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05/28/1987 - Affirmative Action Program

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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (May 28, 1987)

CHARLESTON, ILL.--Providing an atmosphere best suited to ensuring equality in education and employment opportunities for all students and personnel is a primary aim of Eastern Illinois University and its affirmative action program, according to Dr. Judy Anderson, Director.

The University is approaching that goal on a multi-faceted front and an example is an upcoming leadership and preparatory camp for minority high school students.

Students attending the second annual camp on June 21-27 will experience college life and participate in activities to develop skills in leadership, communication and study. The camp is also designed to instill in the students confidence in their ability to succeed in a university.

Anderson said "the Office of Continuing Education should be commended for sponsoring this camp because it ties in nicely with the University's determination to promote utilization of the full potential of minority groups."

The Office of Admissions is embarking on an intensive campaign to increase the current 5.4 percentage of minority students. A minority counselor position has been added and the following steps are underway or ready:

Minority students are telephoning prospective students; minority student "rap" sessions will begin next fall between new students and Admissions personnel; a proposal has been made to bring high school

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counselors to campus from minority high schools;

A proposal has been made for minority scholarships; stepped-up attendance by Admissions personnel to minority student college fairs; contact established with the "Upward Bound" project brings groups of minority students to campus; and, student groups will be brought to campus for overnight stays.

A study conducted by Anderson shows that as of the fall semester 1986, 45 percent of full-time employees were female and 4.1 percent were minority group members. During the five-year period 1981-86 the percentage of women increased in all employee categories. In the same span slight gains for minorities have occurred in all but one employee category.

The philosophy behind affirmative action is consistently practiced and kept before the eyes of the University community. In March the second annual affirmative action day was observed. Two \$500 awards, funded by the EIU Foundation, were given to the journalism department and the campus radio and television station "in recognition of their exemplary affirmative action efforts.

The journalism department publishes a minority newsletter and is involved in a number of supportive activities to recruit, graduate and place minority students.

A portion of the award is being used to establish a student chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists on campus. The radio and television center has successfully utilized the talents of women and minority students in all phases of broadcast journalism.

A 1986 winner in the affirmative action day observation, the Women's Study Council, has established an annual writing award for

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scholarly papers incorporating the feminist perspective.

Earlier this year the Career Planning and Placement Center sponsored the second minority-in-residence program. Minority graduates from Eastern with successful careers returned to share their experiences and offer career advice to minority students.

Seven Eastern students have just finished or are beginning minority internships under sponsorship of the Board of Governors of State Colleges and Universities. Placement for these students included the mayor's office in Chicago, the Department of Mental Health in Springfield, and the Coalition Against Domestic Violence in Charleston.

There are, despite advances, concerns in the overall affirmative action picture. Anderson said that "while minorities and women have advanced up through the faculty ranks it is discouraging to note that the number of minorities pursuing advanced degrees, that are necessary for faculty and administrative positions, is declining.

"The fact that this parallels a national trend does not make it less disturbing for a University interested in attracting additional minority faculty and students."