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January 9, 1996

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU TO COLLECT AN EXTRA \$3.2 MILLION UNDER FY97 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Charleston -- The Board of Trustees for Eastern Illinois University is expected to discuss Fiscal Year 1997 budget recommendations when trustees gather in Charleston for their first regular meeting on Jan 16.

The budget, recommended by the Illinois Board of Higher Education, provides a \$3.2 million increase over the current appropriation for operations. The recommended hike is the third highest among the 12 public universities.

"We are delighted at the priority given to Eastern by the Board of Higher Education," said President David L. Jorns. "The recommendations, if approved by the General Assembly, will allow us to make some progress in important areas."

If the recommended budget is approved, Eastern's total appropriation for operations will be \$61,227,800, a 5.6 percent increase over this year's appropriation of \$58,000,400.

"A significant portion of the increase is earmarked to replace and update our instructional equipment," said Jorns.

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Jorns said the three percent average increase recommended for faculty and staff pay hikes is less than had been hoped for. "We are grateful for the additional compensation but the amount is not enough to narrow the substantial gap between our employee salaries and those at peer institutions."

Eastern received recommendations for \$250,000 to enhance undergraduate education programs and services and \$17,000 to offset the increased cost of operating and maintaining a larger, remodeled Buzzard Education Building.

There were no funds recommended for general price increases. Eastern had requested \$413,700 for inflation-based increases in utilities, fire protection, general operating costs and library materials.

"The increased cost of these essential services is not within our control," said Jorns. "Unfortunately, when we don't receive funds to offset these increases, the money has to come from somewhere else in the budget, which compromises existing programs."

While some new funding was recommended to reduce the university's deferred maintenance list, the amount, \$100,000, will not come close to the multi-million dollar backlog of needs at Eastern. A capital budget of \$16,505,800 has been recommended for Eastern that would provide remodeling, rehabilitation and upgrading for three projects, including \$15.8 million for the renovation of Booth Library. However, the capital budget is dependent upon passage of a bond authorization bill in the General Assembly this spring.

The budget proposal assumes a tuition increase of 4.3 percent. The increase, passed with student approval last fall, is effective at the beginning of the 1996-97 academic year.

The budget proposal includes \$436,000 for transition costs for Eastern. The funds will help offset the costs of assuming duties formerly performed by the staff of university's former governing board, such as legal services, collective bargaining and risk management.

"We urge the governor and the General Assembly to approve this budget without reduction," said Jorns. Gov. Edgar's budget address is scheduled for early March.