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SIUE leaders discuss issues in higher education



Dr. Greg Budzban.

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Segue/Logan Cameron |

In this week's segment of Segue, new Dean of SIUE's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dr. Greg Budzban hosts former CAS Interim Dean and current SIUE Interim Chancellor Dr. Steven Hansen.

Their discussion focuses on the introduction of both men to their recently appointed roles, what University characteristics attracted both men to SIUE's campus, their future goals for the College of Arts and Sciences, for SIUE as a whole, and how the University will continue to flourish despite Illinois' current financial crisis.

University growth, campus diversity, campus collaboration and academic ambition are all topics of interest for both Budzban and Hansen. The two even share a few laughs, with light-hearted remarks from Hansen such as "the fact that I was interim dean of CAS and now interim chancellor makes it sound like I can't hold a job for very long."

Hansen came to SIUE from Georgia in 1984 and originally viewed SIUE as a next step in his career path. SIUE kept being a better place the longer he stayed and has remained so. From the

classroom, he became assistant dean in the Graduate School. After serving as the Graduate School dean and associate provost for research, Hansen returned to teaching, to end his career as he started, before retiring in 2012. He returned as CAS interim dean in January 2015.

In this week's show, Budzban expresses his excitement about joining SIUE's both regionally and nationally impactful University culture, while also discussing the modern and rapidly changing approach to education.

Budzban began his career as a high school teacher in 1980. After graduate work in mathematics at the University of South Florida, he spent six years as a researcher for Martin Marietta Aerospace. He arrived at SIU Carbondale in the early '90s and stayed for 24 years. He served as interim chair and chair for the Department of Mathematics for his final five years at SIUC.

Budzban was drawn to SIUE after watching SIUE's reputation grow over the course of two decades. "There are not many Colleges of Arts and Sciences that I feel have the same potential as SIUE's," he says. "The wealth of resources available across the College gives SIUE the opportunity to be 'intellectually ambitious.'"

"We don't want people to view college as a job training," Budzban says. "We are here to teach students about life perspectives and the tools necessary to succeed independently from a career. That depth of knowledge leads to a richness in the quality of life."

Hansen also weighs in on the ever-evolving educational process. "The amount of information a person can get in one week's time from the New York Times is the equivalent to the information someone living in the 19th century would receive throughout their whole lifetime," Hansen says. "How do we prepare students to live in a world like that?"

"We can teach them skills, but they will become quickly outdated, because things move so fast. Learning to evaluate and express knowledge is the key to success in the world that we're facing."

On the hottest of topics, Hansen discusses the current financial situation within the state of Illinois and how he, as chancellor, plans to implement new initiatives that allow SIUE to continue thriving through tough times. Budzban supports him by stating, "At SIUE, people are willing to embrace tough challenges, and hit transitions and changes head-on."

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