

Category 9:
Building Collaborative Relationships

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9C1 – Key collaborative relationships

A list of collaborative relationships can be found in Appendix A, which reflects the breadth and scope of Eastern Michigan University’s connection to, and positive impact upon, its immediate locale, the region, the nation, and the global community. The categories of relationships listed below in Figure 9.1 were identified using the following criteria:

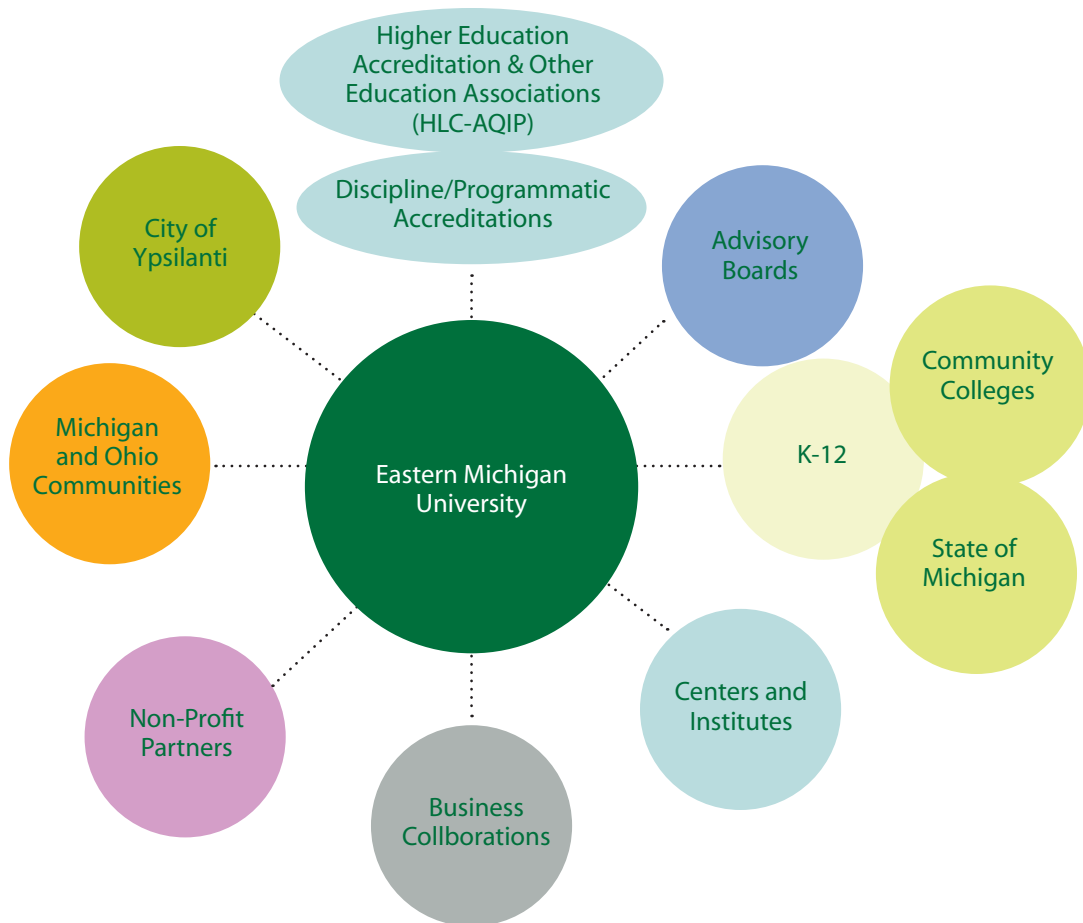
- A collaborative relationship must have **mutual benefit** for both parties.
- The relationship must have **sustainability** (be long-term in nature).

- The relationship must have **significant impact** on the University, the students, and/or the community.

9C2 – Relationships support institutional mission

The EMU Mission Statement states, “We extend our commitment beyond the campus boundaries to the wider community through **service initiatives and partnerships** of mutual interest addressing local, regional, national, and international opportunities and challenges.” EMU continues to maintain and develop new collaborative relationships with key constituents to achieve this goal. While “Helping Students Learn”

Figure 9.1: Collaborative Relationships



is the core of EMU’s Mission, EMU enhances the quality, depth, and vibrancy of student learning through its fundamental commitments to two other closely related distinctive objectives: enhancing the economic well-being and cultural vitality of its regional community and placing faculty-student partnerships at the center of its engagements with the regional community and its scholarly/creative activity. EMU will continue to embark on a path driven by continuous improvement and to engage various constituent groups in conversations that will help support and identify institutional directions based on changes in the environment of the state and particularly southeastern Michigan.

9P1 – Creating, prioritizing, and building external relationships

EMU develops relationships using both formal and informal techniques. Some relationships are of a cooperative nature, building on synergies that exist within the community. Other relationships are established using articulation agreements, written memorandums of understanding, internship and practicum arrangements, and advisory boards and committees. EMU receives many of its students through relationships with feeder community colleges and high schools throughout Michigan, but primarily from the southeastern sector of the state. The Office of Community College Relations works to enhance the educational transition to EMU for community college students by sharing curricular information and various data to promote a smooth transfer process. The progress of these students is tracked using grades,

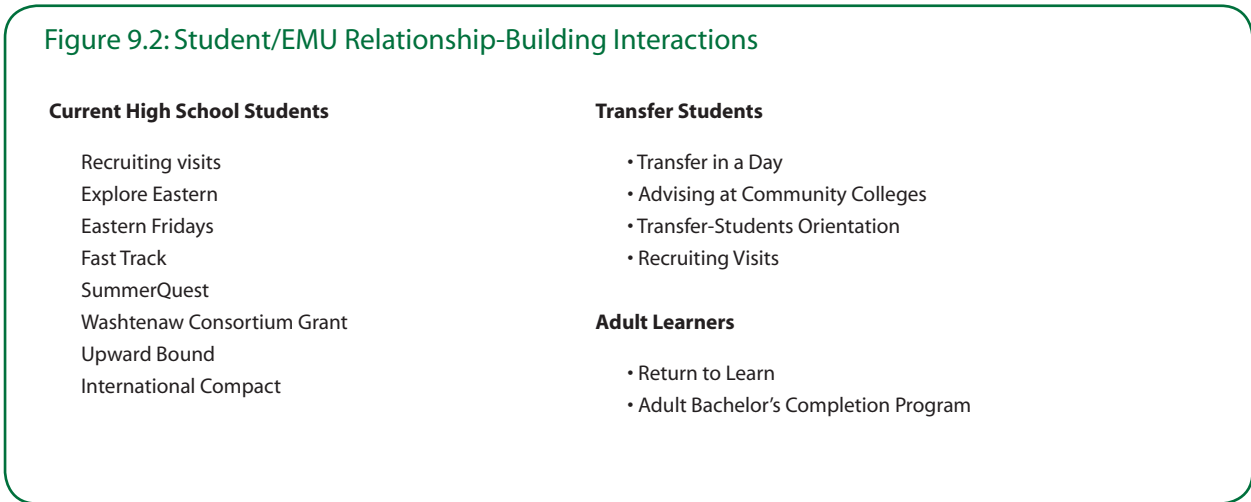
GPA, and yearly progress reports, from acceptance to EMU through graduation.

EMU is a national leader in Academic Service-Learning, and the ASL office has nurtured many important projects in the community. In ASL projects, a need is assessed, a program designed/implemented, an evaluation/reflection done, and a celebration follows. ASL is part of the University’s general-education requirement – learning beyond the classroom, and ASL fellowships help faculty develop courses that include working with the community.

The key stakeholders with whom EMU has built collaborative relationships are varied. They range from local area Chamber of Commerce agencies, Washtenaw County’s SPARK committee (a Washtenaw workforce-development board), to the Early College Alliance, an early college program through which EMU joins with Washtenaw Community College and the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District. This Alliance serves high school students by providing a mechanism through which they can simultaneously complete high school while earning college credits on the EMU campus. Eastern Michigan University builds and maintains relationships with prospective students both traditional and non-traditional through the interactions shown in Figure 9.2.

Advisory boards and committees exist across the University, in academic as well as non-academic units (Appendix A). These externally focused groups are utilized for advice and recommendations regarding best practices and program support for the University units. Advisory boards serve a wide variety of

Figure 9.2: Student/EMU Relationship-Building Interactions



purposes, including curricular advice; strengthening collaborative relationships with school districts, community colleges, surrounding cities, non-profit agencies, employers, local and state governments; and fund-raising activities. Each collaborative relationship is cultivated by some unit of the University, and the primary coordination responsibility rests within that unit. Colleges, programs, and/or units follow their own guidelines for advisory groups, which are determined by their individual needs and accrediting bodies.

The Office of Alumni Relations is the coordinating body for all alumni activity and the means by which personal relationships established while attending EMU can be maintained and renewed (<http://www.emich.edu/alumni/relations/>). The Alumni Legislative Network engages alumni as advocates for the University to communicate with the executive and legislative branches of state government on behalf of the University. Such programs as Career Connections are networking resources that bring Eastern Michigan University students and alumni together to explore the world of work. The Office of Alumni Relations conducts a survey annually among more than 7,500 alumni.

Some of EMU's longest-standing local community activities that have been mutually beneficial and sustainable and have a significant impact for both parties are:

- Washtenaw United Way activities and campaign
- Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels
- Ypsilanti Heritage Festival
- Ypsilanti Relay for Life (Student and Staff Teams)
- Internships and Practica

9P2 – Ensuring needs are met

To ensure that the varying needs of those involved in relationships are met, regular communication between University decision-makers, liaisons, and advisory boards is critical. Accredited programs are subject to regular reviews by teams or accrediting bodies who review the curriculum and program standards, as well as the outcomes identified for students. EMU has not formally imposed structured feedback cycles; however, these do exist in pockets across the institution. The Community College Relations office

has College Counselor Day and also has an advisory committee that provides input on industry needs, environmental changes, and program and transfer issues of feeder schools. Several colleges and departments at EMU have internal and external specialized accrediting bodies that provide guidelines and help to determine the individual needs of their programs.

9P3 – Building and integrating internal relationships

Student representation on key University committees and councils allows students a formalized structure to build relationships with key decision-making groups within the University. For example, the EMU Student Leader Group, which is comprised of student representatives from twelve major student organizations, serves as the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents. This group works to define a common student agenda and serves as an advisory group to the Vice President for Student Affairs and to the President. This participation by students on University committees, task forces, and advisory boards has provided the University with a means to obtain valuable information from students on collaborative relationships critical to their educational experience.

Another area at Eastern that provides a strong bridge for the academic aspect is Continuing Education (CE). The CE department works with every college and with most of the support structures at the institution to provide a cohesive network of services and collaborations for both the internal and external communities. Program coordinators and administrators within CE are aware of the capacity, services, and talent at the University and help to bridge those areas to create better synergy.

At EMU, there have also been an increasing number of cross-college and cross-disciplinary programs, all represented and advised by integrated steering committees. These interdisciplinary collaborations, such as Integrated Marketing Strategies, Language and International Business, and Bioinformatics, to name a few, provide a mechanism for fostering collaborative relationships across campus. Additionally, whenever task forces or ad hoc work groups are established (e.g., Budget Council; AQIP project teams; Continuous Improvement Operating

Council; Institutional Strategic Planning Council), EMU takes deliberate steps to ensure that all key sectors of the University community are represented.

9P4 – Measures of collaborative relationships

The Office of Admissions on campus maintains a system of measures for collecting and analyzing data. Some of their key collaborative, external relationships are with community college counselors, high school guidance counselors, embassies, vendors, and overseas advisers. The Community College Relations office produces a yearly report, “Transfer Student Success,” that provides feeder institutions with data on students who transferred and enrolled at EMU. They also have an advisory board that provides input on how to improve processes and systems that affect students transferring to EMU from community colleges and to keep the University abreast of current issues that are of importance to community colleges. The Transfer Student Success Report is used by the five colleges to inform program and grant development. The five colleges and Halle Library have advisory boards as well, which provide opportunities for insight and advice on what is important to EMU’s constituents. The Office of Alumni Relations collects such measures as number of gifts, and percentage of giving (Figure 9.3). This data is analyzed and provides valuable information to colleges and departments.

9R1 – Results from building collaborative relationships

Some measurable results indicative of key collaborative relationships that exist between EMU and its collaborators are:

- 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.

- EMU has received continual funding from 1999-2011 in federal grants to continue its Upward Bound Program.
- The Early College Alliance program, a partnership between EMU and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, has enrolled 139 high school students for free college credit in 2007-08.
- Community College Articulation Agreements increased from 45 (2004-05) to 74 (2007-08).
- The number of student teachers placed in schools increased from 1,294 in 2003-04 to 1,347 in 2005-06.
- As a result of EMU’s new Eagle Card discount program, more than 50 local businesses now collaborate with EMU to offer discounts to students, faculty, and staff.
- EMU’s student chapter of Relay for Life (2007) raised \$33,315 through 400 participants and 35 teams, a 12 percent increase.
- The Eastern Leaders, comprised of EMU, business, and education leaders, meets quarterly to plan collaborative projects.

9R2 – Results comparisons

EMU has not defined a process for this and is not yet ready to report process improvements in this area.

9I1 - Improving processes for building collaborative relationships

EMU is still in the process of defining its processes in building collaborative relationships and is not yet ready to report process improvements in this area.

9I2 Setting targets for improvement

EMU is not yet ready to report in this area.

Figure 9.3: Alumni Gifts

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Y.T.D.
Number of Gifts	5,551	6,005	5,563	5,721	5,861	4,296
Average Gift in Dollars	\$167	\$301	\$315	\$343	\$191	\$234
Percentage of Alumni Giving	4.3	4.5	4	4.07	4.07	2.96