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"You Are EIU" Campaign Reaches \$10 Million Goal

Feb-10-2006

A three-year, \$10 million fund-raising campaign at Eastern Illinois University has reached its goal - five months early.

But that doesn't mean "You are EIU" campaign efforts will cease.

"We're thrilled with the outcome thus far," said EIU President Lou Hencken. "Our alumni and other donors have really shown their support over the past two-and-a-half years, and for that, we're truly grateful.

"However, needs still exist. We owe our students and faculty our continued efforts to further support - and enhance - academic excellence at Eastern Illinois University," he said.

When the "You are EIU" campaign was publicly announced during Homecoming Weekend 2003, three general categories of need were identified. According to Jill Nilsen, vice president for external relations, all three categories have seen outstanding results.

Efforts to raise endowment funds - money permanently invested, with its interest used to support programs and student scholarships - resulted in \$4.6 million being added to the endowment. Eighty-eight new endowment agreements have been signed since July 1, 2003, Nilsen said.

In addition, \$2.8 million has been committed to enhance the campus' infrastructure (maintenance projects, campus beautification and/or equipment acquisition, especially computer equipment and software).

Projects such as the newly installed clock tower (made possible through a \$90,000 gift from Eastern's Alumni Association) and \$1.465 million worth of specialized software, donated by Lectra, are completed projects made possible through donations in the infrastructure category, Nilsen said. Other projects, including renovation work in Old Main, will be made possible through similar gifts.

And EIU collected \$2.6 million in the third category - annual operation dollars. That money, Nilsen said, is money given on an annual basis and used wherever the greatest need exists (research, travel, equipment, etc.)

As an added bonus of the campaign, Eastern's alumni participation has grown to 10 percent, a 3 percent increase since 2003. Steve Rich, director of EIU's Alumni Services, is pleased.

"I am very appreciative that our alumni have been so supportive during this campaign," he said. "We have seen significant gains in annual fund receipts over the last two years, and our alumni participation rate exceeds the national average for similar institutions. Our graduates know firsthand the value of a degree from Eastern, and by continuing to support their alma mater they are ensuring the future for those students who have followed them."

Karla Evans, executive director of development at Eastern, expressed her delight with the campaign's overall accomplishments thus far.

"The You are EIU' campaign initiative has been successful," she said. "Many generous friends made meaningful contributions to the university, which, in turn, have enhanced the educational experience for all of Eastern's students.

"Our donors' private philanthropy has made a difference by providing an added measure of quality to the already strong excellence provided in all areas of the university."