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The evolution of classroom education, teaching



SIUE photo

Curt Lox.

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Segue/Logan Cameron

In this week's segment of Segue, SIUE Interim Chancellor Stephen Hansen, PhD, hosts Curt Lox, PhD, dean of the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB).

Having worked for the University for 30 and 20 years, respectively, Hansen and Lox discuss what attracted them to SIUE, what they see for the future of the SEHHB, the future of educator preparation, the impact of politics on the American educational system, and the impact of technology in the classroom.

When discussing technology, they are quick to joke about Hansen's more conservative lifestyle and lack of athletic abilities. Hansen begins by saying, "Are you making fun of my video about how I still use a flip phone?" Lox replies with a chuckle, "I give you credit. I honestly don't know anyone else on the face of this planet who still has one of those."

The joke is revisited later in the segment when Hansen shares, "You know that my physical skills as an athlete are renowned for their absence!" Lox follows him with quick wit, exclaiming, "They're on par with your cell phone, I think!"

A native of Southern California, Lox received his undergraduate degree from the University of California-Riverside in 1989. He moved to the Midwest to attend the University of Miami in Oxford, Ohio, and has been in the region ever since.

After obtaining his master's degree at University of Miami, Lox moved to Illinois to complete his doctoral studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He accepted his first job as a faculty member at Northern Illinois University before accepting employment at SIUE in the fall of 1996.

Lox was a professor in the Department of Kinesiology and Health Education until 2001, when he accepted his first administrative position as associate dean of the School of Education. Lox held this position until 2009, when he went on to serve as department chair for the Department of Kinesiology and Health Education. In 2014, he was appointed interim dean of the SEHHB, and was named permanent dean of the School in spring 2015.

Throughout the interview, Lox discusses how his background as a sports psychologist and his previous appointment as associate dean collectively assisted in his smooth transition to dean of the SEHHB. He also explains the transformation of the SEHHB – mentioning everything from the fluctuation in major concentration demographics to the recent change of the School's name.

With this, Lox expresses concern for the future of educator preparation and what the effects will be on the American educational system now that the field is politicized.

“In my mind, the testing has gotten out of control, in terms of what is needed to become a teacher,” he explains. “The public and the media are not kind to teachers, unfortunately. So it's not the sort of career that you're going to read wonderful things and want to rush out and become a part of it. It's not the best paying career. So, when you start adding up those kinds of negatives, it's not surprising that people look at that and say, ‘Yeah, I think there are some better options out there.’”

“Having said that, it's an incredibly fulfilling career. My wife is a middle school teacher, and I see it in her every day. Some of the most passionate people you'll ever find are teachers, and they want to have an impact on the future. One could argue that there's no better way to do that than through teaching, so I'm hopeful people have not given up on the profession.”

Hansen explains the current status of the American educational system as one that is still seen as important in the eyes of society, yet there is somewhat of a paradox as to how we will improve the system as the U.S. continues to slip amongst other industrial leaders in education.

Lox informs his listening audience of the many exciting, new academic programs coming to the SEHHB – both present and future. Hansen even convinces Lox to share a story of a milestone in his youth athletic career.

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.