



Dean's List Student Touts SIUE as a Great Choice

by Patricia Merritt

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EDWARDSVILLE - Practicing elements of his major in real time, taking part in enriching volunteer opportunities and being able to pay for it all are reasons junior Mysaiah Chambers is happy to be at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

“I heard that SIUE had amazing social work and psychology departments that were easy to navigate,” said Chambers, who is majoring in social work, minoring in psychology and has been on the Dean’s List since his first year in school. “The good amount of scholarship opportunities and the affordability of SIUE also drew me.”

In the beginning of Chamber’s first year at SIUE, he found it hard to transition. “Initially, I didn’t have a lot of support,” he said. “It took me a minute to get accustomed. So, I quickly learned how to get hooked up with good networks, such as advisors, professors and Kelly Atkins (assistant director of Student Success in SIUE Office of Academic Advising, Retention, and Student Success).”

“I try to create a warm and welcoming environment in which students feel supported and can talk to me about anything including academic, social, mental health concerns, and challenges they are facing,” noted Atkins. “I’m also very visible on campus, connecting with students in the library, Starbucks, cafeteria, bookstore, etc. If students see me around campus, in their eyes, I am accessible and available to assist with their needs.”

“I’m glad I came to SIUE, because I have been utilizing my degree to advocate for myself and my classmates,” said Chambers, a student worker in the Office for Accessible Campus Community and Equitable Student Support (ACCESS). “I’ve been put in places where I’ve had to grow.”

Chambers also shared volunteer examples where he developed as a person, but more importantly, assisted others or supported a worthy cause. He volunteered in the University’s Send Silence Packing, a project to raise awareness about suicide prevention. Chambers also helped at Move-In Day, where first-year students receive assistance from the University community as they move into their residence halls.

“I enjoyed helping, because I could relate to the fears and anxiety of transitioning from high school to college,” said Chambers. “I was able to reassure others that everything would work out, and they would be OK.”

While a common anxiety about college is the cost, Chambers said he is happy to report that the University provides various opportunities to stem the cost. He receives a

comprehensive package of federal and state grants, the Cougar Pride Housing Scholarship, and is a [Johnetta Haley Scholarship](#) awardee.

“When you come to college, you will be challenged in many ways,” noted Chambers. “Regardless, you will come out learning things that aren’t in textbooks. You will learn what life is really like. I’m looking forward to continuing my education and journey at SIUE.”

“Students belong at SIUE,” said Atkins. “Here, they will be supported, heard, valued and respected. They will receive the support needed to achieve academic success! I received two degrees from our illustrious institution, so I want students to have that same experience.” Atkins earned a bachelor’s and master’s in social work in 2001 and 2002, respectively.

This article is part of the "You Belong Here" story series, which showcases the remarkable journeys of SIUE students as they strive to achieve their academic, personal, and professional aspirations. Through this series, we aim to highlight the diverse experiences and achievements of our students, showcasing their resilience, determination, and growth.

By sharing these stories, we hope to inspire current and prospective students, as well as the wider community, to recognize that SIUE is a place where dreams can be realized. Our commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment empowers our students to flourish academically, personally, and professionally.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high-quality education that powerfully transforms the lives of all individuals who seek something greater. A premier metropolitan university, SIUE is creating social and economic mobility for individuals while also powering the workforce of the future. 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. Home to a diverse student body, SIUE is 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.