

*A Year to Remember:*

**Re-Accreditation, Ph.D. Proposal, Promotion & Tenure**

*State of the School Report, 2009*

**By Michael Bugeja, director**

It doesn't get much better (and more challenging) than this. The School collectively and individually will be tested in every conceivable way, literally from the ground up concerning facilities and metaphorically concerning faculty. Administrators will be evaluated, too, on their commitment to shared governance and oversight of shared resources. Meanwhile, support staff (secretary to director) must help keep operations running smoothly while facilitating additional clerical, technical and financial tasks that undergird our aspirations.

Our goals are challenging enough—so much so, in fact, that I can recall no other program being re-accredited on new standards for undergraduate education while adding a doctoral program and advancing an assistant professor cohort to senior ranks. However, we are doing this while our own disciplines of journalism and advertising are being re-defined in the digital era, for better or worse, during one of the worst economic recessions since the Great Depression that has seen our budget reduced with cuts and reversions.

But I am optimistic about the future and prophesy that at this time next year the re-accredited Greenlee School will have more senior than junior professors and a new Ph.D. degree in Science, Technology and Risk Communication. Why? Because of our record of teaching excellence, research productivity and superior service documented in a self-study that weighs 7.65 pounds.

We have come a long way since the last re-accreditation.

In July 2003, I arrived in Ames with new assistant professor hires Daniela Dimitrova, Chad Harms and Jay Newell. The School then had faced internal and institutional difficulties and had lost all of its assistant professors. During my first week as director, [the dean who hired me](#) announced that he was leaving, too. Worse, I learned, we were being evaluated in a few months by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications with only rough, incomplete chapters of a self study that needed more data before being assembled and edited. However, then as now, we were optimistic about the future despite the challenges.

The first paragraph of the 2003 State of the School report read as follows:

During the last few days of remodeling in Hamilton Hall, when workers were putting final touches on our beautiful facilities, some of them mentioned that they sensed a new feeling in the building.

One remarked, “And I’m not just talking about the building.”

That new feeling was one of reaffirmation and commitment at the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University of Science and Technology. Reaffirmation has come from alumni and administration; commitment has come from faculty, staff and students.

Together we enter the new academic year with vitality and vision.

There is a picture depicting that vitality taken by Professor Tom Beell [at our reception at the 2003 convention](#) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, symbolizing how ready we were to meet the seemingly impossible challenges we faced that year. We titled the photograph, “Dancing Administrators,” because collectively we felt the School would be writing a new chapter in its 100-year history.



Indeed, that year we met our ACEJMC deadlines and ultimately, its standards, earning re-accreditation and hiring four new assistant professors who now are seeking promotion and tenure and being evaluated for their contributions since then.

For those on staff but new to our history, and for others who want to assess how far we have come, here is a recap of accomplishments that have led us to this pivotal year, 2009-2010:

**2004:** [The School received unanimous re-accreditation](#) from the ACEJMC, making ours the longest continuously accredited program in the nation, along with other select programs. The School also amassed some 150 individual achievements, including book and article publications, teaching and research honors, and dozens of refereed papers and presentations. We also forged [partnerships with Meredith Corporation](#), which provided remodeling funds, internships, outsourcing opportunities and instructional support; with the Scripps Howard Foundation, which named us as a partner school, [funding internships and scholarships](#); and with [Lee Enterprises](#), [which co-sponsored our First Amendment Day](#) based on our shared respect for free speech and

community. In light of these accomplishments, Dean Michael Whiteford gave the School the go-ahead to pursue our Ph.D. degree with support from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**2005:** The School launched into [a year-long Centennial celebration](#), for which there were few reserve funds and a host of expectations. Nevertheless we pulled off a headliner student award ceremony in April, featuring alumni luminaries [Hugh Sidey and Karol DeWulf Nickell](#)—our first and then most recent Schwartz Award winners. We also hosted a Centennial celebration in San Antonio at the AEJMC convention, honoring a record number of graduate student competitive paper presentations that elevated our research productivity to [9<sup>th</sup> best in the nation](#). The exposure helped the School raise more than \$853,000 that year from corporate donors and loyal benefactors.

Nevertheless, I informed the faculty that we could not rest on laurels and challenged them to meet these goals to build a comprehensive school:

1. Pave the way for promotion and tenure for our growing cohort of assistant professors who will inherit this School before the end of this decade.
  - **Goal #1:** *Maintain effective mentoring through Promotion and Tenure Committee, individual senior faculty mentors, and the Greenlee Roundtable.*
2. Devise a workload policy for faculty to balance efforts in advising, research, service and teaching.
  - **Goal #2:** *Reduce course-loads to 2-2 by using releases for year-long undergraduate advising, accountable service and substantive research, helping facilitate Goal #1 above.*
3. Meet re-accreditation requirements for enhanced scholarship performance, expanding our efforts in grant acquisition and peer publication consistent with Research 1 standards.



Student Services and broadcast facilities, classrooms, restrooms and second-floor offices and meeting spaces.

**2007:** Two occasions—one at the White House and another at the Board of Regents—marked this as another hallmark year in our history. In February, Greenlee School and Iowa dignitaries joined the national press corps in the [East Room of the White House](#) for the presentation of the Hugh Sidey scholarship in print journalism, an annual \$5,000 gift to be awarded in perpetuity in honor of our esteemed alumnus. A few weeks later the School received an exceptionally positive external review as mandated regularly by the state Board of Regents. The site team’s findings affirmed the hard work of faculty and staff. Here are a few highlights:

- “The School has progressively strengthened its research activity over the past five years, as evidenced by faculty vita and documented self-study reports of refereed publications, academic conference papers and the like.
- “The scholarly output of the school ... surpasses that of some larger journalism units across the country that include Ph.D. programs.”
- “The ‘streamlining’ of the undergraduate curriculum to meet the recent trends of journalism toward the combination or convergence of multiple-media channels and production techniques appears to be an excellent example” of balancing research and professionalism.

A key finding of the external review concerned our Ph.D. proposal, with the site team encouraging us to develop such a degree, which “appears to fit well with Iowa State’s unique intellectual advantages and its land grant mission.” The external review empowered our proposal throughout the year and into 2008 as we gained support from our sister institutions at Iowa City and Cedar Falls.

**2008:** When the term began, we had surpassed \$3 million in gifts and [gifts in kind](#) to the Greenlee School during the past five years, generating as much as \$5,000 for each faculty member in individual research and grant accounts, underwriting scholarship. Productivity soared. We met one benchmark after the other in gaining institutional support for the Ph.D. program in Science, Technology and Risk Communication, its official name. That support continued well into 2009 with a near-unanimous vote in Faculty Senate. Daniela Dimitrova and Jay Newell were the first colleagues in a decade to be promoted to associate professor with tenure, proving that our commitment to mentorship could yield positive results. The State of the School report credited these accomplishments to transparency, collegiality and shared governance, preparing for the re-accreditation awaiting us today.

However, we had no time to relish these achievements because the economic crisis hit. Endowment accounts plummeted by 24% or more. We had a mid-year reversion and then budget cuts totaling \$159,727. Since then, Office Manager Kathy Box and I have worked daily at meeting that target and fulfilling our obligation to the college, often consulting with Associate Director Jane Peterson about scheduling, summer school budget, and maintenance of degree progress of our majors.

Again we rose to the challenge. We knew that in good years, such as the School enjoyed in 2005-07, a unit needed to advocate for as many positions as possible in anticipation of shortfalls in state funding. Since 2006, in part due to my own reappointment and retention offer, we have been able to secure two new lectureships and 3 1/2 new professorships. We understood as well that [curricular expansion](#) is a key factor in faculty work load, so the New Horizons' streamlining also helped us immensely in this regard, adding rigor to both degree programs.

Finally, during the past few months, we have worked closely with the College in applying funds from recent resignations to our LAS bill.

Now for the good news: We are one of a handful of academic units in the College to meet our budget-reduction target, and we did it in three months. Units that did not meet their targets will be charged interest on the unpaid balance, so we have been spared that, too. Moreover, summer school staffing, including our professional internship course, generated enough funds to retain non-contract professional lecturers and hire graduate teaching assistants in AY2010. Otherwise, we could not retain our 2-2 teaching load.

Unlike other State of the School reports, averaging 15 pages or so, this one has been brief, for good reason. We're at the starting line of a race for which we trained for six years. Now we have to run it, working collectively and collegially this year:

- To host the ACEJMC site team, responding proactively to its report before bringing our case next year to the Accrediting Committee and Accrediting Council.
- To adjudicate according to process the dossiers of four assistant professors seeking promotion and tenure and one associate professor seeking promotion.
- To oversee the Ph.D. program through its final hurdles culminating in a vote by the Board of Regents.

In the meantime we will be dealing with our busy personal and School agendas for teaching, research and service with a review of convergence in our curricula; discussions and/or votes on our mission statement and on diversity, assessment and long-range plans; and coordination of our two signature events, the Chamberlin Lecture on Oct. 8, 2009, featuring Bethany McLean, former editor-at-large for *Fortune* magazine, and then our nationally

recognized First Amendment Day in April 2010. We will redouble our efforts at fund-raising, difficult during recessions, with help from the Foundation and the Advisory Council. Meanwhile we advise faculty to apply for grants whenever possible to offset any future budget cuts that may occur in the upcoming academic year.

We will remember this year personally and professionally. Because the challenges are so great and the stakes, high, we also will remember each other as much as the outcome of events. That is why I want to end this report asking each of you to be mindful of process and to show respect for colleagues, climate and collegiality, knowing that we have built something greater than ourselves.