

1-11-2006

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### Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "01/11/2006 - EIU Unveils Poster Of Orion Nebula.pdf" (2006). 2006. 23.  
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## EIU Unveils Poster of Orion Nebula, Newest Hubble Image

Jan-11-2006

Eastern Illinois University is one of 72 institutions in the world to own a copy of what is considered one of the largest and most magnificent images ever taken by the Hubble Space Telescope.

The image provides a breathtaking view of the Orion Nebula, with never-before-seen features of the star-forming region.

Just hours after NASA revealed the image to an international audience on Wednesday, Mary Anne Hanner, dean of the EIU College of Sciences, unveiled the university's 4-foot-by-4-foot poster. EIU President Lou Hencken and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Blair Lord were also in attendance.

"We appreciate the efforts of the faculty from the EIU Department of Physics in acquiring this image from the Hubble Space Telescope," Hanner said. "It is another example of their endeavors to enhance the academic experiences of EIU students and to offer knowledge of science events to our community."

The EIU poster is displayed alongside photographs taken from EIU's own observatory, including a time-lapse picture of the Orion Nebula at almost the same scale as the Hubble image.

EIU's observatory played a direct role in allowing the university to secure the image. The posters were released to institutions providing outreach education, such as the public viewings held monthly at the observatory.

Coincidentally, the Orion Nebula will be the featured object of viewing during this month's public observation at the EIU observatory, set for Jan. 27. The observatory is located in the southwestern corner of campus between O'Brien Stadium and the intramural softball fields.

The image will benefit both the public and formal classes at the university, said David Linton, an EIU astronomy professor who secured the poster for the university.

"Imagery from NASA is one of the greatest visual resources we have in the teaching of astronomy," Linton said. "In this image of the Orion Nebula, we can see thousands of stars in the process of being formed, just as our sun was formed billions of years ago. So we're really looking back at our own birth, in a sense."

The Hubble uncovered 3,000 stars of various sizes, some of which have never been seen in visible light. Some are merely one-hundredth the brightness of stars seen previously in the nebula.

Jim Conwell, EIU physics professor, said the poster's 1 billion pixels provide an outstanding view.

"It's spectacular, it really is," Conwell said. "You can see a lot of detail that has never been seen before, in terms of photographs that have been displayed to the public. I think we're very lucky, because we're one of only three institutions in the state to have it."

Linton said he hopes to receive more images from the Hubble Space Telescope in the future.

The display is in the Physical Science Building, outside of Room 2409. The public is welcome to view it during the building's open hours.

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<http://hubblesite.org/newscenter/newsdesk/archive/releases/2006/01/image/>



*Eastern Illinois University physics Professor Jim Conwell explains the significance of an image of the Orion Nebula taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. The image was unveiled internationally on Wednesday. EIU is one of 72 institutions in the world to receive a 4-foot-by-4-foot poster of the photograph. The poster, displayed in the EIU Physical Science Building, can be seen behind Conwell.*