

## Talking Points

Changes within Civics and Journalism Programs

October 2, 2014

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- The McCormick Foundation is working to merge two of our programs – the Civics program and the Journalism program. A great deal of thought and preparation went in to making the decision to combine this work.
- For the last several months, the Foundation has been looking at ways to increase our impact by working across traditional program boundaries. Staff from our Civics and Journalism teams have been providing input throughout the process.
- We saw how complementary our current programs are in advancing our overall mission of fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens.
- There were areas of overlap most notably in our news literacy and civic education work. It just highlighted the need for these teams to work more closely.
- That led us to the decision of combining the Journalism and Civics programs into a single program. This united program will combine our work that affects the functioning of our democracy, including a free and active press, educated and engaged citizens, and accountable government.
- John Sirek, currently director of the Civics Program, will head up the new program. Clark Bell, director of the Journalism Program, will serve as senior advisor to John focusing on journalism issues until his previously planned retirement at the end of 2015.
- Shawn Healy, Janice Belzowski, and Jenny Choi will round out the new program team with support from Aaron Smith and Janira Clark. Courtney Brouwer will remain on staff working in an advisory capacity over all of our grant teams. As you can understand, we don't have additional information to share on the departures of Mark Hallett and Andrea Jett Fletcher.
- Current grants from the Foundation are unaffected. We do not expect radical changes to our grant making strategy but we will be looking for ways to have greater impact.
- The Foundation will continue to review our grant making strategy in the coming months. Revised guidelines will be available in early 2015.
- We are excited about the opportunities presented by this united program, coming at a time when the effectiveness of democratic government is under great challenge.
- We will share more information with you and the community when it becomes available.