

# SIUE offers warmth and encouragement as students begin spring semester

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EDWARDSVILLE - It may have been a bit chilly out, but that didn't stop the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Office of Student Affairs and campus community members from helping brighten students' day at the start of the 2017 spring semester. A video of first day activities can be viewed [here](#).

"Have a great first day! Stay warm!" Kara Shustrin, associate dean of students/director of student conduct in the Office of Student Affairs, greeted students as they walked to class.

“Everyone seems happy to be back and ready to start a new semester,” freshman Jessica Wittenauer said.

Volunteers were spread throughout campus displaying “Ask Me!” signs and offering guidance.

“I am happy to help regardless of what the temperature is,” said Kevin Thomas, EdD, director of retention and student success.

“We have students who come a bit early and don’t necessarily know how to navigate campus,” explained Tarsha Moore with the Office of Student Affairs. “We want to make sure they feel welcome, comfortable getting to class and meeting their professors. We want to get them started on the right track.”

Volunteers also provided students a little warmth as they hosted the second annual hot chocolate stand.

“Happy first day of class!” Jeffrey Waple, PhD, vice chancellor for student affairs, told students. “Free hot chocolate!”

“It’s a little chilly,” freshman Kristina Springer said. “A warm drink always makes you feel better, so I’m excited!”

“We’re enjoying seeing a lot of smiles as we hand out hot chocolate,” Waple added. “It’s a great event.”

Help could also be found in Textbook Service as students gathered their last minute materials.

“We have a lot of fun things going on as we welcome our students back,” Waple said. “You can see that students are excited to be back. They’re smiling. They’re happy. I encourage them to attend and enjoy their classes, meet and network with faculty and staff, and get involved in student life!”

The opening week of the spring semester continues with multiple events and activities sure to encourage a fresh start in the New Year. A calendar of events can be found at [siue.edu/events](http://siue.edu/events).