

# SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE



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Feb. 25, 2020

## **SEGUE: SIUE's Butler, Snipes and Moore Discuss the State of the Black Union**

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, Chancellor Randy Pembroke interviews Lakesha Butler, PhD, clinical professor and diversity and inclusion coordinator in the School of Pharmacy; JT Snipes, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership; and Tarsha Moore, assistant director of the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion.

This episode of Segue airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday March 1. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or [siue.edu/wsie](http://siue.edu/wsie).

The three interviewees serve in leadership roles within the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA): Butler as president, Snipes as an at-large board member, and Moore as the vice president of staff. The group played a key role in hosting the University's inaugural State of the Black Union last month by presenting a report with figures on grades, hiring and retention of black faculty, staff and students.

"How did the idea to host this event come about?" asks Pembroke.

"When I came to SIUE last year, I was looking for the State of the Black Union during Black History Month," says Snipes. "I didn't see it present, but I saw an opportunity for us to do something new and innovative to provide an opportunity for black faculty, staff and students and our allies to come together to think about the state of black folks on campus."

"When we first conceptualized the idea, we were excited to recognize where we are as a campus and think critically about how we can move forward in a positive way," adds Moore.

The goals set by the State of the Black Union called for the development of a year-long action plan, the enhancement of recruitment and retention of black faculty, staff and students throughout campus, and the development of positive relationships between black faculty, staff and students and their allies.

“We have a variety of initiatives as it relates to diversity and inclusion at SIUE, and you can see that threaded well throughout the fabric of our institution,” says Butler. “There was a number of great work that we wanted to celebrate at this event, but we also wanted to address some areas of improvement.”

Following the presentation, a panel session was conducted to allow participants to brainstorm possible solutions to improve hiring practices and address the lack of black faculty within the University. Proposed solutions included racial ally training, strategic hiring for faculty and staff, and the mentoring and development of student impact scholars.

“If you fast-forward into the future, do you see the State of the Black Union becoming an annual event?” inquires Pembroke.

“Absolutely,” responds Butler. “We plan to come back next year to determine our progress towards meeting the goals that were set this year.”

“As we continue to build this event, my desire is that our campus sees the success of our goals for the benefit of campus in and of itself,” says Snipes. “During the racial caucusing groups, there were allies who were thinking about their role in contributing to the retention and recruitment of black students, faculty and staff, and that’s what I want to see more of.”

“In five or ten years from now, what is something you’d like to accomplish in terms of diversity on the SIUE campus?” asks Pembroke.

“I anticipate that we’ll be working together,” answers Snipes. “I’d like to see greater ties between and amongst different racial communities.”

“The most important piece is us working together,” agrees Butler. “I’m seeing more of our allies taking a vested interest and being a part of this discussion and the solution we’re wanting to move toward.”

“I would love to see more student voices,” adds Moore. “When we work collectively together, we may see the retention of our students when their voices are included. It will be a benefit for the University overall.”

An upcoming BFSA event is the Black Excellence Scholarship Gala, which will be held on Saturday, March 7 at 6 p.m. in the Morris University Center’s Meridian Ballroom at SIUE. All event proceeds will go towards scholarship opportunities for black students at SIUE. For more information, contact Kelley Brooks at 618-650-2628 or at [kbrooks@siue.edu](mailto:kbrooks@siue.edu).

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

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