

SIUE to Host Bi-State Honor Band Festival April 30-May 1

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville 2022 Bi-State Honor Band Festival will take place April 30-May 1 in Dunham Hall on the Edwardsville campus. The event is one of the most important outreach activities in the College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Music and the most important for the band area.

Having been a part of the department for more than 25 years, the festival aims to offer a two-day honor band experience for high school students in the greater St. Louis area.

Participating students are drawn from nearly 30 local and regional institutions across Illinois and Missouri. The festival is also an important recruiting and fundraising event for the department.

“My favorite part is seeing the students’ growth throughout the event,” said Rubén D. Gómez, director of bands and assistant professor in the Department of Music. “At the beginning of day one, they barely know each other, they are seeing the music for the first time, and none of the students have worked with the guest conductor. At the end of day two, they are closer and are able to establish solid communication with each other and the conductor.”

As the general coordinator of the event, Gómez will be conducting the Cougar Honor Band along with the band director from O’Fallon Township High School, Melissa Gustafson-Hinds, EdD, who will conduct the Red Honor Band.

“It takes a lot of time and effort to put the various factors together: auditioning materials, selecting guest conductors, preparing the music, selecting the students, organizing both bands, etc.,” Gómez explained. “However, the time and effort invested is worthy, because of the positive impact this has on young musicians.”

The team includes two graduate assistants who coordinate logistics as well as volunteers from music education and members of the Phi Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity. Our applied faculty also help with auditions, recruitment, and teaching masterclasses. For the first time, the auditions were held virtually, and based on the ratings from each faculty, students were assigned to one of these two bands.

“We want them to return home loving music, loving playing their instruments, and wanting to keep practicing so they can grow,” Gómez said. “We also want participants to replicate their experience at their own schools, so they can inspire others to keep performing their instruments and loving music. In addition, we want them to see SIUE as a welcoming institution and as an excellent option to consider for their future, regardless of their major. We don’t necessarily recruit music students only; we want to recruit for the entire University.”

To learn more and see the full schedule of events, visit siue.edu/artsandsciences/music/events/Bi-State-Band-Festival.

Central to SIUE’s exceptional and comprehensive education, the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) offers degree programs in the natural sciences, humanities, arts, social sciences, and communications. The College touches the lives of all SIUE students helping them explore diverse ideas and experiences, while learning to think and live as fulfilled, productive members of the global community. Study abroad, service-learning,

internships, and other experiential learning opportunities better prepare SIUE students not only to succeed in our region's workplaces, but also to become valuable leaders who make important contributions to our communities.

[Megan Wieser also contributed to this story.](#)