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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BOT APPROVES THREE-YEAR FACULTY CONTRACT

CHARLESTON, IL -- Approximately 600 Eastern Illinois University faculty and academic support professionals will receive a pay raise under a three-year contract approved today by Eastern's Board of Trustees.

The Board's Executive Committee voted unanimously during a conference call meeting to approve the contract agreement which was reached in December and ratified by members of the University Professionals of Illinois, Local 4100, last month.

"I am delighted that the Board was as eager as we were to sign a new contract with the University Professionals of Illinois," said Carol Surles, president of Eastern.

Bob Wayland, the university's chief negotiator, commented, "This concludes the

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negotiation process to reach a new three-year contract . "We now have a collective bargaining agreement which meets the objectives of everyone involved. Members of the negotiations committees for both parties worked very hard to reach this agreement and I am sure that it will provide an amicable means for us to operate the university efficiently and effectively."

UPI Local 4100 represents tenured and tenure-track employees (Unit A), as well as annually contracted teaching faculty and academic support professionals (Unit B). The agreement approved by the faculty union and the BOT includes a contract for each of the two units.

Under the contract, \$1.53 million will be applied to faculty salary increases this fiscal year. That money will cover any increases necessary to bring employees to the contractual minimum salary and provide across-the-board straight percentage increases retroactive to Nov. 1, 1999 for faculty in Units A and B and retroactive to Sept. 1, 1999 for academic support professionals in Unit B. However, raises for individual faculty members will vary depending on promotion and merit pay as well as the retroactive date for the basic increase, Wayland said.

The \$1.53 million will also cover costs for promotions; professional advancement, performance-based and merit increases; and achievement and contributions awards to those eligible employees retroactive to Sept. 1, 1999 for Unit A and B faculty and retroactive to July 1, 1999 for academic support professionals. The contract calls for salary openers for the second and third years of the agreement no

later than July 1 each year.

“Salary increases will be included in faculty warrants for March 31. The implementation of increases is a labor-intensive undertaking for staff in Human Resources. Care must be taken on behalf of each faculty member to ensure that errors are not made. Even in a high-tech environment many tasks must be done manually. Our goal is to ensure that faculty receive their raises as quickly as possible. In fact, had the contract been ready for Board action on January 24, our timeline for implementation could not have been sooner than March 31,” Surles said.

Other provisions in the agreement call for the addition of \$60,000 to the Summer School budget for next fiscal year and improved access to summer teaching opportunities for faculty; the formation of a joint task force on distance learning; and the ability for all faculty and academic support professionals to contribute to and benefit from the university’s sick leave bank.

“Our guiding principle was to make the contract more manageable. As a result, many of the contract revisions involved removing ambiguous contract language and replacing it with language that more clearly delineates processes and timelines and better defines contract terms,” Wayland said.

Contract negotiations began last June. The previous three-year contract was to expire Aug. 31 but was extended as negotiations continued.