

10-4-2011

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### Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "10/04/2011 - Journalism Department Host Reaccreditation Site Team.pdf" (2011). 2011. 64.

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## **EIU Journalism Department to Host Reaccreditation Site Team**

*Oct-04-2011*

The Eastern Illinois University Department of Journalism will host four representatives from the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Oct. 9-12 as it seeks national reaccreditation.

In preparation for the visit, journalism faculty members prepared a comprehensive self-study that has been sent to each member of the evaluation team, according to James Tidwell, chair of the department.

The process takes place every six years. The EIU program was first accredited in 1982 and reaccredited in 1988, 1994, 2000 and 2006. ACEJMC currently accredits 111 programs in journalism and mass communications.

"We think national accreditation is very important," Tidwell said. "It demonstrates that we meet strict standards for journalism education established by knowledgeable academics and media and public relations professionals. It makes it easier to sell our program to potential students and their parents and to promote our students with potential employers."

While on campus, the site team members will inspect facilities and equipment; visit classes; and meet with faculty members, students, administrators and representatives from other university departments. The team will present its report and recommendations to EIU President William Perry on the last day of their visit.

The site team report will then be considered by the ACEJMC Accrediting Committee at its meeting in Chicago in March. The entire council will make the final decision when it meets in Washington, D.C., in April.

The council, along with its accrediting committee, is made up academics from a number of educational organizations, along with members representing such groups as the American Society of News Editors, the Newspaper Association of America, the Radio-Television Digital News Association, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Public Relations Society of American and the American Advertising Federation.

Tidwell said the accreditation process focuses on nine standards established by ACEJMC: mission, governance and administration; curriculum and instruction; diversity and inclusiveness; full-time and part-time/adjunct faculty; scholarship: research, creative and professional activity; student services: resources, facilities and equipment; professional and public service; and assessment of learning outcomes.

Ann Brill, dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas, is the chair of the EIU site team. Other members are Phillip Jeter, chair of the Department of Mass Communications at Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina; Charlyne Berens, associate dean of the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; and Merrill Rose, an independent communications consultant in New York City.