

## Customizing international studies is exciting



SIUE photo

**Sorin Nastasia.**

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Segue/Logan Cameron

In this week's segment of Segue, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean Greg Budzban, PhD, hosts Sorin Nastasia, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Applied Communication Studies and newly appointed director for the International Studies program. Nastasia will lead this exciting new academic bachelor of arts (BA) program within CAS, which was approved in August 2015.

As this announcement opens exceptional new opportunities for students, the discussion revolves around the introduction of the program, what academic areas will be covered within the program, what career opportunities will be available to students choosing this educational path and how this degree will lend itself to the future of both the University and the global marketplace.

The International Studies program will be an interdisciplinary offering, meaning that while a core selection of courses will require successful completion by students, the program also allows for students to choose among an array of elective hours offered across CAS units. The degree can be customized and tailored to encompass the interests and career goals of each individual.

Students will have the choice of three specializations within the major concentration: international relations and diplomacy, international development and sustainability, and

international arts, culture and communication. As part of a program committed to a global perspective, students will be required to complete two levels of foreign language, to participate in at least one study abroad opportunity, and to do a senior assignment with an international focus.

As a native of Romania and former international communications professional prior to earning a PhD in the United States and being employed at SIUE, Nastasia certainly encompasses the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure student success in the international realm. He also displays a passion and commitment to providing SIUE students with global and culturally sensitive experience, having accompanied SIUE students on study abroad trips to France and Romania as well as to Germany and Hungary. “In my public relations teachings at SIUE, I try to give a context of foreign language and foreign culture to students,” he says.

In this week’s show, Budzban expresses his excitement for the beginning of this internationally-driven program, noting the impact that students can make in so many different realms. “For diplomacy, there are organizations that need more than traditional diplomats,” he explains. “When working for the State Department, there are so many different areas where this degree would be useful.”

“For sustainability and communication, they know no boundaries. Once something is shared to Twitter, it goes everywhere. So, this program will help solve issues in those areas as well.”

Nastasia comments on the benefits this program will lend to students seeking careers in project management, noting that student mastery of language and cultural idiosyncrasies will be critical in fulfilling a successful career in international relations.

Budzban elaborates on the subject to demonstrate why the training this program offers is so important and unique. “You can do project management in the States, but if you’re going to do a project on an international scope, that’s a different set of skills and background that is needed to be successful.”

Budzban and Nastasia discuss the bright future of the program, which will enroll students for the next academic year. They also indicate existing and new University resources that will be identified to make the program more effective, future goals and initiatives for the program, and promotional plans to make students in the area aware of the new offering.

For more information on the international studies program at SIUE, visit <http://www.siue.edu/artsandsciences/internationalstudies/>.

More information will be made available as program details continue to progress.

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*