

Section 3

Eastern Connecticut State University

A Unit of the Connecticut State University System

Faculty Handbook

Mission Statement and Role & Scope Statement

	Page #	Current as of
Section Contents	3.1	8/1/01
Mission Statement	3.2	8/1/01
Role and Scope Statement	3.4	8/1/01

MISSION STATEMENT

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state's public liberal arts university. As a predominantly undergraduate institution, Eastern develops outstanding students who integrate learning with expertise in their chosen fields of study for both civic and career success in a highly technological and rapidly changing world.

Eastern offers a wide range of undergraduate majors in the arts and sciences and professional studies, and selected graduate programs, encompassing interdisciplinary and integrated approaches to teaching and learning. The Eastern experience affords students the opportunity to acquire knowledge, values and skills necessary to pursue meaningful careers and advanced study, become productive members of their communities, and embrace lifelong learning. The University strives to be a model community of learners of different ages from diverse cultural, racial and social backgrounds.

Fulfilling the Mission

To accomplish its mission, Eastern offers a distinctive undergraduate educational experience that combines a strong academic program, a student-centered learning environment and an enriching campus life.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM. Eastern's academic program provides students with a strong foundation in the liberal arts and a solid knowledge of an academic discipline or preparation in a profession. Students are encouraged to make connections across the curriculum and to achieve an effective balance between individual and collaborative effort. Modern technologies are incorporated in teaching, learning, and research activities.

New students make an effective transition to the university community by participating in a *first year program*. This program encourages academic excellence, creativity, student involvement and self-understanding and fosters a commitment to diversity and civility.

The *General Education* curriculum introduces students to different modes of inquiry within the arts, humanities, and natural and social sciences. This curriculum is distinctive in its emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to inquiry and analysis, aesthetic awareness, and the understanding of many cultures. Students learn to think imaginatively, examine their beliefs and develop essential skills in technologies, communication, and in qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Academic majors offer experiential learning opportunities that encourage independent thought and decision-making and prepare students for a career, a profession, or advanced study. Both traditional majors and interdisciplinary majors are available.

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. Learning takes place in a challenging student-centered environment that rests on a century-long tradition of teaching excellence, intellectual integrity, and social responsibility. Faculty members, whose first priority is excellence in teaching, are committed to working closely with students as instructors, academic advisers, and mentors. Faculty research, creative and scholarly activities and public service also enhance student learning. Further, faculty and staff continually engage in educational and program assessment in order to improve student learning and university services.

ENRICHING CAMPUS LIFE. Students participate in a wide range of co-curricular activities, university-wide intellectual and cultural events, service-learning projects, and community service that contribute to the development of the whole person. The campus community upholds the highest ethical standards and promotes debate in a civil manner.

The University is committed to the advancement of the region and the state by offering off-campus instruction, professional development and service programs, including distance-learning options. It also serves as an important resource for meeting social and cultural needs of the local and regional communities.

Approved by the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State University System on November 6, 1998.

EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

ROLE AND SCOPE STATEMENT

OCTOBER 14, 1999

Overview

Eastern Connecticut State University's Role and Scope Statement flows from its Mission Statement, which appears on the preceding pages and was approved on November 5, 1998 by the Board of Trustees for the Connecticut State University System.

Organization

The Connecticut public higher education system is divided into three parts: the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut State University System, and the regional community-technical colleges. Eastern is one of the four teaching institutions that compose the Connecticut State University (CSU) System. Eastern distinguishes itself from the other three universities in the CSU System by its predominantly undergraduate, residential, liberal arts character. The CSU Board of Trustees administers the four universities through the CSU System Office and its head, the chancellor. Eastern's president reports to the chancellor. At Eastern, major administrative operations report to area vice presidents. The academic area is organized into three schools, the School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Continuing Education, and the School of Education and Professional Studies. Each school offers its own academic programs and is led by a dean reporting to the academic vice president.

Historical Development

Eastern has undergone a series of transformations since its establishment in 1889 as the State's second teacher preparation institution. In 1937, Willimantic Normal School became Willimantic State Teachers College offering a four-year program that included two years of general education and two years of teacher preparation. The College became known for its implementation of the educational philosophy of John Dewey, which emphasized progressive education and active learning.

Between 1959 and 1969 the College evolved from a teacher preparation school to a multi-purpose college that offered a variety of programs and changed its name from Willimantic State College to Eastern Connecticut State College. During the 1970's, Eastern established new majors and expanded both its faculty and student population. Its mission grew to include emphasis upon the liberal arts and a broader concern with social responsibility.

In 1983, when the Connecticut State University system was created, Eastern became a state university. Since 1983, the University has expanded its physical facilities, increased its total enrollment by approximately 25 percent, and added several new academic programs.

In the past ten years, Eastern has increased its full-time enrollment by 20 percent. It has added the following programs: an individualized major; undergraduate majors in accounting, social work, studio art, and sport and leisure management; several innovative minors; and graduate programs in accounting, organizational management, and teacher education. Student resources were strengthened and facilities were added and renovated. Cutting-edge technology in the form of state-of-the-art labs, teleconferencing, and instructional technologies has transformed the campus.

Eastern enrolls approximately 5,000 full-time and part-time students from every region of the state, 23 states, and 26 foreign countries. This multicultural student community thrives in Eastern's residential college atmosphere while encouraging academic talent in students with varied social, ethnic and educational backgrounds. Eastern is predominantly an undergraduate institution, with two thirds of the student population enrolled as full-time undergraduates. Eastern also serves a large percentage of non-traditional students of all ages, on a full-time or part-time basis, whose interests may include expanding careers, as well as changing or starting new careers. The educational needs of all students are met by courses taught at on-campus and off-campus sites during the evening and weekends, as well as during the summer session and January intersession. Eastern uses state-of-the-art technology to offer distance-education courses and improve access.

Eastern derives its funding from tuition and fees, State of Connecticut appropriations, grants, and gifts. During Fiscal Year 1999, state funding represented 37 percent of operating revenue. The Connecticut State University Board of Trustees has been committed to maintaining student access to ECSU. Historically, the share of operating revenue derived from tuition and fees has increased. Eastern will continue to support excellence by raising additional funds to supplement state support and contributions from students. Eastern is focused on becoming a competitive undergraduate institution. Despite downward pressures on enrollment from demographic changes in the population and increased competition for students, Eastern continued to experience solid enrollment growth. In 1998, Eastern adopted a new Mission Statement which identified it as Connecticut's public liberal arts university offering exemplary academic programs, a student-centered learning environment, and an enriching campus life. Building on this mission, Eastern is poised to become a distinctive public university in Connecticut.

Institutional Distinctiveness

Eastern Connecticut State University is the state's public liberal arts university. As a predominantly undergraduate institution, Eastern develops outstanding students who integrate learning with expertise in their chosen fields of study for both civic and career success in a highly technological and rapidly changing world. Additional distinctive features of the institution include the following:

- Individualized major
- Community service requirement for residential students
- Outstanding campus facilities
- A fully articulated first-year program
- Extensive opportunities for experiential education
- Integration of liberal arts in all programs

- State-of-the-art technology
- Supportive residential atmosphere
- University-wide intellectual and cultural events
- Multicultural, global perspective

These distinctive features facilitate and support liberal arts education.

Academic Excellence

Eastern is a community of learners and scholars dedicated to setting high expectations and achieving excellence. Quality of student learning is the overriding priority. To ensure quality, the institution builds on these strengths:

- high academic standards
- a strong liberal-arts orientation
- exemplary academic programs
- experiential learning opportunities
- quality support programs and services.

Eastern is committed to maintaining the highest academic standards. It attracts a well-educated faculty dedicated to excellence in teaching and productive scholarship and dedicated to the academic mission of the University. Eastern aims to attract and retain students of intellectual promise from various racial, socioeconomic, ethnic, and geographic backgrounds. Eastern supports excellence through its interdisciplinary University Honors Program, which challenges students to develop their thinking and research skills in a series of colloquia and directed research efforts. A first-year program enables students to make an effective transition to the university community. The program encourages academic excellence, creativity, student involvement and self-understanding and fosters a commitment to diversity and civility. Several academic honor societies recognize academic excellence.

A strong liberal-arts orientation pervades all undergraduate programs. The general education curriculum aims to help students gain an awareness of the various methods of inquiring and knowing; to enhance their abilities to research and to communicate; to learn ways to think critically, imaginatively, and analytically; to develop an understanding of diverse cultures and societies; to appreciate the sense in which the past illuminates the present; and to respond sensitively to human achievement and creativity. Eastern emphasizes strong writing and communication skills for all students. A unique Writing Across the Curriculum program stresses the attainment of writing proficiency in each student's chosen discipline. Additionally, general education courses in health and physical education teach students how to attain physical and mental wellness in order to facilitate life-long learning.

Eastern is committed to those programs in the arts and sciences and professional studies it can deliver at an exemplary level. Eastern has a commitment to a multicultural curriculum, state-of-the-art instructional technology to enhance teaching and learning on and

off campus, and interdisciplinary and international studies. Eastern also values its historic and future role in teacher preparation.

The University is committed to strengthening existing and developing new innovative programs that respond to the changes in society as well as enhance the University's competitive position. Central to maintaining academic excellence is the assessment of student-learning outcomes in all academic programs. Academic excellence will be further enhanced by the creation of a new physical environment, including space for the sciences, early childhood education, fine arts, and other academic and student programs. New academic programs will continue to meet the highest standards of excellence, strengthen the University's mission, attain distinctiveness within the state and the region, and attract qualified students.

Graduate programs are offered in accounting, organizational management, and several fields of education. Eastern continues to develop new graduate degree, certification, and certificate programs that serve statewide educational needs and are consonant with the academic mission of the University.

Eastern maintains a strong commitment to experiential learning. Academic programs offer practica, internships and field experiences, and other modes of experiential learning to help students blend real world practices with theoretical instruction. Eastern has made increasing use of other experiential learning modes such as community work, cooperative education, service learning, peer tutoring and advising, and collaborative student-faculty research efforts. Eastern also encourages students to expand their educational outlook by participating in national exchange programs and international study. Inter-institutional arrangements allow students to take advantage of special courses and programs offered at other Connecticut public institutions.

A wide range of support programs and services, as well as extracurricular activities and cultural events, are designed to promote academic success and broaden and enrich the undergraduate experience for students.

Eastern provides a challenging and supportive living and learning environment that encourages students' active participation in residential life, in student organizations, in recreational and athletic programs, and in cultural and social events. To this end, it supports programs and co-curricular activities for the intellectual, social, cultural, physical and psychological development of its students. Students receive counseling on financial aid opportunities, career planning, and employment opportunities. The University provides opportunity for students with potential who need support to succeed. Academic support programs, including peer tutoring, academic intervention, and specialized instruction, promote student learning and success. In addition, health education programs and medical services promote student wellness.

Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity

Enhancing the quality of student learning and public service programs requires a substantial and enduring commitment to scholarship, research, and creative activity. Eastern's faculty members encourage students to engage in research and to produce their own creative work.

Students collaborate with faculty in research and creative activities, often presenting their research at regional or national professional meetings. Scholarship and creative activity enable Eastern faculty to stay abreast of the latest developments in their fields and, just as importantly, enable them to model for students a commitment to life-long learning. The University supports faculty research through sabbaticals, reassigned time, research, and curriculum and professional development grants. It also facilitates faculty exchanges and collaborative work with faculty at other universities.

The importance of research and creative activity is reflected in the number of grants and fellowships awarded to Eastern's faculty. External funding for research and creative activity comes from both the public and private sectors. Eastern continues to aggressively pursue resources to support scholarship, research, and creative activity by faculty and students.

Public Service

Eastern Connecticut State University has a long tradition of meeting the educational, economic, cultural, recreational and social needs of the region and state. The University makes available to the community and region the time and expertise of faculty, staff and students, as well as use of its facilities. Grant-funded research benefits the region through employment opportunities and increased economic activity.

Eastern enriches the educational experience of state residents through activities sponsored by its departments and specialized centers. Educational outreach programs are coordinated through the Planetarium, the Learning Center, the radio and TV stations, the Center for Connecticut Studies, and the School of Continuing Education. Eastern hosts conferences on social issues of local and national interest, such as the environment, transportation, energy needs and educational equity for women and minorities.

Eastern's faculty and staff advise local and regional government agencies, professional organizations, public schools and the general public on a variety of subjects. Economic and business services are offered through the David T. Chase Free Enterprise Institute, the Connecticut Small Business Development Center and the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance. The University's commitment to public service is also exhibited by its students, who volunteer their time at various local and regional social service organizations.

Programs at the Akus Art Gallery, performances at Harry Hope Theater and Shafer Auditorium, athletic events, and other cultural programs contribute to affirming the well being of the community and to celebrating the strengths of our diversity.

Future Directions

In the next five years, Eastern will meet a number of challenges to successfully fulfill its mission and purposes. The following are the key challenges Eastern has identified:

- **Develop distinctive academic programs.**
- **Enhance excellence in programs and services while maintaining financial stability.**
- **Attract talented and diverse faculty, staff, and students.**

- **Secure adequate resources to support excellence in its programs and services.**
- **Acquire and maintain state-of-the-art technology for the teaching and learning process and for administration.**
- **Develop and implement effective planning and evaluation activities, including student-learning outcomes assessment, to identify new opportunities and directions and improve quality.**
- **Strengthen collaboration across the University.**
- **Forge partnerships with community, business, and other organizations to significantly enhance the quality of University programs, increase University resources, and enhance community and economic development.**
- **Implement the campus master plan to meet facilities needs.**

Eastern aims to become a top regional university by focusing on academic excellence, examining its assumptions, and refining its planning processes and goals. Eastern will continue to enhance its strengths and transform its challenges into opportunities.