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Lovejoy Library thrives during digital age



SIUE photo

Regina McBride.

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Segue/Logan Cameron

In this week's segment of Segue, SIUE Interim Chancellor Stephen Hansen, PhD, hosts Regina McBride, dean of library and information services at SIUE.

A conversation full of humor and quick wit, the two historians discuss McBride's career path leading to SIUE, the digital evolution of information resources, the continued importance of library services to students, and future endowment opportunities for Lovejoy Library.

Trading laughs such as Hansen's, "How did you decide to become a librarian? Were you from a family of hoarders who wouldn't let anything out of their control?"

And McBride's, "Frankly, I knew about SIUE, because I was one of those hooligans in the stands who was yelling 'sooey!' – while rooting for the other team," this conversation is certain to have listeners in stitches from start to finish.

A St. Louis native, McBride came to SIUE in 2009, having previously worked in the Saint Louis University (SLU) Pius XII Memorial Library. Originally viewing SIUE as a stepping stone

appointment in her career, McBride has since experienced a change of heart, explaining that, “something about this University – it’s extremely difficult to walk away from it.”

Throughout the show, Hansen highlights the breadth of resources available in Lovejoy, paying special attention to its multiple aspects – Special Collections, the Rare Book Room, Archives, Jazz Music, the Eugene B. Redmond Learning Center and others. On several occasions, the Chancellor mentions how impressed he is with the availability of both tangible and digital research content on the SIUE campus.

“I loved going to the library and going to the card catalog to look at all of the different cross-references, and walking back and forth,” he shares. “Now that is all electronic, and the search engines – knowing how to use those search engines is just so impressive.”

When discussing the evolving role of librarians into today’s digitized and internet-focused world, McBride contrasts the two information sources by explaining, “Google is a wonderful search engine, but it’s just exactly that – it will bring up anything and everything, and you may or may not have the terms right. You will find information but more and more, the librarian is kind of your ‘guide’ through this huge information wilderness, so that you know when you’re dealing with a librarian that you’re being directed to authoritative sources.”

Recently, views on libraries have shifted negatively as some critics even predict that they will no longer be “the place to go” for students seeking information. McBride refutes this theory by explaining that SIUE’s Lovejoy Library is still a largely popular and utilized resource among students on campus as its services prove vital in the completion of group assignments and compilation of research data.

“Right now, I’m focused heavily on building endowments to support funds, so that we can purchase materials that will help provide for the students – to give them things that they wouldn’t have otherwise. Without those things, I would be quite worried about the future of libraries. Because when it comes to teachers or faculty members in the classroom, these materials cannot wait.”

To wrap up the show, Hansen expresses deep gratitude for the work McBride has performed in her time at SIUE and even uncovers a little-known passion of hers.

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