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**PHOTOS OF THE WEEK**



Tim Vizer/BND  
 A shopper walks out of JC Penney near the

Posted on Fri, Dec. 02, 2005

## SIUE ranks in top tier of U.S. schools

BY NICKLAUS LOVELADY  
 News-Democrat

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report as one of the top schools in the nation for the overall academic experience by graduating seniors.

In an annual survey conducted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, SIUE seniors' assessment for education quality was among the top 15 universities in the country.

SIUE held the honor for best 2005 Senior Capstone with other institutions such as Harvard University, Princeton University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

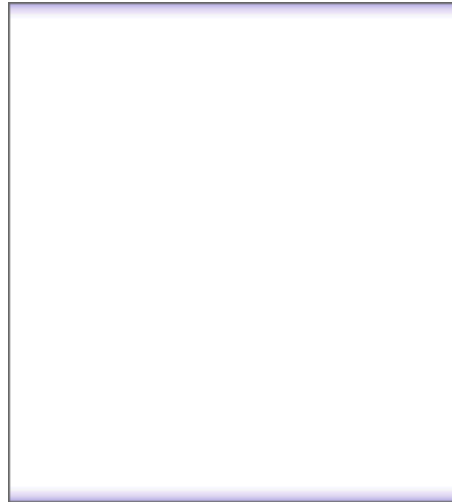
Of the institutions selected, SIUE, Portland State University, and Truman State University were the only public schools.

"We didn't set out to get this award. We set out do what was right for the university, and it just h director of undergraduate assessment Douglas Eder said.

Eder was responsible for getting the senior assessment project rolling in 1988. In 1992, the univ implemented it as one of the requirements for graduation.

The course is offered to graduating seniors and is used to demonstrate all the skills learned dur apply them to one project.

"It's used to help determine curriculum changes based on what the students do well in the proje they didn't do well," Assistant Provost of Planning Sue Thomas said.



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historic carousel in the East Court area at St. Clair Square. This time exposure makes the lights on the top of the merry-go-round appear as a swirling pattern.

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Each department decides its own assignment. Some project can be as complex as building a rocket or as exotic as traveling to other countries to present research.

Funding comes from an annual pool of about \$85,000 known as the Senior Assessment Fund. It goes toward trips, project supplies and research.

Each year about 25 students from the psychology department travel to Chicago for a regional conference where they present research among other professionals in the field.

"To be recognized by other professionals at conference makes the students proud to say they're recognized," Thomas said. "It's all about the students getting a chance to excel in their field and use the stuff they've learned."

Senior Brint Hutchison, who took the course last year, and graduate assistant Jeremy Wood, who graduated in 2003, said it's no fluke SIUE was recognized.

"We might not have the prestige of U of I Champaign, but this is more of a learning school. They're here to help students," said Hutchison an electrical engineering major.

Wood agreed.

"At some research schools, it's always the teacher's assistant teaching the class. And if you ever get to be your professor, you're lucky," Wood said.

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