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PRESS RELEASE

Four Faculty Members Receive 2024 SIU System Collaboration Award

Springfield, Ill.– Four faculty members from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) and Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) were awarded the Southern Illinois University 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,” said SIU System President Dan Mahony. “We are fortunate to have so many intelligent, innovative leaders who are making progress at SIU with their collective expertise.”

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.”

[Click here to watch a video to learn more from Flowers and McIntyre about the SIU tutoring initiative.](#)

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.”

[Click here to watch a video and learn more from Shamsi and Sumita about the work they are doing at SIU.](#)

SIU employs more than 7,000 faculty, staff and administrators who serve approximately 23,500 students through our campuses in Carbondale, Edwardsville and Springfield. The SIU System Office and SIU Medical School are in Springfield, Illinois as well as SIU Medicine clinics that serve thousands of patients.

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Dr. Natasha Flowers (SIUE) and Dr. Christie McIntyre (SIUC) were awarded for their work with the Illinois Tutoring Initiative. (Photo by Howard Ash, SIUE).



Dr. Mina Sumita (SIUE) and Dr. Mohtashim Shamsi (SIUC) were awarded for their work focused on designing biomolecular probes that will detect genetic biomarkers. (Photo by Howard Ash, SIUE).