

## **Media Advisory**

### **East Carolina University News Services**

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**Date:** Jan. 10, 2012

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*Statement by Dr. Virginia Hardy, vice chancellor for student affairs, on East Carolina University's record and responsibilities in regards to the First Amendment and its student-run newspaper, the East Carolinian:*

East Carolina University is concerned that a decision to change leadership in its director of student media role has been connected to a First Amendment issue without full knowledge of the facts at hand. It is important to distinguish between any personnel matter and the First Amendment.

We ask all advocacy groups and the public to trust our internal process, which has been deliberate, correct and legal, as we move forward to address these two separate issues.

The First Amendment demands public universities provide student journalists the opportunity to make their own news decisions and learn from them without interference. ECU puts that principle first. It has upheld it, especially in this instance.

We support The East Carolinian fully. Students have been the central focus of what we have done and the decisions that have been made. We have involved them openly when it was constructive and useful for their education, including holding open, informational discussions with the editorial staff to talk about the impact of news decisions.

Regarding editorial decisions in student media, we have respectfully allowed the student journalists to take their own course. We have and will continue to support their right to make decisions in publishing a newspaper for their fellow students.

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For your reference, below is the ECU News advisory that was distributed on Jan. 5, 2012:

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**Leadership change announced for student media**

East Carolina University announced today it is making a change of leadership in its director of student media.

Paul Isom, director of student media at ECU since 2008, is no longer with the university, according to Virginia Hardy, vice chancellor for student affairs. The university dismissed Isom Wednesday, Jan. 4, Hardy said.

“We will not make any additional comment because this is a personnel matter,” Hardy said.

Isom oversaw all campus student media outlets and directly advised three of them, including the student-run The East Carolinian newspaper, The Rebel and the Buccaneer yearbook.

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