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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION TRAINING

CHARLESTON, IL--Although the Senate hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court put the subject of sexual harassment in the national spotlight, Eastern Illinois University had initiated a series of seminars on the subject months before the hearings.

"I believe we are ahead of the game on the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace," said Judith Anderson, Eastern's director of Affirmative Action and Cultural Diversity.

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In August, Anderson was asked by Eastern President Stan Rives to initiate a proactive educational program on sexual harassment for administrators, faculty and staff.

In September, the first in a series of approximately 60 training sessions was held for Rives, his key administrators and the individuals who report to them, and the Council of Deans.

"The sessions are intended to inform individuals about Eastern's policy prohibiting sexual harassment and to let them know what their responsibilities are in handling and preventing sexual harassment matters and what action they can take if they are victims of sexual harassment," Anderson said.

The sessions also cover the legal ramifications of and definitions associated with sexual harassment, provide the guidelines for determining the difference between friendly behavior and subtle sexual harassment, and show how individuals can stop sexual harassment, she explained.

Meetings are scheduled this month and in November for the deans and department chairs in each college. Faculty in each department are scheduled to receive training in December. Supervisory and civil service employees will be trained at a later date.

"This is by far the most comprehensive effort to date to inform the campus community about sexual harassment. We have taken a systematic approach to assure that everyone receives training," Anderson said.