

## Board of Trustees

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**To:** University Community

**From:** Board of Trustees, Eastern Illinois University

**Date:** June 19, 2025

**Subject:** Performance Evaluation – President Jay Gatrell

### Evaluation Summary

President Jay Gatrell has demonstrated exceptional leadership during a particularly challenging period for higher education. He continues to lead Eastern Illinois University (EIU) with energy, vision, and a deep commitment to the institution's mission and values. Feedback from internal and external stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive, with consistent admiration for his ability to manage diverse responsibilities while remaining approachable, strategic, and student-focused.

### Key Strengths

- **Leadership and Vision**  
President Gatrell brings tremendous energy to his role and maintains a clear and forward-thinking vision for EIU's future. His leadership is widely described as innovative, collaborative, and inclusive. He effectively balances multiple interests and responsibilities while staying aligned with the university's mission.
- **Communication and Transparency**  
The President is consistently communicative with both the Board and campus community. He maintains regular updates via email and public channels and is known for his approachable, responsive, and transparent leadership style.
- **Faculty and Student Engagement**  
Faculty respect for President Gatrell remains high. He has fostered a collaborative and inclusive campus culture, while his student-focused approach continues to enrich the overall campus experience.
- **Fiscal Responsibility**  
His decision to forgo a salary increase during an uncertain economic environment reflects strong fiscal awareness and solidarity.
- **Community Presence**  
President Gatrell's active involvement in local civic organizations, including the Rotary Club

and Scouting America, enhances EIU's visibility and reputation. Public feedback on his community engagement and speaking appearances is consistently positive.

### **Areas for Continued Focus**

- **Strategic Board Collaboration**  
The Board encourages continued dialogue and collaboration around budget planning, infrastructure challenges, and external advocacy efforts.
- **Financial and Legislative Advocacy**  
The landscape of government funding and international student recruitment remains dynamic. Continued legislative engagement and proactive financial advocacy are essential.
- **Fundraising and Donor Relations**  
While the President is highly effective in public engagement, the Board supports expanding his direct involvement in donor cultivation and long-term philanthropic efforts.
- **Well-being and Sustainability**  
The Board recognizes the demands of the presidency and encourages the President to prioritize personal well-being to sustain long-term effectiveness in leadership.

### **Overall Assessment**

President Gatrell's performance exceeds expectations. He leads with integrity, clarity, and resilience. His values are well aligned with EIU's mission, and his leadership is respected across the university and broader community. The Board remains confident in his ability to guide EIU forward through evolving challenges and opportunities.

### **Closing Notes**

The Board of Trustees extends its sincere appreciation to President Gatrell for his continued service and dedication. We look forward to supporting his leadership and vision in strategic planning, fiscal stewardship, and student success in the year ahead.