

# **SIUE's Harris named interim assistant provost**

January 18 2018 2:54 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Denise Cobb, PhD, has named Jessica Harris, PhD, as interim assistant provost, effective January 1, 2018. She will serve in the role through next year or until the successful completion of a search to fill the position permanently. A full search for the permanent position will occur in spring 2019.

Harris is an associate professor of historical studies in the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences and director of the interdisciplinary Black Studies program. Harris' work at SIUE has included a special assignment as a Provost Fellow for Diversity and Inclusion. In this role, she collaborated with faculty colleagues, undergraduate and graduate students, the Honors Program, the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs to launch a pilot of Sustained Dialogue, a powerful five-stage social action model encouraging dialogue across differences, as a curricular and co-curricular program.

"There is so much good work to build upon at SIUE, and I am thrilled that Dr. Harris will be part of our team," said Cobb. "We have opportunities to enrich the student experience and to facilitate the innovative work that our faculty members do in support of student learning and discovery. I have been impressed by Dr. Harris' dedication to our students, faculty and community."

"I want to use my knowledge and experiences to contribute to making this institution all it can be," added Harris. "Everything that I do is to push the mission of this University forward. When I consider the mission and values of SIUE, students are my central focus. I will continue to work with others to develop initiatives and programs to let students know they have been heard, and for them to have new experiences within and outside of the classrooms."

Harris was also integrally involved with the team that re-imagined SIUE's academic convocation, with the new version launched in fall 2017. Since joining the SIUE faculty in 2011, Harris has been a highly-involved campus community member, ideating, facilitating discussions and presenting remarks at such initiatives as the sustained dialogue program, three SIUE Black Lives Matter conferences, Black Heritage Month celebrations, and faculty development workshops.

"I am confident that Dr. Harris will make a difference for our students and serve our faculty in ways that will enhance the curriculum, promote student learning and encourage student success," Cobb said. "I am grateful that she is willing to step into this important role to work with faculty and staff in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to improve student engagement, student learning and success. Her student-centered approach, commitment to inclusive excellence, and collaborative spirit will be necessary to advancing our efforts regarding curricular innovation and student success."

Harris received the Faculty Humanitarian Award at SIUE's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration on Wednesday, Jan. 17.

Harris participated in the 2017 Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) Institute, an intensive, residential leadership development program for female leaders across the United States. Additionally, in 2017, she was named to the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions Inaugural Aspiring Leaders Forum and Mentoring Program.

Harris is an accomplished teacher and scholar of 20th century African American History, and a dedicated servant leader committed to student success and inclusive excellence. Harris received the competitive Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's 2014-15 Career Enhancement Fellowship for Junior Faculty for her research on the contributions of black women to the struggle for civil rights in Oakland, California prior to World War II.

In 2011, Harris earned a doctorate in history from Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y. She also holds a master's from Cornell University and a bachelor's from Dillard University.

[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 nearly 14,000.