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February 26, 1996

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BECK BRINGS INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE TO NEW POSITION

CHARLESTON -- Few American students study abroad compared to their international peers, a third of whom come to the United States to study.

Roger Beck of Charleston, Eastern Illinois University's new acting associate dean of the Graduate School, Research and International Programs, hopes to help more American students study abroad.

"To compete in the marketplace, American students need international exposure and experience working with people from other cultures," Beck said.

Up to 30 percent of Illinois companies export goods, making it essential for Eastern graduates to have some knowledge of international business and culture, Beck noted.

A professor of history at Eastern specializing in African history, Beck knows firsthand the value of a global education. He has studied and worked abroad, having taught in Paris, France; Tokyo, Japan; London, England; and Cape Town, South Africa. He has escorted students through France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark,

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Sweden, Norway, Finland and other parts of the world.

The Belleville, Ind., native and former high school social studies teacher has traveled extensively throughout Europe, Eastern and Southern Africa, Brazil and Japan. He is currently writing a book about Christian missionaries and European expansion.

His involvement with the World History Association, the National Council for the Social Studies, the American Historical Association and the Educational Testing Service has brought notice to Eastern.

"Dr. Beck will focus his enthusiasm on international programs to which he brings excellent academic qualifications," said Thomas Gladsky, dean of Eastern's Graduate School, Research and International Programs.

Beck received a bachelor's degree from the University of Evansville and two master's degrees and a Ph.D. from Indiana University. He is fluent in six languages.

His duties will include overseeing Eastern's international programs, including Study Abroad, international students and The English Language Center.

Beck hopes to continue the trend of a growing international student population, up from 134 last spring to 139 this spring.

"International students bring diversity to the campus. For many of our students from rural Illinois, this may be the first time they have met people from other countries. Our students and faculty can learn a lot from international students and vice versa," Beck said.

Beck plans to create greater visibility for Eastern's international programs by designing a homepage on the World Wide Web and to develop more study abroad opportunities for students and faculty.

"Most of the exchange agreements we have with universities in other countries have not been reciprocal. Their students have come here to study, but ours haven't gone there," Beck said.

In addition to establishing mutual partnerships with universities worldwide, Beck envisions Eastern initiating its own study abroad program similar to those at the University of Evansville where students attend classes abroad at a university-owned or leased facility.

Locally, Beck wants to collaborate with business and industry to place international students in internships. He said opportunities also exist for Eastern to share its resources with business and community leaders, such as offering programs on global issues and foreign language training.

NOTE TO THE EDITOR (Plainfield Messenger): Dr. Beck is the son of Ruth Beck of Belleville and a 1965 graduate of Cascade High School.