

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

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SIUE Chancellor Looks Forward to the New Academic Year

On this week's episode of Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's weekly radio program exploring the lives and work of the people on campus and beyond, Greg Budzban, PhD, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) dean, interviews Chancellor Randy Pembroke.

This Segue episode airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Oct. 6. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or siue.edu/wsie.

A budding tradition on the show has been to feature the chancellor at the beginning of the academic year to discuss what's happening throughout the University.

"Let's talk about what happened during the summer and what we're looking forward to during the new academic year," says Budzban. "This summer, a budget was passed in Springfield that provides new energy on campus and additional funding for higher education for the first time in a long time."

"It had a great effect on morale throughout campus," Pembroke replies. "It was probably the best budget year for higher education in the last 20 years. The 5% increase in general funding will help us address salaries, new building projects and deferred maintenance."

Throughout the summer, the University also celebrated the addition of Tim Hall as the new athletic director and the naming of the First Community Arena at the Vadalabene Center. Additionally, the campus welcomed Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker to sign a bill granting SIU System student trustees voting rights.

"The governor's interest in higher education in Illinois is incredibly important," Pembroke says. "We want our students to stay in Illinois and attend our public institutions. We believe that it's good for the future of the state, and it's something the governor is working hard to achieve."

With the number of high school graduates declining throughout the state, having a broad enrollment management plan is incredibly important for universities such as SIUE. This year, the University's 10-day enrollment numbers showed a 79% retention rate from first to second year students.

“Retention has also increased for population subsets including male, female, first generation students and ethnicity,” Pembroke notes. “We’re excited about the broad nature of what we’re accomplishing.”

In addition to the rising retention rate, the University welcomed its largest group of international students in a decade, and the Graduate School’s student population is continuing to grow with the addition of new online programs.

“The University has a dual responsibility” says Pembroke. “We need to have programs that will provide employment opportunities for students upon completion, but we also need to be thinking about our communities and the needs of those communities.

“Are we meeting those needs? When we find areas where they can’t find employees, we need to reflect on those areas and where we need to invest.”

“You’ve mentioned work with communities,” says Budzban. “The University’s work with communities throughout the Successful Communities Collaborative has to be heartening to you due to the recent high impact community engagement.”

The SIUE Successful Communities Collaborative (SSCC) is a cross-disciplinary program developed to support one-year partnerships between the University and local communities. The purpose of the program is to connect University students and faculty to Illinois communities to help social and economic issues and needs.

“Anytime that students can be involved in the community, they get the chance to understand the issues of the community, practice the skills they are learning in classes and solve problems in the area,” explains Pembroke. “It is great for the students to have hands-on experiences and for the community to get to know our students.”

“Our second annual Diversity Day is coming up soon,” notes Budzban. “Associate Chancellor Vanessa Brown, who is head of diversity and inclusion in your office, is at the forefront of that day and has put together a great agenda.”

“We developed a strategic plan for diversity and inclusion two years ago,” Pembroke responds. “Diversity Day allows us to celebrate the accomplishments within that strategic plan and also bring in national speakers.”

SIUE’s second annual Diversity Day is Tuesday, Oct. 15. This year, the event features Howard Ross as the keynote speaker, and he will be discussing unconscious bias. To learn more about the event and schedule, visit siue.edu/diversity-day.

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