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NEWS

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For Immediate Release:

MISS BLACK EIU 2003 PAGEANT SET FOR FEB. 22

CHARLESTON – Eastern Illinois University's annual Miss Black EIU Pageant will take place at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22, in the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union's Grand Ballroom.

This year's pageant marks the end of the reign of Kia Che'Vaughn Gowder, a senior psychology major (African-American studies minor) and daughter of Don and LaConna Gowder of Hazel Crest.

Tickets for this year's pageant are available from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at the University Union box office (West Wing, 2nd floor). Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door.

Contestants for the title of Miss Black EIU 2003 are as follows:

- ◆ **Ashayla Scott**, a sophomore management major from Peoria;
- ◆ **Angela Christine Beard**, a freshman communication disorders and sciences major from Phoenix; and
- ◆ **Kaylin Gordon**, a freshman speech communication major from Calumet Park.

The three contestants will be judged in creative expression, talent, African garment and evening gown competitions, as well as their response to an impromptu question.

Contestants compete for scholarships, prizes and special awards, in addition to special recognition awards for Miss Congeniality, Miss Togetherness, Miss Enterprise, Miss Ebony and Miss Scholarship.

Since its inception in 1971, the Miss Black EIU Pageant has become one of Eastern's largest cultural events, paying tribute to African-American women at EIU while instilling a sense of pride, appreciation and cultural awareness in their heritage.

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The public also is invited to attend the Miss Black EIU Coronation Dance, to be held immediately following the pageant. Admission is free with the purchase of a pageant ticket or \$5 at the door.