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March 31, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ANIMATION BENEFITS EIU STUDENTS, COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

CHARLESTON -- "Mr. Smith, I've shrunk your warehouse."

Thanks to a generous \$250,000 software grant from the PROMODEL Corporation of Michigan, computer and operations management students at Eastern Illinois University will soon learn to shrink warehouses, restaurants -- almost every kind of business imaginable -- to fit the size of a computer screen.

Imagine a tiny little warehouse, with tiny little cranes moving tiny little boxes of freight to tiny little waiting semis -- all taking place right in front of your eyes.

But there's nothing tiny or insignificant about the purpose of these computerized simulations. In fact, they can serve a mighty big function in helping businesses determine more effective means of operation.

According to Scott Lloyd, Ph.D., the EIU professor to be credited for receiving the PROMODEL grant, owners/managers can input varying information -- the number of employees on one shift, for example -- and see for themselves, through computer simulation, how the new conditions would affect production. In addition to actually

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"seeing" the new number of employees at work, for example, they could, with a click of a mouse or the push of a key, obtain a computer-generated analysis of the effectiveness of the proposed change(s).

In short, the program allows businesses to evaluate alternative operating scenarios, then charts scenario statistics on the same graph in order to clearly determine the best alternative.

Lloyd said conditions of the PROMODEL software grant provide Eastern with a network site license for 40 copies of the simulation software, plus a "stand-alone professor's version." The total commercial value -- \$250,000 -- represents PROMODEL's largest grant ever given to a university.

In return, Eastern must offer its students a graduate or undergraduate class in simulation at least every other year. Lloyd said he expects the course to be offered each fall, beginning this year, and looks forward to teaching the advanced level course, titled "Systems Simulation."

"This is a great opportunity for students to be trained in state-of-the-art technology," said Yunus Kathawala, chair of Eastern's computer and operations management department. He added that the software will also be used to train and assist local businesses.

The terms of the grant call for a tutorial class for local area businesses to be scheduled at least once a year. Marilyn DeRuiter, director of Eastern's Business and

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ANIMATION

Technology Institute, said a PROMODEL demonstration is planned for Wednesday, May 14, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

"The Business and Technology Institute at Eastern Illinois University is extremely pleased to work with Dr. Lloyd in bringing simulation and training programs to our area," DeRuiter said. "His grant enables us to offer training and consulting services to business and industry using PROMODEL simulation software. Since simulation training and consulting has not been available through the Business and Technology Institute until now, this is a unique opportunity to take advantage of training and consulting with an expert like Dr. Lloyd."

Those interested in the May 14 demonstration should phone (217) 581-2913 for details.