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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU OFFERS NEW ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

CHARLESTON, IL--To help ensure a positive college experience for Eastern Illinois University students, the faculty and staff have initiated a Student Assistance Program (SAP).

The program aims to promote well-being of students by offering them support and assistance for personal problems, according to Pat Babich-Smith, program coordinator.

SAP volunteers offer assistance and referral to students who may be having difficulty dealing with life adjustments, relationships, alcohol and drugs, eating disorders, nutrition and stress management, Babich-Smith said.

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"The Student Assistance Program is another part of the helping network at Eastern," Babich-Smith explained. "It offers confidential and professional assistance to students who may feel more comfortable going to a faculty or staff member for help."

A Core Committee Member (a faculty or staff member who has been designated to serve as a SAP contact) may be contacted directly by a student seeking help.

During a discussion between the student and the committee member, a plan to solve the problem will be outlined. It may include referral to another source of assistance, such as the University Health Center, Counseling Center or an off-campus resource.

In addition, the Core Committee Member will work with the student until the recommended plan is completed.

"The Core Committee Member's responsibility is to guide students to the appropriate source of assistance rather than to serve as a counselor," Babich-Smith said. "However, these members receive special training and education to help them identify with student problems."

The 16-member Core Committee is advised by Babich-Smith, project coordinator of C.H.A.P.S. (Creating Healthy Attitudes and Peer Support) and Bud Sanders, director of Eastern's Counseling Center.

For more information, students may call Babich-Smith at 581-6913 or Sanders at 581-3413.