The Eastern Advantage
DRAFT, 9-10-07

Eastern Washington University (EWU) began as an institution of higher education committed to serving Washington residents in preparation for lives of service, stewardship, and leadership. Careers in teaching, health sciences, technology, and biological sciences are offered through signature programs that contribute to the region's workforce and desirability. For example, eighty per cent of Eastern's graduates remain in the surrounding area as teachers, physical therapists, biologists, or engineers, to name a few professions. The institution is a major factor in the economic well-being of the Greater Spokane area.

In addition to serving area economic and social needs, EWU, as a regional comprehensive university, addresses the needs of distinct student populations, including place-bound, non-traditional students, first-generation college students, and a growing multicultural student mix. Building upon its reputation as an institution of opportunity, EWU is committed to ensuring the success of this student population. Experiencing success through programs such as the Washington Achievers, EWU realizes that student potential as future leaders and global citizens can be attained through closer mentoring relationships that begin at the high school level. This relationship continues throughout the student's academic career and concludes with skill training in areas such as developing resumes, preparing for job interviews, and the ultimate transition from student to professional.

One of the hallmarks of the Washington Achievers program is recognizing the potential in high school students who might otherwise be overlooked based on the standard formula for college admissions and economic resources. Through the Achievers programming, students are groomed to be future leaders while also acquiring a college degree. Further, the success rate for the Achievers is compelling with the first cohort at EWU realizing higher retention and graduation rates compared to similar populations at other institutions.

Based upon the success of the Achievers, EWU's programmatic quality, and a mission that includes serving students that are often place-bound, non-traditional, first-generation, and underrepresented, the Eastern Advantage is a new scholarship program that will replicate much of the Washington Achievers program. The Eastern Advantage will serve 250 students annually.

Details of the Eastern Advantage include the following:

High School Contacts
In fall quarter of their junior year in high school, interested students will apply for the Eastern Advantage from select schools. (These schools will be chosen based upon pre-existing partnerships with EWU such as GEAR UP, MESA as well as schools that have large underrepresented populations.)
Pre-College Preparation
Winter quarter of the junior year, students are notified about their acceptance into Eastern Advantage. Upon acceptance, students are required to attend one week of a college success boot camp during the summer between their junior and senior year. (The boot camp will be overseen by the Academic Support Center and staff with Eastern Advantage.) During the boot camp, students will also be provided with student mentors (initially mentors will be selected from the Washington Achievers.)

During their senior year of high school, students will participate in the Eagle Scholars program (via online delivery) and receive credit for their participation in the First Year Experience.

For the summer prior to their college freshmen year, students will attend a two-week intense leadership/personal development program. The program will begin with a weekend welcome orientation that includes students’ families. Students will receive 1-2 college credits for participation in the program.

Before entering EWU, students will have developed an EWU my space account (Eagle AXIS) and an EWU e-mail account by their senior year in high school. Both of these forms of correspondence will lay the foundation for future engagement as well as create a sense of inclusion before attending EWU. (Mentors will use e-mail accounts for ongoing communication.)

In conjunction with these events, EWU will appoint outreach retention/recruitment specialists (RRS) to develop one on one relationships with the students upon selection in their junior year. The RRS will utilize the students’ e-mail accounts to maintain the relationship with the students.

EWU Experience
Once students begin their university career, meetings with their mentors and RRS will occur on a regular basis. The Eastern Advantage will model itself upon the Washington Achievers model with several exceptions:

1. All students will be required to enroll in in-depth Career Development classes.
2. All students will be required to participate in at least one Undergraduate Research project.
3. Internship opportunities will be provided.
4. Student employment will be available for all students.

In addition to the requirements, students will be strongly encouraged to participate in one international experience and one alternative spring break.
Program Costs

250 students @ $1500 scholarship $375,000 annually
4 RRS @ $60,000 (salary and benefits) $240,000
1 Tech to maintain e-mails, etc. $60,000
Equipment, event expense, overhead $25,000
Total $700,000

With the creation of the Eastern Advantage, EWU is realizing the full scope of its commitment as an institution of higher learning. The literature regarding the rewards of a college degree is compelling as college graduates not only have greater earning potential but also experience a lifestyle that is often healthier and more fulfilling. Further, the Eastern Advantage is based on the premise that students from underrepresented groups often lack the tools for a seamless transition to college. Because lacking the tools is not the same as lacking ability as the Eastern Advantage recognizes the ability while providing the tools that are second nature to the second- and third-generation college student. Finally, as a regional, comprehensive institution, EWU is committed to ensuring the success of all who seek a degree and will ultimately contribute to the quality of life in the Greater Spokane area.

(If we go with something like this, for promotional purposes we can say a lot more about the merits of a college degree and the commitment EWU has toward producing global citizens, leaders, etc. We can also discuss the merits of ensuring success for all of our student populations as we can produce statistics regarding economic contributions, etc. We might say something about Washington can only remain competitive as a state with a well-educated workforce, etc. As far as the methods, such as working with the high schools and families, we can say more about this approach.)