

Chancellor Pembroke reviews the past year

Segue • SIUE

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From the time he stepped on campus as a student in the 1970s, to last summer's announcement that he would become Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's chancellor, Randy Pembroke, PhD, knew that SIUE was his home.

On the season finale of Segue, SIUE's premier radio show showcasing the ideas and issues on campus and beyond, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) Dean Greg Budzban, PhD, sits down with Chancellor Pembroke to reflect about his first year in the position, the unexpected challenges that occurred during the course of the year, and his thoughts on SIUE's future.

This week's interview, which airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday, May 14, perfectly complements the season opener that was broadcast in September 2016 on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound.

"This is a nice book-end," Pembroke exclaims, "We started together and now, we will end the season together."

During the course of the discussion, the colleagues elaborate about this academic year's successes and inevitable challenges. Between the increasingly difficult state budget crisis in Illinois, and uncertainty within the international student and faculty community on campus following the 2016 Presidential Election, among other challenges, Pembroke's hands have been quite full.

"Of course, there are issues with the state budget," he says. "When you think about how hard our faculty and staff work, but you can't give raises, how can you create morale and keep optimism going forward?"

"Because of the recent administrative changes in Washington D.C., there's a significant part of our student population who didn't quite know what to expect. We worked quite hard in the past few months by trying to convey how important our international students, faculty and staff are to us. It has been a challenge, but we hope we have created an environment where they feel safe and where they can focus on their studies."

"To face that particular challenge, I felt as if the campus came together to show solidarity with our international staff and students in a way that was truly heartening," Budzban says. "I am sure they are extremely appreciative of the efforts to show that they are welcome on campus and as part of our family."

Overall, the amount of growth that has occurred since he arrived on campus as a student to returning as the University's chancellor continues to leave Pembroke stunned. Between rising student enrollment, NCAA Division I athletics, over 250 active student organizations, and a phenomenal group of nationally renowned faculty and staff, there are so many reasons SIUE has thrived throughout the past several decades.

“It is amazing how quickly our University has grown,” Pembroke says.

In the coming years, Pembroke hopes to broaden SIUE’s international presence and further spread the institution’s core value of diversity and inclusion throughout the student and faculty population. Along with the introductions of new undergraduate and master’s programs, many of which will be delivered online, the chancellor hopes to facilitate new corporate partnerships and align their goals within the curricula, providing outstanding opportunities for SIUE students.

“As we move forward, even though you have only been here a year, where do you see our campus in say, five years?” Budzban inquires.

“You will see the campus continue to grow,” Pembroke replies. “You will see the Engineering Building and renovation of Science East complete. We will be working toward the renovation of Alumni and Founders Hall, development of new research lab space, along with major breakthroughs with our Division I athletics.

“Our alumni will become more involved,” he says. “We are a fairly young campus, and as time goes on, our alumni will be more involved in giving more and hopefully provide other opportunities for the next generation of students.”

To listen to the final Segue episode of this season, tune in at 9 a.m. this Sunday to WSIE 88.7 The Sound.

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