

Board of Trustees

600 Lincoln Avenue
Charleston, Illinois 61920-3099

Office: (217) 581-2011
Fax: (217) 581-2490



To: University Community

From: Board of Trustees, Eastern Illinois University

Subject: 2023-2024 Performance Evaluation – President Jay Gatrell

I am pleased to submit this evaluation of President Jay Gatrell for the 2023–2024 academic year. Under his leadership, Eastern Illinois University has made significant strides in institutional growth, financial stability, academic innovation, and community engagement.

President Gatrell has effectively guided the implementation of PLAN 2028, EIU’s strategic roadmap, with measurable progress across all pillars. The university achieved record international and graduate student enrollments, contributing to a strong financial position. Budget surplus allowed for increased reserves and strategic reinvestments in technology and deferred maintenance. Notably, the early retirement of the textbook rental bond resulted in cost savings and reduced fees for students.

Academically, EIU launched new “learn & earn” BAAS degrees and expanded its MA in Teaching programs. Investments in high-impact practices and redesigned gateway courses reflect a strong commitment to student success. The completion of the Student Parent Hub and the Equity & Diversity Plan further demonstrate EIU’s dedication to inclusive excellence.

President Gatrell has also strengthened EIU’s external partnerships and fundraising efforts. The university secured transformational gifts, including a \$54 million IDPH contract and a \$1 million sponsorship from Sarah Bush Lincoln. The 2024 Giving Day set new records in donor participation and funds raised.

In athletics, EIU celebrated a standout year, earning the OVC All-Sport Commissioner’s Cup and the Sportsmanship Award. Student athletes continued to excel both on the field and in the classroom.

Leadership transitions were handled with transparency and strategic foresight. Key appointments included a new Provost, VP for University Advancement, and the university's first Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer. President Gatrell also addressed long-standing interim roles and enhanced Title IX compliance through staffing and policy improvements.

In summary, President Gatrell's performance in AY 2023–2024 reflects a deep commitment to institutional excellence, student achievement, and collaborative leadership. His efforts have positioned EIU for continued success in a dynamic higher education environment.

Sincerely,

Chris Hicks
Chair, EIU Board of Trustees