

SIUE's International Studies Day promotes global careers, highlights UN

April 19 2018 3:52 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville College of Arts and Sciences' second International Studies Day held Thursday, April 12, featured distinguished international and regional leaders who spoke on issues impacting our region, global career opportunities, and international advocacy.

The event's keynote speaker was Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, a career diplomat with the United Nations and an inspirational champion for sustainable peace and development. He spoke on "The United Nations – Essential or Irrelevant in Today's World?"

"The end of the Cold War and dawning of the new century have confronted us with countless new challenges, and also endless opportunities that we must seize for peace, development and democracy," Ambassador Chowdhury said. "The United Nations handles much more than peace and security. The UN and its family of agencies are engaged in a continuing gigantic endeavor against enormous odds to improve every aspect of people's lives around the world."

"In addition to being universal and impartial, the ability to adapt itself to new realities has made the UN take on the challenges of today's world in an effective manner, which no other institution has the ability and credibility to take on," he added.

Chowdhury is founder of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace and has served as under-secretary-general and high representative of the United Nations, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to UN, president of the UN Security Council, and president of the UNICEF Board.

During his presentation, Ambassador Chowdhury expressed his confidence in today's students to rid themselves of intolerance, prejudice, ignorance and selfishness for the betterment of humankind.

"I am always inspired by the human spirit, and its resilience and capacity to overcome any adversity," he said. "The hardest problems on the planet will not have singular solutions, nor will they be resolved with singular attempts. They must be worked on diligently and collaboratively, and with perseverance and patience."

The influential leader's words, and those of the event's other featured guests, offered inspiration and motivation for SIUE students in attendance.

"These incredible professionals have boosted my confidence that I can achieve my dreams of helping people around the world," said Alexis Robinson, a sophomore international studies major from Florissant, Mo. "They are normal people, who have made a huge difference in the world."

Nanayaa Kumi, associate talent outreach officer at the United Nations Secretariat in New York City, emphasized the value of introducing SIUE students to the international arena and offering a window into the UN's career opportunities.

"I am living proof that there are many entryways in the United Nations," Kumi said. "If you have a will, you take action and you're an activist for sustainable development goals, there is a place for you at the UN."

Zephanii Smith, member of the National Council of the United Nations Association of the United States and an inspiring young public servant, also focused on her personal experiences in connecting to international organizations and global causes. She reminded the audience that, as we all can dream of a world in which there is no hunger and nobody without shelter, we are all sustainable development activists.

"Having professionals of this caliber visit campus, reminds us that the world is smaller than we think and it makes everything seem more doable," added Spanish education major Rachel Liefer.

"As director of the International Studies Program at SIUE, I am always looking for new ways of expanding for our students' internship and career opportunities, while exposing the young minds to the wisdom offered by worthy speakers from important organizations around the country which have a regional or international impact," said Sorin Nastasia, PhD, associate professor and international studies program director. "I would like to express my full appreciation for all the speakers and visitors who contributed time and ideas for the successful organization of the second International Studies Day on our campus."

Nastasia organized International Studies Day with assistance from a team of public relations students completing their senior assignment. Team members included Daniel Nosce, of Alton, and Chicago natives Ricky Rush, Jourdan Canino, Lauryn Fox and De' Ajah Lofton. Nastasia also had the support in organizing International Studies Day from the SIUE chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America.

"We were glad to promote International Studies Day, gain experience creating and implementing a public relations campaign, and engage in event planning, all of which will help us in our future careers," Nosce said.

International Studies Day also featured informational booths on SIUE departments and programs, student organizations, and the Office of International Affairs, along with the International Institute of St. Louis, European Studies Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the Institute for International Education and the Peace Corps.

The event concluded with a film screening of “I am From Chile” by director Gonzalo Diaz Ugarte.

International Studies Day was supported in part by the College of Arts and Sciences’ Targeted Funding Initiative. The program utilizes funding acquired through the College’s Winter Session courses and is supplemented with other internal CAS funds. Now in its third year, the 2018 CAS TFI funded 36 projects totaling \$200,000.

For more information on International Studies Day and SIUE’s international studies program, visit siue.edu/artsandsciences/internationalstudies/.

Central to SIUE’s exceptional and comprehensive education, the [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.