



Southern Illinois University System

ONE SYSTEM | MANY LOCATIONS | STATEWIDE IMPACT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 3, 2024

**Contact:** Catie Sheehan, 217-220-1717

[catie.sheehan@siu.edu](mailto:catie.sheehan@siu.edu)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **SIU Carbondale and SIU Edwardsville Receive 2024 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—The SIU System is pleased to announce that both SIU Carbondale and SIU Edwardsville (SIUE) are the recipients of the 2024 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from Insight Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education.

“The SIU System is very committed to making progress with our work in anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion (ADEI),” said SIU System President Dan Mahony. “We are proud to have ADEI teams working hard in the SIU System to make a positive impact on our campuses, and it’s an honor for this work to be recognized with the HEED Award.”

The HEED Award is a national honor that recognizes U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion. The two universities in the SIU System, along with 112 other recipients, will be featured in the November/December 2024 issue of Insight Into Diversity magazine.

This is the 11th year in a row that SIUE has received the HEED Award, and it is the sixth time for SIU Carbondale to receive this award.

“The HEED Award process consists of a comprehensive and rigorous application that includes questions relating to the recruitment and retention of students and employees — and best practices for both — leadership support for diversity, campus culture and climate, supplier diversity, and many other aspects of campus diversity and inclusion,” said Lenore Pearlstein, publisher of Insight Into Diversity magazine. “We take a detailed approach to reviewing each application in deciding who will be named a HEED Award recipient. Our standards are high, and we look for institutions where diversity and inclusion are woven into the work being done every day across their campus.”

“SIUE is committed to inclusive excellence and will continue to integrate the values of diversity, equity and inclusion into all that we do. We are honored to receive the HEED Award for an 11<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in recognition of our efforts,” said Jessica C. Harris, PhD, SIUE’s vice chancellor for anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Inclusive excellence at SIUE is not just a campus-level practice but is observable through the university’s equity-minded approach to community engagement. Of particular note, through SIUE’s Institute for Community Justice and Racial Equity in Belleville, SIUE hosted a Children’s

Defense Fund Freedom School this summer for 50 scholars, grades 5-8, from over 20 Metro East schools. The free, six-week, literacy-based program encourages a love of reading and learning through a culturally diverse integrated reading curriculum and supports leadership development through enrichment and social action activities.

“The freedom school showcases how important it is for the university to invest in the young people in our communities,” said Harris. “SIUE’s commitment to amplifying access to higher education extends to freedom school scholars and their families, and we look forward to continuing to support them in maximizing their potential as future Cougars through this program and others.”

“ADEI is a pillar of SIU Carbondale’s Imagine 2030 strategic plan,” said Paul Frazier, EdD, SIU Carbondale’s vice chancellor for anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion.

“We are striving to become a campus that exemplifies inclusive excellence by creating a sense of belonging for every student, staff member and faculty member,” Frazier said. “Receiving the HEED Award is a recognition of our mission to create a workplace and community where students, faculty and staff, regardless of background, experience a sense of belonging and respect. We are committed to dismantling systemic racism, bias and discrimination of all forms and actively promote fairness, justice and equity.”

SIU Carbondale has a long history of being supportive of individuals from all communities. In addition to monthlong celebrations to recognize LGBTQ+ history for the 20th year, along with Black history, Hispanic/Latinx heritage, women’s history and more, it holds Diversity Week events early in the fall semester.

Since 2003, SIU Carbondale has participated in the McNair Scholars program to help first-generation college students and members of underserved groups to earn their doctoral degrees. In 2021, the university restarted the Dr. Seymour Bryson Future Scholars Program, an intensive summer program for new students who didn’t get the best grades in high school to succeed in college.

For more information about the 2024 HEED Award, visit [insightintodiversity.com](https://insightintodiversity.com).

### **About INSIGHT Into Diversity**

*Insight Into Diversity magazine is the leader in advancing best practices in DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) in higher education. Through thought-provoking print and online articles, we share expert advice, valuable resources, in-depth profiles of top DEI programs at colleges and universities, headline news, and much more to help keep our readers informed and empower them to advance DEI initiatives at their institutions. To further our mission, we created the Insight Into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award in 2012. The HEED Award — including the more targeted Insight Into Diversity Health Professions, Law School, and Community College HEED Awards — is the only national honor to recognize institutions of higher education for their outstanding commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Current, archived, and digital issues of Insight Into Diversity magazine are available online at [insightintodiversity.com](https://insightintodiversity.com).*

###