

# Eyes and minds opened by SIUE Student Government's Tunnel of Oppression

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE - Eyes and minds were opened as Southern Illinois University Edwardsville community members walked through Student Government's Tunnel of Oppression on Tuesday, March 14. The maze of impactful experiences demonstrated issues people face at home and globally.

More than 400 people walked through the Tunnel of Oppression, which included topics encompassing immigration, same-sex marriage, women's rights, mental health, international injustices and more.

"These topics are relevant and these things actually happen to our students," said Carmen Connors, a senior in the SIUE School of Business and external affairs officer for Student Government. "Right as you enter the tunnel you have three screens that feature testimonials from different students who have been affected by topics that people will then go and experience throughout the tunnel."

"Sometimes you get caught up in your school work, graduating and getting a job, and you kind of forget what's going on in the real world when it comes to diversity and inclusion, and for certain groups that are oppressed," added Taylor Bodine, a senior in the School of Business and marketing and communications officer for Student Government. "Even if you may not fall into any of those categories, it's important to educate yourself."

The goal of the event was to raise awareness of these important topics, and allow individuals to walk in another person's shoes to gain a greater understanding of actions they can take to help and be inspired to do a greater good for the people around them.

"There are a lot of people in the world going through things that I can't even imagine, but I've experienced a little bit of that today," said Ricky Rush, a senior in the College of Arts and Sciences, after walking through the tunnel. "I realize that for some people it's not easy to let strangers know their experiences, so this was a way for me to show my support and hear their stories, and hopefully that will make me a better person in the long run."

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 14,000.