

SEGUE

SIUE's Frey-Spurlock combines sustainability and community engagement with SIUE Successful Communities Collaborative

By Madelaine
Deardeuff
For the Intelligencer

Every other week on Segue, co-host Randy Pembroke, PhD, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville chancellor, interviews members of the university community and beyond.

On this week's episode of SIUE's premier radio show, Pembroke interviews Connie Frey Spurlock, PhD, associate professor of sociology.

The episode will air at 9 a.m. Sunday, July 7 on WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound and siue.edu/wsie.

At SIUE, Frey Spurlock teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in sustainability and research methods. She is chair of the SIUE Sustainability Action Group Steering Committee and is active in the St. Louis Higher Education Sustainability Consortium.

Frey Spurlock earned both a bachelor's and master's in sociology from Middle Tennessee State University in 1996 and 1998, respectively. She arrived at SIUE in 2004 as an instructor and was promoted to assistant professor when she was awarded her doctorate from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 2007.

Frey Spurlock's current research interests focus on various aspects of sustainability, including



Frey-Spurlock

sustainability research methods and literacy, recycling behaviors and education. She co-founded the Mississippi Project at SIUE, a faculty development workshop designed to facilitate curricular transformation. In its ninth year, the workshop has become one of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's 13 curriculum centers and draws educators from around the region. She is also the director for the SIUE Successful Communities Collaborative (SSCC).

"The Successful Communities Collaborative is based on a model of community engagement developed by scholars from the University of Oregon," Frey Spurlock explains. "The model brings together bright, talented faculty and students that have access to resources that communities may not have."

SSCC is a yearlong partnership between SIUE and a regional community. The community partner identifies sustainability and livability projects that would benefit from SIUE expertise. Faculty from across the University incorporate these projects into their courses and engage graduate and upper-level undergraduate students in the projects.

"I get quite excited about this program since it is a high-impact community engagement practice," Pembroke says. "I thank you for keeping students involved in the process and strengthening their education while they're here at SIUE."

The initiative is fashioned after the Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities (EPIC) model created in 2009 by the University of Oregon. In order to kickstart the program, the founders offered to host a number of informational sessions around

the country.

"One of the staff members was attending an informational session held in St. Louis and texted me immediately to tell me that I would be interested in what was happening there," Frey Spurlock says. "Little did I know how much my involvement in this initiative would grow!"

"EPIC's motto is, 'just start.' They're there to help us through any challenges we face along the way, answer any questions, and support us."

Along with Tim Engleman, former associate director of SIUE's Department of Educational Outreach, Frey Spurlock went to the EPIC Conference and gained valuable insight and tools to make the SSCC possible with the promise of support from the EPIC network.

"Godfrey and Highland were at our doorstep eager to collaborate and converse about potential partnerships,

and from there, we took off!" she says.

"Sitting down together and asking ourselves 'how can we achieve our goals by working together?' has been key to the success of this pro-

gram. The model guides us along the way."

To hear more about the SSCC and its past, present and future projects, tune in to Segue on Sunday, July 7 on WSIE 88.7 The Sound and siue.edu.

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