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SIUE's Stack focuses on university development



SIUE photo

Rachel Stack.

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Segue/Logan Cameron |

In this week's segment of Segue, SIUE Interim Chancellor Dr. Stephen Hansen hosts SIUE Vice Chancellor of Advancement Rachel Stack.

Their discussion focuses on campus advancement, initiatives that Stack has in place to further advance SIUE, how the University will survive the financial crisis and thrive upon its conclusion, and the importance of gifts from alumni and friendly donors.

Both Stack and Hansen explain their commitment to University culture, donor relationships and belief in the betterment of the University. A fusion of two glowing personalities, the two trade jokes such as "I'm not trying to turn this interview into a fundraiser phone-a-thon, but you can call..." from Hansen, and "I don't have a secret talent. It wouldn't be a secret if I told it to you," from Stack.

In this week's show, Stack explains her passion in serving the SIUE community through fundraising, while also discussing the challenges of fundraising for a university when the long-term face of higher education remains uncertain.

Prior to her current career, Stack received a master's in English before working at a for-profit firm in Buffalo, New York. The turning point in her career came after being tasked with the fundraising responsibilities for a kid's camp for underprivileged youth. This experience ignited a

passion for fundraising, and she returned to school to achieve proper certifications to pursue fundraising as a career path.

Today, having served in higher education for more than 20 years, Stack has been a member of the SIUE community for nearly two years. Stack joins SIUE after serving as assistant dean of advancement for University of Illinois – Chicago’s College of Business since 2006.

Stack’s attraction to SIUE was the friendly campus culture that she encountered during her interview process. “I could tell there was a lot of community here, and I could tell people were connected to one another in a positive way,” she says. “That’s something I’ve seen on this campus that I cannot find on every campus.”

She also places heavy emphasis on the importance of alumni and donor gifts. “Giving a gift is something that acknowledges your commitment to an institution,” Stack explains. “You’re committed. You want to make it stronger. In times of turmoil, people have a fight or flight response – on this campus, people are fighting. Part of that is showing others that we are greatly committed to this institution. Whether that be a dollar, or five dollars or whatever you’re capable of, that’s a metric that we can use as leverage to our commitment to this University.”

Hansen backs her statement by adding, “I genuinely believe that even if it’s just a dollar, it’s the act that you’re committing that’s important. That we (as a University) believe in ourselves. We’re proud of our alumni for contributing and saying ‘Yes, what I’m doing is important. Yes, I’m doing important work.’”

On the hottest of topics, the two discuss the need for fundraising flexibility and long-term asset planning during tough financial times, as well as possible technologies that could be utilized and would allow the SIUE Foundation to flourish upon financial recovery – notably, cutting-edge technologies such as online giving and TextToGive services.

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