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NEWS

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For Immediate Release:

EIU FALL ENROLLMENT UP; FRESHMAN CLASS SETS ANOTHER NEW RECORD

CHARLESTON – Official figures released following the 10th day of classes at Eastern Illinois University indicate a total Fall 2003 enrollment of 11,522 – an increase of 359 (3.22 percent) from last year's figure of 11,163.

And, for the second consecutive year, a record was set. A total of 2,927 freshmen enrolled at Eastern this fall, making it the largest freshman class in the university's history. The number represents an increase of 176 over last year's record-breaking 2,751.

An even closer look at freshman numbers shows that Eastern's enrollment management efforts are proving to be successful. Of the 2,927 freshmen, 1,983 are first-time students; the university's goal was 1,950.

The numbers please Interim President Lou Hencken.

"The fact that enrollment went up, along with the increasing academic quality of our new freshmen, is another indication that EIU is a university of choice for many Illinois residents," he said. "One of the top criteria that students use in selecting a college or university to attend is the academic reputation of the institution. All of our faculty and staff members should take pride in the popularity of this institution."

The numbers were especially impressive this year given that Eastern closed freshman applications for the 2003-2004 school year back in February. "We might have received another 500 applications if we hadn't made that decision," Hencken said.

"Two years ago, we sought to restore enrollment levels somewhat," said Blair Lord, provost and vice president of academic affairs. "Obviously, we have been successful.

"Looking ahead, we will be seeking to maintain enrollments at levels appropriate to our capacity. Our actual enrollment of new freshman students this year was very near our desired target."

A breakdown of Eastern's total 2003 student enrollment is as follows: undergraduate students, 9,845 – freshmen, 2,927; sophomores, 1,958; juniors, 2,173; and seniors, 2,787; and graduate students, 1,677. Of the total, 9,542 are full-time and 1,980 are part-time. Also of the total, 4,813 are men and 6,709 are women.

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The number of graduate students attending Eastern increased by 42 (or 2.6 percent) over last fall's enrollment of 1,635. In addition, the number of first-time undergraduate transfer students increased to 1,046, up from 997 in Fall 2002.

And for the fifth consecutive year, the university's minority enrollment also showed an increase. The figure jumped to 1,121 this fall – an increase of 22 – and represents nearly 10 percent (9.73 percent) of total enrollment. The number of international students remained nearly steady at 154 – an increase of six over Fall 2002.

"These positive enrollment results continue to demonstrate that Eastern Illinois University is very favorably viewed by our potential and current students," Lord said. "This is due to the superior quality of the educational experience offered our students which, in turn, is due to the excellent work of our faculty and staff."