

**EIU Annuitants Association Chapter Meeting**  
**Zoom meeting**  
**Thursday, Feb. 24, 2022**

Past President Richard Wandling, Wendy Long, Gary Aylesworth, Amy Lynch, Mary Ann Hanner, Secretary John Ryan, Peter Andrews, Billie Rawlings, Marita Metzke, Nora Pat Small, Kathy Reed. Fourteen members and three speakers were present.

**Call to Order**

Past President Rich Wandling called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

**Meeting minutes**

Minutes of the Oct. 7, 2021 chapter meeting were approved. Lynch moved/Hanner seconded.

**Treasurer's Report**

Wandling said EIUAA ended the year with \$4,303.16 in the bank after putting \$3,000 in the scholarship fund during the year and donating \$1,000 to the SUAA Legal Fund. Small moved/Rawlings seconded a motion to approve the report.

**Membership:**

Ryan reported EIUAA has 586 members, down two members from December. He said it continues the trend of a slowly dwindling membership. The Board discussed ways to increase membership.

**Scholarship**

Wandling reported for Nancy Dole. He urged members to encourage members to have students apply for the \$1,000 scholarship before the March deadline. Applications can be made online. The corpus stands at \$22,990.79 and growing.

**Legislative**

Wandling said the compressed legislative session will conclude in early April so that legislators can campaign for the June primary and fall election. Gov. J.B. Pritzker has submitted a budget with proposal of adding \$500 million to unfunded pension debt. Also, he has proposed a 5 percent hike in higher education and a \$120 million boost to MAP grants for a total of \$208 million increase in higher ed.

**Communications**

Long encouraged members to contribute to the newsletter, which will be published the end of spring. Wandling encouraged people to use EIUAA's Facebook page to post news that can later be included in the newsletter.

**Nominations:**

Wandling said come this summer the board will determine vacancies that will occur in the fall and create a list of candidates to join the board.

## **Chapter Program:**

Josh Norman, associated vice president for enrollment management gave an enrollment management update:

Enrollment at universities and colleges has declined nationally by 910,000 in the last five years. In Illinois, enrollment has dropped by 40,000 with the majority of the decline occurring at the community college level. It has been very significant the last two years during the corona virus outbreak.

Eastern has made some gains following a 10-year slide in enrollment that ended in 2018. In 2020, Eastern's enrollment was 8,626 with the freshman class being larger than previous two years.

"I've been really happy with our results over the last five years," Norman said.

Twelve percent of the college-bound students have migrated from Illinois in the last 10 years. Chicago collar counties students have been the majority of those students. The cause: out-of-state schools have been recruiting and marketing that area.

"Everybody is trying harder to get the same student population," Norman said.

After the 2008 recession, fewer children were born nationally. That decrease will affect enrollments, beginning after 2025.

Private colleges are discounting tuition rates just to survive. Neighboring state universities are doing the same. The market is getting tougher to compete in.

Colleges are going to be impacted. Eastern must recruit and market itself to continue to grow.

Norman said the university does strategic planning annually and has to be competitive while retaining students.

Marketing is important piece of any plan. Eastern is relying on marketing via the Internet and social networks because it doesn't have the manpower to do physical visits, mailings, etc.

For the Fall 2022 semester admits are up 50 percent; deposits are up 18 percent; and Presidential scholars are up 16 percent. However, transfer admissions are down 16 percent. Graduate School enrollment is doing well. Eastern currently has 500 international student from 52 countries.

The university is working to retain students – both freshman and transfer students. Through a new mentoring program, 45 mentors are working with 141 freshman, 79 percent of whom are first generation and under represented students. The students live in residential housing and meet together for meals. “It’s an incredible community producing incredible results. This program is making a difference with a large number of students. We plan to continue growing it in the future.”

Q: Aylesworth: of the 8,608 students, 2600 high school students are taking dual credit. Why include them in enrollment figures?

A. They are enrolled at the university. Eastern faculty are teaching the classes. They pay half the tuition. It’s an incredible recruitment effort. The figure includes northern Illinois students, too. Norman said surveys showed students thought EIU was going to close. This helped change that notion. “Our smallest freshman classes were in 2016 and 2017 because of that.” This helped change the narrative, he said.

Q. Ryan: how many students are traditional on campus students?

A. The data is out there on EIU’s Web page. Right now, there are 3,335 off-campus students this spring 3,335 and 4,388 on campus.

B. Beth Gillespie and Crystal Brown from the EIU Food Pantry, office of civic engagement and volunteerism.

Gillespie said without enough food students are not going to be able to do well in the classroom. Students not having access to food is a problem. From 2017-2020, nearly 40 percent of students were food insecure. This is not a trend unique to EIU. These are national norms.

So the university began a campus food pantry. Students are eligible to come to the food pantry twice a month and get enough for nine meals. “We know students are living paycheck to paycheck,” Brown said.

The food pantry’s goal for 2022 is to see 50 unique students a week. Open since Oct. 1, the food pantry has served 690 students so far. Through Feb. 23, the majority of the students have been unique visits. They come just once.

Students are asked to fill out a survey. Of those surveyed, 28 percent are first generation college students; 28 percent are persons of color; 33 percent are international students; 50 percent say being hungry is a distraction in class; 50 percent live off campus.

Volunteers power the food pantry, Brown said. First semester statistics show 140 students served 279 hours at the pantry. It’s a good experience for the students that volunteer, she said. “Having other students there taking care of them makes place secure and welcoming.”

The cost so far. The Alumni Association provided \$5,000 to open the pantry. Faculty, staff and community members raised more than \$12,000, also. "We are going through the money a little faster than anticipated," Brown said. The pantry has spent 6,000 on food so far. The group is working with the Eastern Illinois Food Bank and others to get as much free food as possible. Through a food drive, the pantry received 3,043 pounds in canned food. "It was well received and appreciated."

Q: Wandling: Is there an opportunity for retired staff members to volunteer.

A. Yes and groups, too.

The food pantry is open five days a week, two hours at a time. Afternoons are best for students. Two to three volunteers work per shift. It is located on the garden level of McAfee Gym near the elevator.

The pantry does get food from EIU Food Bank. Money goes farther through the food bank. Some items the food pantry has to purchase locally. The pantry is working on getting donations from Walmart and Aldi's. and is finalizing its partnership with the Food Bank. "Hopefully then we can tap into the grants," Brown said.

Anyone can donate through the EIU Foundation and earmark the donation for the food pantry. People can donate through the food pantry's web site.

Motion to adjourn. Rawlings/Long.