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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EASTERN BOARD ENDORSES INCREASING ADMISSION STANDARDS, DIVERSITY
WITH APPROVAL OF NEW PRIORITIES STATEMENT

CHARLESTON-- Five overriding priorities will guide Eastern Illinois University into the next century after action taken by the Board of Trustees Tuesday via conference call.

After discussion, the board voted to adopt a Fiscal Year 1998 Priorities Statement developed by Eastern President David Jorns and university faculty and staff.

Illinois public universities are asked to submit a statement of priorities to the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) each July 1. The priorities approved by Eastern's board are intended to be accomplished over the next several years.

"These priorities support the university's vision of being a traditional, high quality, residential institution of higher learning," said Jorns. "They focus on expansion, not necessarily of student enrollment, but of academic offerings, fiscal resources, faculty development, services to students and outreach to alumni."

A top priority approved by the board is to revise Eastern's inventory of academic programs. Plans include consolidating selected master's programs into a single degree to allow

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broader preparation of students. Eastern would also pursue IBHE approval of two new degree programs -- one in business and another in the guidance and counseling program. The university would ask for approval of a new option in broadcast journalism and an interdisciplinary minor in nutrition and fitness.

Other priorities are attracting and retaining diverse, highly qualified faculty, staff and students; improving university service and outreach; and increasing university resources.

Objectives identified in the priorities statement include:

- increasing admission standards;
- increasing enrollment in the Honors Programs;
- developing additional alumni chapters across the U.S.;
- improving faculty salaries and access to current computer technology; and
- creating a scholarship program for economically and socially disadvantaged students with ACT scores of 23 and above.