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SIUE's Dr. Jill Schreiber Steps into Role as Department of Sociology Chair

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 dean, interviews Jill Schreiber, PhD, the incoming Department of Social Work chair.

This episode of Segue airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 8. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or siue.edu/wsie.

Schreiber was hired as a faculty member at SIUE in 2013. Previously, she taught and studied social work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she earned both her master's and doctorate in social work.

"What brought you to social work as an academic discipline?" asks Bubzban.

"When I went to college, I decided to be a music education major. But halfway through my undergraduate degree, I switched over and started doing research on children's cognitive development," Schreiber explains. "I really liked understanding how children thought. Halfway through my PhD in cognitive development, I took a step back, because I was less interested in exclusively researching but wanted to help the children.

"I decided to get a master's in social work, and I worked with kids who had been abused or neglected. I really enjoyed being a social worker."

"In terms of coming to SIUE, was it a pretty straight shot?" asks Bubzban.

"It was for me," answers Schreiber. "I was quite concerned with making sure I was where I was supposed to be and doing what I was supposed to do. After one phone interview, one campus visit and one job offer, I knew exactly where I was supposed to be—here."

"Tell us a little bit about the diversity of careers available to students pursuing a degree in social work," says Bubzban.

"A bachelor's in social work qualifies students to do case management work with clients or families, but this work can be done in many settings," says Schreiber. "Social workers can serve mental health centers, hospitals and schools. Earning a master's or doctorate extends those opportunities."

SIUE's Department of Social Work offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Students earn hands-on experience by job shadowing, and participating in practice counseling and simulated client programs. Additionally, undergraduate students complete a practicum by the end of their senior year.

"What is special about the way students practice with clients at SIUE?" Bubzban asks.

"All students must have a practicum where they can go out and work with a practicing social worker in the field," says Schreiber. "Unique to SIUE, we have simulated client labs where students work with actors pretending to be clients."

Students apply the language and knowledge they've learned in their courses during simulated client labs. During the labs, students work with the actors through different situations, and receive feedback from their professors and classmates about how well they handled them. Afterwards, the class discusses what the next possibilities could be for such a client.

"Students say that they appreciate our simulated client labs and feel safe because they were able to practice before their practicums," says Schreiber.

"In what communities do students work during their practicums?" asks Bubzban.

"We have practicums in St. Louis, East St. Louis, Edwardsville and various rural settings around the area," answers Schreiber.

Department faculty are also working in local communities and beyond by conducting research, including topics on healthcare systems, gerontology and religion in social work. Students have opportunities to help faculty members with ongoing research throughout the department.

"A wonderful thing about social work is that there's such a wide range of interest in fields regarding research," says Schreiber. "We have such a wide range in our department itself."

This year, the Department of Social Work will be going through the re-accreditation process. Schreiber will assist the department in taking inventory of its curriculum, budget, faculty, field placements, community engagement, diversity issues and more. Additionally, the department is working on adding post-master's classes to allow students to qualify for a Professional Educator License. To learn more about social work at SIUE, visit siue.edu/artsandsciences/social-work.

To hear the entire interview, tune in at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 8 to WSIE 88.7 The Sound.

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