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Spring 2004 Commencement Ceremonies Set For Saturday; Durbin Among Speakers

May-03-2004

More than 1,500 students are eligible to graduate from Eastern Illinois University this spring, and a vast majority of those will be seen crossing the commencement stage during ceremonies scheduled to take place Saturday, May 8.

Ceremonies are set to take place at 9 a.m., noon, 3 and 6 p.m. in Lantz Arena. Guest tickets are required for admission.

Graduates from Eastern's College of Sciences will march in the morning ceremony, while graduates from the College of Arts and Humanities and the School of Continuing Education march at noon. The College of Education and Professional Studies will have its turn at 3 p.m., followed by the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences during the evening ceremony.

Julie Curry, Illinois' Deputy Chief of Staff for Economy and Labor, will speak during the noon ceremony, while U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin plans to address commencement attendees at the 3 p.m. ceremony.

Curry resigned her seat in the Illinois House of Representatives to assume her current post following the November 2002 election of Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Born in Granite City, she graduated from Eastern with a master's degree in political science and public administration. She began her public service career working as a local government liaison for the Illinois comptroller and served on the comptroller's Local Government Audit Advisory Committee. Curry (D-Mt. Zion) was first elected to the Illinois House of Representatives (101 st District) in 1994.

Durbin, a Democrat from Springfield, is the 47th U.S. senator from Illinois and the first to serve on the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee in more than a quarter of a century. He is the state's senior senator and chairman of the bipartisan Illinois delegation. He also serves on the Senate Judiciary and Governmental Affairs committees and the Select Committee on Intelligence. Durbin has taken a leading role in issues ranging from protecting children from tobacco marketing and promoting gun safety to championing food safety, ethanol use, tax cuts for health insurance and college tuition costs.

Those scheduled to address graduates at all four ceremonies include Caleb S. Judy, student body president from Potomac, and David Carpenter, chair of Eastern's Faculty Senate.

Representing Eastern's Board of Trustees will be Dr. Roger W. Dettro of Mattoon, 9 a.m.; Julie I. Nimmons of Litchfield, noon; and Nathaniel J. Anderson of Belleville, 3 and 6 p.m.

Traditionally, a commencement marshal leads the commencement procession while carrying the university mace, a symbol of honor accorded a faculty member. The commencement marshal for the 9 a.m. ceremony will be Charles M. Evans, associate professor of political science and representative of the College of Sciences. He has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 1994.

Representing the College of Arts and Humanities at noon will be Frank McCormick, professor of English. He has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 1977.

William A. Smith, associate professor of recreation administration, will represent the College of Education and Professional Studies at 3 p.m. He has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 1978.

The evening ceremony's commencement marshal will be Tom L. Waskom, professor in Eastern's School of Technology and representative of the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences. He has been a member of Eastern's faculty since 1985.

A relatively new tradition at Eastern allows additional faculty members the honor of carrying the college banner for his/her college during the procession. Honorees are chosen by their respective colleges.

This year's faculty marshals are Janice K. Coons (biological sciences) and Marshall B. Lassak (mathematics, representing the Graduate School), 9 a.m.; Peter M. Voelz (journalism) and Susan Bazargan (English, representing the Graduate School), noon; Andrew White (mathematics), Erna J. Williams (student teaching) and Merribeth D. Bruning (early childhood, elementary and middle level education, representing the Graduate School), 3 p.m.; and Lucy Campanis (family and consumer sciences) and Jeanne R. Snyder (family and consumer sciences, representing the Graduate School), 6 p.m.

Eastern annually presents its Livingston C. Lord Scholarships during spring commencement ceremonies; this year will be no different. These awards are presented to five students who plan to pursue careers in elementary or secondary education. Recipients must be of junior status.

This year's recipients are Brendan Aydt of Paris, Laura Blankenship of Granite City, Thomas Leslie of Decatur, Heather Robinson of Bethany and Sarah "Beth" Sellers of Troy.