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April 3, 1992

Confirming our conversation today, below are Eastern's comments in response to the Report Digest of the University's Compliance Audit expected to be released by the Office of the Auditor General on Monday, April 6. The comments address items in the order they appear in the Digest synopsis. The Compliance Audit is a routine audit conducted bi-annually by the Office of the Auditor General.

We thought you would like to have this background information for your use when you receive a copy of the report.

Shelly Flock

EASTERN RESPONDS TO AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

1. This finding is a result of an internal audit requested last Fall by the University. The unspent funds referred to in the Report Digest were returned to the State on March 2. Internal controls are being put in place to prevent a repetition.

2. The University exceeded the Illinois Board of Higher Education guideline by about one tenth of a percent. A minimum amount of tuition waivers is essential to recruit talented students in the Fine Arts, Athletics, Journalism, and other student activities. Since tuition waivers are based on an estimate of total undergraduate enrollment, Eastern, as the smallest public university in the State, is penalized by using a percent-

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age approach. Institutions like Northern Illinois University, Illinois State University, and Southern Illinois University are allowed more than twice the number of tuition waivers than Eastern. The decision to slightly exceed the guidelines was made in an effort to keep Eastern competitive.

3. Eastern has taken several steps to protect its computer operation. These steps include installation of a Halon fire-suppressant system, installation of a water alert system and off-site storage of back-up tapes, among others. Eastern believes that the disaster prevention measures that have been taken provide the most practical and cost-effective approach to address disaster recovery. In addition, the University continues to pursue the solution for an alternate power source.

4. This practice was discontinued when it was discovered by the University.

5. This is a serious problem for all State agencies, not just Eastern. The State created these employee benefits and is obligated to pay them. The State will not allow the University to carry-over appropriated funds from one fiscal year to the next to build a reserve to cover this liability.