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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SPECIAL DEGREE PROGRAM

CHARLESTON, IL-For adults interested in earning a college degree, Eastern Illinois University offers a special program.

The Board of Governors Bachelor of Arts degree program at Eastern is one of five in the state under the Board of Governors jurisdiction.

It offers greater educational flexibility for adults who must combine college work with career and family responsibilities.

Dr. Shirley W. Neal, Director of the BOG/BA program at Eastern, identified three specific features of the program which are designed to appeal to the interests and needs of adult learners.

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SPECIAL DEGREE

They are: assessment of prior college-level learning through portfolio evaluation, acceptance of an individualized course of study in lieu of a traditional major, and a minimal fifteen semester hour residency requirement, in place of the usual forty-two semester hours required in traditional programs.

She says adults who have moved often as a result of career relocation find these three features particularly advantageous. Men and women employed in the communities surrounding Eastern Illinois University who have acquired substantial college credit prior to enrolling in the BOG/BA degree program typically combine transfer credit, credit earned through portfolio evaluation, and credit earned by taking EIU courses in the completion of their degree requirements.

Enrollment in the BOG/BA degree program at Eastern currently stands at 1,000, while systemwide the program has an enrollment of 11,000. Since 1973, 1,460 adults have received the BOG/BA degree from Eastern; systemwide, 7,500 have graduated from the program.

The program enrolls slightly more men than women and minority enrollment in the systemwide program is "very healthy," Neal said. At Eastern, minority enrollment in the BOG/BA program is comparable to the national average of minority enrollment at colleges and universities.

She says 36 is the average age of BOG/BA students, whom she described as having "greater motivation and maturity than

when they were younger." "Generally speaking," she said, "they do excellent work."

In addition to individual requests for program information, companies often call and ask for presentations about the program for the benefit of their employees, Neal said.

"Through our students, we are serving such fields as business, health, law enforcement, fire protection, and social agencies," she said, "and the BOG/BA program also provides an avenue for educational advancement for employees of elementary and secondary schools as well as those of colleges and universities in the area."

Neal noted that BOG/BA students and graduates represent nearly all professional fields and most are employed in the communities of east central Illinois. A high percentage of graduates receive career promotions and a majority go on to complete graduate degrees, she said.

Since 1983, when the BOG/BA degree program was cited in the G. Theodore Mitau Award brochure for excellence in innovation and change in higher education by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, it has served as a model for similar programs at other universities in the nation.

Neal said she has received requests from all over the world for information about the program, adding that, "like other programs at Eastern, the BOG/BA program receives far more applications for admission than can be accepted."

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SPECIAL DEGREE

Dr. Robert Kindrick, EIU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, is Eastern's member of the Steering Committee which oversees the systemwide BOG/BA degree program. Dr. Robert A. Pringle, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in the Systems Office in Springfield, chairs the Steering Committee for the BOG/BA degree.