

SIUE International Studies Day broadens perspectives, fosters interest in global careers

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville College of Arts and Sciences' (CAS) International Studies Program hosted International Studies Day on Thursday, April 6 in the Morris University Center's Meridian Ballroom.

More than 150 students, faculty and community members attended the day's events which featured expert panels on key international issues and careers, as well as film presentations, an artistic performance and a trivia night.

"International Studies Day gave attendees a taste of today's key international aspects through the voices of specialists in economics, education and politics," said Sorin Nastasia, PhD, director of the International Studies Program and associate professor of public relations in the Department of Applied Communication Studies. "We wanted to give prospective and current students a sense of what they can become by pursuing a career in international settings."

"We hope participants left with new information concerning the realities and complexities of this world, and a hunger to find out more on their own or through the International Studies Program."

Funding for the event came from the CAS Targeted Funding Initiative, initiated by Greg Budzban, dean of CAS. "Each year we invite our faculty to submit proposals for innovative ideas and programs. International Studies Day is the perfect example of an innovative event that brings interesting people to campus, enriches our students' academic experiences, and provides information about an exciting new program in the College of Arts and Sciences."

An international careers panel included representatives from the U.S. Department of State, City Year, the Peace Corps, the World Affairs Council of St. Louis, and the St. Louis Consular Corps. Expert speakers encouraged students to seek opportunities to build their international resume, and in their endeavors, be humble and flexible.

"Keep your mind open and try to do your best within certain circumstances," said Robert Neus, U.S. Department of State Diplomat in Residence for the Midwest. "When you are thrown into unknown situations, the more flexible and open-minded you are, the better."

"When you are coming into this work, no matter where you are, you need to proceed with a sense of humility," added Eric Barbour, Midwest regional recruitment manager with City Year. "We are there to learn and partner alongside people in these communities. After taking that time to learn, you move forward with confidence and leadership."

“The careers panel was incredibly eye-opening,” said Alexis Shad, a senior international business major. “I learned how many options are truly available for those interested in pursuing an international career. This type of global knowledge is becoming increasingly necessary in our particular political landscape.”

“One of my students left International Studies Day with confirmation that she is on the right path,” said SIUE Academic Advisor Sarah Stover. “She has a new passion and level of excitement for her studies now, since she has had the opportunity to talk with professionals in the field and is aware of available opportunities.”

According to Carolina Rocha, PhD, core faculty for the International Studies Program and co-organizer of the event, the day also featured two movie presentations: *Operation E* and *Sold*. The films presented the realities of living in countries where war and human bondage affect individuals’ happiness and well-being.

Additionally, a performance by African Musical Arts, Inc., The Song of Africa Ensemble, and IMI Chamber Players from St. Louis featured interactive opportunities for the audience to learn about the beauty of African music, instruments, languages and cultures.

International Studies Day ended with a Trivia Night, with the theme A World of Possibilities. Participants tested their international knowledge and learned more about the rapidly expanding International Studies Program, launched in fall 2016.

The College of Arts and Sciences’ International Studies Program features concentration areas in International Art, Culture and Communication; International Development and Sustainability; and International Relations and Diplomacy. For more information, visit siue.edu/international-studies.

Central to SIUE’s exceptional and comprehensive education, the [College of Arts and Sciences](http://siue.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences) has 19 departments and 85 areas of study. More than 300 full-time faculty /instructors deliver classes to more than 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty help students explore diverse ideas and experiences, while learning to think and live as fulfilled, productive members of the global community. Study abroad, service-learning, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities better prepare SIUE students not only to succeed in our region's workplaces, but also to become valuable leaders who make important contributions to our communities.