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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

ART TATE, Assistant Director, University Relations
Office: (217) 581-5981 - Home: (217) 348-7553

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April 5, 1988

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU ALUMNUS STRESSES NEED FOR MORE FUNDS FOR EDUCATION

CHARLESTON, IL.--"Next year, without a tax increase, Eastern Illinois University will have to say 'No' to even more students," said EIU alumnus Robert Kovack of Mattoon, one of 11 alumni association representatives who participated in a "fly around" the state Tuesday (April 5) to decry education's financial plight.

Past President of the EIU Alumni Association Kovack said Eastern, which has had no choice in recent years but to decrease enrollment to 10,000, will be forced to cut enrollment back to 9,000 next year unless funding for education is increased.

This year, Eastern closed admission to entering freshmen and transfer students in early December for the Fall 1988 semester.

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"There is no more fat to be cut from the already strained budgets and staff," he said.

"At Eastern, the funding situation is critical," said Kovack, adding that Eastern has been the most underfunded state institution in recent years.

Gov. James R. Thompson has announced that funds for education for fiscal year 1989 will remain at the same level as in FY 1988 and that he intends to veto any increases unless state revenues are enhanced by passage of a modest increase in the state income tax.

Kovack said during appearances in Springfield and Carbondale that Eastern students are learning on yesterday's technology. "Without the money to update laboratory and instructional materials, the students must work with terribly outmoded equipment."

Since the governor's budget for next year provides no funds for salary increases, he predicts faculty and staff will continue to leave Illinois to assume positions in higher paying states.

While Illinois has the ninth highest per capita income in the nation, it ranks 42nd among the 50 states in per capita spending on higher education.

"I am appalled at the contrast," said Kovack, "and without additional revenue for education, Illinois will have to be content as a mediocre state."

"Election year or not, our legislators must provide additional funding support," he added, urging individuals to send the message to their state legislators.

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The "fly around," coordinated by the state universities and financed by the individual alumni associations, is part of an organized effort by public university officials to educate the public about the budget crisis in education.

The plane and its pilots were furnished without cost to the alumni associations or universities. The plane was donated by Charlie Priester of Wheeling.