

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

November

2023

11-8-2023

Daily Eastern News:November 08, 2023

Eastern Illinois University

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Recommended Citation

Eastern Illinois University, "Daily Eastern News:November 08, 2023" (2023). *November*. 2.
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THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

' TELL THE TRUTH AND DON ' T BE AFRAID '

The Comeback story

By **Cam'ron Hardy**
News Editor | @DEN_news

Antonioys Gibson, a junior psychology major, was awarded with the “Come Back Award” at the Dia De Los Muertos Gala Oct. 28 in the University Ballroom in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union.

This award shows academic and overall growth over time. Gibson’s mentality has changed as he has pushed past many hurdles since his freshman year, thus him receiving the award.

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journey*
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*Jacobi dishes out
double-double*
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The Daily Eastern News is produced by the students of Eastern Illinois University. It is published weekly on Wednesday, in Virden, Ill., during fall and spring semesters and online during the summer term except during university vacations or examinations. One copy per week is free to students and faculty. Additional copies can be obtained for 50 cents each in the Student Publications Office in Buzzard Hall.




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By Jacob Adcock
Reporter | @DEN_News

As winter approaches, walking to class seems like the worst thing in the world, especially if you have a class at 8 a.m. or 9 a.m. all the way across campus. As the cold starts to progress, it is essential to be mindful of how you prepare for the harsh weather.

Nobody can change the weather because it is basic nature, but you can change how you deal with it. The Executive Director of Housing and Dining, Mark Hudson, said, “Not only is the weather getting colder a physical adjustment, but it is also a mental adjustment.”

Hudson also had a lot of advice for the students at EIU. Dressing appropriately is something that will help when adjusting to the cold weather. Having layers and winter gear like gloves, a stocking cap and even a scarf is important.

Some students might have clothing items they owned previously, but some students might need help accessing appropriate attire for winter. Finding things in your budget that will keep you warm can be a hard thing to do.

Places like Goodwill or Walmart are good places to start when looking for clothing that will fit specific needs. People could also communicate with friends or family to see what they could loan, even if it is to battle winter for a few months.

Layers can also be nice for when in a classroom as well. If it is too hot in a class-

Eastern Prepares for winter

room, layers can be taken off for comfortability. It would be best to plan an earlier time to go to class because to anticipate going to class and have time for any mishaps that may occur.

The winter weather can bring sleet, snow and ice. It is important to watch surfaces to avoid falling in slick places. Even though maintenance will accommodate students during this time by shoveling snow off the sidewalks and making sure paths are clear, it is still smart to ensure there is no chance of getting injured on the way to class.

It is important for students who live in a dorm to know how to be prepared for the cold as well. If your dorm room is cold, feel free to report it.

“Report it by going to the EIU Housing page on Eastern’s website; if you tell a worker or RA in the building, the issue might not be resolved as quickly,” Hudson said.

All the buildings will also have heating, but if the dorm is too hot, only open a window for a short time.

The heater on the floor will detect colder temperatures, which will only make the

heat go to a higher degree. This will only affect the other people on the floor.

It might be harder for first-year students to adjust to the weather than students who have been at Eastern for many years.

It is a completely different environment when the classes are in completely different buildings, and it takes 10+ minutes to walk to class.

Abi Lesko, a freshman majoring in elementary education, stated her beliefs about the weather changing from warm to cold.

“I hate the weather, and it makes me so sad because it’s harder to get out of bed and walk to class when it’s so cold outside,” Lesko said.

Lesko also said that she lives in Andrews Hall and expressed concern for people who have classes in Old Main and live in the South Quad like her. She plans on layering her clothes and hopes to get a longer coat to keep her legs and upper body warm for the weather.

“My favorite season is the Spring because I love the warm weather and new growth, which makes me dislike the winter because it’s too cold for me,” Lesko said.

Although Lesko disapproved of the cold weather, some students might find it enjoyable.

To read more, visit our website at www.dailyeasternnews.com

FRONT PAGE COVER BY HARPER HANCOCK AND ASHANTI THOMAS

What's Happening November 8 -15

Wednesday
Fun Film Night at Library
All-day - Whitter's Conference Room, Booth Library

EIU Men's Basketball vs Monmouth College
7 p.m. - 9 p.m.- First Mid Court, Lantau Arena

Thursday
Loteria/Game Night
6 p.m. - 7 p.m. - 7th Street Underground, MLK Jr. Union

Friday
Underground Line Dancing
7 p.m. - 8 p.m. - Dance studio room. 1140, McAfee Gym

Saturday
EIU Football vs. Tennessee State
12 p.m. - 3 p.m. - O'Brien Field

Sunday
YOUR EVENT COULD GO HERE!

Monday
New Moon Yoga
9 a.m. - 10 a.m. - Tarble Arts Center

Tuesday
Jazz Lab Band
7:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. - Dvorak Stage, DFAC

Wednesday
Thanksgiving Dinner After Hours
8 p.m. - 10 p.m. - Stevenson Tower Grill
Presidential Investiture Ceremony
1 p.m. - 2 p.m. - Dvorak Concert Hall, DFAC

Send your event information to dennewsdesk@gmail.com to be added to our online and print calendars!



BY CAM'RON HARDY | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Antonioys Gibson, a junior psychology major, gets the “Come Back” award at the Dia de Los Muertos Gala Saturday night.

A come-back story from the come-back award recipient

Jump from cover

From his lack of discipline, which would later negatively affect his grades, to problems at home back on the South Side of Chicago, Gibson dealt with numerous adversaries early in his academic career at Eastern.

Before attending Eastern, Gibson completed his senior year of high school virtually.

During that time, he said he had become lazy, which caused him to have a rough start transitioning into college.

Gibson’s grades were abysmal during his freshman year.

He said he attributed a part of the problem to hanging out with the wrong group of people. Because of this, academics started to slip.

“[I was] hanging with the wrong crowd, I didn’t have self-discipline, and I had nothing going for myself,” Gibson said.

Gibson received an academic warning, which later switched to academic probation.

During his spring semester of his freshman year, he said he only had D’s and F’s in his classes.

Closing out his freshman year, he was left with an outstanding balance that needed to be paid in order for him to register for classes for his sophomore year.

During that summer, he decided that he needed to make a change in his life.

He was recommended to join TRIO, a student support service at Eastern, by

his academic advisor Beth Kastl.

Gibson said Kastl helped him get into TRIO and also assisted him with lowering his bill so he could register for classes.

During his sophomore year, Gibson was dealing with panic attacks due to his anxiety, which also occurred throughout his freshman year.

His little brother was also dealing with seizures back home in Chicago, which was consuming him mentally.

“I was really depressed,” Gibson said. “I felt like it was the end. I [felt] like I couldn’t continue school. I was going to take a semester off.”

While expressing his frustrations to his father, his father motivated him to continue and push through school.

Other problems started to occur at home which was another reason for him to stay in Charleston and continue his education.

Gibson later joined TRIO and connected with Kassandra Garcia, a graduate student majoring in human services.

Gibson learned that Garcia went through some of the same experiences as him, which allowed them to get to understand each other.

Garcia helped Gibson maintain his life by setting up weekly planners and hosting weekly meetings.

At the end of his sophomore year, Gibson was still on academic probation due to dropping a class, but he saw an improvement in his grades overall.

He used to rely on motivation to get

his work done, but later learned that all he needed was self discipline.

Starting his junior year, he still had the ambition to do different things.

He joined the Resident Hall Association, STRONG MENToring, which focuses on issues and challenges that men of color face while pursuing higher education.

With all of his goals that he has reached, he still has plans to do more. Another goal of his was to connect with more people and network.

“I’m just trying to network this year, that’s my biggest key,” Gibson said. “I’m trying to do something great for myself. I’m trying to get scholarships and get involved in things because I want to have a good future.”

He got off of academic probation during his spring semester of his sophomore year, moving his GPA above a 2.0.

Gibson said this “arc” is his life is still being written.

Gibson said he was surrounded by the right people and going to the library to do work.

He knows that he still has more to do but is aware of the work and growth that he has done so far.

“I did good last year and I’m doing good this semester,” Gibson said. “Ever since then, I’m all about improvement [and] growth. I’m growing as a man mentally, physically, spiritually. There’s still some things I have to work on, but the jobs not finished.”

He appreciates all of his friends and

TRIO advisors for helping him get to where he is and coming to support him. He also thanked his father for pushing him and “teaching [him] how to become a man.”

“My dad was the biggest part of this story,” Gibson said. “He always tells me to chase my purpose no matter what.”

The Gala was held to recognize those who display leadership qualities in the Latinx community, while also celebrating and honoring their ancestors.

The event had multiple ofrenda’s, which is a set-up to honor the deceased.

There was a dance which celebrated Mexican folklore.

Luis Paniagua, a graduate student in College of Student Affairs, was one of the performers.

Paniagua said the dance helped to show diversity and pride in the Latino culture.

Paniagua said he wanted to represent that culture to Eastern since it is a predominately white institution.

He said that he was proud of his performance even though he only had two weeks to learn it.

This year was the second year that the Gala was held and he hopes that it can happen next year.

He also wants more people to attend but appreciated all of the students and faculty that did attend.

Cam’ron Hardy can be reached at 581-2812 or at dennewsdesk@gmail.com.



BY COLLEGE MEDIA ASSOCIATION

Several editors from *The News* staff poses with two of the organizational College Media Association Pinnacle Awards Tuesday, Oct. 31 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Ga. The staff won first place for best college media group and best newspaper website of the year.

EDITORIAL

The News wins 15 national awards

The Daily Eastern News staff won 15 awards at the annual College Media Association/Associated Collegiate Press conference last week.

The staff was a ACP Pacemaker finalist for their website as well as being named fifth place for their website in the best of show contest.

The staff won four first place awards in news, photo and overall categories for the CMA Pinnacle Awards.

Photo Editor Ashanti Thomas placed first in sports news photography with a picture from beach volleyball and former editor-in-chief Madelyn Kidd and current News Editor Cam’ron Hardy placed first in breaking news story for their coverage of UPI announcing they would strike last semester.

The other two awards were best college media

group of the year and best newspaper website of the year.

The media group award encompasses all aspects of publication including website content, print publication and social media presence.

The staff won seven second place awards news, sports, photo and multimedia coverage.

Former sports editor Autumn Schulz placed second for her coverage of the Panther’s homecoming heartbreaking double overtime loss against the Lindenwood Lions, last fall.

The staff received several second places in breaking news coverage for their coverage of the UPI strike, news package for their disability access coverage last fall and newspaper front page about mental health from last fall.

The staff also placed second for website front page.

Editor-in-Chief Rob Le Cates placed second in news feature photography for his coverage of the Red, White, and Blue Days pet parade.

The staff won two third places in feature story and sports feature photography.

Former editor-in-chief Luke Taylor placed third in feature story for his coverage of a local paranormal investigator group and Le Cates for his sports feature photo of last fall’s homecoming loss.

Le Cates also received an honorable mention for a portrait for last spring’s sexual assault edition.

The Editorial Board can be reached at 581-2812 or deneic@gmail.com.

COLUMN

Lack of Thanksgiving acknowledgment

By Kierstyn Budz
Columnist

President Jay Gatrell gave his input on how he hopes to lead As you all must know, October is over. This means Mariah Carey is thawing out.



Even on Halloween, I heard people start singing Christmas music.

I personally am one of those people who loves Christmas but cannot stand the music.

I just get so annoyed so quickly with the same 10 songs playing on the radio over and over.

I think playing Christmas music on

November 1st is way too soon.

What about Thanksgiving? I know there really is not Thanksgiving music but come on. Thanksgiving is a big holiday too.

I always found it weird to start playing Christmas music before it started snowing as well. No snow, no ‘White Christmas.’

I might be a bit “grinchy” on the topic but please wait till after Thanksgiving or until it starts to actually snow.

I know a lot of people will disagree with me here, but I just feel it is too soon.

Why is the minute it turns 12:00 AM on November 1st, it becomes time to play ‘Jingle Bells’ and ‘Last Christmas’ at full blast?

I just do not understand the quick change from dark and scary to Santa Claus at every corner.

Maybe I just love Halloween too much to let it go when it strikes midnight.

Again, what about Thanksgiving? There is just a complete lack of acknowledgment for a holiday between Halloween and Christmas.

I have a lot of thoughts when it comes to Thanksgiving.

How do we spend a whole day based on being thankful for the things we have, then the next we attack each other in stores?

I just feel it is a little weird to say how thankful you are and then go buy a million different things. How does that make any sense?

I do like the idea of Thanksgiving as a time to realize how many good things are in your life but spread Black Friday out.

What about Black Friday as the first Friday of December or something?

I do like that people are having fun with their holidays. However, the first half of the year feels a bit lackluster when it comes to people enjoying holidays.

I wish there was some holiday in the first half of the year that got the same hype as Christmas or Halloween.

You might say “But Kierstyn. New Year’s or St. Patrick’s Day.” Nope. Not the same hype.

People do not sit there and plan for those holidays for months or fight people over gifts for little kids.

Again, maybe I am a “grinch” but I just feel Thanksgiving should have a little more love and Christmas should not start November 1st.

Kierstyn Budz can be reached at [krebudz@eiu.edu](mailto:krbudz@eiu.edu) or 217-581-2812.

COLUMN

Musical mayhem

By Brie Coder
Columnist

All signs point to this: Halloween 2023 was a success. The candy tasted sweeter (if you could afford it), and the costumes were neater.



Suffice to say, everyone was in full spirits for the spookiest day of the year.

Although the black and orange holiday is in the rear view mirror, the horrors of reality are yet upon us.

Between overseas wars, gun violence, immigration concerns and a harrowing economy, it seems fear has swept our nation and into our music.

That’s not to say this is anything new. Take, for example, the genre of punk and the messages of anti-conformity spread throughout the lyrics of bands The Ramones, Sex Pistols, Black Flag, Rancid and Dropkick Murphys, to name a few. Or the anti-Vietnam War songs like Creedence Clearwater Revival’s “Fortunate Son” or “War” by Edwin Starr.

But recently, it seems the stellar men who brought us “American Idiot,” Green Day, along with country-folk left fielder, Oliver Anthony, have something to say about the current climate we live in.

Through their own experiences and those around them, these anti-establishment vigilantes collectively crafted and beautifully articulated our cries and pleas into hit songs, “The American Dream Is Killing Me” and “Rich Men North Of Richmond,” respectively.

An already accomplished voice of truth, Green Day’s vocalist, Billie Joe Armstrong, explores in less than four minutes the yin and yang of the American system with “The American Dream Is Killing Me.”

Similar to Bruce Springsteen’s anthem “Born in the U.S.A.,” the narrative asked throughout this piece is, “Are we well?” As direct as they can be, Green Day answers it with a yes and no response.

The yes replies come from what some dub the joy of their daily living: TikToks and condos. But, of course, those joys are answered with despair with homelessness, taxes and double talk of conspiracy and insanity.

Although the song certainly hits home, Green Day seems to combine their punk roots with some Beatles flair, as the middle chorus slips into a John Lennon, soft and dulcet sound, similar to “Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds.” If you find this song to whet your appetite, then you’re in for a treat, as Green Day’s Armstrong, Mike Dirnt and Tré Cool have announced their next studio album, “Saviors,” which will be released on January 19.

They are not the only fearless man to stand in the face of controversy. Next in line is Anthony’s “Rich Men North Of Richmond.” In this tear-jerker, Oliver sits us down and tells the tale of woe and the undeniable rabbit hole of hypocrisy that tends to live in our American culture. Anthony kicks off the song with the haunting lyrics, “I’ve been sellin’ my

soul, workin’ all day,

overtime hours for bullsh— pay. So I can sit out here and waste my life away, drag back home and drown my troubles away.”

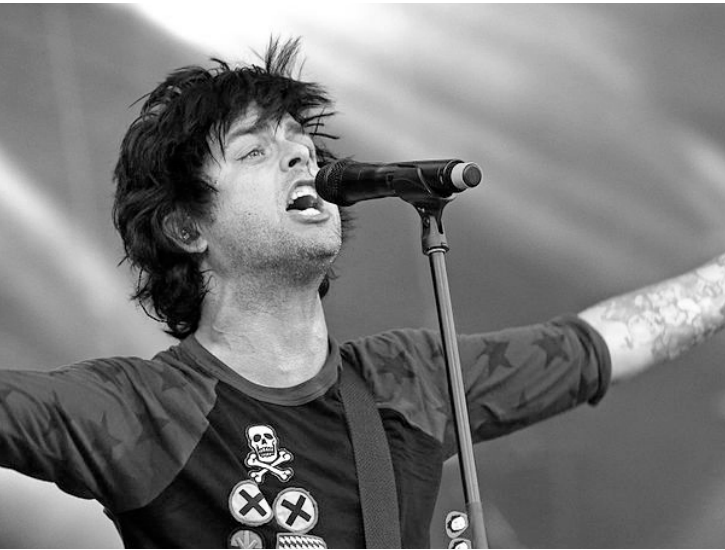
In other words, Anthony is standing up and representing the blue-collar folks who see nothing but zeros in their tenure of hard work.

Gosh, if that doesn’t hit you right away, then I recommend getting your heart checked by a doctor!

Later in the song, Anthony addresses the red, white and blue elephant in the room on the government’s invasion of our privacy, singing, “These rich men north of Richmond, Lord knows they all just wanna have total control. Wanna know what you think, wanna know what you do, and they don’t think you know, but I know that you do.”

Other subjects mentioned include the abuse of welfare, homelessness and politicians getting richer and fatter off the backs of the working class.

Although some criticized Anthony’s song for bashing body positivity or that this song was the self-proclaimed anthem of the conservative party (spoiler alert: it’s not!), it did not stop him from gaining the number one spot on



BY SVEN-SEBASTIAN SAJAK | CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSING
Billie Joe Armstrong, singer and guitarist of Green Day, stands on the Center Stage of Rock im Park-Festival 2013.

the country Billboards and general Billboard Hot 100 charts. Not bad for a guy who self-produces his music!

Even though America is on life support, it’s not to say that we’re damaged goods quite yet.

As the saying goes, “Music soothes the savage beast.” And right now, we need all the therapy we can get, including lullabies from artists who still love and care for a country that allows them to freely express their distaste and distrust of our government.

Love it or leave it: you’d have to be an “American Idiot” to think politics in music will ever end, especially since we’re on the cusp of re-electing or newly electing our 47th president next year. Oof.

Brie Coder can be reached at bm-coder@eiu.edu or 217-581-2812.

Panthers secure sixth season win

In Wilkerson's second season, program sees most victories since 2017

By Zaria Flippin
Sports Editor | @zariaflippin

Eastern has obtained their first winning season in six years after they defeated the Lindenwood Lions 16-10 Saturday afternoon.

After three straight games that went down to the crucial plays in the fourth quarter, Eastern's 16 points in the first quarter helped the Panthers come away with the win.

Here are three Panthers from the offensive side of the ball that helped the Panthers take an early lead:

Pierce Holley

To start the first quarter, the redshirt junior quarterback threw a 13-yard pass to graduate wide receiver Justin Thomas, and on the second snap, Holley found Thomas again for a 44-yard pass to get another first down.

Eli Mirza

Five snaps later, Holley threw a 38-yard touchdown pass to the junior wide receiver for an early 10-0 lead with 10 minutes left in the first quarter. With about 20 seconds left in the first quarter, Mirza rushed for 19 yards to put the Panthers four yards away from an additional six points.

MJ Flowers

With 13 seconds left, the redshirt freshman ran the four yards to give the Panthers a 16-0 lead after senior kicker Stone Galloway's extra point. Along with the offense, the defense played a key role in the victory with three interceptions from three different Panthers:

Nick Coates

The junior nickel came up with his first career interception and the first of the three interceptions for the Panthers in Saturday's game. With four minutes left in the second quarter, Lions' freshman quarterback Tyler Kubat was pressured by redshirt junior defensive lineman Joel Barrows. As Kubat tried to throw to his target, Coates jumped up to catch the ball to give the Panthers the ball back.

Blake Ruffin

Five minutes left in the fourth quarter, the redshirt sophomore safety picked off a Kubat pass up the center of the field that was no more than 10 yards away from the end-zone.



FILE | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

The Panthers won their sixth game of the season against the Lindenwood Lions 16-10 Saturday afternoon pushing Eastern to their first winning season since 2017 under head coach Chris Wilkerson. This is Wilkerson's second season at Eastern as the head coach, but he served as an assistant coach from 1995 to 2001.

Ruffin recorded his fourth interception this season as he leads the Panthers in interceptions for the season so far. With this interception, Ruffin is tied for first place in the Big South-OVC Conference with his four interceptions in nine games.

NiJhay Burt
With nine seconds left in the game,

Lions' redshirt sophomore quarterback Cooper Justice tried to give the Lions a shot to beat the Panthers, but Burt had other plans. Burt picked off Justice's pass to secure the win for the Panthers as the clock was winding down. With this interception, Burt is third in the Big South-OVC Conference with three interceptions in nine games.

The Panthers are now 6-3 overall in the season and 2-2 in the conference. Eastern is set to play their last home game of the season on Saturday as the team recognizes their seniors. The Panthers will compete against Tennessee State at O'Brien Field, and kickoff is scheduled for 12 p.m.

Zaria Flippin can be reached at 581-2812 or zhflippin@eiu.edu.

Panthers of the Week



CHAD SMITH

Junior goalkeeper Chad Smith the Panthers clinch a win over the Liberty Flames during their first game during the OVC tournament. Throughout the 90 minutes of regular plan and 20 minutes of extra time, Smith recorded nine saves to force a shutout between both teams. Smith saved three out of four shootout attempts to help the Panthers win the game 3-1.



CHRISTINA MARTINEZ MUNDO

Senior libero/defensive specialist helped the Panthers sweep the Little Rock Trojans 3-0 Friday and Saturday. Martinez Mundo led the team with 22 digs on Friday and 13 digs on Saturday. She recorded three assists each day. Martinez Mundo is currently tied for 19th place in the NCAA for digs per set, averaging six digs per set.



FILE PHOTO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS
Senior forward Sam Eccles (9) was one of three Panthers to score during the shootout after neither team had scored during regulation or overtime.

Men win first tourney game

By Luther Yoder
Assistant Sports Editor | @DEN_News

Eastern men’s soccer won a game in a conference tournament for the first time since 2007 where it beat Drake University in the Missouri Valley Conference tournament.

The Panthers won 3-1 on penalties against Liberty University on Sunday, Nov. 5, off of a great performance from junior goalkeeper Chad Smith.

Smith had nine saves in this game, his highest for the season, and the second highest of his career behind a 13-save performance against the University of Dayton last year.

The Panthers took eight shots, three on goal, compared to Liberty’s 26 shots, nine on goal.

Seven of the Panthers played to full 110 minutes in the game: Smith, junior defender William Bruce, freshman defender Jake McConnery, senior midfielder Felipe Kerr Lourenco, senior forward Sam Eccles, redshirt sophomore midfielder Anton van Efferink, and freshman forward/midfielder Kyle Ward.

During the penalties Smith was able to save two of Liberty’s four penalties.

The penalty scorers for Eastern were Eccles, Lourenco, and fifth year senior defender Maxwell Allen.

If Eastern were to win its next match it would be the first time that it has ever won two games in a conference tournament. Prior to 1994 the conference it was in did not have a conference tournament at the end of the season and sent to regular season winner to the NCAA tournament.

Luther Yoder can be reached at 581-2812 or at lyoder@eu.edu.

Jacobi records debut double-double in loss against Fighting Illini

By Zaria Flippin
Sports Editor | @zariaflippin

Although the Panthers lost 80-52 to the University of Illinois Fighting Illini, Eastern fans got to see how the newest Panthers can be significant contributors for the team this season.

Redshirt sophomore forwards Kooper Jacobi led the Panthers with a double-double in his first game with the Panthers. Jacobi recorded 10 points and 11 rebounds against University of Illinois.

ILLINOIS	80
PANTHERS	52

“That’s kinda who he is,” Panthers Head Coach Marty Simmons said. “He loves to play, loves to compete. He kinda hangs his hat on rebounding, and he can score from all three levels. I just think he’s gonna get better and better.”

Senior guard Jordan “Tiger” Booker recorded nine points for the Panthers and junior guard Nakyel Shelton recorded an additional seven for Eastern.

Simmons touched on how he feels good about this Panthers team and their chemistry.

“It’s been better than what I’ve anticipated,” Simmons said. “Last night, these guys all got together and fixed pasta and salad, and I’m not sure I would’ve done that if I had eight new guys. I like what they’re doing, and it may not mean a lot to some people. I like this group.”

The Panthers took the lead as sophomore forward Sincere Malone scored their first points of the game with a contested layup.

When the Illini picked up pressure on the Panthers later in the first half, the lead slipped away from Eastern and slowly went to the University of Illinois.

One thing the Panthers struggled with tonight was getting the ball to go down the net.

Eastern was 20 of 69 for field goals (29%) and four of 11 from behind the arc (36.4%). The Panthers were also eight of 16 from the free throw line (50%).

The Panthers went on a field goal drought for about eight minutes in the middle of the second half.

Another key aspect the Panthers struggled with was getting out of foul trouble. Malone ended the first half with three fouls and fouled out with 17 minutes left in the second half, causing the Panthers to adjust without one of their starting forwards for the rest of the game.

Malone played for less than 10 minutes.

Fifth-year forward Jermaine Hamlin also got into foul trouble with four fouls throughout the game.

Despite the foul trouble, Simmons harped on what he thought of the players that came off the bench for the Panthers.

“I was pretty happy with how the bench played,” Simmons said. “When those



BY ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Redshirt sophomore forward Kooper Jacobi puts the ball up in the paint during the Panther’s first men’s basketball game of the season against the Fighting Illini Monday night. Jacobi led the Panthers by scoring 10 points and rebounding 11 shots.

guys got in foul trouble, I thought Gibson came in and gave up some good minutes in the first half, and I thought everyone that played in the first half because of foul trouble did a pretty good job.”

Junior guard Jaylin Gibson recorded two points and an assist for the Panthers.

Eastern will return to Lantz Arena for their home opener against Monmouth College on Wednesday evening. Tip-off is scheduled for 7 p.m.

Zaria Flippin can be reached at 581-2812 or zhflippin@eu.edu.

Remembering loved ones during Día de los Muertos

By Chandler Smith
Reporter | @DEN_News

Painting in honor of loved ones as a tribute and tradition is important to many Eastern students who participated in sugar skull paint and sip Thursday evening at 7th Street Underground. “I love that you do not have to be a Latina or Mexican to join in on the festivities. This is really an environment that everyone can feel welcome in,” math teacher education major Silas Roemer said. “Día de los Muertos is more than just a Mexican tradition. It is a way to honor your deceased loved ones, no matter what your previous cultures were.”

Sugar Skulls have been popular for years and are a representation of a human skull but instead made from sugar or clay.

“Sugar skulls are a traditional decoration used in Mexican celebrations of the Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos), which is typically observed on November 1st and 2nd,” President of the Latin American Student Organization Guiselle Padron said. “The Day of the Dead is a time to honor and remember deceased loved ones, and sugar skulls are often used as part of the festivities.”

“The skulls are normally decorated with colorful icing, sequins and other adornments,” Padron said.

To some of Eastern’s students, this is more of a remembrance. It is a way to recognize those who have passed away and support each other.

“I know it is the holiday that celebrates people’s loved ones that have passed, and I do not personally celebrate it, but I have a lot of, like I said, a friend that celebrates the holiday,” elementary education Lily Spiese said. “It is a cool holiday to celebrate and like



BY ASHANTI THOMAS | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

From left, Celeste Cambron, Jocelyn Cambron, and Kassandra Garcia look at the ofrenda exhibits being displayed at the Dia De Los Muertos Gala on Saturday night.

I said, I just wanted to come out and support the organization throwing the event.”

The importance of Day of the Dead has brought people together to recognize the importance of their loved ones and different cultures.

“This is just a fantastic way like I said, to bring awareness about different holidays that happen because there are so many holidays and so many cultures

and it is just impossible to like to know about every single one,” Guiselle Padron said. “It is also a way to bring everybody together. It is not just Mexican people like coming together and celebrating this. Also, everybody is willing to learn and wants to celebrate with you.”

Over the years, the number of people that attend Sugar Skull Paint and Sip has grown and more people have gained awareness of diverse cultures.

“I do see it grow because thankfully, we have more cultural awareness. Now we are more open to learning about unfamiliar cultures,” Padron said. “This is going to grow and just bring more awareness about the holiday and what it does and like the origin and stuff so that people will just know about it.”

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Patel’s journey to leadership

By Jacob Adcock
Reporter | @DEN_News

Nidhi Patel is a senior majoring in finance with a minor in marketing. She acts as Eastern’s Student Body President and will hold this title for the 2023-2024 school year.



Patel grew up and went to school in Summit, Ill., until her first year of high school, when she moved and began attending school in Hinsdale. She went to Hinsdale Central High School for her entire secondary school career.

During high school, she never did anything remotely close to representing the entire student body, “I played badminton and was involved in scholastic bowl, but that was it: no student gov-

ernment.”

Patel chose Eastern to complete her undergraduate degree because she knew it would give her more opportunities. “I chose Eastern Illinois University because it had a very student-centric culture, and I did not want to go to a big university where I felt like I couldn’t accomplish as much,” Patel said.

Patel said it was great to follow what she wanted to do and focus on her education. “It was nice to be able to know my professors rather than be in a lecture hall with 200 students,” Patel said. She was able to discover student government while trying to find herself.

The student government has an Executive Branch that provides administrative power over the programs and policies at Eastern, which the student government creates.

The executive board includes the Student Body President, Executive Vice President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Vice President for Stu-

dent Affairs.

Patel’s journey started with her first year at Eastern. She was honestly really bored and wanted something to do. “I had a friend who was the Student Body President at the time, and she encouraged me to join student government.”

She ended up listening to her friend and became a senator.

She was a pre-med major during this time and the entirety of her sophomore year, so it took up most of her time. She was not involved in student government because she “needed to focus on other things,” Patel said.

She eventually dropped her pre-med major and picked up her current finance major.

This led to her running for student government during her junior year. She was then elected as the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

As Vice President for Academic Affairs, she represented the student body and administration for Eastern and

served on the Council of Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate. Her duty was to serve as an ex-office member of the Senate Academic Affairs Committee.

“The position was opened, so I just interviewed for it and ended up getting it.” The position is on the same executive board as Student Body President.

This year, she ran unopposed for Student Body President, giving her the current position. “It was a pretty fun experience,” said Patel.

Being elected as Student Body President means that you represent both the student body and administration of Eastern while also serving on various committees, boards and legislative bodies.

They will also oversee important events like Convocation, Open House and First Night.

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