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SIU System-wide Events Focus on Global Communications Studies and 2020 Election

Faculty from across the SIU System joined together recently to host two events which showcased the wide diversity of expertise and talent found within the university system.

On October 9-11, SIU Edwardsville (SIUE) and SIU Carbondale (SIUC) hosted the 20th Annual Global Fusion Conference in what was the event's first-ever virtual gathering to promote academic excellence in global media and international communication studies. It was co-sponsored by a consortium of universities, including SIUC, SIUE, the University of Texas at Austin, Texas A&M University, Ohio University and Temple University. A collaborative effort between SIUE's Mass Communications department and College of Mass Communication and Media Arts at SIUC, it was co-organized by Lisa Brooten at SIUC and Musonda Kapatamoyo at SIUE.

Under the theme "(In)visibility in global communication: Connections and Inequities," the conference saw 67 presentations over three days with participants drawn from across the United States as well as South Africa, Egypt, Turkey, Brazil, India, Australia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Canada, Poland, and Italy.

The SIU System provided some funding assistance which sponsored the film screening of "**12 Days in Ferguson**", a documentary made by an SIUC alumni Fareed Alston highlighting Black Lives Matter and global anti-racist movements from Ferguson, Mo., to Cape Town, South Africa. System support also funded registration fees for international participants and moderators, as well as \$150.00 for the Best Graduate Student Paper award which went to a student from Brazil who hopes to do her PhD studies in the United States.

The second event, *Election 2020: What's at Stake?*, was held on October 13 and featured SIUE and SIUC political science faculty who identified key issues and important takeaways in the upcoming election from the local to the national and international levels. Panelists included experts in Illinois local and regional politics, political parties and political methodology, presidential politics, human rights and the social movement, Congress, U.S. Supreme Court, politics and the media, political scandals, the politics of gun control, and urban politics.

Organized by Ken Moffett, professor and department chair at SIUE and Tobin Grant, professor and department chair at SIUC, panelists included professor Virginia Tilley, associate professor Scott Comparato and assistant professor Benjamin Bricker from SIUC and professors Laurie Rice and Andy Theising as well as associate professor Sophia Wilson from SIUE. It was the first ever joint presentation by political science faculty from both campuses.

The event, which originated from E Pluribus Unum Project was open to the public. It was organized to be both thought provoking and to facilitate numerous discussions covering multiple topics related to the upcoming election, some of which have received more media attention than others. Most importantly it focused on the importance of the electoral process and the need for everyone to participate.

"We have great faculty at each of our campuses, but when the system is able to bring these talented individuals together to organize either an international conference or a timely discussion looking at the impact of our elections process, we demonstrate the strength of the SIU System," said Dr. Gireesh Gupchup, Vice President of Academic Planning, Innovation and Partnerships.

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