Minding your business

ECU dean to get first-hand look at national defense

GREENVILLE – Dr. Marilyn Sheerer has accepted an invitation from the Office of the Secretary of Defense to participate in the Defense Department's Joint Civilian Orientation Conference (JCOC 69), the oldest Pentagon program of its kind and the only civilian orientation program held by the department. This conference was initiated in 1948 and is the Secretary of Defense's premier civic leader program.

The weeklong orientation, which will be held April 24 - May 1, will give participants an opportunity to learn about U.S. military personnel, their equipment and capabilities as well as national defense strategies.

As a JCOC participant, Sheerer will visit military bases of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. A very select few civilians get the opportunity to interact with such a cross section of military leaders and personnel. Sixty U.S. citizens are selected from hundreds of candidates nominated by military commands worldwide. The program begins in Washington, D.C., where Sheerer will meet and be briefed by Defense Department leaders such as Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and other senior military and civilian officials.

JCOC participants will fly on military aircraft; fire weapons; experience aircraft carrier landings and launches; and observe amphibious landings, urban area combat techniques, special operations assaults and other warfare demonstrations. The JCOC 69 program concludes in Colorado Springs, Colo. on May 1 with a visit to the Northern Command, the agency primarily responsible for homeland security.

Sheerer was nominated by the Marine Corps. She is the first ever to attend from East Carolina University.

Dr. Sheerer has served as dean of the College of Education since 1998.