

SWOT Analysis & Report: Developing the Strategic Plan



Dr. Tom Striplin
President

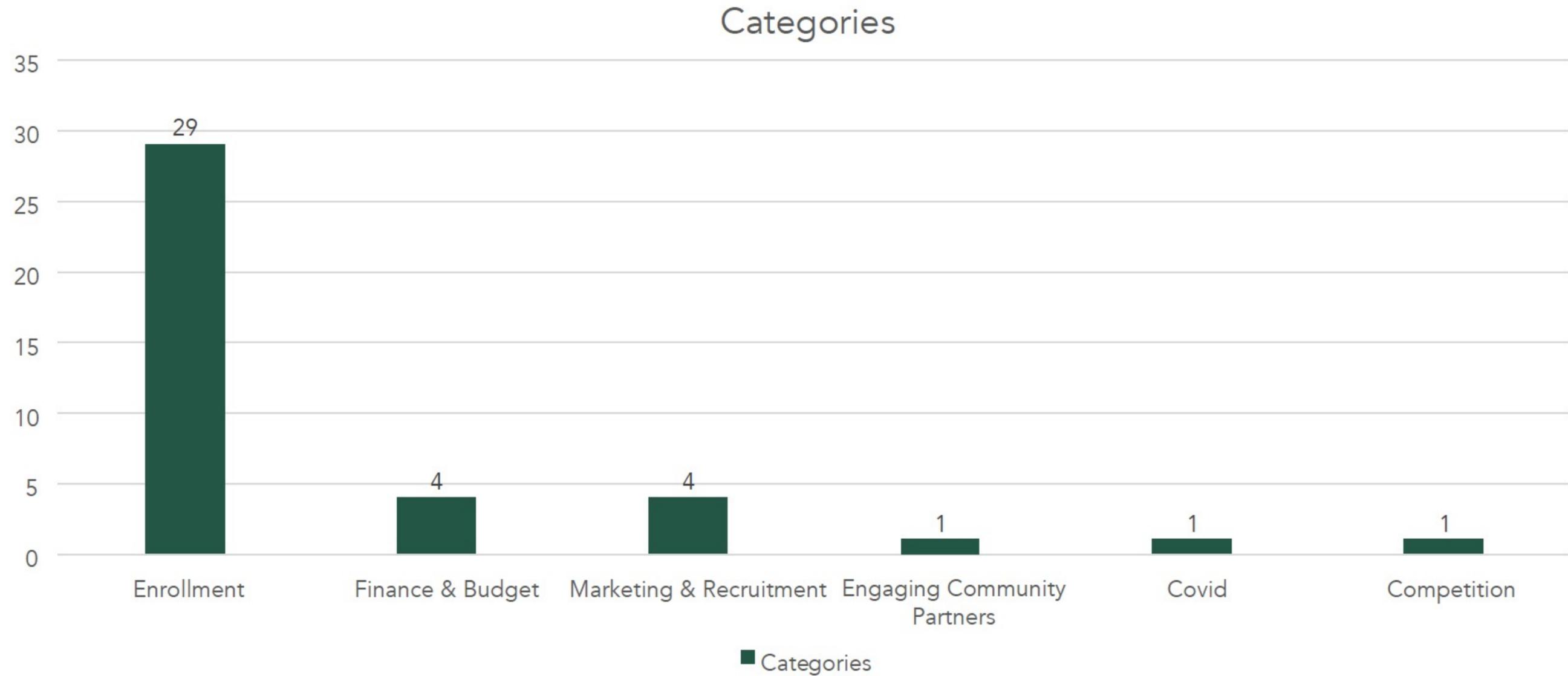
Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College

SWOT Distribution & Respondents

- The modified SWOT was sent out to all employees, Board of Governors and Community Partners.
- Multiple emails and reminders were sent by Dr. Striplin over the period of July and August 2021.
- The respondent breakdown was as follows:

Respondents	
Board of Governors	6
Community Partners	3
Faculty Full-time	11
Faculty-Adjuncts	8
Staff Full-time	14
Staff Part-time	2
Total	44

1st Level Challenges Facing Eastern



1st Level Challenges Facing Eastern

- The college needs to develop a competitive business plan for long-term sustainability that does not assume increased federal spending. Free community college is not a guarantee in the current political environment. The plan should include a diversified approach to revenue from public and private sources.
- A dedicated recruitment individual/department could increase the effectiveness of recruitment activities/efforts.
- Going to schools to give presentations, mailing letters to students about to graduate.
- Looking to the future needs of the region is critical. We cannot get a plumber, electrician, builder, painter to get work done nor can we staff our restaurants. In an area with a burgeoning tourism industry, there is a dearth of trained hospitality workers. We do not have a large meeting center to draw outside attendance nor do we have adequate accommodations to house guests once they are here. We do not have a performing arts center to expand our access to touring groups, music, theater, etc.

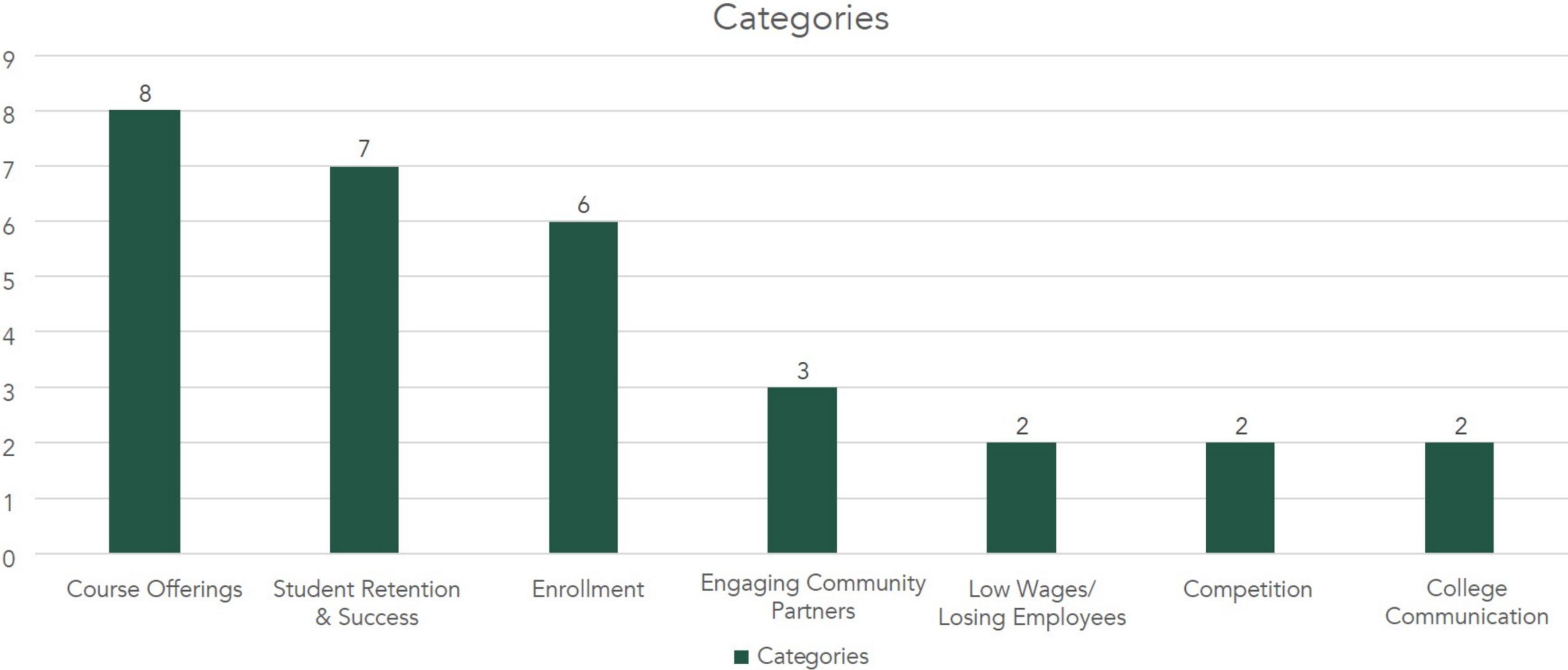
1st Level Challenges Facing Eastern

- I believe our enrollment is down basically due to misinformation. A lot of students are afraid to come to Eastern because they heard that our classes will not transfer to other schools. I think if we put the message out there that we are the most affordable college in the state that we should also include the message of the classes that transfer and List the schools that do accept our classes.
- Employing a full-time recruiter/community liaison (for the college as a whole, not separating academics from workforce) with extensive marketing/business skills and the ability to talk/engage with people in this area.
- Add more unique learning opportunities and programs that will be attractive and bring more students to our college, instead of them going elsewhere to find what they're looking for. More students obviously means more money, which means incentives and salary bumps for faculty can keep more folks in their position for longer. This, in turn, creates even more investment in the college -which comes full circle in working together to grow students and opportunities.
- Market extensively in the high school arena through the Discovery Center advisors and instructors who are visible daily; bridge high school programming to Eastern for completion.

1st Level Challenges Facing Eastern

- Marketing need to be increased. We cannot wait until a day or two before a program activity is to take place to advertise it. Programs need to be marketed continuously. Advertise in the local news papers, radio stations, social media and tv. If we have strong marketing , we should increase our enrollment Students cannot enroll in a programs if they are not aware of what is offered.
- Surprisingly, many people are unaware of Eastern's existence. Marketing needs increased statewide, keying in on the fact that we offer the lowest tuition in the state, and rank #3 with the nursing program.
- Go into the local high schools and make a presentation to the students about the benefits of starting their college career at Eastern.

#2nd Level Challenges Facing Eastern



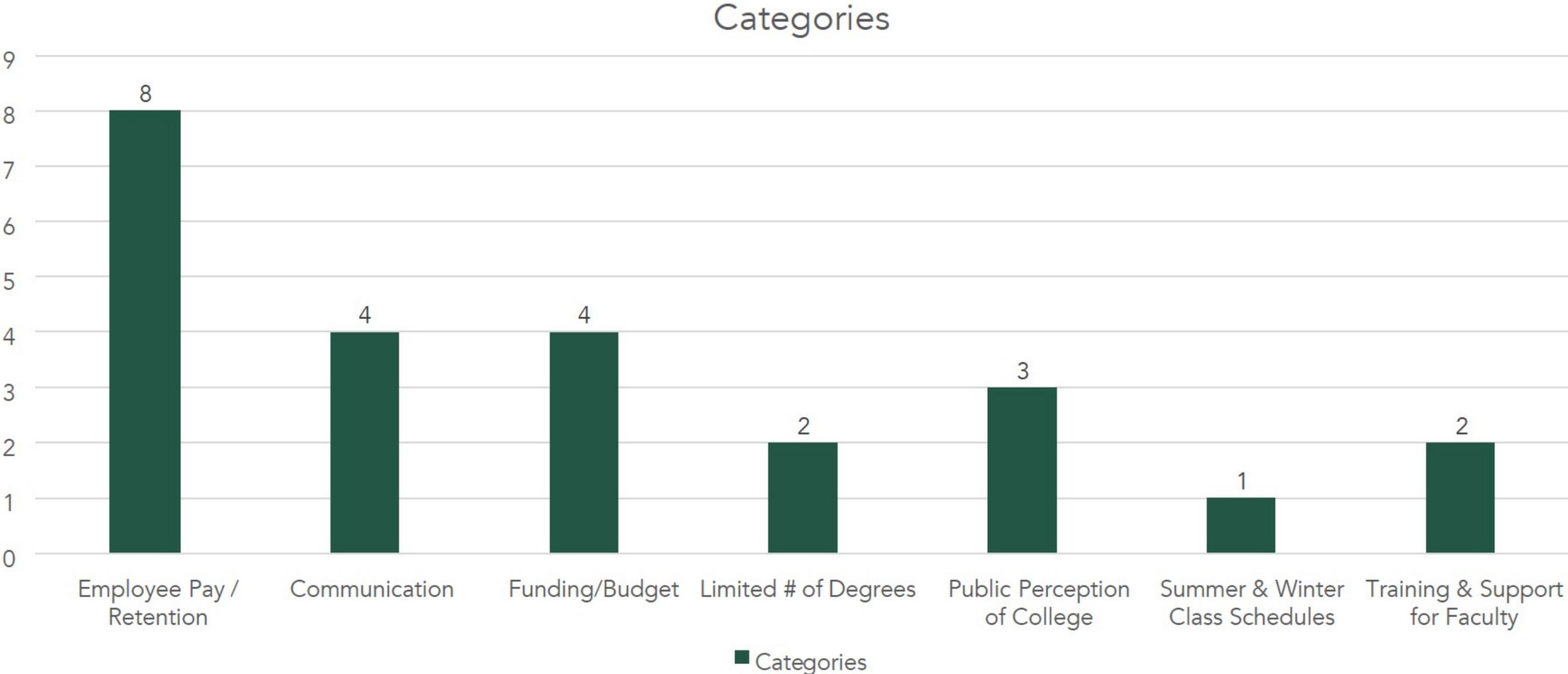
2nd Level Challenges Facing Eastern

- Determining the right courses to offer students that will benefit them the most, advertise those courses, and try to reach as many potential students as possible.
- Offering different fields of study would make educational pursuits more attractive to a wider group of students. (IE: Criminal Justice and Paralegal).
- We need to offer more conveniences for students like food. We also need more recreational activities planned by students so we know what the student body would want to come to. This would help de-stress them.
- Eastern needs to up its pay for employees. Everyone who has left recently has told me they did so because they were offered a better paying job closer to home. We cannot help location, but if the pay were better then people wouldn't mind driving to work.
- Develop relationships with recruiters from information technology and healthcare institutions to point our students toward.
- We also have a large number of transient students that want to take summer classes but we don't offer the courses that they want and need (Biology, Chemistry, or a Foreign Language)

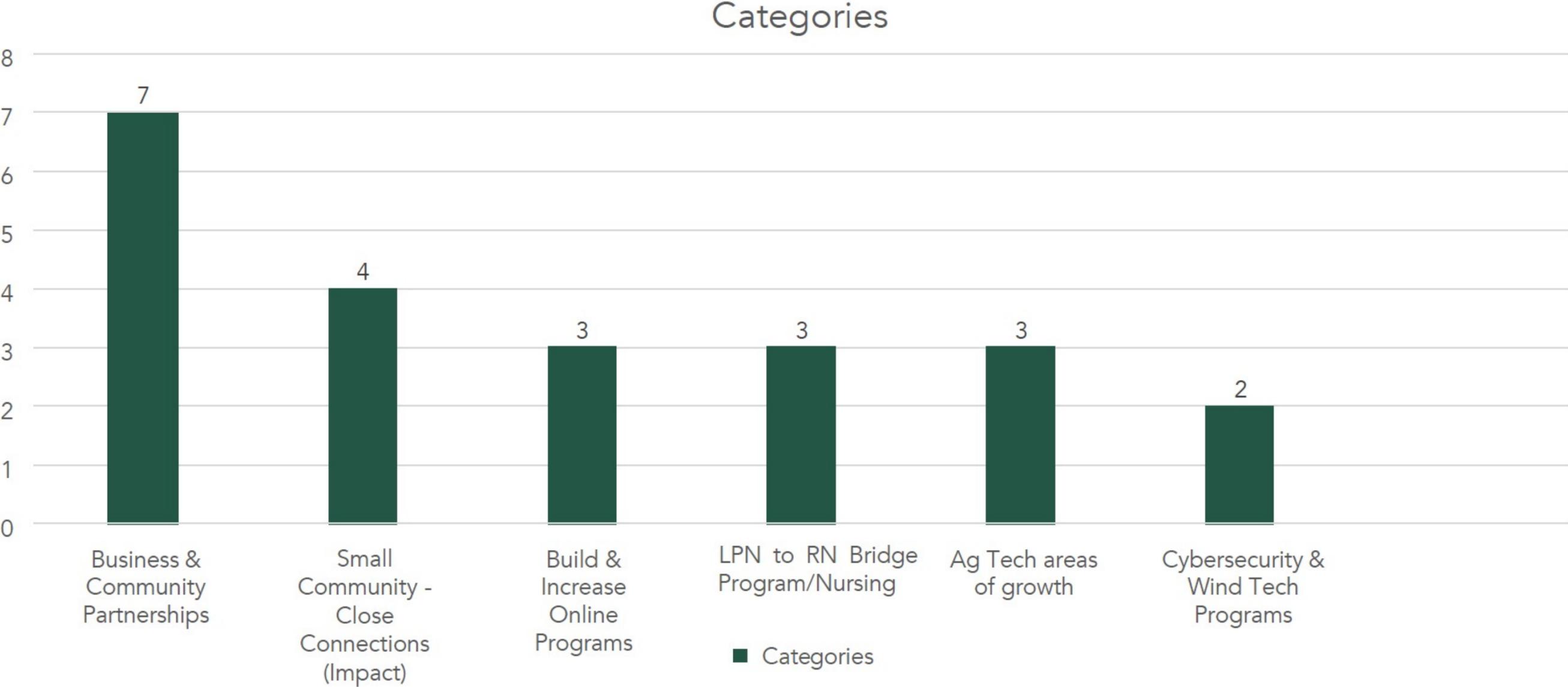
2nd Level Challenges Facing Eastern

- Develop community leadership development program involving community business leaders to better understand programmatic needs of the regional workforce.
- To increase retention and persistence, advisors need to be even more proactive --the At-Risk Tracker has helped, but we need to figure out how to help students who are struggling with external commitments. One way would be during onboarding, proactively provide students information about the pitfalls for what to do when "shit happens."
- Instead of allocating funds for a "Skyway Center" that consists of mostly office space, it would make more sense to use those funds, modify the blueprint, and relocate the Tech Center programs to Moorefield.
- Do a county wide needs assessment to see what skills/programs/education is most needed or wanted to the local businesses.
- We need to work with employers for different degrees we offer to provide an internship to students or make the class involved with the employer to increase employment.
- Make campus more accommodating for students. You could sell microwavable food and have more drink and snack varieties for instance. I really liked the idea of having a gym on campus and I believe students would enjoy it.

3rd, 4th, 5th Level Challenges Facing Eastern



Greatest Opportunities for Eastern



Greatest Opportunities for Eastern

- By maintaining/increasing the number of partnerships/agreements, Eastern can provide students access to more diverse educational endeavors.
- Create a broader network of internships with a clear understanding of expectations (of both sides).
- Build the Skyway! Program for the Skyway!
- Read the community and respond to what you hear (not to just what you think should be done).
- We should get companies and organizations more involved with us. We need to prove to students that they CAN do something with their degree and that its worth their time and effort to pursue more education.
- We could work with local employers to encourage their employees to pursue degrees that will enable them to move up in the company.

Greatest Opportunities for Eastern

- Recruit more high school students to Eastern.
- Offer an agribusiness degree, the Ag Workforce grant is great. However, we don't offer an agribusiness degree so this makes people shy away from our Agriculture department.
- Hire somebody who is bi-lingual who can connect with both the potential students and their parents.
- Cross-train departments for better flexibility and innovation as well as back up support.
- Practical application actions and materials to increase students abilities to either get a job around northern Virginia working for the government making big money, or building a foundation where they can continue to develop skills that are in demand.
- I think we need to reach out to more businesses in the area to establish more partnerships and sponsors.
- Other schools are supported by their states and counties and I think it would be great for us to lobby to get more money from the state when representatives are in session. They can't always come to so it would be great to go there to show them who we are and what we have to offer.

Greatest Opportunities for Eastern

- Establish multi-year capital campaign to support new programs, or to enhance faculty recruitment.
- To increase roots in the region and innovation, we could create specialized mentoring programs featuring local community members with special skill sets.
- Developing computer science jobs, which can be performed remotely, has become a popular rural strategy. Capitalizing on flexible, higher wage jobs is one strategy to improve rural communities, especially if things shift to a more remote working model.
- A common fear in rural communities is that once students earn a college degree, they will leave home for higher-paying jobs in other areas. Some rural colleges are focusing on training for occupations such as IT support. That way, local hospitals and manufacturers that are currently outsourcing those jobs can hire local workers instead.
- A local bank may need customer service training for their employees... or the school system may need suicide prevention training for staff. Could these be offered through Eastern's staff and a fee charged to the business to help generate revenue for Eastern? These are things that many businesses are paying outside companies to provide and maybe there is an opportunity there to take advantage of.

Greatest Opportunities for Eastern

- Achieve more online programs; creation or implementation of the expansion of career/counseling services and workshops to students and staff; researching more grants and scholarships to add to our academics/student services/and students; build off skill sets/certificates and short term trainings to benefit local businesses with discounted prices; rebranding of Eastern.
- More involvement with the Local high schools, and offering more classes for those students to take while in high school.
- More community involvement -we have people locally that does not know there is a college in Hardy County. Get out and promote the college. Show our community what we have to offer. Become involved with businesses by giving their employees their trainings, certifications (EX. offer the substitute teaching course/testing, CPR/ First Aid certifications , ECCAT certification, Autism trainings, ACDS)
- We sit in the middle of several counties. Participate in College Day at the high schools, participate in community parades, as well as the local park recreations. Advertisements via radio. An event barn would be another avenue to community involvement and promotion of agriculture.

Greatest Opportunities for Eastern

- See if we can expand the Sustainable energy curriculum to include solar and geothermal.
- I believe that opportunity expansion and implementation is a multiple departmental involvement/team approach, and is best accomplished through the organization of work groups, which only concentrate on a specific transparency.
- For the High Schoolers: Once they are in the proper grade to attend Early Entrance classes, we should see if we can make it a requirement that students fill out a FAFSA. Once they see that they can take college classes for FREE, they may be more inclined to sign up. Also try to make it so filling out your FAFSA is a requirement for seniors. They sometimes do assignments in their Homeroom, it could be done there. Again, I don't think many students know they can get tuition covered in a lot of cases. When I went to the local High School the counselor barely told us anything about how to go about signing up for and picking a college.
- With an IR person, we have the opportunity to become more analytical in terms of what works and what is cost effective. Having a shared IR person creates an opportunity for sharing findings/strategies.
- Moving online could supplement the limited number of potential students in the geographical area

Other Opportunities for Eastern

- New leadership at Eastern.
- The low cost and availability of a remote workforce positions the college as a source to train and support a remote workforce to compete for jobs nationally while supporting the local economic base.
- Adult Learning that employers can take advantage of for employees.
- Becoming an active participant in the sustaining the region's economy.
- Creating greater visibility of Eastern as more than an institution on the hill
- We really need to try and pull in more High Schoolers. I believe that doing small presentations to homerooms rather than in a big auditorium would pull in more people. In the more personal setting of a classroom students are more likely to pay attention and ask questions.
- We could work with local employers to encourage their employees to pursue degrees that will enable them to move up in the company.
- Focus on the salaries that both nursing and IT will bring as an enticement to attract students.

Other Opportunities for Eastern

- Reaching out to local established employers to develop cost-effective educational and training opportunities, rather than cultivating partnerships with enterprises that make splashy arrivals, but don't seem to live up to the promises and hype. Meanwhile, we have GMH, Woodmark, Pilgrim's, multiple banks, Hawse Health, and county school systems, several nursing care facilities, and many more out there that are essential economic engines and might be interested in working with us.
- Work with legislative leaders to help eliminate the educational boundary fee for EMS students.
- Hire a consultant to review the operation of the college and help the college with restructuring.
- I believe if we had a relationship with WVU or Marshall that would encourage more students to enroll with Eastern. Just knowing that we had a relationship.
- Event Barn -offers community involvement-more space for activities-area of socialization for students (coffee shop/area to gather for studying-socializing/food available-students/staff would not have to leave campus to get something to eat) if we offered a catering or hospitality program those students could run the food area. Open for large events in the community.

Areas of Improvement for Eastern



Areas of Improvement for Eastern

- Increased operational and process efficiencies to maximize existing staff resources without having to add new salary lines.
- Communicating with students.
- Increase efforts to maintain and upgrade the Tech Center.
- Upgrade equipment at the high schools.
- Who are all of the new faces at Eastern and what do they do specifically in relation to the college and to the community?
- Employee morale.
- Marketing to the outlying counties.
- Heightened focus on academics and traditional workforce training offerings.
- We need to focus on mending bridges with our former community partners. This could help with our enrollment.
- We need to collect and use data to improve all areas of the college.
- Marketing, continued quality with deliverables deadlines met.
- Relationships with high schools and career/technical centers

Areas of Improvement for Eastern

- More promotion and image development throughout the region. Utilize graduates in the workforce to help recruit students and educate current students on workforce opportunities. Identify / develop community leaders committee to help identify pressing workforce opportunities and potentially support accreditation applications for new programs, as well as to help support possible fundraising needs.
- Transportation for students and more food options.
- Increasing student alumni involvement and donors.
- Provide an on-campus recreational area for students and employees, which includes out door activities.
- Faculty salaries to be competitive with other colleges.
- Increased agreements with other universities, especially WVU, to be comp
- Advertise Locally -There are a couple local radio stations that would advertise for us, TV stations, Social Media. We cannot wait until a day or two before the event is to take place and then decide that it needs to be advertised. Send the event to the local news papers and weekenders (these covers the 5 county region) Do a bill board that is excellent advertising. competitive with Potomac State College.

Areas of Improvement for Eastern

- Community assessment on additional program needs.
- More tutoring services.
- More college and community events.
- ROTC in connection with the guard barracks right there?
- Finding and maintaining qualified staff.
- Communication both within the college and in our service region.
- Better budgeting.
- We need to establish even more transfer and articulation agreements.
- We need to enhance student advising even more (with more funds and full-time positions).
- Diversity/Inclusion.
- We need a more visual presence. Not everyone uses social media for information.
- Building upgrades (Student Services is the face of the college but our office looks more like a storage unit). our carpets and storage is needed badly.
- Implement interview workshops where students can learn about the art of being interviewed and build their confidence in a safe environment centered on positive feedback. All the education in the world cannot overcome undeveloped interview skills.

Areas of Improvement for Eastern

- Pedagogical training for instructors.
- Seek grant opportunities that fit with and complement our core strategies, rather than seeking grants that stretch our attention and resources.
- Communications between administration and faculty/staff and between departments.
- More age diverse workplace.
- Resources for student success and alliances to further student education.
- I can't think of any areas of improvement.
- Tuition free classes for staff/faculty.
- Link the faculty, staff, and students to the community.
- Recognize partnerships.
- Meeting with students earlier to plant a seed of the benefits of a community college.
- Consolidating/reducing the number of top-level departments.
- Utilize department chairs/heads to serve on committees and then share the decisions/information with their subordinates.
- Closing gaps in processes between departments.
- More extensive partnerships with regional healthcare system for allied health programs.

Greatest Strengths of Eastern



Greatest Strengths of Eastern

- Keep the plan short and focused -a small number of important targets (e.g. retention, recruitment) addressed by the whole college; planning is collaborative in its detail from an early stage.
- I am very fortunate to work in a healthy environment that embraces diversity and excellence.
- Marketing is needed to focus on our strengths, which are quite remarkable. Everyone has been hit hard due to Covid-19, in the institution and in the homes, with our health, finances and being emotionally spent from the lockdowns. A comparison sheet would offer the realization of the cost saving options of enrolling with Eastern, and staying at Eastern for that bachelor's degree, and marketed on social media, in the newspapers, on the radio.
- Eastern has the lowest tuition in the state of WV. We also participate in the WVInvest program, and FAFSA.
- Early Entrance courses are offered at the local high school at a minimal cost. We need to figure out how to keep those students enrolled with Eastern after they graduate high school and move on to college.
- Ratio of student and staff is a positive attribute. Staff can spend more quality time with students.
- Continue to make ALL staff accountable for recruitment and retention; keep our facilities updated, painted and clean; keep our facilities with the current technology; keep offsetting our delivery methods for courses students.

Greatest Strengths of Eastern

- Need partnership levels for support, either Foundation and/or Workforce Education. Recognized partners and community supporters.
- We have many staff and faculty that are extremely dedicated, want to improve the college, and see growth. Improved communication would help promote a greater sense of belonging and make everyone feel valued.
- We need to reach out to Virgin Hyperloop when the time is right and see if we can get a head start on supplying the kind of local training they need for success and support.
- Expand what classes are available online. More Technical courses. Have a dedicated Eastern bus through Potomac Valley Transit so students always have a way to class.
- One of the greatest strengths of the college is the readily accessible technical support. Kristen Colebank has been a tremendous support to me in solving issues in my courses and improving my courses.
- Continue to pursue additional agreements to increase the appeal of Eastern to students wishing to continue higher educational goals.

Additional Ideas or concerns Eastern Should Consider:

- “With freedom comes responsibility.” (Eleanor Roosevelt).
- This survey is a start. Be open with the strategic planning process and even more so with the application of results Rely on that history, build on that history, but don't be bound to that history Accomplishment will depend on integration of resources -administration, faculty, staff, students and community partners.
- Adding additional classes. A discount for employees and family of employees taking classes would increase enrollment.
- As an adjunct who is slated to teach first course this fall, my responses are few.....staff interaction and inclusion has been terrific and encouraging
- Think outside the box.
- I have not really been here long enough to have seen anything that needs improving. I just know that I enjoyed being a student here and now I'm enjoying being part of the Faculty.

Additional Ideas or concerns Eastern Should Consider:

- More promotion and image development throughout the region. Utilize graduates in the workforce to help recruit students and educate current students on workforce opportunities. Identify / develop community leaders committee to help identify pressing workforce opportunities and potentially support accreditation applications for new programs, as well as to help support possible fundraising needs.
- More student support and better adjunct/full-time instructor pay --those are my mantras. You can trim my salary to kickstart this initiative. We need better instructors, improving modes of course delivery, and more support for students. Easy, right?
- We have many staff and faculty that are extremely dedicated, want to improve the college, and see growth. Improved communication would help promote a greater sense of belonging and make everyone feel valued.
- Consider being the leader in educational opportunities in the region both academically and on the workforce side. Forget looking back, drive forward!

