

1-24-2000

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Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "01/24/2000 - BOT Approves Labor Agreement with AFSME Local 981" (2000). 2000. 14.
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January 24, 2000

For Immediate Release:

BOT APPROVES LABOR AGREEMENT WITH AFSCME LOCAL 981

CHARLESTON – Eastern Illinois University's Board of Trustees on Monday gave its stamp of approval to a labor agreement with AFSCME Local 981, representing approximately 195 building/food service employees.

The AFSCME agreement was reached Dec. 13, 1999, and was ratified by the union on Jan. 11, 2000. Under the terms of the agreement, effective for the period Sept. 15, 1999, through Sept. 14, 2002, bargaining unit employees would receive a 3 percent wage increase the first year of the agreement, and the percentage increase appropriated for salaries for EIU in the second and third years of the agreement.

The BOT also was expected to consider the tentative agreement reached Dec. 3, 1999, with the approximately 600 employees of the University Professionals of Illinois, Local 4100. Two-thirds of those employees voted to accept the three-year contract agreement, which, if approved by the BOT, would raise salaries by about 6.1 percent on an annual basis.

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EIU BOT

UPI Local 4100 represents tenured and tenure-track employees (Unit A), as well as annually contracted teaching faculty and academic support professionals.

Even though Eastern's faculty had agreed to the tenets of a new contract agreement, representatives of the university and UPI did not finalize contract language until late last week -- too late for BOT members to obtain copies and study them before Monday's meeting. To ensure that faculty are not inconvenienced, a special meeting of the BOT executive committee (as authorized by the BOT as a whole) will be scheduled for sometime in early February so that faculty salary increases are reflected in the March 31 payroll. Even if the UPI contractual item had been included on Monday's agenda, the implementation of faculty salary increases could not have occurred any sooner.

Teshome Abebe, provost and vice president for academic affairs, expressed his appreciation to all negotiators "for working very hard to provide us with a contract (that) will serve the institution and the faculty very well." Carl Koerner, BOT chairman from Effingham, echoed Abebe's comments, giving the board's compliments to all involved in negotiations.

Board members also approved a change in contract for expansion design services for Eastern's Clinical Services building. An agreement was approved Oct. 19, 1998, for a cost of \$372,000, with A. Epstein & Sons of Chicago, but the scope of the work and estimated cost of construction has changed, increasing from \$2.5 to \$3.3 million in order to meet the needs of Health and Career services and to comply with Eastern's Campus Master Plan. Approval of this change order, in the amount of \$104,000, was necessary to cover the cost of additional design services.

According to the Campus Master Plan, the current Clinical Services building would be demolished to make way for the planned renovation/expansion of Eastern's Doudna Fine Arts

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Building. Its replacement will be one of several departments to be housed in the new east addition to Eastern's University Union which, ultimately, will become an "all-purpose" student center.

It was also reported that construction of Eastern's Food Court, to be located under the current walk-way, will now begin in late summer or early fall of 2000.

Informational items presented to the board included a round-up of Eastern's financial aid programs and an update on the FY 2001 Illinois Board of Higher Education budget recommendations.

In FY 1999, 73.9 percent of Eastern's student body received some form of financial assistance – loans, scholarships, grants, tuition waivers and/or employment – from various federal, state and university programs. Financial aid in FY 1999 totaled \$43,489,640 at Eastern; 62 percent came from federal sources, 16.7 percent from the state, 17.6 percent from the university and 3.7 percent from other sources.

Lou Hencken, vice president for student affairs, told BOT members that Eastern's default rate (students failing to repay loans) is among the lowest in the state (4.5 percent for direct loans, 3.7 for Perkins Loans). "And that's something to be proud of," he added. "We commend our students."

In its FY 2001 budget recommendations, the IBHE proposed a \$4,090,100 (5.6 percent) increase for Eastern's general and income funds operating budget. This overall increase recommendation incorporates a 6.9 percent increase in general funds (state tax) and a 3.2 percent increase in income fund (tuition and fee) monies. Comparatively, Eastern's recommended general funds increase of 6.9 percent is the second highest of all public universities.

In addition to recommendations for Eastern's operating budget, the IBHE also makes capital budget recommendations. For FY 2001, the IBHE has recommended that Eastern receive

\$47,435,000 for regular capital and \$1,580,000 for capital renewal projects. A recommendation was made for \$4 million for Booth Library equipment, \$500,000 less than originally requested. The Fine Arts building project was recommended for the full \$43,435,000 requested.

The board also learned that bids for the actual expansion/renovation work planned for Booth Library will be due sometime in March, with work set to begin "as soon as possible," according to Ted Weidner, director, facilities planning and management. Asbestos removal and the design phase of the renovation work are virtually complete.

According to Hencken, approximately 1,200 students took advantage of Eastern's "New Millennium" room and board contract option. Returning students who committed to a 2000-2001 room and board contract by Dec. 10, 1999, will pay the 1999-2000 academic year rate for the 2000-2001 academic year. Room and board rates at Eastern – although among the most affordable in the state – have increased an average of 8.2 percent per year over the past five years. The "New Millennium" contract is part of the university's "continuing effort to keep room and board charges for our residence halls and Greek Court housing as affordable as possible."

Hencken also reported the completion of Phase I of the EIU Century 2000 project which provides direct Internet access in Carman, Ford and McKinney residence halls and Building 7 in Greek Court. This project allows students living in these buildings to connect directly to the university computing network using an outlet installed in their rooms.

In other matters, Hencken reported that Eastern's 24-hour computer lab has officially opened and that students living in residence halls will continue to receive *USA Today*, the *Chicago Tribune* and the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* free-of-charge as a continuation of a pilot program instituted last semester. Students will be surveyed in March and, should the reaction be favorable, an increase in student fees may take place to cover the cost of a permanent program.