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## **Irwin Chosen as New Dean of EIU's College of Arts and Humanities**

*Jan-20-2010*

The newly named dean of Eastern Illinois University's College of Arts and Humanities looks forward to promoting what she's considered her "academic home" for the past 15-plus years.

Bonnie Irwin arrived on the EIU campus in 1994, working her way up to be a full professor of English before being named dean of Eastern's Honors College in 2004. She will assume her new role on July 1.

In addition to English, the college houses the departments of art, communication studies, foreign languages, history, journalism, music, philosophy and theatre arts; the African-American studies, social science and women's studies programs; and the Table Arts Center.

"Dr. Irwin has a strong record of leadership and accomplishment at Eastern Illinois University," said Blair Lord, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "She is a highly regarded faculty member and, more recently, administrator for the university, bringing excellent credentials and a long list of accomplishments to this new position. I look forward to working with her to assist this already excellent college in achieving even greater levels of acclaim in the years ahead."

Irwin's appointment was preceded by a national search. Lord recognized the search advisory committee for its efforts, stating that "committee members identified six well-qualified candidates for consideration for this important leadership position, and I thank them for a job well done."

Irwin, who received her own higher education from the University of California, Berkeley, has been recognized by many as an energetic and creative administrator during her time at Eastern, and is credited with introducing several new programs within the university for the benefit of all students.

In addition to securing campus membership in the National Student Exchange and institutional affiliation with The Washington Center, both of which provide opportunities for EIU students to study at institutions elsewhere in the country, Irwin influenced and increased the numbers of honors students studying abroad.

She played a pivotal role in the establishment of EIU Reads, a freshman reading program which has engaged students (as well as nearly 100 faculty and staff as facilitators), and also worked to raise the profile of undergraduate research, scholarship and creative activity on campus. Irwin is credited with initiating the Student Expo for Undergraduate Research, now an annual event on the EIU campus.

Additionally, she was named Eastern's first Faculty Laureate in 1998 and, as such, became the university's first official spokesman on the importance of a general, liberal arts education.

When she assumes the role of dean of EIU's College of Arts and Humanities, Irwin will be replacing James Johnson, who retired at the end of June 2009. Jeffrey Lynch is serving as interim dean during the 2009-2010 school year.

Lord said he will now turn his attention to identifying appropriate leadership for the Honors College given Irwin's impending reassignment.