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## 03/14/1989 - Rives Gives State Of The University Report

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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

RIVES GIVES STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY REPORT

CHARLESTON, IL.--The State of Illinois cannot continue to make education a lower and lower priority and expect the people of Illinois to prevail in the nation and about the world, said Eastern Illinois University President Dr. Stan Rives during his annual "State of the University" message today (Tuesday, March 14).

Illinois, once a leader in its support of education, continues to rank 42nd among the 50 states in per capita tax support for higher education and 44th among the 50 states in tax support for education based on personal income, Rives said.

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"In the past two years, to make up for inadequate appropriation of tax dollars to higher education, tuition for our students has been increased by 37 percent, significantly above the rate of inflation.

"But no single fact makes the sorry state of support for public education in Illinois clearer than this: In the past decade, the percent of the state's budget devoted to education at all levels has declined from 43 percent to 37 percent," he added.

"I remain convinced that an increase in the state income tax to support education and other vital public services is essential, even if such action is again not in the realm of political probability in this legislative session.

"In my judgment Illinois needs a higher priority for education and it needs tax reform to lessen reliance on the property tax and increase reliance on the fairer income tax to support the public schools," Rives said.

#### Undergraduate Education

In his review of the University's accomplishments, Rives noted that a comprehensive study of undergraduate education at Eastern has resulted in both increased freshman admissions standards and the implementation of a Minority Admissions Program to ensure cultural diversity in Eastern's student body and to meet the University's obligations for expanding minority student educational opportunity.

"Nothing is more important to the substance of Eastern than the quality of our undergraduate program...A great university is defined in large measure by its willingness to involve faculty in definition of future directions, to change when and where necessary, and to give faculty views primacy in the direction of change. How well we are able to do this shall define whether we are truly a university or merely a part of the educational bureaucracy," Rives said.

Rives said significant efforts are also being made toward revising the University's general education program, which includes defining core curriculum criteria for courses meeting the revised general education program requirements.

He re-emphasized that Eastern, the most cost-effective and underfunded of the 12 senior public universities, cannot continue to offer a quality academic program by serving more students with less state support.

To create a better match between the resources available and the number of students served, last Fall, Rives announced a strategic plan for downsizing the University. This will reduce enrollment by 200 students a year for the next five years, with the qualification that significantly improved appropriations would result in re-evaluation of that strategic plan.

#### Campus Development

He said the University is progressing in the area of campus development to meet immediate and future facilities needs.

"Our last major construction project, coal conversion at the Heat Plant, is finally near completion and the Capital Development Board should be turning the facility over to us soon," Rives said.

This academic year the University also initiated three major construction projects including the \$6.2 million Coleman Hall addition to house Eastern's Lumpkin College of Business and the \$2.2 million Phase I of Greek Court to provide campus housing for sororities and fraternities. Construction of an Art Studio facility will begin this Spring. These, he said, constitute an impressive beginning of the task of reshaping the campus to meet Eastern's immediate and future facilities needs.

Eastern has also reached an agreement with the City of Charleston on three street projects; one that will provide additional parking and two others that include the construction of new streets that will provide improved access to the City and the University.

Progress also continues on installation of Eastern's UCAN local area network, a state-of-the-art communications system. The University has also been awarded more than \$1.7 million in state and federal participatory grants in the area of energy conservation.

#### Development Campaigns

In the area of self-development programs, Rives said, "I do not view Eastern becoming the 'Harvard on the Embarras'...We rightly seek to maintain our tradition as a 'public ivy,' a national center for excellence in undergraduate education." He said Miami University of Ohio and the College of William and Mary in Virginia are useful models for Eastern to follow.

Rives said Eastern's Tenth Decade Campaign initiated in 1984 to raise \$5 million in private support in five years has proved to be an unqualified success. In a short period of time, the EIU Foundation nearly tripled its assets and more than quadrupled its endowment. "But it's only a beginning," he said.

"We are just now both employing our first Vice President for Development and completing plans for a more ambitious Second Century Campaign for Eastern. We must act like what we have become, a publicly-assisted rather than a publicly-supported university."

In conclusion, Rives addressed faculty and staff: "I know of no single fact that demonstrates more clearly the growing strength of that reputation (for quiet competence of your university), than the fact that the number of applications we received forced Eastern to close admissions to undergraduates before any other college or university in Illinois, public or private. You have a right to be proud about that fact."