Retreat Group Discussion: Institutional Strengths and Weaknesses

Retreat participants met in small groups and were asked to identify Eastern’s weaknesses—the “boulders” that hold Eastern down—and our university’s strengths—the “eagles” that help us soar. Groups then pasted their on boulders and eagles to a large poster of the EWU campus.

Following are the strengths and weaknesses that we need to take into account as we proceed with our planning. They are grouped by similar ideas and in no order of priority.

Eagles: Strengths that help EWU soar

- We’re a student-centered, accessible public institution
- Commitment to our students
- Congruence of our activities with our mission
- Commitment to the university
- Innovative and entrepreneurial in attitude
- Innovation in our programs
- Small class sizes
- Classes taught by “real” faculty (adjuncts are a problem)
- Positive student-faculty relationships
- Supportive campus environment: facilities, student interaction with faculty and staff
- Great leadership
- External support for Dr. Jordan’s leadership
- Improved public image: presidential leadership, credibility with the legislature
- Enhanced image
- The contributions EWU grads make to the Spokane community and economy
- Beautiful campus environment
- Campus beautification
- Friendly campus community
- EWU is a good value
- High-quality programs at low cost to students
- EWU transforms lives!
Boulders: Weaknesses that hold EWU down

- Lack of faculty & student diversity
- Lack of diversity and support for people of color
- Lack of diversity—both cultural and intellectual

- Doing too much without enough
- Inadequate resources
- Lack of internal funds allocated amongst academic units—inefficiency

- Academic quality of incoming students
- Reputation for being easy
- Perception of faculty and their ability to teach

- Insufficient classroom technology

- Lack of support from Spokane
- Not “Spokane’s University”
- “Rodney Dangerfield” syndrome
- Local perception of EWU: low prestige degree; see us as school for “poor” students; not Spokane’s university
- WSU “stepchild” at Riverpoint

- Barriers to inter-dependency
- Turf wars among areas of university (especially colleges)
- 3 distinct, separate campuses, disconnected from each other

- Time to degree is too long; hard to schedule classes

- Communication with faculty, staff, students and community
- Inconsistent information (to students, everybody)

- Process laden and slow to respond to change