



Southern Illinois University System

ONE SYSTEM | MANY LOCATIONS | STATEWIDE IMPACT



SIU SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN

PROGRESS REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2025

JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025



"Progress is impossible without change,
and those who cannot change their
minds cannot change anything."

- George Bernard Shaw

Dear Friends,

The SIU System has made meaningful progress over the past year in advancing the strategic plan that we began developing 5 years ago. This forward momentum is driven not only by the strong dedication of our faculty, staff and students, but also by the invaluable support and partnership of community leaders, donors, policymakers and industry partners.

Our students and their success are the heart of our mission at SIU. We are proud of the work being done to elevate the quality of instruction, research and public service, all aimed at helping students reach their full potential.

This progress report highlights achievements from fiscal year 2025 (July 2024–June 2025). It reflects the real progress being made to shape the future of education across our campuses, but it only captures a portion of the impactful work that is underway.

The strategic plan is focused on six main areas:

- Academic innovation and student success
- Anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion
- Community impact
- Research, creative activities and partnerships
- Faculty and staff
- Infrastructure.

We are proud of how far we've come as a system, and we are even more excited about what lies ahead. Together, we are building a stronger, more innovative SIU—one that is deeply committed to educational excellence, community impact and preparing students to lead in a changing world.



[Signature]
Dan Mahony
SIU System President



[Signature]
Gireesh Gupchup
SIU System VP of Academic Innovation,
Planning & Partnerships

MISSION

The SIU System enriches students and diverse communities through inclusive excellence, experiential education and innovation. The system creates and shares knowledge that enables stakeholders to achieve their full potential, serves as an economic catalyst for the region and state and advances global change, opportunities and social justice.

VISION

Empower people. Transform the world.

THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY SYSTEM -
WHERE LEARNING COMES FIRST, WHERE STUDENTS ARE VALUED
AND ENCOURAGED TO EXPLORE NEW IDEAS, AND WHERE
PROGRESS IS COMPLEMENTED BY TRADITION.

SIU’s influence can be felt far beyond the locations of its great campuses. It serves as an economic engine for Southern Illinois and a high-quality institution of learning for the citizens of Illinois, the nation and the world.

Chartered in 1869, Southern Illinois University, first known as Southern Illinois Normal University, opened its doors for instruction in 1874 as a one-building teacher training institution in Carbondale. By 1947, the name was changed to Southern Illinois University, reflecting the institution’s expanding academic mission. As early as 1949, SIU started offering courses in the metropolitan East St. Louis area. This led to the development of the SIU Edwardsville campus, which was officially established in 1957.

Today the SIU System employs more than 7,000 faculty, staff and administrators who serve approximately 23,500 students and operates with a budget of \$989.5 million. Each member institution offers more than 200 academic degree programs.

The SIU System’s economic impact in fiscal year 2023 was an impressive \$4 billion, and the system’s economic activity helped support 45,075 jobs in Illinois.

The two institutions that constitute the SIU System today reach from the Shawnee National Forest to the bluffs of the Mississippi River, and through the flatlands of Central Illinois to the shores of Lake Michigan.

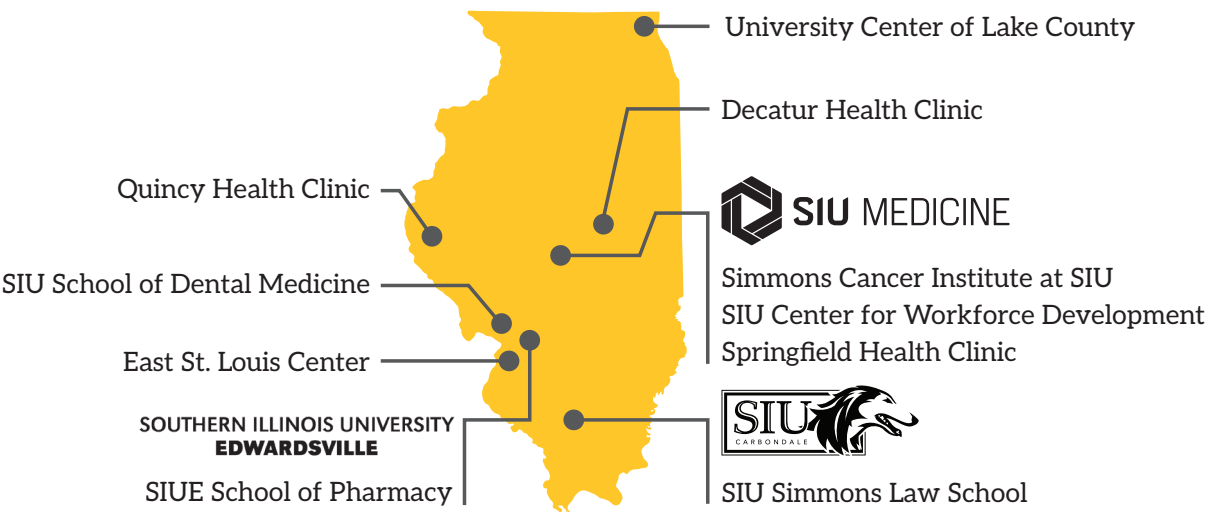
SIU Carbondale has a law school at the main campus and a medical school in Springfield. The health care operation of the SIU School of Medicine provides over 429,000 clinic visits per year in its primary and specialty care clinics.

SIU Edwardsville has a pharmacy school in Edwardsville and a dental school in Alton. The SIUE East St. Louis Higher Education Campus has evolved into a modern and comprehensive post-secondary educational system.

Additionally, both campuses partner in providing education at the University Center of Lake County in Northern Illinois.

With a strong commitment to anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion on its campuses, the SIU System was the only university system in the United States to receive the 2022 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. In 2024, SIUE received the HEED Award for the 11th year in a row and SIUC received it for the 6th year.

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THE SIU SYSTEM STRATEGIC PLAN IS DESIGNED TO DRIVE INNOVATION, ADVANCE INCLUSION & STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IMPACT.



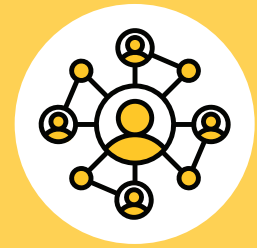
Academic innovation & student success

Our innovative and accessible academic programs will provide interdisciplinary and experiential components that empower our students to address regional, national and global challenges. While maintaining the strengths of each campus, we will engage in system-wide collaboration to create new opportunities for students and support lifelong learning.



Anti-racism, diversity, equity & inclusion

We will be a national model of anti-racism and anti-oppression that promotes diversity, inclusion and equitable access and opportunity for all individuals.



Community impact

We will collaboratively create sustainable solutions, utilizing the collective strengths of the system to improve the quality of life for all that we serve.

FY25 HIGHLIGHTS

40%

INCREASE in number of
**ONLINE SHARED
COURSES**

5.8%

INCREASE in **ENROLLMENT**
of **BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN
& LATINX STUDENTS**

4,700

SQ MI AREA served by
**ACTIVE COMMUNITY
PROJECTS**

The purpose of the SIU System Strategic Plan is to drive academic innovation, promote diversity and inclusion and enhance community engagement across its campuses. With a strong focus on interdisciplinary and experiential learning, the plan outlines a comprehensive approach to fostering student success and addressing regional, national and global challenges. Key initiatives include the creation of flexible academic programs, the support for applied innovation and the implementation of high-impact practices to boost retention and degree attainment. Additionally, SIU aims to become a national leader in anti-racism and equity, revitalizing local communities, expanding research and partnerships and ensuring the sustainability of its infrastructure. This transformative vision underscores SIU's commitment to shaping a brighter future for all its stakeholders.



Research, creative activities & partnerships

We will build collaborative opportunities to expand research, scholarship and creative activities through internal and external partnerships that fulfill our mission.



Faculty & staff

We strive to foster an equitable environment where our diverse faculty and staff can be successful and satisfied.



Infrastructure

We will build and maintain a sustainable infrastructure through continuous improvement, transparency and accountability.

TOP 1/3

NATIONWIDE IN RESEARCH

Both SIUC and SIUE are ranked among the top one-third of universities for research nationwide

12.4 YEARS

AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT TIME

for all faculty and staff across both campuses

120

STUDENTS currently
USING FEDERATED IDS
between SIUC & SIUE

SIU SYSTEM RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR INNOVATION IN ONLINE EDUCATION

The SIU System is proud to be nationally honored for our bold approach to expanding student access and academic flexibility. At the 2025 convening of the National Association of Higher Education Systems (NASH) in Washington, D.C., SIU received the Seeding for Change Award for its development and implementation of the SIU Online Course Exchange, a system-wide initiative designed to streamline course access across campuses and support on-time degree completion.

The Seeding for Change Award recognizes initiatives emerging from NASH's Improvement Communities that reflect the organization's core principle of "systemness," the idea that a unified system can have greater impact than the sum of its individual parts. For the SIU System, the online course exchange is a prime example of that philosophy in action.



The course exchange allows students at SIU Edwardsville and SIU Carbondale to take online courses offered at either campus without transferring. This cross-campus flexibility opens new pathways for students navigating scheduling conflicts, waitlisted classes or rotating course offerings. This program is especially beneficial for students balancing academics with work, family and other responsibilities.

SIU System President Dan Mahony noted that the award reflects not just innovation, but intentional collaboration. Mahony says the online course exchange is a testament to the system's dedication to expanding access and flexibility for our students. By leveraging the power of online learning and system-wide collaboration, SIU is empowering students to achieve their academic goals and creating new pathways to degree completion.

This level of collaboration didn't happen overnight. The initiative emerged from SIU's participation in NASH's Course Sharing NIC, where leaders across the system identified shared pain points and worked together to redesign administrative and academic structures. Admission and registration processes were streamlined, and technical barriers were addressed to create a seamless student experience. Over the past academic year, the number of online shared courses offered across the system grew by 40 percent. Enrollment in those courses more than tripled; clear evidence that students are embracing the opportunity to customize their educational path in previously unavailable ways.

Mahony emphasized that while the recognition is meaningful, the real success lies in the impact on students. **"This recognition belongs to the faculty, staff and administrators across our campuses who saw a bold idea and made it real,"** he said. **"Together, we're showing how public systems can lead by being flexible, student-focused and unified."**

The NASH award places SIU alongside other leading institutions recognized this year, including the University of Massachusetts and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities System. It also reinforces SIU's strategic commitment under the first goal of the system strategic plan: to provide innovative interdisciplinary, and accessible academic programs that meet the evolving needs of today's learners.

With national validation and a growing student response, the SIU System is poised to continue building on this momentum, offering more courses and more meaningful and flexible pathways to success.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TASK FORCE POSITIONS SIU FOR A FUTURE-READY ACADEMIC SYSTEM

As artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes industries and transforms the nature of learning, the SIU System is taking deliberate steps to position itself at the forefront of academic innovation by convening a system-wide AI Task Force. The goal: evaluate how AI is being integrated into academic programs and recommend a coordinated path forward for the SIU System.

The AI Task Force convened its first meeting in April 2025. It is co-chaired by Dr. Mario Hayek, dean of the SIUE School of Business, and Dr. Xiaoqing “Frank” Liu, dean of the SIUC College of Engineering, Computing, Technology and Mathematics. Their leadership reflects the interdisciplinary nature of AI and its potential across diverse fields.

The task force was charged with a comprehensive set of priorities: inventory current AI-related academic activities, assess programmatic strengths and gaps, evaluate AI’s impact on student success, and explore ethical considerations and opportunities for cross-campus collaboration. A final report of recommendations is expected by the end of summer 2025.

“AI is transforming the way we prepare students—not just for the jobs of tomorrow, but for the realities of today,” said Hayek. “We’re already integrating AI into coursework across disciplines, helping students build both technical fluency and ethical awareness.”

SIU SYSTEM ADVANCES TRANSFER STUDENT SUCCESS WITH INNOVATION & COLLABORATION

The SIU System is making significant strides in strengthening transfer student success through a series of innovative, student-centered initiatives. From streamlining transcript processes to eliminating barriers to enrollment, the system has prioritized accessible, equitable pathways across all campuses.

The SIU System was selected for the Transfer Network Improvement Community (NIC) by NASH to improve 2-year to 4-year college transfer rates. Improvement science is being used to achieve this purpose. Essentially, this technique provides a grassroots – rather than top-down – approach to developing and testing measurable change. The hallmark of the NIC model is that it facilitates work on campuses so that the people closest to the problem are the ones engaged in creating, testing and implementing change. A problem is identified and goes through a 45- or 90-day PDSA cycle (Plan, Do, Study, Act). The cycle is repeated, and when consistent results are received, it is scaled. Through participation in these efforts, the hope is to inculcate a culture of improvement science to make sustainable change. “Our use of improvement science—grounded in grassroots change—ensures that those closest to the problem help shape sustainable solutions,” explained Gireesh Gupchup, SIU System VP for academic innovation, planning and partnerships.

156% INCREASE
IN TRANSFER APPLICATIONS
from colleges in Chicago
to SIUC during one spring cycle

A new automatic transcript exchange pilot **IMPROVED SAME-DAY ADMISSION PROCESSING**, though scalability remains a focus for future cycles

At SIUE, **TRANSFER APPLICATIONS**
jumped from **8% to 27%** in **ENGINEERING**
and **17% to 25%** in **ARTS & SCIENCES**
within a year

SIU RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR DEI LEADERSHIP

The SIU System was honored with the Leadership in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Award at the 2025 Keystone Awards, a global ceremony celebrating innovation in higher education. SIU was selected as the sole DEI institutional winner from among international finalists across Africa, France and the United States.

Presented by Keystone Education Group, the award spotlights institutions pushing the boundaries of equitable education. SIU's selection reflects its system-wide work to embed equity into academic policy, retention strategy, faculty development and student leadership.

The recognition reaffirms SIU's growing national and international impact—and celebrates the many students, faculty and staff who contribute to this work every day.



Congratulations to Dr. Randolph Burnside of SIU Medicine (pictured on left) and Yahaira “Yaya” Vargas of SIU Carbondale (pictured on right). They are the 2025 winners of the SIU System Dr. Wesley G. Robinson-McNeese ADEI Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors faculty and staff members whose careers generally span 15+ years and have demonstrated dedicated service and advocacy in anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion (ADEI) at SIUC, SIUE or the SIU School of Medicine. We appreciate all that Burnside and Vargas have done to make a meaningful impact in the ADEI field for students, staff, alumni and faculty, as they’ve helped create a more inclusive and equitable SIU community.

RETENTION DAY HIGHLIGHTS SYSTEM COLLABORATION

The second annual SIU System Retention Day showcased innovative practices from SIU Carbondale, Edwardsville and the School of Medicine. From predictive analytics and early alert systems to student wellness strategies and health equity immersion, each presentation demonstrated how campuses are moving from insight to action.

Students shared their personal stories of belonging, mentorship and resilience—reminding attendees that retention is about relationships, not just numbers. The event reflected a shared commitment to equity, transparency and continuous improvement across the SIU System.



ADVANCING SUCCESS FOR HOPE CHICAGO STUDENTS ACROSS SIU CAMPUSES

Hope Chicago is a program focused on boosting economic opportunity by helping parents and students from Chicago's south and west sides pursue and complete tuition-free college and career training programs throughout Illinois. As Hope Chicago postsecondary partners, the SIU System is advancing access to debt-free college pathways for graduates of Chicago Public Schools. The Hope Chicago initiative is closely aligned with the system's student success model by offering comprehensive support that begins in high school and extends through students' college careers. Dedicated Hope Chicago success coaches work with students before they arrive on campus, while Hope Chicago ambassadors provide continued mentorship and guidance throughout students' academic journey. This collaborative approach ensures that students from underrepresented backgrounds have the resources, relationships and support systems they need to thrive in higher education.



79%
of **SIUE HOPE SCHOLARS PASSED
THREE OR MORE CLASSES**
in their first semester—
exceeding the Hope
average of 67%.

89%
of enrolled **SIUC Hope Chicago**
freshmen return to
CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES

SIUE continues to distinguish itself as a leader in student support and academic excellence. An impressive 79% of SIUE Hope Chicago scholars passed three or more classes in their first semester—exceeding the Hope average of 67%. This performance reflects SIUE's commitment to preparing students for a strong start and long-term academic success. Perhaps most notably, 100% of students who completed the fall semester returned, showcasing SIUE's outstanding retention efforts and a campus climate that fosters persistence and belonging.

SIUC demonstrates a strong foundation in student commitment and targeted support initiatives. Retention is a strength for SIUC Hope Chicago scholars, with 89% of enrolled freshmen returning to continue their program of study. SIUC also invested in a Summer Bridge Program, with nine Hope Chicago students participating and earning academic credit. This investment reflects SIUC's dedication to early intervention and academic preparedness, equipping students with the tools to thrive from the start.

Together, SIUE and SIUC are committed to student success through intentional programming, strong retention practices and a shared belief in every student's potential. Their efforts are yielding promising results and improving equity across the system.

ADVANCING EQUITY & INNOVATION IN REENTRY: SIU SYSTEM COLLABORATION POWERS ILLINOIS PROWD

SIUE serves as the programmatic manager for the Illinois Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD) grant—a U.S. Department of Labor initiative funded through the First Step Act and administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). But what sets PROWD apart is not just SIUE's leadership; it's how the SIU System, through the SIU Office of Community Engagement (OCE) and Dr. Connie Frey Spurlock, redefines what coordinated, equity-driven reentry support looks like.

Illinois PROWD is a three-phase initiative that provides in-facility education, transitional support during home confinement or residential reentry, and community-based employment services for individuals returning home from federal prison. As of March 31, 2025, the initiative has served 342 justice-involved individuals and is on track to meet its 750-participant goal. More than 100 individuals have already received direct post-release services, including career coaching, digital access and referrals to statewide training programs.

At the core of PROWD's success is a commitment to systemwide and interinstitutional collaboration. OCE has played a pivotal role in aligning reentry efforts across campuses, partners and state systems. Dr. Frey Spurlock's leadership has enabled PROWD to tap into SIU-wide expertise, supporting everything from instructional design and workforce curriculum to trauma-informed capacity building and internal evaluation. This includes innovations like the digital literacy micro-credential curriculum (offered in partnership with Rend Lake College), the gamified Digiscape learning platform (developed with the Illinois Innovation Network and the University of Illinois Springfield) and the implementation of a whole-household support model that connects participant families to other state and federal workforce development services, including local workforce innovation areas and special grant programs through the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA).

SIUE's team has also leveraged innovations in AI and automation to support live case management and generate customized, qualified referrals. Through the SIUE Center for Predictive Analytics (C-PAN), the university is actively evaluating PROWD outcomes related to employment, recidivism and systems impact—ensuring that insights from the field translate into scalable solutions.

A team of four returning resident advocates (RRAs), funded through PROWD and trained by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), are on the frontlines of this effort. These staff provide holistic, trauma-informed case management to participants and their families. Through resource fairs inside correctional facilities, job placement partnerships like HonestJobs, and flexible service models including library meetups and virtual coaching, PROWD is reaching individuals where they are, online and in person.

PROWD is meeting its benchmarks and actively shaping a replicable, equity-centered reentry model that can inform federal policy and state strategy. It is a blueprint for relational, data-informed and community-rooted reentry that reflects the SIU System's mission to serve as a catalyst for regional transformation.

Under SIUE's operational leadership and with strategic support from the OCE, PROWD demonstrates the power of a public university system to lead with purpose, mobilize its resources and deliver meaningful change across Illinois.



SIU SYSTEM FUELS REGIONAL INNOVATION & SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH

SIUC SBDC NAMED 2024 ILLINOIS SBDC OF THE YEAR

SIU Carbondale's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) was named the 2024 Illinois SBDC of the Year by the Illinois SBDC Network, earning statewide recognition for its leadership in entrepreneurial support, equity-driven outreach and community-based impact. This honor highlights the SBDC's role as a catalyst for economic resilience throughout Southern Illinois, particularly in rural, underserved and historically excluded communities.

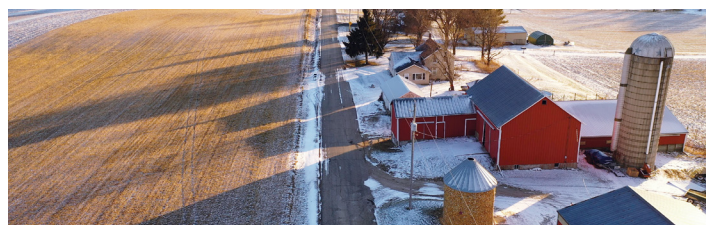


Over the past year, the SIUC SBDC achieved measurable success by expanding services to new regions, increasing its impact among minority- and women-owned businesses, and helping launch and grow enterprises across sectors. Its comprehensive one-on-one advising, training workshops and access-to-capital support enabled job creation, business retention and long-term planning for hundreds of clients.

As part of the SIU System, the SIUC SBDC reflects the broader institutional commitment to regional revitalization and inclusive development. By building relationships with community partners and tailoring resources to local needs, the center is not only helping small businesses thrive—it's ensuring that Southern Illinois remains a vibrant place to live, work and grow. This statewide recognition affirms SIU's leadership in community engagement and economic transformation, aligning with the strategic plan's goals of fostering equity, opportunity and innovation across the region.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE SIU INSTITUTE FOR RURAL HEALTH: BUILDING A HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

At a time when rural communities face increasing health disparities and workforce shortages, the Southern Illinois University System's Institute for Rural Health (IRH) is aligning the strengths of SIU campuses into a coordinated force for regional health impact. Since its inception, the IRH has steadily grown its footprint and developed essential infrastructure to improve lives across central and southern Illinois.



Rooted in the SIU System's strategic priority to improve access to healthcare and social services through regional collaboration, the IRH is focused on enhancing public health through education, innovation and responsive programming. A core area of strength is its Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) Training Program, developed in partnership with community organizations. This workforce initiative trains individuals to provide peer-based mental health and addiction recovery support, addressing both a critical service gap and the need for lived-experience leadership in behavioral health recovery.

The IRH also leads community education efforts around the intersection of substance misuse and familial human trafficking, a little-understood but devastating dynamic in rural communities. Through partnerships with the National Drug Endangered Children Alliance and Illinois courts, the institute delivers trainings that help communities recognize and respond to these hidden crises using multidisciplinary strategies.

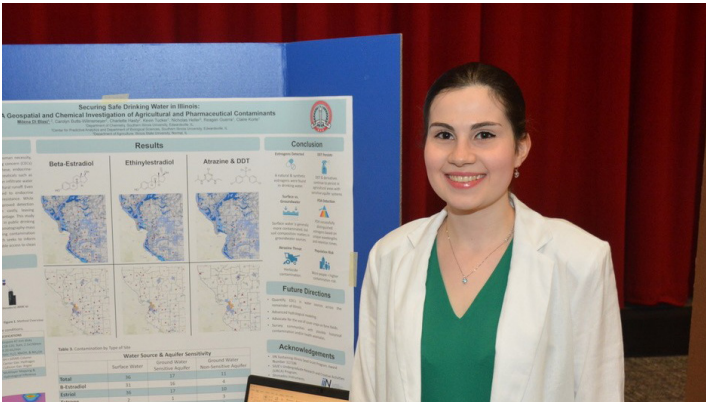
Beyond programming, the IRH plays an integrative role in the SIU System Strategic Plan. Its mandate to improve collaboration between university-based programs and regional partners is seen as central to revitalizing underserved communities and building sustainable health ecosystems.

The IRH continues to strengthen the systems that make lasting health improvement possible. Its work in training, coordination, and community partnerships supports long-term resilience and reflects a clear commitment to the health and well-being of rural Illinois. As the institute continues to evolve, its contributions are shaping a stronger, more connected health landscape for the region.

SIU RESEARCHERS LEAD THE WAY IN ILLINOIS INNOVATION NETWORK SEED GRANTS

Four SIU System-affiliated projects were awarded \$40,000 each under the Illinois Innovation Network's (IIN) Sustaining Illinois program in spring 2024. These interdisciplinary initiatives reflect the system's leadership in sustainability, equity and innovation:

- **Clean Water & Contaminants** – Led by SIUE, this project uses advanced chemical analysis and geospatial modeling to assess emerging contaminants in Illinois drinking water.
- **Social Media & Sustainability** – SIUE researchers are using machine learning to help local governments improve public outreach on sustainability via X (formerly Twitter) and other platforms.
- **Humanities Futures** – An SIUE-led digital storytelling project supporting marginalized students as they explore career paths at the intersection of technology and the humanities.
- **Green Hydrogen Electrolyzers** – A collaboration between SIUC and UIUC to develop new electrolyzers for sustainable hydrogen fuel production.



SIU CARBONDALE JOINS ELITE RANKS WITH R1 RESEARCH STATUS



Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) has achieved a significant milestone by attaining the prestigious Research 1 (R1) designation from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. This recognition places SIUC among the top 5% of research-intensive universities in the United States, highlighting its commitment to high-level research and academic excellence.

The R1 status is awarded to institutions that meet specific criteria, including awarding at least 70 research doctorates annually and reporting a minimum of \$50 million in research expenditures. In 2023, SIUC surpassed these benchmarks by awarding 102 research doctorates and investing \$58.3 million in research activities. This accomplishment reflects the university's dedication to advancing knowledge across various disciplines, from STEM fields to the arts and humanities.

Chancellor Austin Lane emphasized that achieving R1 status was a key objective in SIUC's Imagine 2030 strategic plan, which focuses on research and innovation. He noted that this designation affirms SIUC's position as a leading research institution and enhances its ability to attract top-tier faculty and students.

As the only R1 university in rural Illinois and within a 100-mile radius, SIUC is uniquely positioned to drive innovation and economic growth in the region. The university's elevation to R1 status not only bolsters its research capabilities but also reinforces its role in fostering academic and professional development for its students and faculty.

SIU EDWARDSVILLE ACHIEVES RCU STATUS

In February 2025, Carnegie also announced that SIU Edwardsville is now part of a new Carnegie classification: Research Colleges and Universities (RCU), a designation that identifies research happening at universities that historically have not been recognized for research activity and do not offer many doctoral degrees. SIUE joins this designation along with 215 other institutions nationally that are non-R1 or R2 institutions that spend \$2.5 million or more on research annually. SIUE spends \$28.9 million annually on research.

SIU FACULTY COLLABORATION AWARDED FOR ADVANCING EQUITY & INNOVATION



Four faculty members from SIU Edwardsville and SIU Carbondale were awarded the SIU System's 2024 Faculty Collaboration Award at the SIU Board of Trustees meeting on September 12, 2024.

The SIU System Faculty Collaboration Award was created to highlight and encourage faculty collaboration across SIU campuses.

Natasha Flowers (SIUE) and Christie McIntyre (SIUC) were awarded for their work with the Illinois Tutoring Initiative. Dr. Flowers and Dr. McIntyre have collaborated on this state-funded project to offer thousands of tutoring sessions to students who may have fallen behind in recent years with COVID and remote learning in the Carbondale and Edwardsville communities.

“The Illinois Tutoring Initiative is our state’s response to existing equity gaps during the pandemic,” said Flowers. **“Gaps were exacerbated and clearly exposed to everyone. We are excited to be a part of a partnership that focuses on students’ well-being and academic success.”**

The initiative offers reading and math instruction to students grades 3-8. SIUC and SIUE’s efforts have provided tutoring to nearly 1,500 students in their local communities from 2022-24. This program has been very successful in helping students improve.

“They’ve had a statistically significant increase in their reading and math based on their experiences with the Illinois Tutoring Initiative,” said McIntyre. **“So it has made a positive influence in their classroom experiences and has translated into higher achievement scores.”**

They are honored to receive the SIU collaboration award. “This award says to me that our universities care about collective responsibility and authentic partnerships,” said Flowers. “This award also says to me that I am doing the right thing with the right people at the right time.”



The other SIU collaboration award winners are Mohtashim Shamsi (SIUC) and Mina Sumita (SIUE). Their work is focused on designing biomolecular probes that will detect genetic biomarkers. Biomarker tests can identify genetic changes you may have that increase your risk of cancer or other diseases.

“We are designing new biomolecular probes to detect genetic biomarkers,” said Sumita. “Hopefully it will be one step closer to a cure.”

“We are developing a low-cost technology that will be accessible to millions of people across the globe who don’t have access to a centralized labs for diagnostics,” said Shamsi. “All great scientific works are the result of strong collaboration.”

SIU System President Dan Mahony says we are fortunate to have so many intelligent, innovative leaders who are making progress at SIU with their collective expertise.

SYSTEMWIDE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE EXPANDS REACH, DEEPENS IMPACT

Beginning in 2022, the SIU System launched a series of in-person and online interactive leadership workshops designed to strengthen leadership capacity across all campuses. Since inception, more than 1,300 faculty and staff from Carbondale, Edwardsville, Springfield and Alton have participated. The momentum continued in FY25, with 498 attendees participating in leadership training sessions, building on a steady increase from 408 in FY23 and 485 in FY24.

The workshops emphasize practical leadership skills grounded in real-world application. Topics include delegation, motivation, decision-making and leading without a formal title. Participants engage in individual and small-group activities that foster reflection, peer learning and immediate application. Throughout each session, facilitators model core leadership practices, using storytelling, case studies and role play to deepen engagement and relevance.

FY25 evaluations reaffirmed the program's value, with average participant ratings of 4.95 out of 5 across key measures such as facilitator effectiveness, relevance and overall satisfaction. Participants consistently described the sessions as energizing, empowering and highly applicable to their work. Many noted that the workshops helped them see themselves as leaders, even without formal authority, and gave them tools to delegate more effectively, support team development and drive change within their units.

Participants left with clear, personalized action plans—often focused on strengthening team performance, creating structures for shared decision-making, or initiating cross-unit collaborations. One attendee wrote, “I love that I now have a solid action plan to present to my boss—excited to see how this proceeds.” Another noted, “I learned that delegating isn’t just about efficiency—it’s about empowerment. I now see it as part of my role as a leader, even if I’m not a supervisor.”

Collaborative learning remains a cornerstone of the workshop experience. Participants valued the opportunity to network across campuses and units, often citing the cross-pollination of ideas as one of the most powerful aspects of the training. The interactive format—described by many as “engaging without being overwhelming”—allowed attendees to test ideas, reflect on challenges and see how others approach leadership in different contexts.

Several participants expressed a desire for expanded offerings, including role-specific tracks, deeper dives into select topics and department-wide applications. Feedback from FY25 will inform future design efforts, with a focus on modular options that allow staff and faculty to continue building skills over time. Many also encouraged the system to explore stronger alignment with HR pathways and leadership advancement structures.

This initiative is not just strengthening leadership skills—it’s changing how leadership is viewed and practiced across the SIU System.



ACUE TRAINING TRANSFORMS FACULTY CLASSROOMS

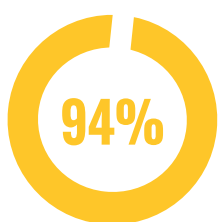
Over the past year, more than 200 faculty across SIUC and SIUE have participated in inclusive pedagogy training through the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). These evidence-based modules cover topics from fostering belonging to culturally responsive teaching and are helping faculty redesign courses to increase student engagement and close equity gaps. With an 81% completion rate, ACUE training has become a cornerstone of SIU's faculty development efforts. New plans are underway to offer full certification pathways across campuses, elevating instructional equity and embedding inclusive practices into every classroom.

200+
FACULTY TRAINED

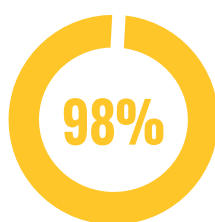
81%
COMPLETION RATE

**FULL CERTIFICATION
PATHWAY**
launching soon

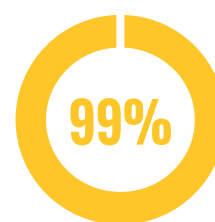
Faculty response to ACUE



**OF FACULTY
WOULD RECOMMEND**
the ACUE course to a colleague



OF FACULTY
report modules were
HELPFUL IN REFINING
their teaching practice



OF FACULTY
found the content
RELEVANT TO THEIR ROLE

As one participant summarized, **“ This training helped me understand that leadership isn’t about position —it’s about impact. And that I have the tools to make that impact now. ”**



SIU GETS RATING BOOST IN 2024

In 2024, SIU received good news from two major rating agencies, Moody's and S&P Global. Both upgraded SIU's ratings, showing more confidence in the university's financial health.

- In September 2024, Moody's upgraded SIU's issuer rating and housing and auxiliary facilities system revenue bonds to Baa2 from Baa3 and Certificates of Participation (COPs) to Baa3 from Ba1 with a stable outlook.
- In December 2024, S&P increased SIU's credit rating from BBB+ to A- with a stable outlook, which is a strong score.

MOODY'S
RATINGS

S&P Global
Ratings

“This is not just a financial milestone—it’s a reflection of our entire system’s commitment to smart governance, student-centered strategies and long-term fiscal health,” said SIU System President Dan Mahony.

According to the rating agencies, these upgrades happened because SIU has improved its finances and built up its cash reserves, enrollment has improved and the State of Illinois is providing more financial support, especially for pensions.

With better credit ratings, SIU can borrow money at lower interest rates, saving money over time. It also shows that SIU is managing its finances well and is in a stronger position for future growth.

SEAMLESS ACCESS ACROSS CAMPUSES: SIU'S FEDERATED ID SYSTEM DELIVERS ON STRATEGIC VISION

A quiet but transformative shift is underway across the SIU System. As part of the SIU System Strategic Plan, the new federated ID system is changing how faculty, staff and students use technology across campuses—making everyday tasks easier and setting the stage for greater collaboration.

In short, a federated ID allows users to log in once with their campus credentials and access systems at any SIU campus. Whether a student at SIUE is enrolling in a course hosted at SIUC, or a faculty member is scheduling a meeting with colleagues across the system, federation removes the need for duplicate accounts, multiple passwords and siloed logins.

“This is about bringing your own ID,” said Wil Clark, chief technology officer at SIU Carbondale. “We’ve enabled our Microsoft 365 environments to recognize and trust each other. Your Edwardsville login works for Carbondale resources and vice versa.”

The move was driven in part by the SIU System Course Exchange and feedback from cooperative PhD students who faced frustrating barriers accessing required materials on other campuses.

“The pilot with our co-op PhD students showed us how critical this was,” Clark noted.
“These were real people needing real access to do real work.”

The results are already clear: shared calendar visibility, access to digital library services and automated tools for managing licenses and enrollment-based access. Best of all, it's integrated into existing systems—avoiding the disruption of new workflows or universal IDs.

While a few systems don't yet support federation, SIU's technology teams are steadily closing those gaps. “It's not flashy,” Clark said, “but it makes collaboration, scheduling and shared programs easier. It's about making technology serve people.” With continued progress, federation is delivering on SIU's commitment to accessible, student-centered innovation—an infrastructure win with broad impact.



As of June 2025, there are

120 STUDENTS
CURRENTLY USING
FEDERATED IDS

between SIUC and SIUE.

BUILDING REGIONAL CLIMATE CAPACITY: SIU JOINS MIDWEST CLIMATE COLLABORATIVE, LAUNCHES GRANT WORKSHOPS

In March 2024, the SIU System officially joined the Midwest Climate Collaborative (MCC), a growing alliance of research institutions, nonprofits, municipalities and foundations dedicated to accelerating climate action and equity across the region. The membership, coordinated through the SIU System Office of Community Engagement, signals a deeper institutional commitment to systemwide sustainability and regional collaboration.

As a new member, the SIU System quickly took an active role. On November 22, 2024, in conjunction with MCC's annual Fall Flagship Forum hosted at Washington University in St. Louis, SIU co-led a series of free grant training workshops designed to help campus and community stakeholders access federal climate and resilience funding. The workshops were offered in both virtual and in-person formats, expanding access and engagement across Southern Illinois and beyond.

Together, these efforts reflect SIU's strategic priority to build sustainable infrastructure through partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and capacity-building. They also position the system to serve as a vital conduit between federal funding opportunities and the rural, underserved communities it is uniquely positioned to reach.

SYSTEMWIDE SUSTAINABILITY IN ACTION

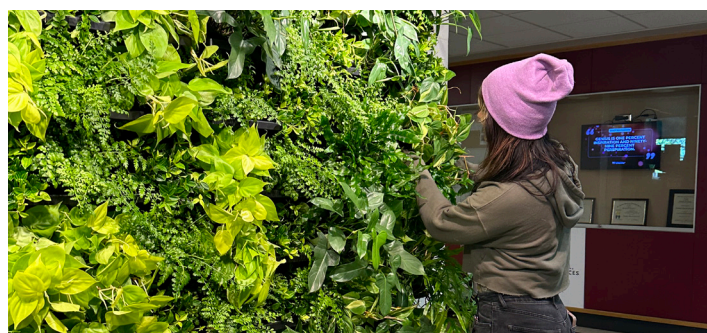
SIUC | GREEN FUND POWERS CAMPUS INNOVATION

In spring 2025, SIUC awarded over \$154,000 in Green Fund grants to 17 sustainability projects. Initiatives ranged from sustainable lab equipment and agriculture building updates to increased support for the Saluki Food Pantry, advancing student well-being and environmental responsibility in tandem.



SIUC | CAMPUS-WIDE SUSTAINABILITY TRACKING

SIUC is actively collecting campus-wide data to renew its AASHE STARS sustainability rating in 2025. The STARS framework helps institutions benchmark performance on everything from curriculum to operations to social equity. The effort is highly collaborative, requiring input from units across the university.



SIUE | ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM SPOTLIGHTS SUSTAINABILITY NEXUS

On April 24, 2025, SIUE hosted its annual Sustainability Symposium, focused on the "Energy-Water-Food Nexus." The event drew faculty, students and community partners to explore interconnected sustainability challenges in Southern Illinois and the St. Louis region.





Southern Illinois University System

ONE SYSTEM | MANY LOCATIONS | STATEWIDE IMPACT



EMPOWER PEOPLE. TRANSFORM THE WORLD.