



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE

SIU Carbondale and SIU Edwardsville Partner with Gateway Equity Institute to Empower Students to Advance Equity and Justice

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.—The SIU System is pleased to announce that both SIU Carbondale (SIUC) and SIU Edwardsville (SIUE) are engaging in a new partnership with the [Gateway Equity Institute](#) (GEI), a St. Louis based organization dedicated to advancing equity and justice. GEI empowers leaders to drive change, provides transformative training and engages youth through impactful diversity programs.

SIU and GEI are partnering to provide the Anytown Campus Program to 100 students from SIU Carbondale and SIU Edwardsville, plus students from Carbondale Community High School and East St. Louis Senior High School. “Through the inclusion of both college students and high school students, GEI and SIU are creating unique opportunities for youth to learn from one another’s perspectives as they explore the following topics: establishing a foundation, sex, race, ability, LGBTQIA2S+ identities and preparing for next steps,” said Rhonda Carter Adams, executive director of GEI.

Each school has successfully recruited 25 participants who will start the Anytown Campus Program on January 30 with the inaugural session including all 100 students scheduled to occur on the SIUE campus. Students will attend six workshops from January through April 2025 as they complete this program.

“The program includes educational components such as guest speakers, facilitated group discussions, and creative reflection activities that expand students’ understanding of social identities,” said Jessica Harris, SIUE’s vice chancellor for anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion. “Upon completion of the program, students will be better equipped to advocate for themselves and for all marginalized communities while making strides toward a just future.”

SIUE and SIUC leaders who work in anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion (A DEI) at each university are collaborating to offer this program to students in the Edwardsville and Carbondale areas. Steve Parks, director of programs at GEI, will be leading this initiative with SIU leaders.

“The SIU System is strongly committed to making progress with our work in A DEI,” said SIU System President Dan Mahony. “It’s important to make continuous A DEI progress with both our staff and students so they are equipped with the skills and awareness needed to make progress in an increasingly diverse world.”

“This is an opportunity for our students to gain a greater understanding of how important it is for everyone to experience equality on multiple levels,” said Paul Frazier, SIUC’s vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion. “These opportunities will provide students with access to information that will educate them beyond the classroom.”