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SIUE's Cobb takes on interim provost role



SIUE photo

Denise Cobb.

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Segue/Logan Cameron

In this week's segment of Segue, SIUE Interim Chancellor Stephen Hansen, PhD, hosts newly appointed Interim Provost Denise Cobb, PhD.

Their discussion focuses on Cobb's introduction to her recently assumed role, what brought her to the University, her life experiences prior to SIUE and her specific job duties as interim provost.

A passion for academic support for students and faculty, senior capstone projects and the pursuance of funding that will enhance these educational assets are all topics of interest for both

Hansen and Cobb. They share a few light-hearted moments, with Hansen joking, “Your least favorite job responsibility is probably taking care of the chancellor.”

Cobb came to SIUE in 2003 as an assistant professor of sociology, having had no prior knowledge of the University. Having been approached by SIUE faculty members as a prospect for a teaching position, she began to learn more about the University and was excited by its potential.

She viewed a position at SIUE as an opportunity to join an intellectual and vibrant community with a commitment to interesting student projects and research opportunities. From the classroom, she became director of assessment for the Provost’s Office in 2010.

Soon after, Cobb assumed the position as assistant provost for academic innovation and effectiveness in 2012. In 2014, she was appointed interim associate provost for academic planning and program development. Cobb began her duties as interim provost on November 1, 2015.

In this week’s show, Cobb expresses the gratification she receives as a facilitator for faculty and student success. She also finds pleasure in easing the duties of faculty and staff members, so they can focus more heavily on their academic goals and dreams. She embodies this message by saying, “I love that I have the opportunity to help our faculty achieve what they imagine for students.”

Cobb expresses great passion and commitment to the SIUE community, with Hansen even saying several times throughout the show, “Your eyes light up when you talk about the academics, and support and services.”

Both Hansen and Cobb express how fortunate they feel to have such great opportunities as professionals in academia. “I still marvel at the idea that I get paid to think, read, write and talk,” said Cobb.

Hansen adds, “I think sometimes we forget how fortunate we are to work at a university where we continuously pursue knowledge, work toward our curiosities and are rewarded at the same time by teaching students. It’s a good life, no doubt about it.”

Cobb discusses her gratitude to the faculty’s dedication to research using limited funding and resources, her initiative to improve support for first generation and less prepared students, and the need for shared academic goals and priorities among members of the campus community.

Hansen supports her by stating, “As an academic community, it’s important for us to communicate our programs, priorities and directions, so that we can marshal our strengths and critical mass to achieve those things we imagine.”

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