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For Immediate Release:

CENTRAL ILLINOIS COLLEGE STUDENTS TO GATHER AT EIU TO CELEBRATE TRIO PROGRAM

CHARLESTON – Students and staff from several universities will gather at Eastern Illinois University on Saturday for National TRIO Day Central, a celebration of the program's benefits.

"It's just a day of celebration of the TRIO program and the success we've had over the years," said Claude Magee, director of the TRIO program at EIU.

TRIO is a federally funded program that promotes the importance of education and provides academic assistance to first-generation, low-income students and those with disabilities in an effort "to level the playing field," Magee said.

"It gives students who are first-generation students a support system," Magee said. "It gives a student an opportunity to go to someone with an understanding of what they're dealing with."

EIU's TRIO program is utilized by 175 students. Nationwide, more than 1,200 schools and agencies offer TRIO programs.

This is the second consecutive year EIU has hosted TRIO Day for the program's Central Illinois region, which is comprised of EIU, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Parkland College, Heartland College, Richland College and Illinois Central College.

TRIO Day offers workshops to help students with academics and life issues. Charleston Mayor Dan Cougill is to be one of the speakers, and EIU President Lou Hencken and Vice President for External Relations Jill Nilsen are scheduled to attend the opening session.

Nearly 150 students and staff are expected to attend.