

http://www.theintelligencer.com/local_news/

SIUE graduate school evolves, flourishes



SIUE photo

Jerry Weinberg.

Posted: Friday, December 18, 2015 12:15 pm

Segue/Logan Cameron

In this week's segment of Segue, SIUE Interim Chancellor Stephen Hansen, PhD, hosts Jerry Weinberg, PhD, associate provost for research and dean of the SIUE Graduate School.

Their discussion focuses on the duties performed under Weinberg's dual appointments, how the two positions relate to one another, future growth of the Graduate School, and how the University flourishes in graduate studies and research opportunities.

As Hansen was Weinberg's predecessor in the dean position, both men discuss what it is like to hold the position, elaborating particularly on the evolution of master's programs and the breadth of knowledge, which is now provided through graduate studies.

The two engage in a few light-hearted exchanges such as Hansen saying, "You haven't even answered yet, and I'm already interrupting you!" Weinberg responds with wit, saying, "I'll do the best I can to remember your original question. I might need another master's degree to do it!"

Having originally worked as a nurse for five years, Weinberg returned to school to complete his PhD in computer science and came to SIUE in 1996 as a professor of computer science. That was his first – and so far, only – tenure-track position in academia.

He developed a reputation as a researcher in computer science, receiving several external research grants and having served on research review panels for the National Science Foundation (NSF) many times.

Weinberg assumed many responsibilities as an SIUE faculty member, later becoming director of the computer science master's program in 2000, chair of the computer science department and eventually assuming the role as dean of the Graduate School in 2010.

In this week's show, Weinberg discusses the importance of master's-prepared professionals in today's work environment, as well as the need to provide these students with both research and professional opportunities to ensure career success prior to graduation.

“There's a need for advanced knowledge that's difficult to obtain anywhere else other than a master's program,” Weinberg shares. “In fact, there are several areas where having a master's degree is truly the starting point for your career. At SIUE, our graduate programs are quite traditional, in many respects – the end goal is to have a degree, but also have professional experience that jump starts your career.”

Hansen also weighs in on the evolving perception of graduate education. “Master's degrees began as a ‘next step to PhD’ degree, which allowed students to expand knowledge and be able to work independently,” he said. “That definition has evolved. A master's degree is now seen as an important degree in and of itself. Professional master's degrees are seen as terminal degrees for a lot of people's careers.”

On a topical note, Weinberg discusses drone research and other exciting upcoming research projects being planned by SIUE faculty. He even possesses several special talents which he shares with the audience.

Tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM every Sunday at 9 a.m. as weekly guests discuss issues on SIUE's campus.

By Logan Cameron, SIUE Marketing & Communications