

Inclusive, Capable, Tenacious: Phenomenal Women Shine at SIUE

by Megan Weiser
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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's fifth annual Phenomenal Women's Luncheon held Tuesday, March 26, honored 15 women, comprising faculty, staff, students and community members, for their incredible positive impact as people and leaders.

In honor of Women's History Month, and hosted by the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, the annual event honors women from all walks of life who have made contributions to diversity and inclusion at SIUE, the region, nation and world.

“Today we come together as a University community to celebrate you, your tireless efforts, and your commitment to diversity and inclusion,” said Venessa Brown, PhD, associate chancellor and chief diversity officer. “Through the annual recognition of phenomenal women’s contributions, we hope to inspire others to embrace and promote diversity within their own lives and the lives of others.”

“This event underscores SIUE’s core values, particularly those related to inclusion, excellence and citizenship,” added Chancellor Randy Pembroke, PhD. “I thank you for all you do, and the tremendous difference you make at SIUE. We appreciate it so much!”

Graduate assistant in the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion Tanadja Barber shared what a phenomenal woman means to her.

“Being a phenomenal woman means going beyond the possibilities of your mind,” Barber said. “You are adventurous, capable and tenacious. You embrace your compelling and captivating nature as human beings. You use your empowerment to break through challenges and bring change in the lives of those around you.”

“When you think you can’t, you do it anyway, and the results are beautiful,” she added. “Thank you for sharing your light with all of us.”

The 2019 awardees include:

Stephanie Bargiel: SIUE graduate student

Eboni Buckels: Lifelong Learning coordinator in the Office of Educational Outreach

Christina Chapman: SIUE alumna and professor of English and reading at Lewis & Clark Community College

Christy Ferguson: Instructor in the Department of English Language and Literature

Jessica Friz: Community member

Chaya Gopalan, PhD: Associate professor in the Department of Primary Care and Health Systems Nursing, and the Department of Applied Health

Jeanne Gyuriseck: Support Staff in the Office of Equal Opportunity, Access, & Title IX

Dalia Hassan: SIUE undergraduate student

Edith Laktzian: Learning strategist at the SIUE Charter High School

Alexis Lambert: SIUE graduate student

Sharon Locke, PhD: Associate professor, and director of the SIUE STEM Center

Patricia Merritt: Marketing specialist - media relations in University Marketing and Communications

Tricia Oberweis, PhD: Professor in the Departments of Sociology and Criminal Justice Studies

Kimberly Simpkins: Family engagement specialist with SIUE Head Start/Early Head Start

Wendy Weber, PhD: Associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning
The luncheon also featured Women's History Month trivia and the reading of Maya Angelou's empowering anthem, "Phenomenal Women."

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 13,000.