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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE;

LABOR NEGOTIATIONS PROGRESSING

CHARLESTON -- Labor negotiations between the Eastern Illinois University administration and the University Professionals of Illinois (UPI) are progressing smoothly, with a contract agreement expected to be reached by the start of the fall semester.

Eastern's administration and UPI negotiate two separate units of employees covered by the contract, Unit A, which comprises tenured and tenure-track faculty, and Unit B, which includes temporary teaching faculty and academic support professionals. EIU employees represented by UPI total more than 600.

Responsibility for labor negotiations with the UPI shifted to the university administration in January when the BGU was dissolved.

Jeanne Simpson, university contract administrator and chief negotiator for the administration, attributes the progress of the negotiations to the interest-based approach being used to identify priorities for ongoing talks.

"We are receiving very carefully considered, intelligent and creative ways to

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address the issues. Talks have been cordial, reflecting a strong commitment by the parties to develop a contract that fits Eastern and meets its needs," Simpson said.

"At the risk of sounding optimistic, this process of interest-based negotiation works," said Laurent Gosselin, president of the EIU chapter of UPI and professor of family and consumer sciences. "It is efficient and civil. Hopefully, we are redefining labor negotiations at Eastern for the time-being and in the future."

With interest-based negotiation, Simpson said negotiations have advanced much more rapidly than with adversarial bargaining. "To date, we have negotiated about 50 percent of the contract. If we were utilizing adversarial bargaining, we would just now be gearing up for negotiations. We anticipate producing a contract by the beginning of the fall semester, which will be a first," she said.

The negotiating teams, referred to as the "umbrella group," will continue to meet over the summer to finish negotiating the language of the current contract, which expires in August. Early on in the process, the umbrella group identified compensation, Faculty Excellence Awards, distance learning and Step Two of the grievance process as key issues and designated committees to review some of these areas and to make recommendations to both teams.

Under the current agreement, EIU faculty and academic support staff received salary increases averaging 4.3 percent for 1995-96, plus a mid-year increase of .5 percent.

When a new tentative contract is reached, it will have to be ratified by the union membership and approved by the EIU Board of Trustees.