Unveiling University Diversity Plan

As part of the Chancellor’s Installation Event Calendar, the University Diversity Council, chaired by Dr. Venessa Brown, Associate Provost, Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, presented the proposed “University Diversity Plan (2013 – 2016)” to the University community on April 16, 2013. The purpose of this Diversity Plan is to define and clearly identify goals and measurable outcomes for diversity and inclusion.

The Diversity plan is aimed at three goals:
Goal 1: Institutional Leadership: Campus Administration will provide leadership and support, as well as oversight, for all diversity and inclusion initiatives.
Goal 2: Curricular and Co-curricular Transformation: Curricular and Co-curricular activities will incorporate diversity and inclusion into instructional materials, classroom discussions, and student assignments, activities and university events.
Goal 3: Campus Climate: Southern Illinois University Edwardsville will be a welcoming and inclusive climate for all faculty, staff, students and visitors both in the classroom and the work environment.

The We Are One Diversity Plan is available at: https://www.siue.edu/institutionaldiversityandinclusion/pdf/SIUE_Diversity_Plan-_2013.pdf

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“Never judge someone
By the way he looks
or a book by the way it's covered;
For inside those tattered pages,
There's a lot to be discovered”
— Stephen Cosgrove
The United Nations Flag at SIUE

What a wonderful event! With nearly 75 faculty, staff and students of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville represented, the United Nations Flag event was a success. This was part of the Chancellor’s Installation Event Calendar.

On Tuesday, April 16 five international students: Mohammed Chakir (Fulbright Scholar from Morocco), Syayid Sukandi (Fulbright Scholar from Indonesia), Yang Peng (Graduate Student from Taiwan), Dora Opoku-Acheampong (Graduate student from Ghana) and Omotola Soyoye (Graduate student from Nigeria) presented a PowerPoint titled “The United Nations Flag at SIUE.” The presentation featured the history of the UN Flag at SIUE, the University’s policy as regards the flag, diversity and inclusion at SIUE and the University diversity statement.

In 1974, SIUE declared that it is a “World University”– a University which recognizes that it is a part not only of a state community and a national community but also of a global community (policy 1Q6). As an appropriate symbol of this declaration, the United Nations flag is flown on the main campus flagpole along with the United States and Illinois State flags.

The international students expressed what the United Nations flag means to them. “Whether we are from Europe, Asia or the Middle East, even though we have differences through cultural, geographic and political backgrounds, we are building on our relationships here,” said Mohamed Chakir, a Fulbright scholar from Morocco.

Safe Chat – by Vicky Dean

Safe Zone proudly debuted a new program this year called “Safe Chats”. This program stemmed from requests the committee has gotten the past several years to expand on the material provided in the Ally Training each semester. Safe Zone committee members brainstormed topics people have suggested as well as tapped into the resources we have here on the SIUE campus. The resulting schedule for this year included sessions about being out at SIUE; activism and advocacy; creating safe spaces, divorce in the LGBT community, and more about “coming out”.

The first session about being out at SIUE was arranged to have panelists who are faculty, staff and students at SIUE who are “out”. A wide variety of audience members were able to ask questions about the panelist’s experiences— including some positive anecdotes as well as instances of being challenged, ridiculed or not being supported.

The second session featured Daniel Rosner and Vicky Dean presenting on the myriad ways people can become more active in their support of the LGBT community-starting with basic awareness and personal behaviors; and increasing toward being a conscientious consumer, an educated voter, and getting involved with LGBT organizations.

Several faculty and campus administrators spoke on the panel for the third session about creating safe spaces. This session provided plenty of opportunity for audience members to ask questions and to engage in conversation. The fourth chat showcased visiting professor, Elizabeth Victor, discussing the challenges for LGBT couples who marry with the current state of marriage laws in the U.S. and across international borders.

The final chat of the semester provided an opportunity for campus members to explore additional challenges related to the coming out process, and was facilitated by Rex Jackson from University Housing. Overall, the sessions ranged from having a handful of attendees to rooms overflowing the seats. Given the success of the program, Safe Zone plans to continue this program next year, kicking off with a program about parents of LGBT people. If you are interested in getting involved in Safe Zone, please contact co-chairs Dayna Henry, (dayhenr@siue.edu) or John Davenport, (jdavenp@siue.edu) or attend our first public meeting in the fall semester.
Welcome to SIUE, Dr. Kevin Thomas

Dr. Kevin P. Thomas joined SIUE in July, 2012 as the first Director of Retention and Student Success. Kevin Thomas earned his doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership, Postsecondary Education at Western Kentucky in 2012. He earned a master of science in Human Development and Leadership, College Student Personnel at Murray State University in 2004 and a bachelor's degree in Organizational Communication and Public Relations also at Murray State University in 2002.

“As the Director of Retention and Student Success at SIUE, it is my honor to serve the students, faculty, and staff of the institution. When admitting a student to SIUE, our end goal is to watch that students reach graduation and move onto successful careers in their chosen field. My role is in place to help guide students toward the path of graduation and help them overcome any roadblocks that may be in their way,” said Kevin.

“Students enter SIUE in varying times in their lives. Whether you are a new freshman, transfer students, or non-traditional student, your path toward success can be found at SIUE. I am committed to working with the students of SIUE to ensure they find success.”

“Retention at SIUE is a campus wide effort. As a student at SIUE, you will find the faculty and staff of the institution are committed to helping you find success both in and out of the classroom.”

New Faculty Attend Faculty Women of Color in the Academy (FWCA) Conference

Over three hundred participants attended the Faculty Women of Color in the Academy (FWCA) Conference on April 3-5, 2013, hosted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The conference focused on issues of politics and scholarship, and featured prominent keynotes and panelists.

Two new faculty: Dr. Sandra Weissinger, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies and Dr. Kimberly Carter, Department of Social Work attended from SIUE.

The presentations at the conference struck a chord with Dr. Weissinger, who remarked, “It was a joy to go to. I actually told people when I came back and even before I came, for someone like me who travels a lot, I go to different jobs; this was like going home. You got all these people around you who are going through the same experience of being on a tenure track or being in the classroom or doing research. They are willing to tell you their stories. We had sections in which we had folks tell us the steps they took and if it’s not working out, you go do this. But giving that kind of guidance, usually, I’m the one giving guidance so, to get that kind of guidance is a good thing! …It was awesome! … It was a holistic encouragement. We had a choir who sang to encourage us. We had people who are supportive…It was a good time!”

Dr. Carter also had this to say about the conference: “Every section was good which is unusual for a conference and I think in particular, it spoke to a topic that is not always discussed but that’s very relevant. It spoke to me; what does it mean to be a minority in academia… But to hear it from women who have been there, who are still struggling with being minority in academia and to have them mentor us remotely by talking about it was really empowering. I feel like okay, I can do this and this journey is not mine alone so, I really enjoyed it.”
Embracing Diversity and Inclusion Newsletter

Coming Soon: The Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion will Sponsor a Book Club for Women in Academia


Dr. Sandra Weissinger of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies and Dr. Kimberly Carter of the Department of Social Work will be co-facilitator for a book club which will start in fall 2013.

*Presumed Incompetent* is a path breaking account of the intersecting roles of race, gender, and class in the working lives of women faculty of color. Through personal narratives and qualitative empirical studies, more than 40 authors expose the daunting challenges faced by academic women of color as they navigate the often hostile terrain of higher education, including hiring, promotion, tenure, and relations with students, colleagues, and administrators. The narratives are filled with wit, wisdom, and concrete recommendations, and provide a window into the struggles of professional women in a racially stratified but increasingly multicultural America.

Feel free to contact Dr. Carter at kimcart@siue.edu or Dr. Weissinger at sweissi@siue.edu for questions and contributions.

For more information and sign up visit: [http://www.siue.edu/institutionaldiversityandinclusion/](http://www.siue.edu/institutionaldiversityandinclusion/)

Art Workshop for Parents of Head Start Children

About 140 parents attended the art workshop organized for parents of Head Start children on April 11, 2013 at Our Lady of the Snows Shrine. The workshop was organized by Dr. Gussie Klorer, director of the graduate Art Therapy Counseling program at Southern Illinois University and other faculty members in the department.

“It stemmed from my own research, my own work. I got the idea of taking art-making into more public settings and helping people to tell family stories with art. I wrote several grants which got funded, one was the Meridian Foundation and one was the Target Foundation. We received funding for the Head Start workshop, we were able to provide each participant at the workshop with a goodie bag full of art supplies that they could take home and do art with their children. My students and the faculty here in the Art Therapy counseling program made up a book of art ideas that parents can use with their kids using recycle materials and just real basic art supplies. The students get two versions of the book; one in English and one in Spanish, because a lot of the Head Start parents are not English speaking. It was a day of what we call “celebrate the family through art”. It was a day of art making and a day of having parents just really appreciate their families and having fun and the need thing about it was according to the head start administrators. It was one of the best attended parent workshop that they’ve ever had. And the parents seem to love it,” said Dr. Klorer.