

Dr. Niki Davis

SIU Hospitality, Tourism and Event Management Program Director



Dr. Niki Davis began her career in media, marketing, and event planning and actively participates on event committees to help plan anything from local community events to large national conferences. She regularly draws on her personal experience when teaching to help connect industry to the classroom. Niki has taught tourism and event marketing as well as event and destination management courses in HTEM for the last 20 years.

In addition to publishing her own food and heritage website, Rooted in Foods, Niki has been a food content contributor for the Southern Illinoisan newspaper and the regional Life & Style Magazine. She is co-editor of a cookbook – Food, Fun & Folks – about southern Illinois food heritage. Previously, Niki authored the Talking Tourism column in the Heartland Women newspaper and was the content coordinator and contributor for Food, Fun & Folks: A little magazine about big travel opportunities.

Active in her community. Dr. Davis regularly volunteers at the Carbondale Elks Lodge #1243. She is the recipient of the 2017 Illinois Southern Region Elks Lady of the Year. She has organized cooking classes for Jackson County, Illinois 4-H and periodically presents cooking demonstrations at area Farmers' Markets.

Niki served as President of the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) from 2013 to 2019, after having served on the Board of Directors for three years. She is a member of the Faculty Summer Institute steering committee and helps implement its annual education conference. She is also a member of EuroCHRIE (European Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education) and the International Association of Culinary Professionals (IACP).

Niki obtained her undergraduate degree in marketing from SIU as well as her Master of Science and Doctorate degrees in education. Additionally, she holds a Master Online Teacher certificate from the Illinois Online Network through the University of Illinois.

Rooted in Southern Illinois, Niki lives in Carbondale with her husband Jeff and daughter Phoebe.