



Southern Illinois University System

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**ANNUAL EVALUATION LETTER**

June 3, 2025

Dr. Austin Lane  
Chancellor  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Dear Chancellor Lane,

I have reviewed the accomplishments on your annual evaluation. Based on that review, along with frequent interactions, I am providing this formal annual review of your performance.

Growing enrollment continues to be critical for the university and has continued to be a top highlight for SIU Carbondale. In fall 2024, we had the largest increase in enrollment at SIU Carbondale over 30 years (3.8%, 431 students) and another solid increase in new first-time freshmen (8.45%) in fall 2024. Overall, first time freshmen increased at SIUC by 69.5% since fall 2019. There were also increases for in-state students and students specifically from the southern Illinois region. In addition, there were increases in Black/African American, Hispanic, and two or more races. For the second year in a row, there was also an increase in the spring enrollment.

While we are still a couple of months away from the start of the fall 2025 semester, enrollment for next year is currently trending ahead of this time last year. You have continued to be very active in the recruitment process, from working to develop programs like the Saluki Step Ahead and growing online programs to personally connecting with school leaders and visiting students at the schools. This year, I had a chance to visit some of the schools with you and it is clear the connections you and your team are making are having an impact. I also appreciate the efforts you and your team are making toward improving retention rates. Increases in retention would help to further enhance our enrollment growth goals.

The growth in enrollment has also helped another goal, improving the financial position of SIU Carbondale, by growing tuition revenue. During the last year, you have also reduced costs in a variety of areas, including implementing a hiring chill. We should have a balanced budget at SIU Carbondale for this year, with some additional money going towards the payback. In the area of athletics specifically, expenses were decreased by 8% through a variety of strategies.

Another area of success that is helping with the fiscal health of the university is the growth of fundraising. SIU Carbondale has now raised \$394 million toward the \$500 million campaign

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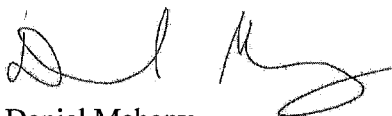
goal. This past year is on track to be over \$40 million, the second highest ever behind only last year's total. In fact, except for last year, this year's total is predicted to be about 25% better than any previous year's total. The impact of this success has had an impact in several areas, including enrollment with another record amounts of scholarships being provided from the foundation (approximately 7.5% higher than last year's record and 117% higher than FY20) and support for various initiatives like the Seymour Bryson Summer Scholars Program.

The Foundation also provided support for the growing research efforts at SIU Carbondale. The emphasis on research culminated with the university's recognition this spring as a Carnegie R1 institution in the spring. It is noteworthy that the institution was also recognized by the Carnegie Classification as an opportunity university (high access, high earnings), one of only 21 R1 institutions to do so.

Another highlight this year is there was no change in any members of your senior team. While it is unrealistic to believe this will always be the case, the stability at the top after years of frequent turnover is noteworthy and has contributed to the accomplishment of several other goals. You also continue to build strong relationships across the campus and with key stakeholders off-campus. This has also been critical to the campus achievements.


Again, congratulations on the accomplishments in the past year. I look forward to working with you and your team in what I hope will be another successful year for SIU Carbondale and its many stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Daniel Mahony  
President  
Southern Illinois University System

*The signature below indicates the employee has had an opportunity to review this annual evaluation letter. The employee should feel free to attach to this letter any written response which is necessary for further explanation or detail.*

  
Austin Lane (Jun 24, 2025 10:38 EDT)

Employee

06/24/2025

Date