

You Belong Here: Sarah McDaniel; Intern Gets Practical Experience

by Patricia Merritt

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EDWARDSVILLE - Professors with real-world experiences, who are “hands-on” with their teaching, are the primary reason that senior Sarah McDaniel decided to attend Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

“Anytime I’ve had questions or needed help, my professors have gone above and beyond,” said McDaniel. “Whether that means doing Zoom calls late at night or meeting after class, my professors have readily shown interest in my education. I knew I would be getting quality instruction if I attended SIUE.”

“And then there’s the fact that WSIE 88.7 The Sound radio station is here!” she added. “If the station wasn’t here, I’m not sure I’d be on the path I am today. It’s so exciting to be able to build your resume while in school. It gives you a leg up once you start looking for jobs.”

WSIE General Manager Jason Church is also helpful in that he connects students to people in the radio industry, shared McDaniel, who worked as a volunteer and is now an intern at the station.

“Jason is always helping you build your skills while also helping you network,” she said.

“Sarah is extremely driven and has great resolve,” said Church. “She is always willing to troubleshoot. She sees what needs to be done and takes it upon herself to address it.”

“Sarah is planning a career in media,” he continued. “She is a lover of music, a fantastic on-air host and is extremely motivated to learn and gain experience.”

McDaniel pointed to the [Jazzathon](#) events at WSIE as one fun way she has gained industry experience. “The Jazzathons are always memorable because of the great artists that come to show, and the people I get to work with,” she said.

While McDaniel has been enjoying her college life, it has not been without some struggle.

“The biggest challenge has been balancing work with school,” she confessed. “I’m putting myself through college and sometimes I’ve had to put my job first to make sure I’m financially stable. However, I am grateful for the many scholarships that the school offers. I received the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences’ Barbara Regnell Leadership in Media award in 2023.”

“The time I’ve spent at SIUE has really shaped me beyond just my career,” continued McDaniel. “There have been so many others at the University who have helped me such as Robin Boyce (WSIE Associate Director of Underwriting), Cory Byers (SIUE Department of Mass Communications instructor and Director of Video Services), Theresa Pauli and Ben Moyer (both broadcast engineers in Mass Communications).”

“Getting an education, having mentorship, and stepping out of my comfort zone repeatedly has built a new confidence in me,” said McDaniel.

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.