



A White Paper: Proposed Reporting Line Changes for SIU's First-Professional Schools

Background

The SIU Board of Trustees has asked the President's Office to review the reporting lines for the first-professional schools: the schools of Medicine and Law attached to SIU Carbondale, and the schools of Dental Medicine and Pharmacy attached to SIU Edwardsville. As one aspect of this review, the Board also welcomes impact statements from internal and external constituencies, groups, and individuals potentially affected by any changes in reporting. As part of its analysis too, the President's Office has requested that SIU's institutional accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, share any concerns or relevant insights it may have.

Currently, the dean of the School of Medicine reports to the SIUC chancellor, and this reporting line has been a topic of conversation during several chancellor administrations over at least the past two decades. The dean of the law school reports to the SIUC provost; the deans of dental medicine and pharmacy report to the SIUE provost.

The Trustees have asked for eventual recommendations regarding a proposal limited to the following: That the dean of the School of Medicine report directly to the system president, and that the deans of law, dental medicine and pharmacy report to their respective chancellor. It is important to note that this proposal is not a precursor to any kind of long-term reorganization plan for the system or individual campuses, and it is wholly consistent with Board policy regarding the responsibilities of the Board and the president with respect to questions of this type.

Nature of First-Professional Schools

First-professional schools are distinct from other collegiate units. Students must have previously completed undergraduate coursework and/or degrees before enrolling.

The nature of the first-professional schools generally is that they are much more independent units than the other academic colleges that have undergraduate and graduate programs. They tend to have relationships with a variety of community and regional institutions that are unique, and in its definition of first-professional schools, the U.S. Department of Education notes that these programs “are closely regulated by recognized professional and specialized accrediting agencies.”

One timely illustration of this concerns the SIU School of Medicine, which recently completed its cyclical review by its accrediting agency, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. Among its standards is one that says the dean of a medical school “must have ready access to the university president...” In addition, SIU HealthCare is a \$100 million business enterprise and such elements as the in-depth relationships with multiple hospitals, the ongoing interface with municipal governments where SIU has clinics, and the extreme regulatory environment all contribute to the need for nearly constant participation of the president (as well as that of system staff in such areas as finance, legal affairs, tax compliance, and risk management) in the affairs of the School of Medicine.

Over the past few weeks, the President’s Office has been examining the organizational structure of medical schools across the country. There are approximately six models, one of which involves a medical school reporting directly to the highest-ranking officer of the university or system.

Similarly, several organizational models exist for the other first-professional schools nationally, including the structure proposed here. A key element of the changes under consideration within the SIU system is that the president and the chancellors would play a much more direct role in facilitating communication and collaboration between the first-professional schools and other academic units.

Carnegie Classifications

In addition to soliciting feedback from the Higher Learning Commission, the President’s Office has asked for external counsel regarding any impact the proposed School of Medicine reporting line change might have on SIUC’s research and community engagement classifications. To this end, the office has submitted written requests for feedback to the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University, which

administers the Carnegie research classifications, and to the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, which administers the Carnegie community engagement classification. Please note that if anything in the reporting line change proposed places SIUC's Carnegie status (or the Carbondale campus generally) at risk, it will be difficult if not impossible to move forward with the School of Medicine reporting line change.

System Impact

Nothing in the reporting line change for the School of Medicine, or for the other schools, is intended to create an adverse impact on organizational and governance functions. It would not create a free-standing medical campus, nor change its structure or function; it would remain a unit of the Carbondale campus as it is now with respect to its operating and support systems, and this change would not affect the Department of Physiology's programs within the College of Science.

The same would be true of the other first-professional schools: This is not about re-organization, nor is this a first step toward altering the reporting lines for other collegiate units on either the Edwardsville or Carbondale campus. As is the case in many large and complex organizations, the changes in reporting lines may create a need to reconsider, adjust, or change some operational processes—and that could be possible here. Those would, of course, be worked through in accordance with current applicable requirements as specified in other authorizing documents, such as collective bargaining contracts and operating papers. Generally speaking however, ongoing processes, including those involving academic administration, would continue as they exist across a wide variety of units on the campuses.

In addition to being responsive to the request from the Trustees to explore the reporting line question, it is believed to be best that this issue be resolved before a permanent SIUC chancellor is selected. It is important that those interested in the position have a clear understanding of the university's structure; it would be unprofessional to inform candidates of the position's responsibilities during the search process, only to make a change after the new chancellor is in place.

Input Requested

The Board of Trustees invites impact statements related to this review, including any findings generated by faculty and/or staff committees, such as the joint task force created by the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Council at SIUC. The Board also will consider any alternative approaches that achieve the same goals; some have suggested, for example, the formation of a joint advisory council for all of the first-professional schools that would report to the president.

All statements, letters, comments, thoughts, advisory votes, or other communication received from all parties will be included as part of the record as a recommendation is submitted to the Board for decision-making. While thoughtful input is welcome, it will need to be submitted in a timely fashion based on the Board's calendar. The Board will likely discuss this (and, as always, allow for public participation and testimony accordingly) at its regular meeting May 14 on the Carbondale campus.

As many who have followed this issue are aware, the original deadline for all input was March 20; however, when the Trustees met on March 19 they agreed to extend that deadline to **Friday, May 1** to ensure more time was made available as various groups had requested additional time to respond.

All written communication (including e-mails and attachments) can be directed to the office of the SIU System President, rdunn@siu.edu, or to that of Misty Whittington, Executive Secretary to the Board of Trustees, at mistyw@siu.edu. Please clearly indicate identifying and other contact information on any documents you provide. Further questions may be directed to the President's Office at 618/536-3331 or the Board's office, 618/536-3357.