

Making SIUE better for students

Segue

Each week on Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's premier radio show, co-hosts Randy Pembroke, PhD, SIUE chancellor, and Greg Budzban, PhD, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) dean, take the opportunity to interview various members of the University community to explore the ideas and issues occurring on campus and beyond.

On this week's episode, Pembroke speaks with Jeffrey Waple, PhD, vice chancellor for student affairs. The episode will air at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 9, on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound.

Waple has over 25 years of professional service in student affairs. He had previously held positions at Northern Kentucky University, Clarion University, Bowling Green State University, Illinois State University and Eastern Michigan University.

Waple was awarded a PhD in higher education administration from Illinois State University in 2000.

"What a fantastic resume!" Pembroke exclaims. "You have been a lot of different places and seen a lot of different experiences. How did you originally get involved in student affairs?"

"As many of us who get involved in student affairs, there's no undergraduate degree that prepares you for that," Waple says. "I was a physical therapy major, but I

was a highly involved student who worked in the Dean of Students' office, captain of the soccer team, a resident assistant and was also in a fraternity.

"One summer, I asked the dean how I could do this for a career. He pointed me in the right direction, and that's where I've been since 1993!"

"That's not unlike my story," Pembroke reminisces. "I came to school in 1974 and never left higher education! It's certainly a wonderful career."

Waple was recommended to the position of vice chancellor for student affairs by former Chancellor Julie Furst-Bowe in spring 2015. Entering his fourth year in the position, Waple's office is dedicated to supporting and challenging students to achieve their full potential.

Central to students' life on campus, the Morris University Center has received a few much-needed improvements that will help enhance student experiences, Waple says.

"We've been undergoing renovations to the skylights, and we spent a lot of the summer renovating the Student Success Center," Waple mentions. "We will also be tripling the space belonging to ACCESS."

Formerly Disability Support Services, ACCESS is located

in the Student Success Center and is dedicated to providing reasonable curricular and co-curricular accommodations to diverse learners with major life challenges at SIUE. Each year, ACCESS assists hundreds of students with a variety of diagnoses as they pursue their academic disciplines.

The newly renovated area in the Student Success Center now features a small, 24-hour fitness area, along with four small meeting rooms.

"You're probably wondering, 'what's next?'" Waple says. "In May 2019, there will be a much anticipated renovation to Starbucks and Chick-Fil-A, as well as updates to infrastructure and other air handlers. We also want to change out some of the colors in the Meridian Ballroom to be more 'SIUE-centric' in the curtains and chairs to help further brand our institution."

"I'm glad that we're able to address all our issues one building at a time," Pembroke says.

A large part of students' experience at SIUE is engaging on campus. One way to do so, Waple says, is going to the Kimmel Student Involvement Center. The focal point of student involvement on campus, students can find ways to become active through opportunities like clubs and groups, intramural sports, fraternity and sorority life, student gov-



Waple

ernment, community engagement, volunteer opportunities and more.

However, some parents want to know when their students leave home to attend college that their young adult children have the best resources available in case they are sick or need assistance.

"People get sick!" Waple says. "We explain to our students all the time that we have a full-service health center where we have doctors and nurses that can take blood, do screenings and provide medicine in our full pharmacy. Any student, who has any type of illness, can come to our Health Services during normal busi-

ness hours."

After business hours, Waple mentions, students can visit one of the local clinics that SIUE has collaborated with around the community, including the Anderson Hospitals Express Care in Glen Carbon.

Waple also mentions that if students are struggling with their emotions or mental health, they should not feel any stigma about seeing a counselor or visiting SIUE's Counseling Services.

"There should never be a stigma around mental health issues," Waple says. "Counseling Services is a great resource for students who just might need to talk to someone. Life happens, so they say, and someone is there to listen and may help them solve some of their problems."

Counseling Services, Health Services and ACCESS are now working together to see how they can best support students who might require all three services in navigating their college experiences.

To hear more of Pembroke and Waple's conversation about how the vice chancellor's office is working to improve SIUE for its students, tune into Segue at 9 a.m. this Sunday on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound.

By Madelaine Deardouff, SIUE Marketing & Communications