



## THE SYSTEM CONNECTION

Greetings:

With the end of the fall 2014 semester, the pace has appeared to slow considerably on all of our campuses after a hectic – but productive – academic term.

For those of us still working up until the holiday closure (at least if you're like me), you are scurrying to finish any number of different projects, tasks, small jobs and the like to get the desk cleared before leaving for the break period.

I often use the statement that if you work in the field of higher education ... then commencement ceremonies are our high church. More than 2,700 students earned SIU degrees on Saturday, including 1,100 at Edwardsville and 1,600 at Carbondale. I had the honor of serving as “emcee” for SIUC’s ceremony, and the Arena at Carbondale was packed to the brim with excited graduates and their families – as I know was the case at SIU Edwardsville’s Vadalabene Center as well (having experienced one of their ceremonies this past May). Lots of dedicated staff work tirelessly in advance of, and behind the scenes during our ceremonies, and they deserve a great deal of credit for ensuring commencement is a memorable experience for one and all.

Also last week, the SIU Board of Trustees met in regular session at SIUC, and starting with this edition of the *Connection*, I will take to sharing a few key items of interest to each campus from BOT meetings in the column immediately following the Board session. Had I been thinking about it, I would have started this following the late October meetings of the Board — since the column was underway at that point — but sometimes I’m a little slow on the uptake about such things.

The idea here is not to include a full accounting of the meeting such as official minutes would do, but rather to give those interested a synopsis of what was discussed and acted upon. (For those wanting to read the complete version of the adopted minutes of SIU Board of Trustee meetings, remember that those can always be accessed at Board’s website at [www.bot.siu.edu](http://www.bot.siu.edu) )

- I know that the search for a permanent chancellor is of special interest on the Carbondale campus, and the Trustees discussed plans for the search during the meeting. I recommended, and the Board concurred, that we conduct the search without an outside firm, and I expect to form a broad-based Search Advisory Committee to assist in that important work right away.
- Much-needed physical improvements also were on the Board’s December docket. Trustees authorized the remodeling of the Student Lab in the Dental Clinic Building at Alton, plus the development of plans and cost estimates to renovate Founders Hall and Alumni Hall as part of SIUE’s 21st Century Buildings project. These campus “legacy” buildings were built in the 1960s and 1970s, and though the staff

continues to do an amazing job of maintaining them, the primary electrical, plumbing, window and mechanical systems are all original. Neither building was designed to current life-safety, energy and seismic codes, so it is time to move forward with major renovations.

- The BOT approved several key projects for the Carbondale campus as well. One involves the replacement of low-efficiency, high-sodium lighting with about 400 new LED fixtures along central campus walkways. Along with being far more environmentally friendly, the new lighting will enhance campus safety as part of SIUC's strategies to enhance campus safety that were announced earlier this fall. Improvements in the Lentz Hall dining area are planned for next summer to better serve Thompson Point residents, and renovations to the University Bookstore in the Student Center are planned for spring. Also set for next summer are the expansion and renovation of the parking lots east of the Student Center.

It is probably important to note at this juncture — particularly as we prepare for a potential cut in state appropriations to our general operating budget — that each project advanced to the Board for approval must identify a viable and available stand-alone source of funds for that purpose (e.g., campus facilities fee, Housing repair budget, parking revenue, etc.). The Carbondale lighting project will be paid for in large part from a special appropriation for that purpose awarded by Gov. Quinn this fall.

- Trustees also took a walking tour of SIUC's Greek Row area and discussed — but made no decisions about — renovation and demolition options, in addition to touring the University Museum.

- Of final note, the Board approved honorary degrees and distinguished service awards to be presented during the May 2015 commencement or subsequent commencement ceremonies at both the Carbondale and Edwardsville campuses. Here's a quick summary:

At SIU Carbondale:

- Former Illinois Governor and Secretary of State Jim Edgar, Honorary Doctor of Humane Arts.
- The late Dixie B. Fortis, who had a distinguished career in advertising, Honorary Doctor of Commerce.
- Captain William R. "Bill" Norwood, Honorary Doctor of Aviation Science. A 1959 SIUC graduate and Saluki football star, Bill had a 31-year career with United Airlines, becoming the company's first African-American pilot and the first to achieve the rank of captain. He served on the SIU Board of Trustees from 1974 to 2001.
- Michael J. "Mike" Lawrence, Distinguished Service Award. Mike was a well-known journalist when he went to work for Jim Edgar, spending 10 years as press secretary and senior policy adviser first in the secretary of state's office and then in the governor's office. Mike came to SIUC in 1998 as associate director of the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, retiring as director in 2009.
- Dr. Marsha G. Ryan, Distinguished Service Award. Marsha served on the SIU Foundation Board of Directors from 1992 to 2013, which included serving as chair and as chair of the university's first-ever comprehensive capital campaign. A 1987 graduate of the SIU School of Law, she is very involved with the university and the community.

At SIU Edwardsville:

- Lauren Elizabeth Metcalf, Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. Laurie is a graduate of Edwardsville High School and Illinois State University, and an accomplished stage, screen and television actor. She also is a co-founder of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago.
- David Werner, Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. Dr. Werner held several positions at the university during his 36-year career, including associate professor of management science, dean of the School of Business, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, and chancellor. He was appointed SIUE's sixth chancellor in 1997, retiring in 2004.
- Kay Werner, Distinguished Service Award. Retired as manager of information technology at the SIUE East St. Louis Center, she is the wife of Chancellor Emeritus David Werner. She served as a teacher and community leader for more than 30 years.

Let me close out this first semester of the *Connection* by telling you how much I appreciate your many efforts on behalf of Southern Illinois University during 2014. It is hard to believe that in a couple more months, I will be coming on to the one-year anniversary of my hiring as president. I get to many events on the campuses and in our communities, and I am constantly impressed with the dedication, passion and sense of community I find at each of our many SIU locations. And what I don't see with my own eyes ... I hear from many others who recognize the importance and value of what you do.

I will be back in this space once again on January 28. If you are traveling over the coming weeks, please return safely to us. Ronda and I wish you the best for the upcoming season — and hope you enjoy some well-deserved rest and relaxation with family and friends during the break period. Happy Holidays to you and yours! See you in 2015!

Randy Dunn