

2-2-1995

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University Marketing and Communications, "02/02/1995 - EIU Invests As Much As 1 Million Dollars In Equipment.pdf" (1995). 1995. 36.

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96-34

February 2, 1996

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU INVESTS AS MUCH AS \$1 MILLION IN EQUIPMENT
THAT WILL BENEFIT STUDENTS, FACULTY

CHARLESTON -- By year's end, Eastern Illinois University officials estimate that as much as \$1 million will be spent for new computers and other equipment for general-use student computer labs, instructional labs, the library, and faculty and departmental offices.

Up to \$500,000 will go toward academic equipment, including computers, printers, microscopes and other laboratory tools.

Terry Weidner, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs, said the funding request for academic equipment was made in the VPAA's articulated plan. It was recommended by the Council on University Planning and Budget (CUPB), which prioritizes institutional needs. Academic equipment ranked near the top of CUPB's list.

"We are fortunate to be able to spend a significant amount of money on crucial equipment that will directly impact the instructional process. It shows we are making progress in reducing our equipment deficit in accord with our planning process, as well

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as meeting the technological needs of our students," Weidner said.

Weidner said some resources will be used to make a final payment on equipment for the university's Foreign Language Lab, to help academic departments defray the cost of leasing photocopiers for instructional materials and to make appropriate equipment available to accommodate students with disabilities.

Dean of the College of Sciences Lida Wall said the infusion of equipment money into the College of Sciences is critical for the continued high quality undergraduate and graduate education in mathematics, the natural sciences and the social sciences.

"The equipment funds will allow us to purchase new basic equipment, as well as replace and update older equipment used for instructional needs in classrooms, clinics and laboratories," Wall said.

She noted, for example, that geology/geography has unique summer field programs which attract students to Eastern. The Total Station instrument to be purchased with the equipment money will be used in student independent studies to develop and evaluate projects. Successful projects will become part of the 1996 summer field programs.

In chemistry, electronic balances will update some organic chemistry labs, allowing students to weigh materials used for chemical reactions. The speed and precision of the new balances will reduce the time it takes for measurements, Wall said.

In communication disorders and sciences, students learn about hearing

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EQUIPMENT

disorders and identify hearing problems. A portable pure tone audiometer will screen for hearing problems and add immeasurably to students' education and experience, she explained.

As is the case in the College of Sciences, equipment needs in the College of Arts and Humanities and in the other colleges are extensive.

"This year's allocation of funds will meet a variety of concerns throughout the College of Arts and Humanities and will help reduce a long-standing list of equipment needs," said Jim Johnson, the college's dean.

In addition to the planning funds, more than \$265,000, generated from the student computer technology fee, will be used to purchase 70 new personal computers for general-use student labs receiving the most traffic and to buy personal computers to establish the new Arts and Humanities Writing Laboratory serving beginning English composition students.

The computer technology fee revenue also will cover the cost of CD-ROM workstations in the library, computer lab network servers in the Lumpkin College of Business and Applied Sciences (LCBAS), a network server Internet connection for physics and computerized reference materials for sociology.

Two open student labs in LCBAS and the Booth Library Self-Study Materials Center will be the first to receive new computers, based upon their high student usage and the need to replace the labs' six-year-old technology. The college will internally reallocate an additional \$57,000 to purchase more computer workstations.

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"Eastern students are in full support of advancing the university in any way possible. There is a campus-wide need in all academic buildings and in the residence halls for new computers. The equipment to be purchased for the student labs is appreciated and will enhance students' educational experience," said Student Body President Michelle Gaddini.

"Through the willingness of Eastern's students to double the computer technology fee to \$20 per semester, the university has been able to put in place a four-year replacement cycle for microcomputers in the general-use, student computer labs. In addition, approximately \$100,000 of fee revenue continues to be available annually for funding proposals to integrate information technology into the instructional process," said Morgan Olsen, vice president for business affairs.

To continue providing students access to state-of-the-art computer technology, the university plans to spend about \$200,000 annually in student technology fee monies to replace obsolete microcomputers in the general-use, interdisciplinary open student computer labs across campus.