



# **SIUE Hosts Successful Virtual Admitted Minority Student Visit Day**

by Megan Wieser  
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Office of Admissions hosted almost 100 admitted minority students during a virtual visit day on Monday, March 29.

Students from as far away as California interacted with current students and representatives from SOAR (Student Opportunities for Academic Results), the Office of Academic Advising, CORE T.E.A.M. (College Readiness: Transition, Engage, Achieve and Mentor), ACCESS (Office for Accessible Campus Community & Equitable Student Support), Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion (CSDI), the Department of Theater and Dance, and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

According to Kelley Brooks, assistant director for campus visits in the Office of Admissions, this was the first recruitment program held this year which targeted admitted minority students.

“In creating a virtual program of this kind, we wanted to ensure that admitted minority students could login for the day, listen to presentations, and speak with current SIUE students from various support units on campus. We wanted them to leave with enough information to decide if SIUE was the right fit for them,” Brooks said.

“Underrepresented students admitted to SIUE are running 15% ahead of 2020. Virtual programs like this are essential, and we look forward to welcoming all students for fall 2021.”

During the virtual program, current students provided short introductions, including their majors and hometowns. Breakout sessions were held to allow admitted students to ask questions about what life is like at SIUE. Current students and SIUE staff provided insightful answers.

Sade Shepherd, academic advisor in the SOAR office, noted how college is different from high school in so many ways. “Our program assists incoming freshmen,” she said. “SOAR is committed to helping students develop the abilities and skills needed to succeed at the University level.”

Shepherd explained how students are assigned to a faculty mentor upon admission. The SOAR office conducts academic advising, while connecting new students to University resources, networking events, scholarship opportunities and support groups like FAME /GAME.

“If advisors observe that a student is struggling, they will connect them to appropriate resources,” said Shepherd, a two-time SIUE alum, who expressed how much the program has developed since she started in the SOAR Office.

Assistant Director of Academic Advising Kelly Atkins explained that the Office of Academic Advising can help students with any questions they have about attending college.

“Before you even set foot on campus, every staff member highlighted on this call today is excited for you,” Atkins said. “We’re ready to assist, ready to jump in. We understand that your parents are passing the baton to us, hoping we’ll take you all the way through your academic journey. We’re here for you.”

CORE T.E.A.M. Director MaKesha Harris Lee, EdD, described how newly admitted students can find a campus mentor. The CORE T.E.A.M. hosts events through its High School Speaker Series that highlight current students in various majors. She also emphasized the Summer Success Program.

ACCESS Director Dominic Dorsey explained how people have many different ways of arriving at a solution. He explained the many resources and accommodations available for students through the ACCESS Office.

“It is the entire campus’ responsibility to make sure that this campus is welcoming for you,” Dorsey said. “It is our responsibility to make sure that, in terms of your education, you don’t get a one-size-fits-all model. You get an education that fits you.”

CSDI Assistant Director Tarsha Moore described the different ways CSDI is involved in the University. She explained the myriad welcome celebrations and cultural graduation celebrations on campus. She also noted that CSDI holds many collaborations with other organizations, like ACCESS and SOAR, and explained that this is how the University brings diversity and inclusion to all aspects of campus life.

Black Studies Program Director Kathryn Bentley, an associate professor in the Department of Theater and Dance, provided more information about the department. “Black Theater Workshop is a place for your voice to be heard,” she said. “Students can share anything on their hearts as a writer, performer and artist. We welcome you.”

SIUE juniors Heaven Bones and Joseph King performed original pieces written by themselves and other students. Bones’ piece described how society perpetuates stereotypes about Black women, and how she will not be silenced by these stereotypes. The two artists concluded by performing Maya Angelou’s “Caged Bird.”

Another SIUE alum, Chris Wright, assistant director of athletics for annual fund and ticketing, invited the admitted students to become involved with Cougar athletics and stressed that students have free entrance to all games.

“I hope you can see that there are many things to do at SIUE,” Wright said. “St. Louis is also right down the street, and there are many things to do in the City of Edwardsville.”

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 13,000.

SIUE Assistant Director for Campus Visits and Outreach Kelley Brooks.