



# **ITC Director Torres Bowman Earns Statewide Outstanding Commitment in Education Award**

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EDWARDSVILLE – Silvia Torres Bowman is passionate about helping small businesses become competitive in the global marketplace. As director of the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center (ITC) at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Bowman has assisted southern Illinois businesses in making over \$175 million in international sales during the past five years alone. For these accomplishments, Bowman has been named the recipient of the 2021 Hispanic Heritage Month Outstanding Commitment in Education award by Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs.

“I am honored to be the recipient of the 2021 Outstanding Commitment in Education award for my work at SIUE and the Illinois SBDC network supporting exports and small business,” said Torres Bowman. “This Hispanic Heritage Month and beyond, I invite our community to join me in celebrating the histories, cultures, and contributions of the hard-working, vibrant, and beautifully diverse community of more than 60 million Hispanics in the United States. I am incredibly proud of being part of this American story.”

Since joining the ITC as its director in 1998, Torres Bowman has been helping small businesses become globally competitive by providing one-on-one export advising, market research, and customized training. She also utilizes the international connections she has developed throughout her nearly 30-year career in both the public and private sector.

Even a pandemic hasn’t slowed down Torres Bowman’s commitment to her ITC clients.

“With the huge challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we creatively adapted to virtual formats and built new, solid relationships to ensure business owners can survive and thrive in the world of exports,” Torres Bowman added.

Using technology to her advantage, Torres Bowman has supported ITC clients by hosting monthly virtual roundtables for businesses across southern Illinois and facilitating one-on-one consultations with professionals around the world. The ITC distributed financial support through federal and state initiatives, such as the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, to help businesses offset marketing costs and participate in trade missions, both in person and virtually.

“I am incredibly proud of our accomplishments, especially during 2020 as we focused our support on rural small businesses and minorities to help them recover from the pandemic,” Torres Bowman said.

Another facet of Torres Bowman's role at the ITC is forming new partnerships with universities and trade organizations around the world. These connections provide SIUE students with richer educational opportunities through exchanges, study abroad programs, and collaborative projects.

As a native of Lima, Peru, Torres Bowman is particularly excited about the cooperation agreement established in 2020 for a student and faculty exchange program between SIUE and the Universidad de Lima, Peru. She has several other projects in the pipeline that will establish even greater opportunities for southern Illinois businesses and SIUE faculty and students to connect with their Peruvian counterparts.

"I take great pride in my Peruvian roots. I am also proud of the beautiful and multicultural state of Illinois that I have been serving for the past 23 years," said Torres Bowman. "To my Hispanic brothers and sisters: always be proud of who you are, and never forget your precious roots, your mother language, your heritage. Never lose your Hispanic soul. And make sure to carry on those values and traditions wherever life takes you."

For more information on the IL SBDC ITC at SIUE, email? [International-Trade-Center@siue.edu](mailto:International-Trade-Center@siue.edu), call 618-650-3851, or visit? [siue.edu/itc](http://siue.edu/itc).

The Illinois SBDC International Trade Center at SIUE serves businesses in southern Illinois by providing individualized, no-cost export advising, identification of foreign buyers, agents, and/or distributors through trade leads, international market analysis, and more. The ITC is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, as a service to the region's entrepreneurial and business community. As a key member of the Illinois SBDC Network, the ITC delivers these important services to its clients while supporting the goals and objectives of both the [SIUE School of Business](#) and the University at large.