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**Contact: John Charles | jcharles@siu.edu**

**SIU Board Meeting Update: Carbondale diversity head among numerous hires approved, SIU System Institute for Rural Health and SIU System Office of Community Engagement receive authorization**

Carbondale, Ill. – The Southern Illinois University System Board of Trustees approved Dr. Paul Frazier as vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion at SIU Carbondale today.

Frazier’s appointment rounds out earlier picks to lead diversity efforts across the multi-campus university system, including Dr. Sheila Caldwell, who begins her role as the inaugural vice president for antiracism, diversity, equity and inclusion and chief diversity officer on July 19, and Dr. Jessica Harris, who serves as SIUE’s first vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion. They join Dr. Wendi Wills El-Amin, MD, who is the associate dean for equity, diversity and inclusion at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

“With Dr. Frazier’s approval, we now have a full team of dedicated professionals whose primary charge will be to work on their campuses and across the system to lead faculty, staff and students in fostering a climate that focuses on expanding diversity, equity and inclusion. Our goal is to be recognized as a leader in fighting racism, not just in Illinois, but across the nation. Today we took another important step in achieving that objective,” said SIU System President Dan Mahony.

Other new hires approved by the board include: Mr. Wendell Williams, associate chancellor for enrollment management; Dr. Eric Brevik, dean, College of Agricultural, Life and Physical Sciences; Dr. Robert Morgan, dean, College of Health and Human Sciences; and Mr. Olusegun Ojewuyi, interim dean, College of Arts and Media. All four will serve at SIU Carbondale.

In other action, the board gave final approval to the creation of the SIU System Institute for Rural Health (IRH) and the SIU System Office of Community Engagement (OCE) following months of discussion at both the board level and throughout the system on how the university can better embrace its mission to support health care and community development in central and southern Illinois. The board also approved interim directors who will lead the new offices.

The Institute of Rural Health will combine strengths across SIU’s campuses to develop a coordinated array of rural health services, research and nondegree-based education. Its goal will be to provide opportunities and best practices to promote SIU’s medical and health care services, as well as serving as a resource for communities, governmental officials and agencies, and health-related organizations. Its newly approved interim director, Mr. Jeff Franklin, is the current director of the SIU School of Medicine Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development. He brings over 27 years of professional experience in project and grant management to the role.

The Office of Community Engagement will also maximize SIU campus resources to improve individual communities. It will serve as an outreach model to assist low-income cities and rural leaders in developing economic and infrastructure initiatives, pursuing state and federal grant funding opportunities and assisting in the identification of and utilization of various SIU System resources. Designed around the “Four Pillar Agenda to Rid Illinois of Systemic Racism” as proposed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus last year, it will be led by Interim Director Dr. Stacy Grundy, who currently works in the SIU School of Medicine’s Department of Population Science and Policy. Grundy previously worked for the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and as the Community Transformation Grant Program Coordinator in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

“The SIU campuses have always been community-oriented and the desire to serve has been part of our DNA from the very beginning. With the Office of Community Engagement and the Institute for Rural Health, we are stepping up our commitment to share our resources and expertise with those who need it most, as we create tremendous new opportunities for service that our students can take advantage of,” said SIU Board of Trustees Chairman Phil Gilbert.

An archived copy of today’s meeting can be viewed on the SIU Board of Trustees YouTube page by clicking this [link](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCl4JAPREaN0k-ObbbtdoqRA).

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