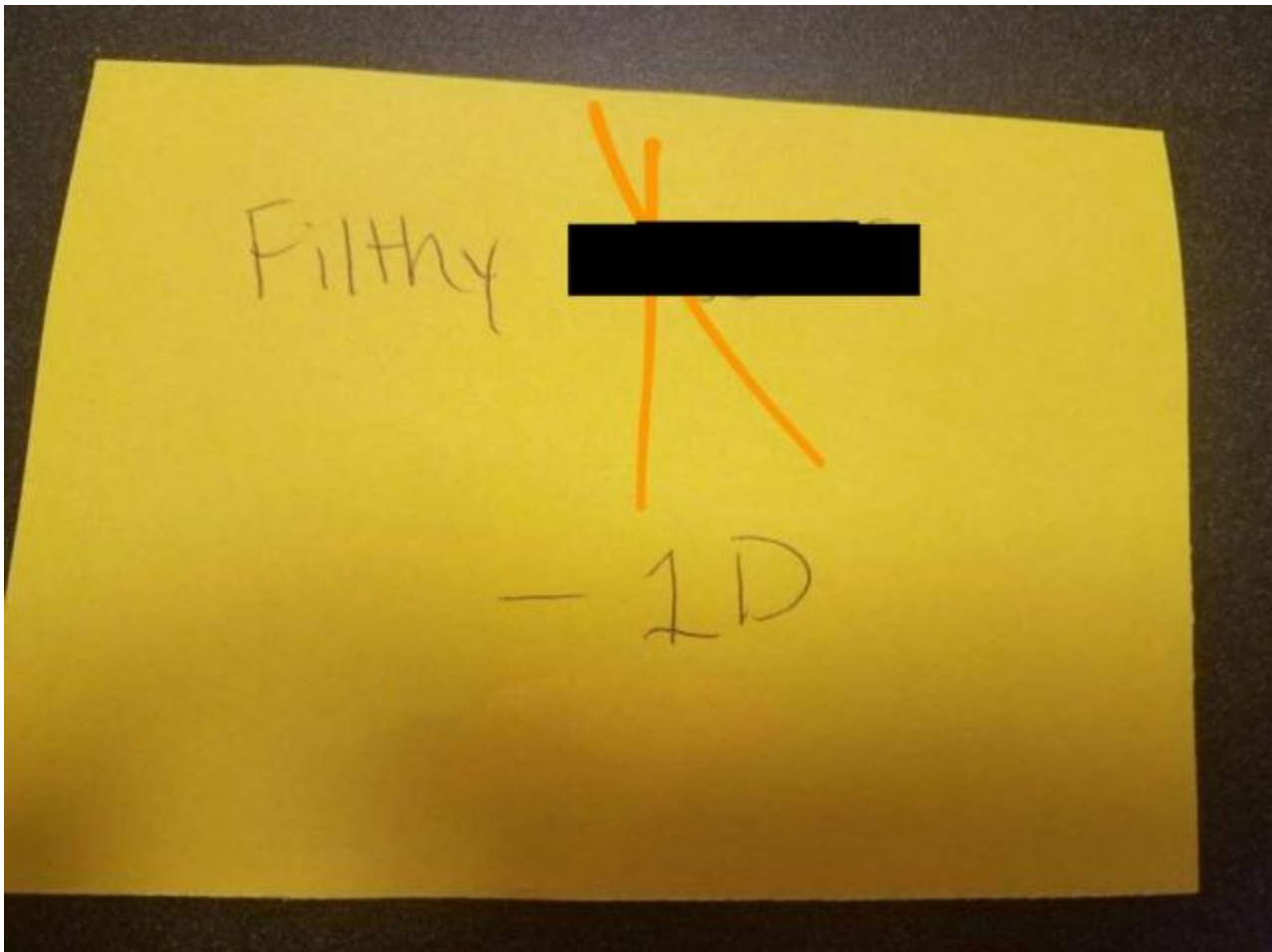


SIUE offering one semester's worth of tuition for arrest of person who left racially-charged note

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - Last Friday, Sept. 15, students of Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville (SIUE) were alerted to two possible racially-motivated events on campus.

Earlier last week, a rock, which is utilized by various student groups to promote events was covered with a Confederate flag. Once the administration of SIUE heard of it, SIUE Communications and Marketing Director Doug McIlhagga said it was immediately resprayed. He said that rock is constantly changing day by day or at least week by week. No charges are being sought in that incident. The rock itself can be utilized by nearly anyone to promote events, awareness, etc.

A second, more heinous, example occurred last Friday when someone posted a sign on the door of a residence at the Cougar Village student housing complex that read: "Filthy *racial slur*" and addressed it from residents from room 1D. Many posters sharing the image on social media claim the signature is a red herring and the crime was committed by at least one white female suspect. The origin of the note is unknown at this time, according to an email from the university, but it is under investigation by the SIUE Police Department.

In a second email sent from the university to the entire student body regarding the incidents (the hateful note in particular), SIUE promises an entire semester's worth of tuition and fees to anyone who can provide information leading to the arrest of the individual or individuals who committed what the university promises to charge as a felony hate crime.

Here is the second email in its entirety, provided by a student of the university. It was signed by SIUE Chancellor Randall G. Pembroke, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Denis Cobb, Vice Chancellor for Administration Rich Walker, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Rachel Stack, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Jeffrey Waple and Associate Chancellor for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion Vanessa Brown.

Dear Campus Community,

We are providing an update regarding the steps that we are taking to improve internal responses to racial bias and other forms of injustice. Regarding the racially motivated hate incident in Cougar Village last week, University Police are continuing to investigate the origin and author of the note. When the perpetrator is identified, he or she will be charged with a felony. Neither SIUE nor the Madison County State's Attorney has any tolerance for hate crimes.

A reward of a semester's tuition and fees is being offered for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrator.

We are moving forward with planning related to the four points communicated last Friday by our senior leadership team to address any actions that violate our commitment to an inclusive and equitable campus. Specifically, we recognize that we have work to do to improve support and inclusion for African American students at SIUE. This includes:

- An “immediate response team” is being created for hate and bias on campus. Until that team is formed, any future student incidents should be directly communicated to Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Jeffrey Waple, who will provide immediate response and ensure on-site support for students.*
- Student Affairs, in consultation with other divisions, is developing plans for immediate support for students, faculty and staff who are victims of racist, sexist, homophobic, religious discrimination or other forms of oppression, including counseling and advising.*
- We recognize that SIUE must be a safe and inclusive place for students, faculty and staff 24 hours per day/7 days per week. We will work to develop and disseminate a clearer plan for members of our community to access help and support, should these events occur.*
- We will follow-up on these incidents with those involved, including SIUE Police and appropriate SIUE administrators and staff members.*
- We are also instituting updated incident communication protocols to better meet future situations in a timely fashion should they occur.*

We have received many notes and messages of concerns from our entire community. Building trust and nurturing relationships with each member of our community is critical to moving forward. We will work to identify new and better ways to structure opportunities for critical dialogue and learning. As we continue this work, we need you to join us. We look forward to working with members of our community to help lead necessary change as we continue to evolve.

We are committed to maintaining a safe, secure and inclusive campus environment for all students, faculty and staff.

When asked for comment last Monday, Sept. 18, McIlhagga said incidences such as these are "exceedingly rare" on campus.