



idfive

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Polytechnic Student and Parent Brand Survey Analysis

07.30.2024

Project Objectives

In October 2023, the Eastern Washington University Board of Trustees charged President Shari McMahan with crafting an updated identity for EWU. Informed by EWU’s strategic planning process and in response to the region’s crowded, competitive higher education landscape, the recommendation to the board is to position EWU as “The Region’s Polytechnic.”

EWU’s Marketing & Communications team and idfive surveyed prospective students, parents/guardians of prospective students, and current EWU students to address these research questions:

- **What understanding do prospective and current college students and their parents/guardians have about the term “polytechnic”?**
- **What related themes to the proposed polytechnic positioning—which include “applied learning for in-demand careers”—resonate with the target audiences and can be used as messaging pillars for the polytechnic repositioning?**

Polytechnic Survey:

Executive Summary

A survey of nearly 2,000 stakeholders—prospective students, current students, and parents/guardians—confirms that EWU’s proposed polytechnic messaging pillars of **practical experience while in school** and **career preparation** resonate strongly with all audience segments.

Eastern should highlight those pillars in defining its distinct approach to polytechnic education and in defining **its unique value proposition as The Region’s Polytechnic.**

Polytechnic Survey:

Executive Summary

Key Takeaways

- EWU’s polytechnic messaging pillars of **practical experience while in school** and **career preparation** resonate strongly with undergraduate prospects and their parents/guardians.
- **“Hands-on Education”** and **“STEM Education”** are the most familiar terms across all survey respondent segments.
- **“Liberal arts education”** and **“polytechnic education”** has **low brand awareness** among prospective and current undergraduates.
- Although **awareness of the term “polytechnic education”** is **low** across all audience segments:
 - **Students have no preconceived or negative ideas about what a polytechnic is** and what it could offer them.
 - **EWU has the freedom to define “The Region’s Polytechnic”**— how it is different from the competition (no other polytechnic in the state) and what that difference means for students.



Thanks.