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January 22, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES TO VOTE ON MAKING NEW  
STUDENT FEE A REALITY BEGINNING NEXT SPRING

CHARLESTON -- Eastern Illinois University's Board of Trustees is scheduled to take action on a new student fee at its regular meeting next Monday, that would add \$100 per year to the bills of Eastern's more than 11,000 students.

At the same time, the board will consider authorizing officers of the board and university to approve the steps necessary to issue revenue bonds in the approximate amount of \$11 million.

The board is scheduled to meet at 8:30 a.m., Monday, Jan. 27, in the Grand Ballroom of the University Union in Charleston.

The two actions are necessary in order for Eastern to move forward on 11 campus improvement projects approved by a student referendum last November. The fee is intended to pay off the bond debt incurred to fund the projects, and would be assessed for a period of 20 years.

"If approved by the board, we are officially on our way to bringing some very

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desirable and important projects to this campus that will benefit students for a long time to come," said Eastern President David Jorns. The \$11 million in original principal will finance approximately \$9.5 million in campus projects, provide for any required reserve fund and defray the costs of issuing the bonds.

The list of projects to be funded include such items as a 24-hour computer lab, wiring for Internet access, food court and adding air conditioning in the residence halls.

In other business, the board will consider approval of a three-year contract and one-year wage agreement with 201 employee members of AFSCME Local #981 Clerical/Technical Union.

The tentative agreement calls for most of the employees to receive an across-the-board sixty cents (\$.60)-per-hour increase in base pay, effective retroactive to July 1, 1996. In addition, approximately 12 employees in the bargaining unit will receive a longevity increase of 1.5 percent when they reach 5, 10, 15 or 20 continuous years in their classification with the university.

The board also will take action on the proposed purchase of new network electronics equipment for the newly-renovated Buzzard Building and the Student Services Building. The equipment, which costs approximately \$400,000, will provide for high speed, building-to-building communications over the university's existing fiber optic network, improving the capacity for multimedia applications.

Also on the board's agenda are reports on Eastern's Fiscal Year 1998 budget

recommendation from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which calls for a 5.7 percent increase, the highest recommended for any public university. Trustees will also review the latest figures on financial aid at Eastern. The report shows that in FY 1996, approximately 75 percent of Eastern's student body received some form of financial assistance, including employment, loans, scholarships, grants and tuition waivers from federal, state and university sources.

Financial aid in FY 1996 totaled \$35,369,421 at Eastern. The numbers are slightly higher than the figures reported for FY 1995, particularly in the area of loans. The total dollar amount of student loans rose 17.6 percent during that one-year period.