Strategic Initiative: Eastern Washington University will be a primary choice for prospective students because of the high quality of the educational experience.

**Narrative:** This initiative supports education as exploration, not training, with a commitment to an integrated and interdependent curriculum and an expectation for students to achieve a high level of critical academic skills. EWU will celebrate its high academic standards, and will provide students with substantial academic support services to facilitate their success.

**Objective 1:** Establish an integrated component to the general education curriculum which provides insight and appreciation for the interplay across disciplines.

**Strategies:**

- Revisit the linked-courses proposal developed for the General Education Core Requirements (GECR.)
- Develop learning goals and objectives that apply to students in all baccalaureate programs, and include expectations that require students to understand issues from multiple perspectives.
- Through university-wide discussion, develop theme-based interdisciplinary courses or sequences of courses.
- Develop and administer a student survey to determine students’ perception of redundancy in major course offerings.
- Investigate the development of course offerings at the college level that explore career options while fostering growth in students’ abilities in the areas of communication, critical thinking, and information literacy.
- Complete a catalogue review to determine possible courses that may be cross-listed. Determine the number of cross-listed course currently offered and if the instructors offer multiple perspectives.

**Indicators for success:**

- The existence of linked courses in general education and an increase in number of students taking linked vs. non-linked GECR’s
- An increase in the percent of graduating students who took a course with an interdisciplinary perspective
- Positive Alumni survey results regarding “integrated” learning experience at Eastern

**Barriers:** territoriality of departments, funding model, faculty time for course development and collaboration. **Solutions:** offer GECR’s as UNIV courses

**Objective 2:** Reinforce and enhance undergraduate and graduate students’ ongoing development of academic skills in the areas of information literacy and technology, mathematical reasoning, oral and written communication, and reading comprehension.
Baccalaureate and Graduate Education

Strategies:

- Provide flexible resources to both faculty and students to 1) assist the faculty’s efforts to promote students’ further development in these areas and 2) assist students with assignments that require use of knowledge and skills in these areas.
- Incorporate these academic skills into course offerings.
- Examine student learning expectations to ensure maximization of students’ potential.
- Facilitate students’ development of professional standards in their behavior and the presentation of their ideas.
- Increase the awareness of the level of rigor of courses and how it can stimulate students’ learning.

Indicators of success:

- An increase in the number of courses using math, writing, oral presentations, information literacy and technology.
- Frequency of use of resources designed to assist faculty and students with assignments requiring students to apply critical academic skills.
- Departments’ reviews of students’ work completed in senior courses will reflect an improvement in students’ abilities in the areas of information literacy and technology, mathematical reasoning, oral and written communication, and reading comprehension.

Barriers: ability to provide flexible resources to faculty and students. The need for flexibility is key, because resources may be need to be available to students for a range of one assignment to multiple assignments. Similarly, resources for a faculty member may be needed to aid with anywhere from a minimum of one lecture to a complete revamping of a course. Extremely large classes create another barrier. Solutions: manageable class size, supply resources (e.g., TA time; PLUS program).

Objective 3: Extend integration into the major and graduate programs.

Strategies:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of discipline-specific and cross-disciplinary Capstone courses at addressing integration.
- Develop and administer a student survey to determine students’ perception of Capstone offerings.
- Majors will require a minor or a significant amount of coursework outside their department or program.
- Identify course/curriculum duplication across majors (e.g. ethics, research methods, statistics, graphic design), and create cross-disciplinary courses with the common content needed by numerous majors.
a) Investigate offering low enrollment discipline specific applied sections related to the cross-disciplinary course. For example, a cross-disciplinary “Ethics” course would be offered by the Philosophy department, and students with majors in any program requiring an Ethics course would enroll in this cross-disciplinary course. Then, a department in CSBS, CSMT or CBPA could offer multiple applied sections with lower enrollments than the cross-disciplinary course.

b) Follow-up or concurrent courses to the cross disciplinary course could be taught in the specific disciplines to apply the information to the major.

- Provide an environment where graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend oral presentations of graduate students’ research from other departments.

**Barriers:** accreditation requirements, department FTE pressures

**Objective 4:** Foster a learning environment in graduate programs that provides opportunities for students to further develop critical thinking skills, (e.g. conjecture, synthesis, disagreement with rational support, examination of assumptions.)

**Strategies:**
- Graduate courses build upon and extend undergraduate course content while fostering initiative and participation in learning.
- Require graduate students to access and utilize research as a tool for professional growth.
- Graduate programs offer colloquia requiring presentation of research projects (students would register for credit and be involved in discussion the quarter they present; other students would be encouraged to attend as they develop their research ideas).

**Objective 5:** Contain the growth of program and course offerings to ensure the existence of ample resources to allow continued self examination and improvement of academic programs and academic student support services.

- Develop a process for reviewing proposals for new courses and programs that will include the identification of one time and ongoing costs and sources of funds for covering costs.
- Review programs requiring more than 90 credits to identify redundancy in content that cannot be shown to provide a meaningful increase in understanding.

**Objective 6:** Communicate (to internal and external constituencies) the positive aspects of high academic standards paired with strong academic support services designed to facilitate students’ achievement of those standards.

**Strategies:**
- Track alumni and share their records of success.
Baccalaureate and Graduate Education

- Identify examples of the following types of students, and use anecdotes about their successes to publicize the importance placed on learning by the University community at Eastern.

  a) Students who came to EWU as freshmen with pre-University skills completed, were challenged by college course work, but with hard work were successful, in part due to assistance provided for students’ learning.

  b) Students who came to EWU as freshmen with pre-University skills completed, who were not accustomed to studying, did not do well at first, but who learned to study and are willing to applaud standards that caused them to apply themselves.

  c) Students who were academic stars in high school, and….etc.

Existing University models and resources

**Models for curriculum and curriculum revision**
- Honors program
- Curriculum revision in the CSBS
- Women’s Studies Program
- other…

**Models for academic student support services**
- Writers’ Center
- Mathematics Tutoring lab
- Academic Support Center
- PLUS program (grant funded)
- other …

**Resources**
- Writers’ Center
- Mathematics Tutoring Lab
- Mars Lab
- Teaching and Learning Center
- Work Study funding
- Graduate teaching assistantships
- Honors students who are funded to work at the University
- other …