come a long way but we need to work on our transfer students better. Advising has come a long way, SOAR audit is great, etc.
**Where do we want to go?**

- Want to be the transfer center in the state. We need to have more than one advocate in place that is thinking about transfers. The ASEWU – how open to transfer students are the Greek system? Not at all. We have unique programs for transfer students that works well. He sees that we would have equivalency information prior to the students getting to the university. They are speaking with advisors. He is coaching the community colleges to get them to get more transfer ready courses. We have to affect the mass. –Equivalencies is huge and making sure they are consistent. They attended a seminar and they were selected to building bridges between the community colleges and the university. To make sure that when the students do get transfer there is a similarity between what they need and what we offer.

- There are some people who transfer don’t know where they want to go so if there is some kind of orientation for transfer students to help them decide what kind of major they want to do.

- I teach a degree exploration class. Most students I see don’t know enough about work and careers. I teach a class which will have an internship program. I want the sophomores to have more so they can decide what they would like to major in. Think we do a lot of really good things for freshmen and that should stay. The FYE is awesome however I am concerned there is too much shining on the freshmen and not enough with the sophomore. When they become a sophomore they are not required to see an advisor. If they don’t know to go to Robin they are in the dark.

- ***Should we require sophomore advising? – yes.

- ***Think advising should be required each quarter. Need a stronger culture of advising and maybe requiring. Patty – have to put reward into advising. Research also needs to be in the reward system. Campus employment – why don’t we have a more robust campus employment because of funding. Campus employment is not need based it is usually word of mouth. It is the stupid people who do advising, etc. for the students but it won’t help the faculty in the long run.

- There were 120-150 faculty who mentored students at the symposium last year but they don’t get any reward for it. 1 in 4 faculty did.

- Get worried when they say things like advising is required or make them pick a major but if they don’t have a plan to handle the number of students it wouldn't work. Robin – why not empower advisors to say if you don’t do whatever needs to be done they won’t remove the hold on their account. Meaningful.
• One of the things they need to do is have a campus wide discussion about advising. Have a ton of faculty doing advising and they don’t talk together. But clearly we all know there is a lot of great things that are happening in advising but they need to have the administration in their corner.
• Also need training because they need to know what is current and what isn’t. Training then they need to have some sort of compensation for it. Some of them doing it enjoy it but they need some sort of release or compensation to continue doing it.
• She always dedicates one early on a department meeting to advising. She will have a folder of basics for advising so they can’t claim ignorance. Giving them the tools, advising some don’t know so they don’t like to do it.
• Being admitted to the university needs to be a more positive experience. Transfers shouldn’t have to do the same things as a freshmen. That certainly helps because if they are advised properly, their transfer credits are done quickly, etc
• Advising – early warning thing is a big deal. Are they looking at any software?
• They will be using an early warning system through some products they already own. The issue is to teach faculty how to use it. Think it is easy to use. Don’t know when it will be implemented.
• Want to make sure it isn’t done too early because they want to make it useful.
• Summer session is something he would like to improve. Seems to be in a vicious circle. Great opportunity to identify students who need to take classes. isn’t it a money issue?
• They have a financial aid issue with summer classes. Some students don’t have money to attend.
• Years ago when it was working – there were more courses – a good summer program would be bread and butter courses and some fun courses they would enjoy taking. The idea was where some parts of the university they would do the bread and butter courses and the others would be fun courses that you could also offer to community members. Having a new director each year and they have changed things steadily. That isn’t going to do it.
• They don’t have consistent courses in the summer. Biology – they have had to shift but they try to make it predictable.
• We could lower the price for summer courses or give 10% discount. Having summer session could be like a quarter with a mix of classes, consistent staffing, etc. Could choose 3 or 4 quarters for faculty or all of them. Would like to see how other universities do that. We do a lot of things well but that is one thing that is a problem. And with the critical foundations we are going to do things
better. Looking at the draft it will be a time for those that struggle with MATH and ENG. They will need to play catch up and that would be a good time. Summer should be for that.

- Beyond looking momentum over the summer but you also have all the entering freshmen we could give them a preliminary experience that would get them up and running.
- Faculty don’t get paid for internships.
- In the summer they do.
- Sometimes they get paid for internships in the summer. It depends on the chair. Maybe there should be a pool for college level money that would cover things like internships that can’t be anticipated. How do they manage that to make it equitable for everyone. How do they make it equitable for everyone? For some staff clearly time off doesn’t help. There is so much you have to do but you can’t get it done anyway because you have so much to do. One of the things they need to do is mentoring. All faculty are supposed to do it.
- What do they have now? SOAR.
- There are some online things they are working on
- Self-advising isn’t really working well right now.
- Mentoring she is a firm believer in it but with caveats. People need to be trained – mentor and mentee and they need a place to recognize those people. She worked at a university where they recognized them each year with a banquet and you can nominate someone, etc. Think that is something they should do. Every department does things different. Some have department secretary sign off, some have advisor, etc. There needs to be training.
- This is not going to be an intake thing. How do we move them into a major in a functional sense. Filling out paperwork without talking with anyone there will be problems.
- Some programs will use it as an application so things are strange how some do it. Do you have a sense which process works the best?
- Right now from their perspective – students want fireworks, they are trying to figure out what a major is, etc.
- Reminder of standardization of advising. It strikes her that whatever advising tells faculty they will do it.
- Whether or not peer mentoring is useful and would upper division students mentoring work well. Everyone as a mentor. Mentoring the theory is fine but if we don’t tell students at some level rather than they learned it the hard way. With guidance it could be more effective.
- Mentoring is time restrictive and commitment.
• Erin – she has a daughter that is a student here – one of the things we should think about a major declaration start developing departments so they know what to do to get involved in professional organizations.
• Way to get hold of graduated students and how they are using their degree. There isn’t a mechanism in place to do that.
• The Anthropology Society did that with a post on Facebook.
• The cornerstone course – that is a great thing. That includes CV or resume building and that course should include portfolio building. The student research project they did, that goes onto their professional docia. A portfolio, an e-portfolio, campus wide to pull assessment data. That has assessment tools, programs that use it you can ask, excited about that course. The Critical Foundations will help them get there.

**Post-college**

**Background on EWU Alumni from the Office of Alumni Relations:**

Of 100,000 known EWU alumni, a majority (60,000) live in Washington State, and a majority of those live in Spokane County. Because of mailing costs, those who live internationally are the most difficult to track. An office research person tries to keep track of alumni moves, which also are tracked with a tracking service. A tele-fund service, when calling to solicit donations, tries to obtain demographic information. The Alumni Office has good information for 40,000 EWU alumni; numbers have increased due to EWU’s success in football.

**What things can we do with current EWU students to ensure their loyalty later?**

• An NSA grant in biology requires tracking of graduates. Can these types of data be accessed? Can logistic connections be made? Graduates with loyalty to their departments could serve as emissaries for networking out there in the larger world. Higher education, although huge, has a lot of networking going on.
• Spread the good word regarding the Eagle identity with school pride. What is the identity of being an EWU Eagle?
• Current students have expressed interest in what EWU graduates are doing. This is information that could be leveraged. Career Services and the Office of Institutional Research might do alumni surveys.
• Do more collaborating across units for a more unified approach.
• The Ronald E. McNair Program tracks graduates for ten years after they graduate from EWU. The main purpose for this is for fundraising and lobbying efforts at
the state and national legislatures. McNair also uses LinkedIn and Face Book to track students. This program has mentors at EWU and at graduate universities.

- Do we need some kind of formalized requirement for keeping in contact with or for tracking students?
- Let’s also focus on academic connections with students, an academic continuation beyond the degree. Drew University in New Jersey offers colloquia where 1-2 people from around the world are brought in each year. Internet and Skype could involve colloquia and graduates from all around the world. Note that sports tend to draw graduates back because that is alumni’s only point of contact.
- So could EWU offer some kinds of post-baccalaureate incentives such as entitlement to life-long learning for non-credit or auditing? What about reduced tuition for relatives? That could be an incentive and a possibility, given state regulations. Other public institutions in the state offer this.
- We need to rethink what questions might be asked here. Are the graduates happy and successful? What did we do right? What did we do wrong? That information/those answers could then be used to inform changes. This might not require as many resources to launch as one might think.
- Seniors could serve as mentors to freshmen – students are still in silos. What about accessing them while they are graduating?
- The feeling is that we are losing contact with our alumni. Lisa Poplawski is confident that the Alumni Office’s contact data are as good as or better than at other schools. She says the problem is a lack of tradition at EWU. Creating traditions now could lead to stronger connections later. These things take time.
- E-mail works better than paper.
- Alumni relations come back and fuel the academic wellbeing of a university. Our efforts here today are to develop strategies to fulfilling this goal.
- To further explore the McNair model of developing a community, what that boils down to is getting to know these students, mentoring them, taking them to conferences. McNair faculty and staff care about their students’ success and always invite them back to interact with new McNair students. Relationships and faculty mentorship create community.
- As a federal program, McNair has money to support its students, and they are a small group. So how can we take the McNair strategies and use them in broader contexts? The Economics Department created a cohort of students who were treated like the ones in McNair.
- FirstStep opportunities: Have more EWU folks on hand for parents and students to talk with, answer questions, facilitate, etc.
- Let’s also return to the idea of getting feedback and the intellectual and professional connections associated with that. Bob Zinke has accomplished this by being his students’ grant reviewer ... before and after graduation. Faculty could take a role in this post-graduate-student connection arena.
We must expand the notion of what the culture should be for alumni. We could celebrate those alumni who aren’t just businessmen.

What about community mentors in the disciplines/professions?

Some areas obviously do these activities very well.

Patterns and strategies for ongoing faculty mentoring of undergraduates and graduates are components that could be added to a faculty work plan.

Regarding post-graduate surveys, if you have relationships with students, they will answer a survey. If you don’t, they won’t.

If we are approachable and, in terms of helpfulness, consider students in some ways as customers, this can build post-graduate relationships.

What about growing professional organizations within the campus? People in ‘the profession’ could get together with the freshmen. Tradition and connection begin here.

Tap Career Services for alumni connections.

From the outside, the EWU website is difficult to get through. Navigation can be very challenging. Google works better for EWU access than the website itself.

We have a foundation of tradition, but we are missing some pieces.

You are talking about YOUR culture again. Make connections, deep connections, with students. These individuals serve as mentors beyond graduation.

If you call the professors mentors and give them access to mentoring workshops, they really begin to see themselves as such. Deliberate, regular, informed, check-in meetings with students are an aspect of deep mentoring.

Some areas of the university really take care of their students by reminding them to apply for things, bandaging ankles, feeding them when they are sick.

If the university’s first contact with students is after they leave, that’s about 4+ years too late.

We have a problem with assessment’s never being used to inform change.

Faculty could mentor other faculty in how to mentor students.

**Final Points from Dr. John Gardner:**

Transition points for students occur in their first year and at other junctures. A place to start is a group of interested university stakeholders for sustained conversation around this subject. ... once a month for an academic year. Who might these cross-institutional stakeholders be?

What are the current practices here? What is the current state of the practice here?

You could do something of a voluntary self-study. What is done formally and informally? What are the policies and practices? And you must look a lot further than what the alumni office is doing. Don’t be surprised if different areas are working at cross-purposes with each other. Look at current practices of other universities. Look at
CASE studies. Then develop a working strategy of your own. Waiting until after students graduate is WAY too late! You could spend a whole conversation about the Ronald McNair model for example. AT EWU, TRiO has a first-to-second year retention rate that is higher than that of the general university population. Some of the components are replicable. I encourage a continuance of the conversation. It is ALL about relationships!