

# **CSDI Welcomes SIUE Students To Spring Semester During Its Virtual Open House**

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The work being done in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion, and the many student opportunities to connect, participate and develop were presented on Monday, Jan. 25 during a Virtual Open House and New Student Welcome Reception hosted by the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion (CSDI).

“What I’m excited about is the search for the first SIU System Vice President for Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Chief Diversity Officer,” said SIU System President Dan Mahony, PhD. “We still have a lot of work to do. If you have suggestions for change, please tell us what we could do better.”

“I hope you have a fantastic experience here. SIUE changed my life, and I know it will change yours, as well,” said SIUE Chancellor Randy Pembroke. “I’m pumped up for 2021 for several reasons. We have a vice chancellor search going on now relating to equity, diversity and inclusion. We also have a group called the Anti-Racism Task Force that is working on creating a wonderful environment at SIUE, and helping us think of new opportunities to support students, faculty and staff.”

“When we started this semester, we asked everyone coming to campus to complete a COVID test,” Pembroke offered. “More than 7,000 tests were completed, and fewer than 50 people were positive. That is less than 1%. SIUE is a good, safe environment, and I want to thank all of those who are wearing their masks, washing their hands and keeping socially distanced from others.”

These are uncommon times, said Mahony. “Still, my advice is not vastly different than at any other time, which is for you to take advantage of every opportunity to get involved in University life.”

CSDI Director Lindy Wagner emphasized the Center’s mission and vision and gave an overview of its signature events, which include:

- History and Heritage Month Programs
- Inclusive Conversations
- Listening Sessions
- Affinity-Based Town Halls
- Sustained Dialogue

After the presentation, students were assigned to breakout rooms where they connected with one another and with faculty and staff.

“Connecting students to one another is crucial,” said Wagner. “We also wanted to ensure that students understood CSDI programs, met its staff and knew its physical location.”

“I went to the CSDI Student Welcome Reception and learned a lot,” said R’Eyanna Moore, a freshman majoring in psychology. “When it comes to their mission, they mean it! CSDI strives for the inclusion of marginalized groups and to create a place and community where they are celebrated and loved.”

“They want to create not only a safe place, but an authentic place. They are making a place of support, courage and transformation.”

“This institution has some great and welcoming faculty and staff,” Mahony told the students. “Our goal is not only to make you feel welcome, but to make you feel like you belong at SIUE.”