



This issue is devoted to topics covered at the March Enrollment Forum, *Telling Our EIU Story: The Path to Success from Recruitment to Retention and Graduation.*

## Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)

- Cindy Boyer
- Kesha Coker
- Mona Davenport
- Shelley James
- Stephen King
- Jeanne Lord
- Kimberlie Moock, co-chair
- Gopal Periyannan
- Karla Sanders, co-chair
- Jody Stone
- Jennifer Stringfellow
- Jean Wolski

For other retention information, go to our web site at <http://castle.eiu.edu/~core>

Want to contact us? Send us an email at [core@eiu.edu](mailto:core@eiu.edu)

## Enrollment Management Data Shared

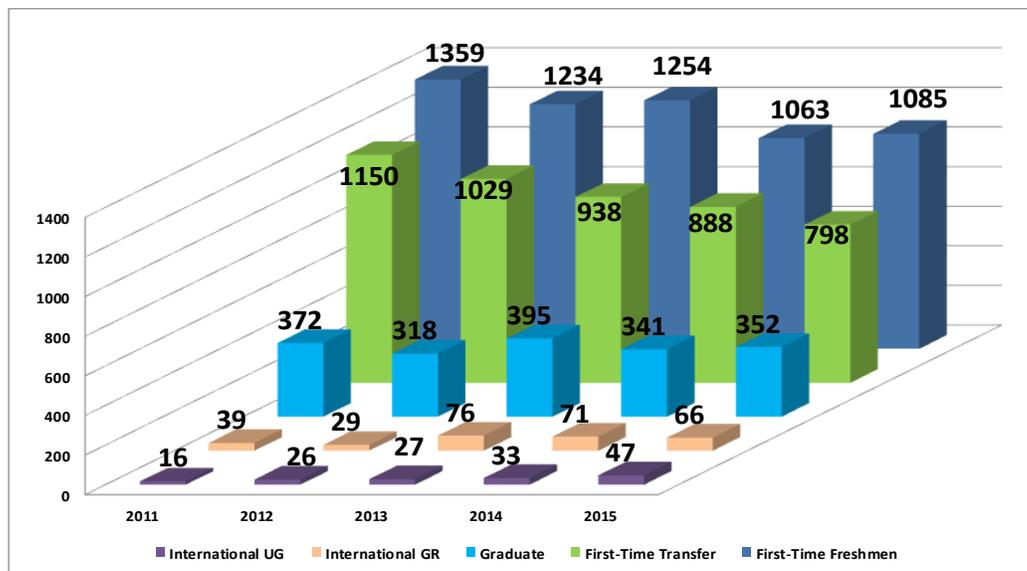
In the opening session, Kimberlie Moock, Josh Norman, and Karla Sanders shared information related to historical enrollment figures, program quality, the new student profile, the applicant profile, and retention and graduation rates. All data is from the Office of Planning, Budget, and Institutional research unless otherwise noted. In 2011, there were 11,771 graduate and undergraduate students enrolled at 10th day in the fall compared to 8,875 total

students in FA15. Presenters noted that the average class size has dropped from 19 in 2011 to 17 in 2015. The time to degree for first – time freshmen has dropped from 4.79 years in 2011 to 4.69 years in 2014; for transfer students, the time to degree has moved from 2.99 years to 3.06 years. While enrollment has declined in the past few years, Eastern has seen growth in the number of undergraduate and graduate international

students and in the number of out-of-state students. The two graduate programs that have seen the most growth are the MS in Technology and the MS in Art. The chart below depicts the decline in traditional freshmen and transfers and the increase in international students. The presenters shared several reasons for the decline in undergraduate enrollment at Eastern. The first reason is the decline in students in

*(Continued on page 2)*

Historical Fall Enrollment for New Students



## Enrollment data cont.

Illinois enrolling in colleges. Data from the national student clearinghouse shows that in 2011 there were 758,074 students in Illinois colleges and universities compared to 660,808 in 2015. In addition to fewer students attending college, Illinois ranks second as the highest exporter of college students in the U.S.; in 2012, 28,792 students left the state for college compared to 18,040 in 1996 (IPEDS). Eastern has also experienced increased competition from other state schools and universities in bordering states. From Fall 2012 to Fall 2015, 1,501 students who applied at Eastern enrolled in Illinois State University, 497 matriculated to Northern Illinois University, and 486 chose to attend the University of Illinois-Urbana. The top out-of-state competitor is the University of Missouri-Columbia with 185 students followed by 122 students who chose Indiana State University and 106 who matriculated to the University of Iowa. Eastern's stellar reputation as a university that produces educators has also hurt enrollment as jobs for educators in the state has declined.

For first-time freshmen and transfer students at Eastern the following programs have been the most in-demand: pre-medicine, business, elementary education, psychology, and kinesiology and sports studies. At the graduate level, technology, business administration, kinesiology and sports studies, college student affairs, and counseling have been the most in-demand programs.

The academic profile of the first-time freshman at Eastern has held steady at a 21 ACT composite and with an above 3.0 high school gpa.

Eastern's retention and graduation rates remain above our peers at similar institutions nationally. The average 6-year graduation rate for all public master's

granting institutions is 43.5% compared to Eastern's 58% (ACT Institutional Datafile, 2015). Our retention rate is also above the national benchmark, which is 69.9% compared to Eastern's 75%. The tables below offer our retention and graduation rates for certain key populations. Over the past few years the percentage of special admit students in the freshman class has risen although the overall number of students has held steady, but with the smaller number of standard admits, the retention percentage has dropped. Contributing to this retention drop is the increase in the number of minority students in the freshman class; minority students have traditionally retained at a lower percentage rate than non-minority students.

All the slides shared are available at the enrollment forum web site at

## Graduation

First-Time Cohort	2011	2015
Six Year	59%	58%
Five Year	54%	54%
Four Year	32%	32%

Minority Students	2011	2015
Six Year	45%	47%
Five Year	40%	43%
Four Year	17%	17%

First Generation Students	2011	2015
Six Year	56%	51%
Five Year	50%	47%
Four Year	27%	24%

## Retention

First Year to Second Year	2011	2015
All First-Time	79%	75%
Minority First-Time	76%	68%
First Generation	78%	74%
Zero EFC	74%	69%

## First-Generation College Students at EIU

First-generation students have long been a large segment of the student population at Eastern, so this group of students was featured at the enrollment forum. A first-generation student is anyone whose parent or legal guardian did not graduate with a degree from a four-year college or university. The table to the right shows the overall and first-generation enrollment at Eastern for the last five years. Their average ACT composite score is 21 and the average high school gpa is 3.08.

Nationally, first-generation students are less likely to attend college than students whose parents have earned a degree. Students who have one or more parents with a college degree have an 89% chance of attending college compared to those whose parents hold a high school diploma who are 50.6% likely to attend. Students whose parents do not have a high school diploma have only a 29.3% chance of attending college.

Why does this discrepancy exist? First-generation students are less likely to take the challenging high school courses that prepare them for college level work. According to a 1999 study by the Department of Education, only 9% of first-generation students take rigorous courses. This lack of preparation leads more first-generation students to receiving academic warnings or probation in their first year. These students have a strong need for supportive academic advising, financial literacy education, strong role models and mentors, personal counseling, and cultural, educational, and leadership-related activities.

Compared to their peers, first-generation college students are more likely to be academically under-prepared and more likely to work 20+ hours a week. These students are also more likely to be part of an ethnic minority. Although the national average of first-generation students enrolled in college is 38.5% among

**First-Generation Enrollment at Eastern**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Overall Enrollment	9657	8975	8347	7640	7202
First Generation Students	4698	4435	4087	3715	3346
Percentage of First Generation Students	49%	49%	49%	49%	46%

entering freshmen, 69.6% of Latino students are first-generation; 62.9% of African-Americans, 44.8% of Native Americans, and 42.5% of Asian/Pacific Islanders are first-generation.

Nationally, first-generation students have lower retention and graduation rates than the overall rates. A 2011 UCLA study showed that while 42% of students whose parents had attended college graduated within four years, only 27% of first-generation students completed degrees that soon. The five year graduation rate shows a similar disparity with 60% of those with college-educated parents graduating compared to 45% of first generation students. The six year graduation rate is 64% for those whose parents have a degree and 50% for first-generation students. Eastern's graduation rates are given on the opposite page and are very strong compared to the national averages, but the gap between first-generation retention and completion rates and the students with college-educated parents is growing. These rates are due to academic preparedness, cultural mobility, and finances.

Cultural mobility refers to the challenge many first-generation college students face being part of two cultures: that of their friends and family and the college community. These two cultures may

hold conflicting values and pull the student in different directions, which may affect persistence and degree attainment.

Many first-generation college students also lack the means to afford a four-year degree program, and federal and state financial aid programs have shifted their focus to subsidize middle-income students rather than low income students.

Experts on helping first-generation students succeed offer the following suggestions for implementation on college campuses. Offer a first-year experience course to introduce students to resources, college norms, and provide role models. Eastern's University Foundations course meets this need for our first-generation students. UF covers faculty expectations, understanding the goals of college, choosing a major, planning a career path, learning time management and test-taking and study skills to prepare first-time students to be successful.

Other helpful programs include supplemental instruction and tutoring, residence hall living communities, integrated study groups, extra-curricular activities to bond students and faculty together and cement the relationship between the student and the institution.

# Engaging Prospective Students with Our Story

Josh Norman and Ryan Gibson presented two sessions on using Eastern's Argos reports and information from MyEIU to recruit prospective students. This article combines information from those two presentations on using the recruiting tool kit and showcasing MyEIU.

Prospective students come from all different areas and backgrounds and can be found at various states of the enrollment process from inquiry to applicants to admits. The key to getting those students to enroll is engagement. What follows outlines how to identify and engage prospective students.

All new students are directed to complete information in MyEIU, Eastern's portal for new students. CATS has devised this tool so that it caters to students' individual needs whether a student is a new freshman, transfer, or graduate student. Students are asked about their academic interests as well as their out-of-classroom interests and then information related to these interests will appear in the student's page.

The recruiting toolkit allows faculty and staff to find all the data needed to engage students through email, phone calls, direct mail, and even supplies information needed to organize a high school visit. The toolkit can be found in Argos at [argos.eiu.edu](http://argos.eiu.edu) in the folder Student/ Recruiting Tool Kit. If you do not have access to Argos, you may request it through the access request form off of the ITS web site.

The recruiting tool kit allows programs to identify prospective students with specific academic interests through the recruit by college or major function. Programs

can then create emails or direct mailings about those academic interests related to Eastern's majors, concentrations, and faculty research. Jeff Stowell, assistant chair of the Psychology Department, sends an email each week to new prospects welcoming them to the study of psychology at Eastern. This email includes a video welcome message that has proved to be very popular with prospective students.

This tool kit could also help identify students amenable to recruiting efforts based on non-academic interests in the recruit by interest function. Interests are varied, but a few examples are dance, debate,

The recruiting tool kit also allows programs to plan a high school visit based on where there are a large number of recruits with certain academic interests. Guidance counselor information is available for each high school as well as a list of planned visits by our admission staff.

Departments may also use information from the tool kit to follow-up with a student they met at a campus event, such as an open house. Prospective students can be found by name, so that additional contacts can be made. The report will also show information from the application

and where they are in the application process. MyEIU also asks students whether they would like to create a family account for parents or guardians. This function allows Eastern to send targeted messages to parents and guardians, who are key players in the college decision-making process.

Each time a student logs into

MyEIU, she can check a checklist designed especially for her with what the next steps are to enrolling. Information in green boxes shows that the student has completed the steps, such as paying the enrollment deposit, applying for housing, signing up for an orientation day, and so forth. Information on those academic and non-academic interests are also provided as well as a link to our virtual campus tour.

Departments can use the tool kit and MyEIU information to tailor communication to prospective majors.

**myeiU** [click here to sign up](#)

**Log In**  
email address or eiu netid  
password  
[Login](#)

New User? [Register.](#)  
[Forgot your password?](#)

Need more assistance? Have questions? Visit our [contact us](#) page to see how you can reach your admitting office.

**Thinking of applying? This is your chance to learn all about EIU!**

Rivalling the positive features of the finest private institutions, Eastern Illinois University offers potential students — like yourself — a small campus, close-knit community, and great hands-on opportunities to pursue the goals and dreams of your future. As a public university, however, we provide these qualities at an affordable rate you'd be hard-pressed to find at a private school. Of course, we know there's more to choosing a college than simply reviewing compiled facts and statistics. It's also a very personal decision.

That's why we've created myeiU. It will serve as your personal portal into EIU, allowing you to learn anything you could possibly want to know about our campus. You might want to learn more about our top-flight academic programs, our numerous student organizations, or the seemingly limitless professional opportunities available to our students. That information is all right here. Your portal will also plug you into the university's latest news, events, and opportunities to visit, along with links to information matching your unique interests. Let's get started! Go ahead and log in or [sign up now.](#)

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study abroad, student publications, theater, politics, intramurals, leadership, or band. Shellie Gregorich, chair of the music department, has successfully used this function to reach out to students interested in continuing to play in the band or orchestra or sing in the choir or an ensemble. These students may not want to major in music but want to continue this interest while attending a university, and Eastern can let them know that such options are available to students here, which may convince them that EIU is the best place for them to continue their education.