

The Journalist

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Newsletter for Journalism Majors

Road to Re-accreditation

By Angie Faller

Judgment has been passed, and Eastern's journalism department has been recommended for re-accreditation by the on-site evaluation team. But the final word on the department's re-accreditation will not be released until May 2006.

"The re-accreditation process provides a standard for which all people can know if this is an accredited school," Dan Lattimore, chair of the site team and dean of extended programs at the University of Memphis, said. "People know this is what you get."

The journalism department was first accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC) in 1982, and the re-accreditation cycle runs every six years. Only 107 senior institutions in the country with journalism departments are accredited by ACEJMC.

The re-accreditation process began one year ago with an exhaustive departmental self-study that filled two volumes. Five journalism professionals and professors were chosen from across the country by the executive secretary of ACEJMC to read the self-study and conduct an on-site evaluation of the department.

Lattimore, who has been a member of ACEJMC for 15 years, said

that he only participates in site evaluations once or twice a year, and that the team members are only together for one evaluation.

"The school is given a list of team members and have the option to veto a member," Lattimore said.

The team members had a hectic schedule when they visited Eastern from Sunday, Oct. 16 to Wednesday, Oct. 19. The visit began with dinner with James Tidwell, acting chair of the journalism department, Sunday night and ended with the presentation of the team's report to Tidwell Wednesday morning.

"They visited classes, talked to faculty members privately and met with students," Tidwell said. "The team said that everyone they talked to was very supportive of the program."

The team met with 10 students in a forum open to all journalism students Monday, Oct. 17 at 11 a.m., and met with students in specific concentrations at 3 p.m. The team asked the students questions about internship opportunities, guest speakers, ethics, diversity, courses, concentrations, faculty, advising, technology and student media opportunities.

Tiffany Kochanski, a senior journalism major, attended the 11 a.m. session.

"It was interesting to evaluate our own professors," Kochanski said. "It was a good learning experience."

The re-accreditation team also sought the opinions of people outside the journalism department. They talked to journalism alumni, employers and internship providers.

"On Monday, the team had lunch with 20 people outside of the program who have knowledge of our journalism program," Tidwell said.

Some of the luncheon attendees included the chair of political science, the athletic director and dean of the honors college.

The re-accreditation team produced a 36-page report. Tidwell had a chance to review the report and suggest changes. The on-site team's report is then sent back to ACEJMC, and the council sends the report to a 15-member accrediting committee. "The committee goes through about 25 reports a year," Lattimore said. "They make a recommendation to the council on our recommendation. It's a long process."

ACEJMC makes the final decision on whether to grant re-accreditation to Eastern's journalism department in late May 2006.

Continued on page 3

Hall of fame inducts new member

By Amy Smith

An induction into the EIU Journalism Alumni Hall of Fame points out an alum's loyalty, involvement and support within the journalism department, according to the constitution and bylaws. Lisa Green was a perfect fit for the honor.

Green was inducted into the journalism alumni hall of fame at Eastern Friday, Oct. 14, in the Buzzard Hall Auditorium.

She was graduated from Eastern in 1986 with a degree in journalism and she earned media experience through the Daily Eastern News. Her journalism career continues at the Journal Gazette in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Green was nominated by faculty, friends and alumni of the journalism department through a nomination letter reviewed by James Tidwell, acting chair of the Journalism Department. Those letters contained detailed explanations of why she should be inducted. Tidwell sent the letters to the Outreach and Service Committee who voted and affirmed Green as new inductee.

A member of the Outreach and Service Committee, Joe Gisondi,

said Green deserves the award. "You can tell that she loves to teach and help others," Gisondi said.



The Journalism Alumni Hall of Fame plaque is on display in the Department of Journalism office.

Photo by Jacob Sweet

John Ryan, also a member, said she is a very active alumna that gives back to the department. Both agreed the most powerful way Green has helped is through her participation in the two-week Illinois Press Foundation High School Journalism Workshop at Eastern each summer.

"Every summer she has helped lead and uses her own vacation to help run the workshop," Ryan said. The workshop is designed to provide students with an intimate

look at a journalism profession particularly in a newspaper newsroom.

"The workshop is an excellent opportunity for students to get hands-on experience, one-on-one coaching and feedback to help them decide whether journalism is really the field they want to be in and if so, how to begin to improve the writing and reporting skills they already have," Green said.

She enjoys helping the department because it puts so much effort into her own passion.

"The department faculty has worked hard to recruit professionals to come and talk to and work with the students," Green said. "The energy that the workshop creates is refreshing to see and helps remind me of why I got interested in journalism and the importance of what journalists do everyday."

At the induction ceremony, Ryan said Green received "hardware to put on the wall" plus her name placed on a Journalism Alumni Hall of Fame plaque in Buzzard. This symbolizes the recognition she has earned by her work in the field and her support of the EIU Department of Journalism.

Green was thankful for the award and said it was an honor just to be nominated. "The journalism program at Eastern has had hundreds of graduates, many of whom have quite impressive résumés," she added.

Re-accreditation *continued from page 1*

Re-accreditation— The Report

The on-site evaluation team recommended re-accreditation for Eastern's journalism department, but the department did not meet compliance in one of the nine standards: scholarship, research, creative and professional activity.

"The lack of scholarly output is evident not only in the lack of publications and presentations, but also in the ability of the faculty to bring that scholarship into the classroom," the report said. "Clearly the administration, as well as the current departmental leadership, has increased scholarship as a major goal for the department."

Brian Poulter, professor of journalism, thinks that the department is not behind in its scholarly research.

"The university, in consultation with the faculty, decides what constitutes research," Poulter said. "The committee only looked at a narrow spectrum of what that research can be."

Poulter explained that traditional research is considered getting a paper published in a scholarly journal, while other forms of creative research could include publishing expert columns in newspapers or spending the summers working as a professional journalist.

"I wish they (committee) would have paid more attention to what the university considers research,"

Poulter said. "The faculty will have to exclude creative outlets for more traditional research."

The report lists many more strengths than weaknesses. Some of the department's strengths listed in the report are strong student-centered faculty, outstanding facilities and equipment, outstanding public service commitment and a good record of career placement and alumni relations.

Some of the other weaknesses the report listed were lack of success in hiring additional minority faculty and a lack of a good alumni-tracking system.

The department is judged on 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.

"I think that the evaluation went well," Tidwell said. "It was a very good team. They were very fair and impartial. I'm glad it's over. You're always tense, wondering how it's going to go."

Congratulations!

As the semester comes to an end, the Journalism Department would like to congratulate those individuals preparing to graduate in December.

The department wishes the best of luck to the following individuals: Marcia Buie, Jessica Caudle, Jennifer Chiariello, Robert Ebsen, Courtney Jenkins, Christopher Luther, Matthew McCarthy, Gregory McElroy, Matthew Meinheit, Ola Mohammad, Bianca Sisson and Daniel Williams.



Annette Samuels says goodbye

By Kristen Thompson

After 10 years of service in the journalism department as a teacher, Annette Samuels is retiring from Eastern Illinois University.

Professor Samuels was born in New York City where she spent most of her life. She worked as the first fashion editor for *Essence*. She also worked for *Family Circle* and *Mademoiselle* as assistant fashion editor. Annette has 10 years of experience as a reporter for *The New York Amsterdam News* and *WRVR* radio. Later she moved to Washington, D.C. to join President Carter's administration as assistant press secretary. She was the first African-American woman to serve as a spokesperson for the president. Samuels came to Eastern for a year as a visiting professor and several years later decided to move to Charleston, Ill., to teach courses that dealt with women and minority issues in the media and public relations. This was her first and only teaching job.

Having been on sick leave in the spring semester of 2005, this semester marks her official retirement, with many students and staff sad to see her go. "I enjoyed my time teaching; the students were great," Samuels said.

Terri Johnson, assistant professor of journalism, spoke fondly of her friend and colleague's time at Eastern. "Professor Samuels brought to Eastern a great deal of experience in media relations and public relations. She served as an assistant press secretary to a president, Jimmy Carter, and was

one of the first females and first blacks to do so. She also served as press secretary to Mayor Marion Barry in Washington, D.C.

"This outstanding national and major city experience is hard to find in Charleston, Ill., but Professor Samuels was willing to come here and share her expertise with the students," Johnson said. "She advised a number of student organizations. Her concern and support of students is going to be hard to replace. I will also miss her insights and her company at Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) meetings. I wish her the best of luck on her retirement."

In the 10 years that she taught, Samuels was involved in numerous activities here at Eastern. Now that she is retired, she reads and is planning on moving back to Washington, D.C. to be nearer to her family.

"She believes in diversity and has been involved actively in leadership roles in national professional organizations, including the National Association of Black Journalists and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, as the department's representatives," Les Hyder, professor of journalism, said. "She has also chaired the Commission on the Status of Women in Communication.

Samuels' extensive professional experience made her a sought-after speaker. "Her experiences enabled her to bring unique perspectives to the faculty and were shared generously and effectively with her students. She has been asked



Samuels, center, met with EIU friends, Sue Kaufman, journalism, and Terry Hyder, education, for dinner at Pizza Hut recently.

Photo by Terri Johnson

frequently to speak at campus events as well as others in the community, region and state," Hyder said.

"Because she has traveled widely, her awareness and understanding of global issues and events were effectively integrated into her classes and were useful to the journalism faculty on curricular matters, especially when the major requirements were revised in 2003," Hyder added.

Hyder said that Samuels students often speak highly of her. "Her students have frequently told me of her enthusiasm in the classroom and high academic standards. They also have told me of her ability to challenge and inspire her students to be open minded, learn new information and reassess their perspectives," Hyder said. "Her students and the EIU community have been enriched and made better because of Prof. Samuels and others like her."

Voelz retires from university

By Alyssa Gaenzle

“Who is the president of China?”

As many students in Dr. Peter Voelz’ class shake their heads unknowingly, he says to them “No, I’m telling you, Hu is the president of China.”

If one is familiar with our world one would understand that Hu Jintao is in fact China’s president.

Peter Voelz, a journalism and history professor, has a skillful way of bringing today’s pop culture into his lessons.

Occasionally the students in his classes might be caught off guard when they hear him rap: “The fancy cars, the women and the caviar. You know who we are, ‘cause we’re pimpin’ all over the world” — a stanza from Ludacris’ new album “The Red Light District.”

Lauren Franco, a senior journalism major, says Dr. Voelz is a character.

“He is comical and animated. You normally wouldn’t think he would be so interactive with us all and make the class so interesting, but he makes it work,” said Franco.

“I talk about things in the news,” Voelz said. “We talk about the great moments in history. We talk about pop music.”

“I encourage students to watch certain movies like Murrow’s ‘Good night and Good luck,’ or the new Harry Potter movie coming out,” Voelz said.



Dr. Voelz takes a short break from teaching.

Photo By Angie Faller

He also said he figures movies are a way to bring history into his students’ lives. He said more students are willing to watch a movie than read a book. If that’s what it takes, then he’ll encourage it.

Jim Allocco, a junior journalism major, said Voelz makes sure that he is up to date and informed about any media outlet or forms of entertainment.

“When he comes into class knowing more about our culture than we do, it’s really impressive. He’s the one that tells our class the newest information on MTV, like when Britney Spears was pregnant,” said Allocco. “A lot of the girls in our class hadn’t even heard about it yet, but he had.”

“When my daughter went away to college, I began to sympathize with my students. I thought about how I wanted her professors to be nice to

her, and I started to care about my own students more. I wanted to try to make their lives better,” he said.

“Teaching is important, but the most important decision I have made is to just love my children,” Voelz said. “It’s just so wonderful to see them grow up.”

He believes that by watching his kids grow older, he has learned to treat his students with much more kindness and care.

“The most important advice that I have for people is to just love your children,” said Voelz.

He and his wife have a daughter of their own and have adopted a son from Thailand.

“When I see all that we did for that little boy, I just wish I had adopted another child,” said Voelz. “Life just goes by so fast.”

Voelz received his doctorate and master’s degree at the University of Michigan and received his bachelor’s degree at Loras College in Iowa.

Now after teaching for 44 years, 28 at Eastern, Voelz has finally decided to retire. Although he is happy to retire, he says that nostalgia keeps coming back to him.

Voelz has made an impact on several students during the years he spent teaching at Eastern.

“He has fun in class. It’s just a lot of fun, because he gets us to laugh,” said Allocco.

JEA Honors Professor Tidwell

By Jacob Sweet

Professor James Tidwell was presented with a Medal of Merit award from the Journalism Education Association (JEA). The award was presented at a luncheon November 12. The award is given to members of the association who have made significant contributions to scholastic journalism.

Tidwell says, "I'm very grateful. I'm looking forward to getting the award."

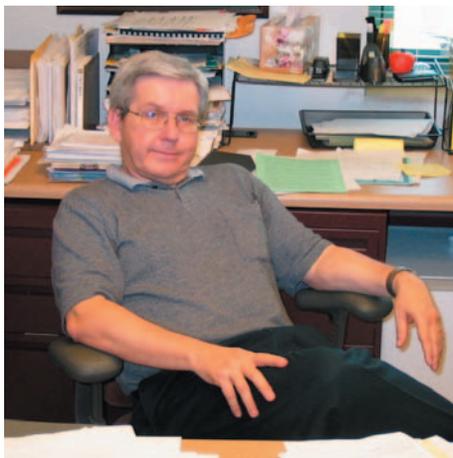
Professor Tidwell came to Eastern Illinois University in 1987. In 1988, Illinois JEA, a statewide high school journalism teacher and adviser group, was founded. Ever since that time, Tidwell has been at the organization's forefront as it's Executive Secretary. His name has also been synonymous with the Eastern Illinois High School Press Association.

"For as long as I can remember, James has been director of the Eastern Illinois High School Press Association. His work has inspired and involved thousands of student journalists and their advisers throughout the years," said Randy Swikle, retired journalism teacher/adviser from Johnsbury, Ill., who nominated Tidwell for the award.

Tidwell has also made a strong effort to protect student journalists' rights as members of the press. In the '90s he helped Illinois advisers work toward a student freedom of expression law.

Susan Hathaway Tantillo has worked with Tidwell on the IJEA

Board of Directors since 1988. "Not only was he more than qualified to help us, he was leading us and encouraging and helping us every step of the way," Hathaway Tantillo said. "Without James and his steadfast determination on behalf of Illinois journalism



Professor Tidwell takes a brief break from his duties as chair.

Photo by Sally Turner

students, we might have given up long before we almost prevailed."

Unfortunately, after hundreds of hours spent devising strategy, meeting with supporters, implementing plans, traveling and pushing for the legislation, former Governor James Edgar vetoed the bill despite it passing the House 109-4 and the Senate 57-0.

More recently Tidwell was a leading force behind the Illinois High School Association's adoption of statewide journalism competitions that will begin this spring. Working with teacher/adviser Cathy Sullivan Wall from Harrisburg and with the help of Jim Butler, principal of Harrisburg

High School, Tidwell coordinated meetings with the IHSA and helped form the framework of the competitions.

Professor Tidwell has taught classes every summer to journalism teachers and advisers from high schools all around Illinois. More recently, he has begun to teach those courses online and has taught individuals from as far away as Italy.

During an interview that took place before the award presentation, Tidwell said he has hopes that some of the people he has taught during his online courses will be at the presentation.

He says that one of the most fulfilling comments he receives is when someone comes back and tells him how helpful his teaching was.



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