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## **Obia Named Interim Dean of EIU's College of Sciences**

*Apr-01-2011*

Godson C. Obia, associate dean of the College of Sciences and professor of geography at Eastern Illinois University, will assume the role of interim dean when Mary Anne Hanner retires, effective June 30, 2011.

"Dr. Obia brings a wealth of experience in the dean's office, as well as a distinguished record as a faculty member," said Blair Lord, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "He knows the college well, its recent history, its programs, as well as its members. I look forward to working with him in the coming year to lead the college and be an effective member of the Academic Affairs leadership team."

Obia, who has been at EIU since 1994, has more than 22 years of college teaching and administrative experience, including 10 years as associate dean. Before coming to EIU, he taught for seven years at the University of Nebraska, Kearney, where he reached the rank of associate professor and earned tenure before moving to his current position.

He earned tenure and was promoted to full professor before he moved into administrative duties as associate dean at Eastern. He has received achievement and contribution awards for teaching, research and service at EIU, and a teaching excellence award from the Association of American Geographers. He served on Eastern's Council on Academic Affairs before joining the dean's office.

"I consider it an honor to be called upon to serve Eastern in the capacity as interim dean of the College of Sciences," Obia said. "I am looking forward to working with our excellent faculty and staff to sustain a dynamic learning environment that prepares our students to become responsible global citizens. I feel fortunate to be asked to lead the college at a time of great strategic interest in constructing a new science building and renovating existing science facilities."

Obia holds his bachelor's degree from the University of Nigeria, a master's from the University of Toronto, and a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. He has taught courses in environmental, economic, world regional, cultural and African geography, as well as an interdisciplinary course on global threats and problems.

Obia also has conducted and presented research on topics such as farm bankruptcy, brain drain and African development, African agricultural development, rural land use and development, environmental resource management and watershed management. He has published the results of his research in journals and books such as *Small Farm Advocate*, *Journal of Third World Studies*, *Papers of the Applied Geography Conferences*, *Platte Valley Review*, *Platte River Atlas*, *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century African History*, *Proceedings of the Small City and Regional Development*, *Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa*, and *Beyond the Veil: Some Misconceptions About African Development*.

He is a member of several professional and civic organizations, including the Association of American Geographers and the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences. He and wife, Nnenna, have four children.

Lord said the university will conduct a national search for a permanent dean in the coming academic year.