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EIU Journalism Department Recommended for Reaccreditation

Oct-19-2011

A four-person on-site evaluation team representing the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication has recommended that the EIU Department of Journalism be reaccredited.

During the campus visit Oct. 9-12, the evaluation team inspected facilities and equipment; visited classes; and met with faculty members, students, administrators and representatives from other university departments.

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

The self-study and the evaluation team's work centers around nine standards: mission, governance and administration; curriculum and instruction; diversity and inclusiveness; full-time and part-time faculty; scholarship: research, creative and professional activity; student services; resources, facilities and equipment; professional and public service; and assessment of learning outcomes.

The team found the department in compliance with all nine standards.

The report will now go to the ACEJMC Accrediting Committee when it meets April 17-18 in Chicago. Final approval rests with the full council when it meets April 27-28 in Washington, D.C.

Tidwell said 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.

The site team's report praised the faculty members for significantly increasing their level of research/creative activity since the last accrediting visit in 2005, according to Tidwell. He said the report noted several other strengths of the program:

- "Students, faculty and others on campus all praise the warm and close relationships between faculty and students and the way that relationship enhances learning."
- "Assessment practices are firmly established, and the faculty uses the assessment results to change and improve classes and the overall program."
- "The unit does an admirable amount of service work, including its support of scholastic journalism throughout the state of Illinois and the nation."
- "Students have many opportunities for working on award-winning campus media."
- "Facilities are better than those at many larger schools. The campus continues to invest technology resources in the unit."

ACEJMC 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.

Ann Brill, dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas, was chair of the EIU site team. Other members were 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.