

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Electronic Writing Portfolio Due
Deadline to return textbooks with NO fines

DEC.
16

Commencement 10 a.m. & 1 p.m.

DEC.
17

Grades Due by 4 p.m.
Term Closes

DEC.
19

LAST Day LATE Textbooks will be accepted WITH pay-
ment of late fines.
Deadline to clear record or lose spring classes

DEC.
22

First Tuition payment due

JAN.
03

Term opens

JAN.
04

First day of class

JAN.
09

GRAPHIC BY ANGELICA CATALDO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

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“He said that it is a cheap option because it is really staffed by only one unit B faculty member, and everybody else are from other areas and they have no office support at this point,” he said.

Campbell said Woodley has big ideas for the program and understands that enrollment for the program is low.

However, Woodley said the program gave students of color a reason to stay at Eastern.

“It’s something (students) identify with,” Stevens said.

The program has only six majors.

Stevens and Campbell also spoke with Sally Renaud, the director of the journalism department, and said she was passionate about the program and the successful alumni.

Stevens said during their meeting Renaud said the program is expensive because of one-on-one interactions. A maximum of 18 students are allowed in a classroom, allowing professors to interact with the students individually while they are writing stories.

Also expensive are the equipment and technology, Stevens said.

Stevens said Renaud mentioned that the journalism program would be better off merging with English, not communication studies.

“Her major concern is that with a merger they lose control of their curriculum and budgets and the budget is something that she believed they needed to be able to control for the accreditation,” Stevens said. “She felt very strongly that with a merger they would lose their accreditation.”

Campbell said Renaud was adamant that 18 was the maximum class size the program could have, and professors really do give students one-on-one attention.

“(Renaud said) if you want quality students that’s what is required to have for that program,” Campbell said.

Workgroup chair Cindy Rich said everybody would say that because they believe in their programs and are passionate about them.

Mike Murray, director of development of the Neal Welcome Center, and Heather Webb, director of the Office of Student Standards spoke with Douglas Brandt, a physics professor, who spoke on behalf of the pre-engineering program.

Murray said Brandt was like everyone else by supporting both pre engineering and the engineering co-op programs, and said these things go hand in hand but there is a distinction.

Webb said Brandt emphasized that there are some students who really wanted to study engineering, but to jump right into large institutions such of the University of Illinois or Purdue is a rough transition for them.

Therefore, Webb said she learned that students come to Eastern because of the smaller class sizes, the one-on-one instruction and to get the foundation before transferring to a larger institution that offers the full program.

Murray said this then puts Eastern into a feeder category for pre-engineering.

Webb said she questioned if Eastern really wants to be considered a feeder school and that she does not think this is a fit for who Eastern wants to be as an institution.

Rich said that with only six students in the program, it is obviously not a position Eastern wants to be in.

They also spoke to Kathlene Shank,

the chair of the special education department, and said she defended the program with great passion.

Webb said Shank said there were 1,500 unfilled jobs that could have been filled by graduates of this program.

“She really emphasized that this is a program in the state of Illinois that really graduates are going to get out and fill some of those programs,” Webb said.

Webb also said the program has had some road blocks but sounds like a promising program with room to enroll more students once they are able to get past the road blocks.

“It really can serve the entire state, not just the individuals who are here in this local area,” Webb said in response to the fact that some of the program is offered online.

Murray said Shank had to turn away six students from the program because she was not sure if there would be enough support or faculty for them to be able to complete the program in a given amount of time, because those students had an “emergency waiver.”

Joyce Schumacher, accountant III, said Shank needs more resources and members agreed, but they also said everybody is asking for more resources as well.

Murray and Webb also spoke to Grant Sterling, a philosophy professor representing the department and program.

Rich said members were careful and cautious just because of the process but not secretive.

“I can’t say I’m happy with what we did because I know some people are upset but I’m proud of the work that we’ve done,” Rich said.

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“We can talk about moving timelines up, but we have to look at things on the academic side of the house because they are moving through the hands of current students, and I know there is stress on the advising staff in some of the departments,” she said.

This is especially the case when New Student Programs does not have as many staff members, Moock said.

“It’s going to take some technology support and it’s going to take some commitment from other departments to have those things in place,” Moock said.

Workgroup Chair Jody Stone said staffing and technology issues should not limit the university’s efforts at making students the number priority.

“Some people have their priorities mixed up in terms of, if you have students that need advising to get registered for classes whether it’s a traditional or transfer student, how do we help that student during that process sooner rather than later?” Stone said. “Then worry about other aspects of our positions down the road.”

Norman said the articulation process and updating the Degree Audit Report Systems software must be corrected before early registration and orientation can be fixed.

Articulation is the process of analyzing credits that transfer students earned from their previous colleges and then determining how those credits line up with Eastern’s academic catalog.

DARS is how students show the amount of credits earned, what graduation requirements they have met or they still need to complete and show all of the grades they have earned.

Pearson said the system and the articulation are slowed down due to lack of staffing, which harms the transfer students Eastern already has, stopping potential students from attending.

“Articulation and evaluation is so important and that’s part of this issue we are talking about, is that timelessness to get that degree audit,” Pearson said. “Some schools, as soon as (students are) admitted within two day they already have their evaluation of credits available for them to view. We can’t turn it around because we don’t have the people or staff to do that.”

To improve the transfer student experience, providing more staffing for the registrar’s office and Office of New Student Programs was recommended.

“It’s very connected for transfer students to have correct and timely articulation. It’s a recruitment strategy,” Pearson said.

She said an academic adviser cannot accurately advise students without updates to DARS reports.

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The Workgroup members all reviewed what the trend for enrollment was, but Schumacher said enrollment was not the only data they used.

“We used the totality of what we learned,” she said. “I don’t know there’s one magic statistic that anybody focused solely on to come up with their recommendation.”

Rich said the group had a list of 12 or 13 data sources they were able to use in the process. Other sources used were admissions data, such as what admitted students said they were interested in, demand for a particular program and enrollment data and profit-loss sheets.

Though Schumacher self-identifies as a “numbers person,” she said she did not look “really hard” at the profit-loss sheets.

“You can’t boil it down to ‘it makes money, it doesn’t make money,’” Schumacher said.

Murray said these sheets were only one part of what they looked at, though they were looking at what to do financially.

“It’s one component of the bigger picture,” he said.

Rich said when she was looking at the recommendations; she was more interested in student credit hours produced.

“That shows students are enrolling in their classes,” she said.

Rich knows people wanted the group to have discussions and make decisions in front of “everyone,” but she said that is not what they were charged to do.

She acknowledged that there are people who are anxious about this process, but departments already have a good idea of what their status is.

“They know if they only have six students enrolled in their major,” she said. “We’re not creating any of that data.”

Rich said the group took that data, and based it on their own experiences they found from their individual work.

Murray said anxiety is natural when going through a process like the vitalization project.

“Obviously, we wouldn’t be having these discussions if we weren’t having problems with how the university is funded,” he said.

He said the president is trying to find a way to create an enterprise that is efficient and cost effective while still providing educational opportunities the university has historically provided.

“We need to find a way right now to survive,” he said. “The discussions going on right now wouldn’t even have been conceived of ten years ago. s.”

Some departments the Workgroup have talked to have been giving suggestions for how to fix the enrollment and other issues they have.

“The programs are not saying cut this (other program), they are saying we can do this, taking responsibility,” Rich said. “People are aware of their fields. The faculty know what needs to be done.”

Rich said any implication that the Workgroup is looking to get rid of any courses completely is wrong.

Though programs themselves may have low enrollment, they may offer general education courses that many students sign up for.

“There’s no way we want educational opportunities taken away,” she said. “But how do we justify having an academic program with five students majoring or six or eight majoring in that area- how do we justify this expense when the university is struggling like it is? These are things people thought and say in private no one wants to say out loud.”

Murray said the group was only pulling the facts together to recommend what should be done.

“I’m sorry some people think we didn’t do it the way they wanted us too, but I’m happy with how we did it,” Schumacher said. “We got no feedback from the head of the vitalization project saying we were off track. Other groups had the same approach.”

At an all Task-Force meeting Wednesday, Eastern President David Glassman said the vice presidents had also been asked to give recommendations on programs and services in their area as well.

“We’re only one source of information,” Schumacher said.

At the same meeting, Glassman said he will talk to the areas that have been recommended for eliminations, consolidations or outsourcing.

Workgroup No.7 members also reached out to areas they chose for a No.4 designation and talked to their department chairs or others who were designated to talk to the Workgroup.

Going through the process has been “gut-wrenching,” Schumacher said. “We know that whatever happens is going to directly affect the future of this university,” she said. “I long for the good old days.”

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