

Category 3:  
Understanding Students'  
and Other Stakeholders' Needs

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# Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs

## 3C1 – 3C2 – Student-stakeholder groups, expectations, and requirements

With a mission that identifies the education of undergraduate and graduate students with a focus on “Education First” as its highest priority, EMU actively responds to student and other stakeholder needs. EMU focuses on five broad, overlapping, categories of students: undergraduate, graduate, international, residential, and commuter. As a state-assisted institution, EMU is active in identifying other stakeholders and their needs, who are defined and differentiated by their unique investment in and relationship to the institution. EMU places special emphasis on parents, taxpayers, State Legislators, Board of Regents, alumni, local communities, employers, and such feeder groups as high schools and community colleges.

Student expectations are assessed and monitored through the University's participation in several national surveys [[http://www.emich.edu/strategicplanning/ia\\_surveys.htm](http://www.emich.edu/strategicplanning/ia_surveys.htm)]. The needs to engage and involve external stakeholders are assessed and monitored by programs and units on campus through a variety of focus groups, direct and indirect communications and networking, the network of charter schools, and feedback from external accreditation organizations. From these assessments, student and stakeholder requirements and expectations are identified. Some of these are shown in Figure 3.1.

## 3P1- Identifying, analyzing, and responding to student needs

The changing needs of students are identified in both formal and informal ways. Formal means include the AQIP Project Advising Survey, CIRP, Graduating Senior Survey, Housing and Dining annual survey, National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), and the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI).

Informal means include feedback from the Division of Student Affairs Student Leader Group that reports to the Board of Regents, enrollment data collected by admissions (i.e., SAT and ACT scores, enrollment reports), student-government surveys and feedback, academic departments via analyzing program enrollment numbers, student-employment exit surveys, departments' satisfaction/needs-analysis surveys, scan and evaluation of environmental trends and community needs (i.e., enrollment trends, changing workforce trends), student evaluations of courses, and professional organizations/conferences.

Analyzing and selecting a course of action occurs primarily at the departmental level. Most departments are asked to develop work plans and submit them to appropriate vice presidents. The work plans are often developed based on University Goals, but are also individualized to the departments' needs for improvement and change.

## 3P2 - Building and maintaining student relationships

Eastern Michigan University builds and maintains relationships with students through a variety of methods. These interactions are focused on the needs of both prospective and current students. Some examples include orientation sessions (Fast Track), advising (central, off-campus, college, and departmental), “One-stop shopping” at Service EMU, student associations, student government, career services, and surveys related to a variety of topics. Students are also involved in major University committees, including a committee of the Board of Regents.

The Student Center, Recreation Intramural facility, and intercollegiate athletics are the focal points of activities for students. Students can participate in activities and locate resources that are designed to reflect the interests and needs of the University's diverse student

Figure 3.1: Stakeholder Requirements and Expectations

Stakeholders	Requirements and Expectations	
STUDENTS	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
Undergraduate	Undergraduate-degree, high-quality instruction, advising, sequenced courses, suitable scheduling, help with job searches, learning beyond the classroom, affordability	Retention, additional education, jobs, lifelong involvement with the University
Graduate	Graduate degrees, Certificates, high-quality instruction, advising, sequenced courses, suitable scheduling, help with job searches, help with additional graduate education, integration of theory and practice in chosen fields, collaborative-research experiences	Reputation, jobs, high-quality graduate programs
International	Good orientation programs and services, good living conditions, food, entertainment, safety, comfort, social activities, recreation, and health	Jobs, lifelong relationships
Residential	Good living conditions, food, entertainment, safety, comfort, social activities	Lifelong relationships
Commuter	Convenient parking, opportunities to join and contribute to campus culture	Lifelong relationships
OTHER STAKEHOLDERS	SHORT TERM	LONG TERM
Parents	Safe environment, convenient location, easy access, affordability	High-quality education, good value, information sharing, affordability
Taxpayers / Legislators	High-quality education, highest return on investment, responsible fiscal management, relevant curriculum	Well-educated work force, most graduates remain in the state, sound fiscal management, response to community needs, responsible citizens
Board of Regents	High value for the taxpayers, responsible fiscal management, relevant curriculum	Good value for the taxpayers, responsible fiscal management, academic excellence, response to community needs, University leadership congruent with mission and values
"Friends of the University"/ Non-Alumni Donors	Worthy investment, commitment to EMU	Good reputation, investment in the future
Alumni	Good job preparedness, continuing connection to institution	Good reputation, bragging rights, continuing education, high-value degree
Local Communities	Good symbiotic relationship, educational and cultural enhancements	Positive "town and gown" relationship, educational and cultural enhancements
Employers	Well-prepared employees, interns, and coops	Response to changing needs of work force
Prospective Students	Academic program availability, affordable tuition, housing, safety, stimulating campus life	High-quality education, good job preparedness
Guidance Counselors/ High School, Community Colleges	Academic-program availability, affordable tuition, housing, articulation agreements	High-quality education, continuing articulation agreements, regulation

body, and that promote educational, cultural, and social enrichment. The University seeks students' input as to what services are needed, the quality of these services, and the students' level of satisfaction with the services. Two of the initial AQIP Projects (Academic Advising and Quality Service) were directly linked to input and feedback received from students relative to the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships with students.

### 3P3 – Identifying, analyzing, and responding to stakeholder needs

Stakeholder needs are identified via both formal and informal methods. Some of the more formal methods include the Alumni Survey, Fast Track evaluations completed by parents/families of newly enrolled students, and employer surveys conducted by Human

Resources and various University departments. Less formal methods have included Career Services surveys, "Secret Shopper" programs, information garnered from professional organizations, feedback from community service/activities, advisory boards in the colleges/departments, and meetings with State Legislators. Data from the surveys and feedback from informal sources are brought forward through the divisional vice-presidents, and a course of action is taken based on congruence with the University mission and resources available.

### 3P4 – Building and maintaining stakeholder relationships

Eastern Michigan University builds and maintains relationships with key stakeholders by a) maintaining effective relationships with high schools and community colleges via school visits and annual update meetings; b) participating in community service and academic service-learning programs with community groups and employers; c) participating on community boards and councils; d) utilizing several communication methods to inform students and parents before enrollment, during matriculation, and after graduation; e) including students in a wide array of University committees; f) participating in such Ypsilanti community activities as United Way, the Relay for Life, and the Heritage Festival; g) meeting with state senators and representatives; h) offering such experiential learning activities as internships and practicums; and i) maintaining smooth articulation and transfer processes.

Partnerships are also established through stakeholders serving on University committees and advisory boards. They provide input and guidance in developing innovative programs that can attract both students and new stakeholders. The recently developed EMU Caucus, through the Office of Governmental Relations, consists of dedicated members of the EMU community who pledge to advocate, when needed, on behalf of the University at the local, state, or federal level. Having a strong community of institutional advocates is critical in securing the resources for Eastern Michigan University to remain a world-class, comprehensive University. This program also provides a means through which every employee and student at EMU can be involved in building relationships with key legislators and government officials.

Faculty and students interact with employers in community settings throughout the state of Michigan and beyond, through such applied-learning activities as internships, practice experiences, and service-learning activities. Faculty and students consult with many area agencies and carry out research in multiple community settings and businesses. The Office of Community College Relations works collaboratively with the faculty and staff of EMU and area community colleges to promote a smooth transfer process to minimize the loss of academic credit and save time in obtaining a bachelor's degree. Relationships are also maintained through the University's fourteen research institutes and centers. The University is well known for merging theory and practice for the benefit of the community. The Eastern Michigan University Foundation, through collaborative relationships with individuals, corporations, foundations, and other organizations, creates opportunities that provide additional support to the students, programs, services, and educational community. The Office of Alumni Relations is the coordinating body for all alumni activities and the means by which personal relationships established during student days can be maintained and renewed.

### 3P5 – Determining new student and stakeholder groups

EMU surveys a wide range of student groups as well as stakeholders, including faculty, staff, community members and both local and state governmental agencies and business. Tools utilized by EMU to identify new student and stakeholder groups include but are not limited to: a) Admission Reports and Enrollment Trends; b) Outside Consultants; c) Faculty Evaluations and Academic Program Reviews; d) Student Leader Group Reports; e) University Faculty Council Recommendations/Reports; e) Labor Union Recommendations/Reports; f) Changes in Economic Factors in local and state economies; g) Eastern Echo news reports and Local Media; h) Surveys / Focus Groups / Evaluations conducted by the University through the offices of the Ombudsman, Career Services, Student Government, and Commuter Focus Groups; and i) Institutional Research Reports. The current state of the economy in Michigan places greater importance on identifying critical stakeholder groups and developing or revising these relationships.

### 3P6 – Collecting complaint information

Eastern Michigan University encourages students and other stakeholders to contact the appropriate office with complaints and concerns. Those who contact these offices can expect that their concerns will be investigated and addressed appropriately, keeping in mind the importance of confidentiality. A detailed grade-grievance procedure is in place and communicated via the student handbook [<https://www.emich.edu/ombuds/handbook.html>].

The Office of the Ombudsman is the general office at Eastern Michigan University for student and other stakeholder complaints. Information tracked by the Ombudsman includes gender, race, and current student status. Complaints are categorized into six categories: Academic, Financial, Staff/Faculty, Disciplinary, Club/Organizational, Personal, and Other. In order to identify patterns and devise improvements, annual reports are generated and shared with the Provost, and starting in 2008 these reports will also be shared with the Academic Deans.

In its efforts to ensure responsibility and accountability, the “Eastern Michigan University Advantage” program has been implemented [<https://www.compliance-helpline.com/welcomePageEMU.jsp>]. This program is open to every person at every level within the University and to all its students and stakeholders. It enables individuals to communicate confidentially if they believe that they have observed unethical, illegal, or suspicious behavior. Examples of situations to which this program applies are those that involve ethics and compliance issues; employee relations, human resources, and equal opportunity; environmental health and safety; and loss prevention and asset protection.

### 3P7 – Determining student and stakeholder satisfaction

Key tools used to measure student and stakeholder satisfaction are listed in Figure 3.2. EMU surveys students with regard to academic services, student-affairs services, and institutional perceptions. The Office of Institutional Research and Information Management (IRIM) oversees many of the surveys that assess student and stakeholder satisfaction. Some surveys, however, are administered by individual departments based on needs and / or external accreditation requirements.

### 3R1 – Student satisfaction results

Strengths identified by students in the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory include: a) major requirements are clear and reasonable, b) the academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in the major, c) the quality of instruction received in most classes is excellent, d) the instruction in the major field is excellent, and e) nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields. One of the challenges listed for EMU on the SSI was “My academic advisor is approachable.” Related to this documented challenge, EMU instituted an AQIP project focused on Academic Advising. Several changes resulted, including a new comprehensive online-advising module, degree audits expanded to online format, and the formation of a University Retention Council to address barriers to advising identified in the AQIP project.

The Housing and Dining Survey (Winter, 2007) explored satisfaction with residence hall programming and personnel. Key findings indicate that 80.5% of the students are satisfied with their resident advisor; 80.8% are satisfied with the courteousness of hall office staff; and 76.4% are satisfied with services provided by hall office staff. One of the challenges was students’ dissatisfaction with the physical environment, such as room temperature and the process for submitting work orders. The Department of Housing has been working closely with Physical Plant personnel to increase the levels of communication as well as to establish procedures for following up on student work orders in a timely manner. Analysis of these data as time passes will yield additional areas for exploration.

Data from the Graduating Senior Survey indicates a “high” or “very high” level of satisfaction with academic advising through the colleges, Snow Health Center, computer technical support, Halle Library services, Halle Library holdings, and the EMU student center. Additional data are needed for comparison across a longer time frame.

Fast Track, the cross-divisional collaboration enrollment program for prospective students and their parents, yields the following results:

- Do you feel that you are ready to attend EMU in the Fall? Yes: 1,431 No: 18

Figure 3.2: Tools to Measure Student and Stakeholder Satisfaction

Survey	Description
Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP)	Conducted annually; a report of national normative data on the characteristics of students attending colleges and universities as first-time students.
Student Satisfaction with Administrative Services (SSAS)	Conducted every three years; last conducted in Winter 2005; measures student satisfaction within the Divisions of Enrollment Services, Business and Finance, and Academic Affairs.
Student Learning Evaluations in Student Affairs Program (SLE)	Conducted annually; evaluation is administered to students who attend the Division of Student Affairs sponsored programs. Total number of programs analyzed annually is ~250.
Housing and Dining Services Resident Survey	Administered annually; longitudinal data provide information on trends in student satisfaction throughout the years.
Alumni Survey	Conducted annually. The alumni survey is mailed to ~7,500 alumni each year.
All Employee Culture / Climate Benchmark Study	Conducted in Fall 2005.
Graduating Student Survey	Utilized to provide feedback to departments and programs for program review and accreditation; all students are asked to participate after they apply for graduation.
2004 Your First College Year Survey (YFCY)	Conducted for the first time in Winter 2004; now conducted annually.
LibQUAL Satisfaction regarding Library Services	Examines the quantitative data according to EMU user groups and disciplines.
Housing Floor Environment Survey Commuter Student Survey & Focus Groups Orientation – Fusion Satisfaction Survey	Conducted annually.
Teaching Evaluation Surveys	Conducted each academic semester; includes two all-campus questions regarding instructional effectiveness and quality of instruction; individual departments, programs create individual question sets.
Career Services – Senior Survey	A five year-out survey.
Noel-Levitz Satisfaction Survey (SSI)	Conducted in 2006.

- Did the Fast Track experience help prepare you for EMU? Yes: 1,445 No: 4
- Please rate your overall experience:  
1,089 – Above Average; 330 – Average; 30 - Neutral

All the data cited above need additional analysis for patterns and trends over time.

### 3R2 - Student relationship-building results

Some results in the area of student relationship-building include:

1. Advising Survey: 85% of students indicated they had seen an academic advisor.

#### 2. Graduating Senior Survey:

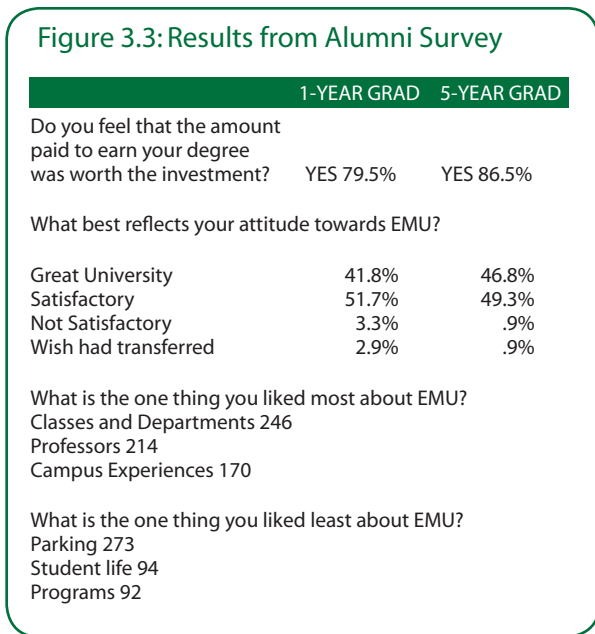
- a. 85.9% of students reported they “had good relationships with faculty.”
- b. 66.6% reported having “positive interactions with office staff.”
- c. 68% reported that they felt the “faculty really cared about me.”

3. Alumni Survey: 54.68% of respondents reported participating in activities sponsored by EMU including reading publications, attending on- or off-campus functions, or other.

### 3R3 - Stakeholder-satisfaction results

In the 2004-05 Alumni Survey, 7,577 graduates were surveyed with 1,747 responses. Twenty-eight percent

of the responses were from 2002-03 graduates (1-year graduates), and 17% of the responses were from 1998-99 (5-year graduates). Results are shown in Figure 3.3.



- The number of High School Counselor workshops increased from 2 in 2006/07 to 5 in 2007/08.
- Alumni Admissions Recruitment Team volunteers increased from 18 in 2006 to 33 in 2007.
- More than 50 local businesses now cooperate with EMU to offer students, faculty, and staff discounts when they show their student I.D. cards.
- EMU received an \$86,000 grant from the American Honda Foundation to run an innovative after-school program, titled "Designed by Nature."
- EMU received \$2.3 million in federal grants to continue its Upward Bound Program.
- EMU's social Greek Fraternities and Sororities raised \$32,000 for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and \$10,000 towards the Ometta M. Smith Memorial Playground in Ypsilanti.
- EMU's student chapter of Relay for Life (2007) raised \$33,315 through 400 participants and 35 teams, a 12 percent increase over last year.
- The Early College Alliance program, a partnership between EMU and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, enrolled 139 high school students for college credit at no cost to the students.

Parents were surveyed regarding their satisfaction with Fast Track, EMU's enrollment program. When asked, "Did you learn more about EMU today?," 1,101 responded "Yes," and only 10 responded "No." Their overall experience was rated at Above Average by 802, Average by 293, and Neutral by 24.

Jumpstart, the community stakeholder program pairing college students with preschool students, has experienced strong satisfaction levels. In 2006/07, 89% of the preschool programs rated overall services as outstanding, and 3% as above average. In a family satisfaction survey conducted in March 2007 regarding a new program where families received up to 25 new books during the course of the year to build a learning library at home for their students, 100% of the families rated the service as outstanding.

### 3R4 – Stakeholder relationship-building results

Some results indicative of the strong relationships that exist between EMU and its stakeholders are:

- Community College Articulation Agreements increased from 45 (2004/05) to 74 (2007/08).

### 3R5 - Results comparisons

Some national benchmarking results include data from NSSE. Based on the 2006 national NSSE benchmarking data, EMU compared closely with "highly engaging institutions" (Figure 3.4). Housing, the Student Center, and Campus Life will be conducting EBI surveys in Winter 2008 that will provide national comparison data.

### 3I1 & I2 – Improvement

EMU is currently refining its processes and is not yet ready to report process improvements in this area.

Figure 3.4: NSSE Benchmark Data

