



## SEGUE

# Rocha takes on director of women's studies

By Amanda Cooper  
For the Intelligencer

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, Greg Bubzban, PhD, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) dean, interviews Carolina Rocha, PhD, the incoming director for the women's studies program.

The interview will air at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 25. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or [siue.edu/wsie](http://siue.edu/wsie).

Born in Argentina, Rocha is a traveling researcher and professor in CAS. Her focus areas are literature, cinema and women's studies throughout Latin America. Rocha started her education at Argentine Catholic University, where she was awarded a bachelor's in Latin American history. She earned both her master's and PhD in Hispanic literature at the University of Texas at Austin and began teaching at SIUE in



Bubzban

2007.

"Tell me your story. How did you become interested in your area of study?" asks Bubzban.

"I always loved reading and I decided to focus on Latin American literature," says Rocha. "During the 20th Century, there has been a huge movement in literature throughout Latin America. The writers have a lot of ideas and influence the identities of the countries and I wanted to study and teach them."

"Why did you move from literature to cinema?" asks Bubzban.

"I saw that students were much more engaged when discussing films, so I switched my area of research from literature to cinema," Rocha responds.

"What brought you to SIUE?" Bubzban asks.

"My love of teaching and researching," Rocha says. "I always wanted to be a teacher. I get recharged in the classroom and I love learning from my students."

SIUE hosts an Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) program, where students are able to work alongside professors in semester or year-long research projects. Rocha has participated with students throughout the program since it began.

"We empower students and give them confidence when we work alongside them outside of the classroom," says Rocha. "When I tell my colleagues from other universities about URCA, they are surprised we have these programs. This is something unique to SIUE."

"Why were you interested in becoming the director of women's studies?" Bubzban inquires.

"In 2017, I was in Colombia after receiving a research grant," Rocha says. "I saw several women going into an auditorium and decided to follow them. It was an event organized and run by women about women's rights and power. Three years ago, I had no plan to become the director, but that experience was very eye-opening for me."

"Even in our country and our own program, the empowerment of women is something widely discussed," says Bubzban.

"That's true and we are approaching a very important moment," Rocha responds. "Twenty-twenty is the centennial of women's suffrage here in the United States."

Women's studies is an interdisciplinary minor in CAS. Once students have taken an introductory course, they can choose six other courses among different disciplines such as English, art, history, education and more.

"Our interdisciplinary program gives students a broad spectrum to choose from and exposes them to many different views," says Rocha. "One of my main objectives for the program is figuring out how to do more service learning. I want students to be able to see how different agencies and institutions work with women's issues."

"With the centennial of women's suffrage right around the corner, tell us about the event you've planned for campus in the spring," says Bubzban.

"Every March is Women's History Month and next

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year is also the centennial of women's suffrage and the College of Arts and Sciences' 25th Anniversary," says Rocha. "To celebrate all three of these important events, we are organizing a conference on women and gender studies."

"As professors of the university, we not only teach, but also research," explains Rocha. "We have to present our findings to our peers, and bring students and colleagues from other uni-

versities together to see what they are doing in relation to our work."

The Symposium on Women and Gender will take place March 19-20, 2020. The conference is a multi-disciplinary event that will focus on themes of women, gender and sexuality throughout history. Please visit <http://www.siue.edu/artsand-sciences/swg/> for more information.

To learn more about Rocha's research, film suggestions and plans for the program, tune in at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 25, to WSIE 88.7 The Sound.