

9-6-1984

09/06/1984 - Marching Blue

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_1984

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "09/06/1984 - Marching Blue" (1984). 1984. 316.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_1984/316

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 1984 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

Sept. 6, 1984
T-C /

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHARLESTON, IL--"Step . . 2 . . . 3 . . . 4 . . . 5 . . . 6 . . . 7 . . 8 - Sound Off!" These commands and many others just like them can be heard every afternoon when the Eastern Illinois University's "Marching Blue" practices its routines in preparation for performances the band gives around the midwest.

The EIU Panther Marching Band performs at half time of every home football game along with showcasing its talents at the Chicago Bears (Sept. 9) and the St. Louis Cardinals (Oct. 14) games this season.

Organizing and preparing the EIU marching band is similar to a collegiate football coach tutoring his players for their weekly contest.

"We begin each week with what I call 'chalk talks'," says second-year marching band director Gregory C. Clemons. "I go over the new formations, music and other odds and ends that may come up during the week. I delegate a lot of my authority to my student assistants because I can't concentrate on every detail that needs to be taken care of."

Clemons has seen quite an increase in interest around the Charleston community in the two short years he has been at EIU. The size of the "Marching Blue" has increased over 25% in the past year to 175 students--including 162 students getting one hour of credit.

"I recruit for the band just like Al Molde (football) or Rick Samuels (basketball)," explains the Marshall, Mo. native. "I go to see high school bands--mostly in a 75-mile radius around Charleston--to see what kind of talent is out there and also who is interested in coming to Eastern. I try to project down the road what my needs will be. Last year I traveled 4,500 miles around the state looking for potential band members."

Since arriving from a four-year stint at Cal. State-Fresno, Clemons has made his presence known around campus. He began an increasingly-popular football game-day event parading the band through the EIU campus and among the "tailgaters" to get the fans "fired up" prior to the game.

"The fans really enjoyed it and it also increased the band's awareness among the students, faculty and fans alike," Clemons says.

"I feel the band is an integral part of collegiate life."

Clemons isn't the only member of the band who exudes enthusiasm and excitement. Senior Scott Hellen, entering his third-year as the "Marching Blue's" drum major, feels his years in the band have been an important part of his collegiate experience. The unusual footnote to Hellen is he is a psychology/sociology major and 75% of the entire band are non-music majors.

"I really enjoy being a member of the band," states Hellen. "It was a great way to meet people and as soon as I joined the band I had over 100 new friends as a freshman. The camaraderie is tremendous."