



SIUE School of Engineering Honors Academic Excellence, Outstanding Service and Leadership

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE – Academic excellence, dedicated service and outstanding leadership were celebrated during the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Engineering’s (SOE) 16th Annual Awards Banquet held Tuesday, March 1 via Zoom.

“The advancement of the SIUE School of Engineering is propelled by the outstanding contributions and accomplishments of our students, faculty, staff and alumni,” said

Dean Cem Karacal, PhD. “We are proud to celebrate their incredible work, and realize the significant potential our engineering community has for future achievement.”

Chancellor James T. Minor, PhD, joined the celebration, which aligned with his first official day as the University’s senior leader. He shared his great ambition for the University’s advancement and underscored his belief in the transformative power of higher education.

“Higher education has the power to transform your lives, and because of what you’ll do, it has the power to transform the workforce and our communities,” Minor said. “I believe in that transformative power. I believe in people. And, I believe in the power of collaboration. There are many amazing things happening in the School of Engineering. My job will be to continue to facilitate the School’s growth and development. I look forward to working with you.”

Angela Heise, corporate vice president of defense and intelligence for Microsoft, served as the keynote speaker. Heise earned a bachelor’s in computer science in 1996. She was named the Department of Computer Science’s outstanding alumna in 2017 and was inducted into SIUE’s Alumni Hall of Fame in 2018.

Upon noting that experts say half of career success is determined by luck, Heise offered her definition of LUCK: Leadership, Uniqueness, Curiosity, and Kindness.

“I would encourage you to embrace the time that you have and imagine all the possibilities in front of you,” she shared. “Throughout the course of my career, the four characteristics of LUCK have absolutely changed my path more than once, and I believe the same goes for you.”

“Seek out leaders who you can learn from, who will challenge you and who you want to emulate,” Heise advised. “Embrace early on who you are and the unique skills or thinking that you bring to the team. Decide that it’s okay to lean into your uniqueness. Ask questions for true understanding. The engineers that I’m drawn to are those who ask questions because they want to elevate every person in the room by providing better understanding and adding clarity to a problem. And, know that kindness was important before the pandemic, but it is essential now. Your ability to be kind will change the experience of every team member. Be a good person.”

During the virtual event, the SOE recognized an outstanding junior, senior, graduate student, teacher and alumnus from each of its academic programs, including civil, industrial, electrical and computer, mechanical and mechatronics and robotics engineering, as well as computer science and construction.

Three student organizations were finalists for the Outstanding Student Organization award, including Cougar Rockets, Society of Women Engineers and Solar Car. Attendees cast their votes during the event, and the Society of Women Engineers took the top prize.

A complete list of the 2022 award recipients is available at siue.edu/engineering/banquet/award-recipients.

The virtual event was made possible by the generous support of Gold Sponsors Contegra, MiTek, and Oates Associates, computer science alumnus Hal Gentry, electrical engineering alumnus Dr. Tyria Riley, emeritus dean Dr. Hasan Sevim, as well as Silver Sponsor Civil Design, Inc.

The School of Engineering offers one of the most comprehensive and affordable engineering programs in the St. Louis region with eight undergraduate degrees, five master's degrees and two cooperative doctoral programs, all housed in a state-of-the-art facility. Students learn from expert faculty, perform cutting-edge research and participate in intercollegiate design competitions. Companies in the metropolitan St. Louis area provide students challenging internships and co-op opportunities, which often turn into permanent employment. All undergraduate programs are accredited by their respective accreditation agencies.

Photo: SOE Awards Banquet Keynote Speaker Angela L. Heise.