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# NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## \$2.9 MILLION IN UNMET NEEDS PROJECTED FOR UPCOMING FISCAL YEAR

CHARLESTON – Lida Wall, Eastern Illinois University's interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, met today (Tuesday) with the Faculty Senate to discuss the university's anticipated budget for next fiscal year and to brainstorm ways to help resolve a budget shortfall for fiscal year 2002 that will impact the institution's ability to fund a number of priorities.

Wall explained that at first glance, Eastern's budget looks good. She noted that the Illinois Board of Higher Education has recommended Eastern receive the highest general funds (appropriated dollars) increase at 7.2 percent increase (\$3,675,200) and a 3.2 percent increase (\$818,000) in income funds (tuition revenue) for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1, 2001. This amounts to an overall increase of 5.9 percent.

"We are very pleased with this recommendation," Wall said.

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**E**astern Illinois University emphasizes distinguished teaching in the liberal arts, sciences and selected professions. A traditional, residential state university of recognized quality, Eastern enrolls more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs. The university, located in Charleston, also serves the region through a variety of non-credit and off-site degree programs, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities. Eastern's pursuit of excellence attracts well-qualified students of an increasingly diverse population and a teaching faculty active in research and public service who utilize the latest technology.

It is important to note, Wall commented, that it is still early in the budget process. The IBHE's budget recommendations for Eastern have yet to be approved by the governor and the general assembly so Eastern officials will not know for sure how much they will receive for FY02 until June.

Wall said the best case scenario is that Eastern will receive the full 5.9 percent increase in its budget. If it does, however, most of the new dollars the university will receive (\$4.5 million) are already committed. They will cover the cost of salary increases, the recruitment and retention of critical faculty and staff, technology-enhanced and -delivered education, deferred maintenance, selected fixed-costs and incentives for academic programs and assessment.

After the university has covered the above costs, there are additional priorities which need to be considered and include salary annualization costs, a 1 percent match for faculty/salary increases, network costs, restoration of the microcomputer replacement budget and other fixed-cost increases. These unfunded priorities amount to \$2,935,570.

Since most of the university's IBHE-recommended \$4.5 million budget increase (if approved by the governor and general assembly) is designated for specific use, the university has to find additional means to fund its outstanding obligations projected at \$2.9 million, Wall said. "A significant portion of Eastern's budget is driven by enrollment. If Eastern's enrollment drops, then the university will be facing an even larger reallocation need. In addition, these estimates do not account for the need to fill high

priority positions in External Relations or to make the conversion to digital broadcasting for WEIU-TV," Wall said.

Wall said in preparation for the projected \$2.9 million budget shortfall for next fiscal year, department heads are being asked to review their unit's priorities (in the context of university-wide priorities) and to develop graduated budget reduction scenarios to support these priorities. She emphasized that actual reduction levels are dependent on the final budget enacted by the legislature.

"Although we do not know what specific impact the projected budget shortfall will have on the university (i.e., fewer classes, unfilled positions, etc.), it is important that we begin planning now since all areas of the university (Academic Affairs, Business Affairs, Student Affairs and External Relations) will be impacted," Wall said.

In addition to the Faculty Senate, Wall said she and the other vice presidents and/or their representatives will be meeting during the spring semester with more than 25 university councils to review the FY02 budget projections and to answer questions.