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January 6, 1998

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

IBHE APPROVES BUDGET INCREASE FOR EASTERN

CHARLESTON -- Eastern Illinois University has been recommended for the highest increase in new state monies among the 12 Illinois public universities for 1998-99.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education today approved a fiscal year 1999 general funds increase recommendation for Eastern of \$2.8 million, which would boost the university's total appropriated funds budget to \$44,707,800 for the next fiscal year, beginning July 1. Last fall, the Eastern Board of Trustees had asked for an increase of \$4.4 million.

Eastern was recommended for the highest general funds appropriation increase at 6.8 percent, with the next highest recommendations going to Chicago State and Northeastern Illinois universities at 6 percent each. The total general funds increase recommended by the IBHE for Illinois public universities is 4.5 percent.

In addition, Eastern projects it will collect \$23.7 million in tuition and fees for FY 1999, reflecting an increase in its income fund of almost \$1.4 million, or 6.1 percent over the current fiscal year. This would bring Eastern's total FY 1999 appropriated and income funds operating budget to \$68.4 million -- a \$4.2 million, or 6.5 percent increase. Eastern had requested a \$5.7 million, or 8.9 percent increase.

Eastern President David Jorns said, "Eastern's success as an institution is reflected in the BHE's FY 1999 budget recommendation for the university -- the highest general funds increase recommendation among all state public universities. This recommendation, if adopted by the governor and the General Assembly, will be a step toward moving Eastern's per-student funding closer to that of comparable public universities in Illinois."

The IBHE budget proposal funds average FY 1999 employee salary increases of 3 percent. During the last several years, Eastern has reallocated money internally from other areas of the budget, including equipment and operating expenses, to supplement the state-funded salary increase monies.

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“While the recommended increase would provide funding to allow employee salaries to keep pace with inflation next year, a top budgetary concern for Eastern will remain improving salary levels relative to our peer institutions,” Jorns said.

The increase recommended for Eastern also would provide \$99,200 (a 10 percent increase) to purchase new library materials; \$1.1 million for increased academic base support; \$784,000 to add tenure-track faculty and improve faculty and staff salaries; \$415,500 to replace and enhance technology; and \$365,000 to help address Eastern’s deferred maintenance backlog on its facilities.

The IBHE recommended a FY 1999 capital budget of \$5.3 million for Eastern that would provide \$3 million for new equipment for Booth Library (ranked 26th on the IBHE’s capital priority list) and \$1.3 million for environmental health and safety projects (ranked 18th on the IBHE’s list). Funding for these two capital improvement projects is uncertain, as the IBHE’s ranking of these requests would require a total FY 1999 higher education capital budget allocation of over \$165 million.

The IBHE also recommended \$564,100 in capital renewing funding for Eastern including \$414,100 for replacing windows in Blair Hall and \$150,000 for upgrading the campus compressed air system. Capital renewal funding is used for repair and maintenance of existing campus facilities. Another \$465,300 was recommended for technology infrastructure improvements. Six Eastern capital project requests, totaling \$5.7 million, were not recommended for funding. Funding for the \$17 million Booth Library renovation project construction was approved last month during a special legislative session.

Under the IBHE recommendations approved today, another \$16 million in grants would be available to Illinois public and private colleges and universities to provide campus connections to the IBHE-endorsed Illinois Century Network. This network, if implemented, would establish a high-speed communications network that eventually would link every college and university in the state, elementary and secondary schools, public libraries and state agencies. These funds will be distributed by the IBHE in the form of grants.

The IBHE will forward its higher education budget to the governor who will make his FY 1999 budget recommendations to the General Assembly in mid-February.

In other business, the IBHE recommended that Eastern receive \$30,000 in federal grant funding for its new Mathematics for the 21st Century program, and \$37,000 in continuing funding for its Earth Systems Education and Illinois Ecosystems program.

Funding for these projects is through the Dwight D. Eisenhower Professional Development Program which supports the training and retraining of elementary and secondary mathematics and science teachers. The IBHE is designated by the governor to administer the higher education

portion of the federal grant program.

The IBHE also presented the report "Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletic Programs at Illinois Public Universities." State statute requires the IBHE to report every two years to the governor and the General Assembly on the use of tuition waivers and progress in achieving gender equity in intercollegiate athletics.

The report shows Eastern issued 98 gender equity waivers worth \$191,900 to female athletes in eight different sports during the two-year period FY 1996 and FY 1997.

It also indicates that since FY 1995, the number of men participating in intercollegiate athletics at Illinois public universities has remained relatively constant, increasing by eight, or 0.4 percent, while women participating in intercollegiate athletics have grown by 279, or 26.9 percent.

The largest increase in participation occurred at Eastern where the number of female athletes increased by 120, or 116.5 percent, as a result of the introduction of both women's golf and soccer and increasing participants in ongoing sports, particularly track and cross country.