



Eastern Connecticut State University

# NEWS

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Eastern President Inspires December Graduates**

**Willimantic, Conn.** – The number of December graduates at Eastern Connecticut State University has grown steadily over the years. Many students leave Connecticut after graduation and are unable to participate in the May Commencement ceremonies. To recognize their accomplishments in a public gathering and provide them with the opportunity to visit with their professors, friends, and family, Eastern hosted a reception on Dec. 11 to honor 315 December graduates in the Betty R. Tipton Room of the Student Center.

President Elsa M. Nuñez congratulated the graduates, acknowledging “how rough the road can be without the support of parents and friends who love you.” She encouraged the graduates to be sensitive to the plight of other human beings, noting the two and a half million homeless children who live in the United States and the billions of dollars being spent on the war in Iraq. She said individuals who care about other people can make a difference.

“The head of the soup kitchen here in Willimantic graduated from Yale and could work anywhere, but he’s worried about families that don’t have a shelter or food to eat, so he spends his day making sure 50 to 200 low-income families have enough to eat each day.”

Nuñez cited 89-year-old Charles Prewitt, professor emeritus, who spearheaded the creation of a peace studies minor at Eastern because of his desire to teach young people his core value of peace. She encouraged students to be centered in their moral certitude; focused on things that make them happy; and fortified by their belief in themselves.

“Be centered like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Caesar Chavez. These great men believed in something and took the people and their nations to greater heights. If you do what makes you happy, the money will come. Stay fixed on knowing that you have a contribution to make. If you do, it will take you a long way.”

Nunez told the graduates that the Eastern family celebrates their accomplishments. “You have a home here. We are proud of you. Your stay here is not over. This is just the beginning of our relationship with you for many years to come!”

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Eastern Connecticut State University is part of the Connecticut State University (CSU) system and is the state’s public liberal arts university. ECSU serves more than 5,000 students each year on its Willimantic campus.