

SEGUE: Robin Fultz joins SIUE CAS as communications director

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Published Thursday, November 28, 2019



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 and beyond, Greg Budzban, PhD, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) dean, interviews Robin Fultz, the new CAS communications director.

The interview airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 1. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or siue.edu/wsie.

Until now, no college or academic unit within the University has had its own communications director. Fultz joins CAS as the first of her kind, bringing education communications experience from both Mehlville and Clayton school districts in Missouri.

"I love to have our guests talk about how they ended up here," says Budzban. "You actually grew up in Edwardsville, didn't you?"

"My parents met at SIUE and decided to stay here, and that's how I ended up growing up here," responds Fultz. "After graduating from Edwardsville High School, I went to Bradley University in Peoria, where I became a communications major with an emphasis in public relations."

After graduating and completing an internship, Fultz found full-time work with the Mehlville School District in South St. Louis County. Later, she found a similar full-time position with the School District of Clayton, where she developed a passion for communications in education. Last year, she and her family moved back to Edwardsville and have been reconnecting with the community she grew up in.

"Though I didn't necessarily go to SIUE, I feel a strong connection with it from growing up in Edwardsville," adds Fultz. "I feel like SIUE is such an important part of our community. It's one of the reasons why we have such a well-educated community."

"You mentioned that you worked for Clayton," notes Budzban. "Tell us what it was like to work for the school district."

“As a communicator, I’m also a storyteller,” says Fultz. “There are many things that go on in a K-12 district or a university that go untold unless we tell that story. That was something I really worked on during my time in Clayton, getting those stories out to the community and to people who might not necessarily have a connection with the district.”

Fultz hopes to recruit more students to CAS by utilizing a social media strategy that utilizes content generated by current students to capture the essence of campus life and what is great about attending SIUE.

“I think students telling their stories is the most compelling evidence we have,” says Budzban. “There’s so many social media platforms, how do we sort through and optimize that?”

“Currently, we use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for the College,” answers Fultz. “I hesitate to jump on the bandwagon for a new platform, because it might be gone in six months, and we need to work on establishing our followers and maintaining content throughout our current social media accounts.”

“Another thing we’ll be working on is redesigning our College website,” says Budzban. “Most of the time, students visit websites on their phones. If the sites aren’t adaptive, in today’s media environment, you’re a dinosaur.”

“Our current website is not responsive, meaning it doesn’t adjust to the size of a screen if you’re visiting from a phone or tablet,” says Fultz. “By making the content easier to find and adjusting the navigation, we’ll also be able to make the site more accessible and meet the needs of our audiences.”

“In terms of recruitment, communications is critical,” says Budzban. “We have students coming from Chicago, across the river in St. Louis, and the rural communities around Edwardsville. We need to tell stories to pique the interest of students from these areas.”

“By having all of these different communications channels, we will be able to effectively reach out to different audiences based on how they are finding our content,” adds Fultz. “Having news stories, photos of campus, and video testimonials from students will all assist in recruitment.”

Fultz has been in her new position for almost a month now and would love to hear from CAS alumni, students and faculty. Anyone with a CAS-related story idea can reach out to her at rofultz@siue.edu.

Tune in at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 1, to WSIE 88.7 The Sound to hear the entire conversation.