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September 29, 1993

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

OCR REPS VISIT EASTERN

CHARLESTON, IL--Four representatives from the U.S. Education Department's Office for Civil Rights in Chicago are on the Eastern Illinois University campus this week to gather information for a gender equity review of EIU sports programs.

Eastern was notified in February of this year that it had been selected at random by the OCR to see if its sports programs comply with federal laws against sexual discrimination.

OCR is in charge of enforcing Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the law that bars sex discrimination at educational institutions that receive federal aid.

The OCR review team arrived on campus Monday and has met with Eastern President David Jorns; EIU Athletic Director Mike Ryan and Acting Director of Affirmative Action Cynthia Nichols, who are coordinating the university's response to the OCR review; and Patricia Rea, assistant vice chancellor for legal and student affairs at the Board of Governors Universities.

They will conclude their visit Thursday afternoon, after having met with members of the EIU athletic administration, head coaches, selected assistant coaches and student athletes, sports

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information staff and student affairs personnel.

"The purpose of these meetings will be to answer questions about the review, gather information about the administration of EIU's intercollegiate athletic programs and establish a time frame for the study," Ryan said.

He added, "We are cooperating fully with OCR officials to ensure that we are running our sports programs in a way that is in the best interest of our student body."

Some things the OCR review team will be looking for are whether athletic financial assistance is allocated in proportion to the numbers of male and female participants in the intercollegiate programs as a whole; that male and female participants are being provided with equal benefits, opportunities and treatment; and that the athletic interests and abilities of men and women be accommodated to the same degree, with respect to participation opportunities, team competition levels and the selection of sports offered.

The review team will base its findings on a self-study prepared by Eastern for OCR and from on-campus interviews. OCR is not expected to issue its findings before January 1, 1994.

Jorns said, "While we cannot speculate what the outcome of the review will be, we maintain that Eastern is committed to the spirit of compliance with Title IX. We will, however, continue to closely monitor gender equity in intercollegiate athletics."

The president has appointed a self-study committee on gender

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OCR VISIT

equity in athletics to examine the role of athletics and gender equity issues at Eastern and make recommendations.

"The work of this committee will complement the OCR review and their recommendations will be integrated into the university's strategic plan," Jorns said.