

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
EDWARDSVILLE



School of Education, Health & Human Behavior
SEHHB INSIDER 2025



LETTER FROM THE DEAN

SEHHB IS OFF TO A STRONG START!

The School of Education, Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB) is off to the races and looking forward to a prosperous new academic year. Here's a brief recap of where we left off. Last spring, we awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships during our first combined, all-school SEHHB Honors Day and Research Expo. Shoutout to Nick Niemerg and Suzi Schieferdecker, whose leadership made this celebration of nearly 200 scholarship recipients, families, faculty, staff, and donors a seamless success.

Inspiring the Next Generation of Educators: We also hosted the third annual Future Teacher Conference last November, welcoming more than 250 high school students interested in earning a teaching degree at SIUE. For perspective, our first conference drew just over 100 students, the second nearly 200, and last year—we surpassed 250 future educators!

Commitment to Early Childhood and Head Start: Our School remains deeply engaged with Head Start. I serve on the transition team as we search for new leadership, while Alison Reeves, PhD, chairs the Policy Council, and Amy Wilkinson provides key leadership in Head Start and the Student Success Center in East St. Louis. Rosa Thorpe and the Shine organization continue to guide this important work. We are also seeking additional early childhood expertise from faculty, especially those with ties to East St. Louis. On a personal note, visiting the baby rooms to rock and feed our littlest learners remains one of the best parts of my job.

East St. Louis Charter High School Leadership Transition: We welcome Kim Allen as the new Principal of the Charter High School. Our deepest thanks to Natasha Flowers, PhD, who served as interim director. Her leadership and dedication have left a lasting impact.

Welcoming New Faces: We are excited to announce Sarah Conoyer, PhD, as faculty secretary and Greg Everett, PhD, as associate dean. We wish Paul Rose, PhD, the best in retirement after many years of dedicated service. I remain deeply grateful for his support and guidance.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the SEHHB. Go Cougs!

Robin Hughes, PhD

Robin Hughes, PhD
Dean



SEHHB Honors Day and Research Expo

This spring, SEHHB relaunched its School-wide Honors Day and Research Expo, bringing together students, families, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters. Over \$100,000 in scholarships were awarded—more than triple last year's total of \$30,000.

Plans are well underway for this spring's Honors Day, scheduled for Sunday, April 19, 2026. Want to learn more? Contact Nick Niemerg, director of development, at nniemer@siue.edu.

HOWARD V. DAVIS MEMORIAL AWARD

Receiving this award made me feel like my efforts had been seen and appreciated. My mission is to create environments where students are supported and equipped to succeed. This acknowledgement motivates me to keep pushing forward and remain focused on my mission.

— BENJAMIN ESSILFIE
Higher Education and Student Affairs Graduate Student



Making History!

This past season was historic for SIUE Men's Basketball, as the Cougars captured their first-ever Ohio Valley Conference Championship and earned a bid to the NCAA Tournament! The team includes several students from the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior, including Ray'Sean Taylor, sharp shooting, quick guard and all-time leading scorer, three-point shooter, and graduate scholar in the SEHHB!

Winning the OVC championship was an incredible feeling, it is something I'll always remember.

— RING MALITH
Integrative Studies, Psychology and Business Administration Undergraduate Student

Playing in the tournament was a remarkable experience. It was a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team.

— DESMOND POLK
Kinesiology-Exercise and Sport Psychology Graduate Student



ANTHONY LOUIS SPRINGMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



I was excited, honored, and grateful to receive this award. It shows that individuals like me who choose teaching or any degree in education are recognized and valued.

— ALICE TRINIDAD '25
Doctor of Educational Leadership

LEARN MORE ABOUT SEHHB'S FUNDING PRIORITIES
connect.siu.edu/g/sehhb



Unlocking Peak Performance

The Department of Exercise, Sport, and Nutrition Sciences is partnering with SIUE Athletics to explore the physical and psychological factors that influence athletic performance.

Launched in 2023 by Josh Wooten, PhD, professor and department chair, the project began with the SIUE Women’s Volleyball team. Faculty and students created a performance survey to track mood, sleep, soreness, and training intensity throughout the 2023-24 season.

“Our goal is to give coaches actionable data to reduce injury risk and improve player readiness,” said Wooten.

The research has since expanded to include body composition analysis, providing even deeper insight for athletes and coaches. Players receive monthly reports

to help build self-awareness and ownership of their performance.

“I have enjoyed a lot about our research,” said Max Hardiek, a senior biomedical sciences major and Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) assistant. “Developing relationships with Dr. Wooten, other faculty, and my fellow URCA assistants has been very enjoyable and rewarding. Additionally, having a positive impact on our university’s sports programs and learning much along the way has been a huge plus.”

Hardiek was one of several student researchers involved in the project. He helped develop the original performance survey and contributed to research on physiological markers in volleyball athletes to better understand their connection to recovery and performance. Wooten aims to expand the initiative to more SIUE sports teams in the future.



Tedd Masiongale’s Teaching, Collaboration, and National Recognition

Tedd Masiongale, MA, CCC-SLP, FNAP, clinical instructor in the Department of Public Health and Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, joined the SIUE faculty 10 years ago. Prior to SIUE, he worked at the Emory University Hospital System in Atlanta where he focused on clinical practice, research related to swallowing disorders, clinical tools, and inclusive education in speech-language pathology.

Now focused on teaching and clinical instruction, Masiongale works with students at SIUE’s on-campus Speech-Language Hearing Center, which provides free services to pediatric and adult clients with a range of communication disorders.

“A highlight of my time at SIUE so far has been learning new treatment skills and adjusting my teaching style to meet the demands of a new generation of learners.”

Masiongale works with the students to assess and treat clients who come into the center, operating very similar to an outpatient medical clinic.

“ I enjoy learning about how students learn and exploring best methods for teaching in an ever-changing world.

— TEDD MASIONGALE, MA, CCC-SLP, FNAP

Clinical Instructor

Department of Public Health and Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

“It is a collaborative approach designed to give our students experiences in preparation for externships and their post graduate clinical fellowship year,” he explained. “We have an excellent clinic and do very good work for those we serve.”

Earlier this year, Masiongale was inducted as a Distinguished Fellow of the National Academies of Practice (NAP) in Speech-Language Pathology, one of the highest honors granted

by NAP, which recognizes leaders across health professions dedicated to advancing interprofessional healthcare. His induction into the Class of 2025 took place at the NAP Annual Meeting and Forum Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C., in March.

“It’s quite an honor to be recognized by my peers for my work in interprofessional practice,” he said. Learn more about the Speech-Language Hearing Center by visiting siue.edu/slh-center.



Pharmacy and Public Health Student Recognized by USPHS

Matthew Jacquot, PharmD, MPH, ’25, received the Excellence in Public Health Pharmacy Award from the U.S. Public Health Services. The national honor recognizes pharmacy students who go beyond their curriculum to significantly contribute to public health, including promoting wellness and healthy communities.

“To me, this award is not just an individual honor, it’s a reminder that public health work matters, even if it’s behind the scenes,” said Jacquot. “It motivates me to keep finding ways to serve communities, improve access to care, and advocate for health equity through my pharmacy career.”

Equity-Focused Dissertation Earns National Recognition

Latrice Marianno, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership, received the American Educational Research Association’s (AERA) Leadership for School Improvement Special Interest Group 2025 Dissertation of the Year Award.

Her research examined how educational leaders understand the relationship between equity and school improvement planning, as well as the practices they engage in during that process.

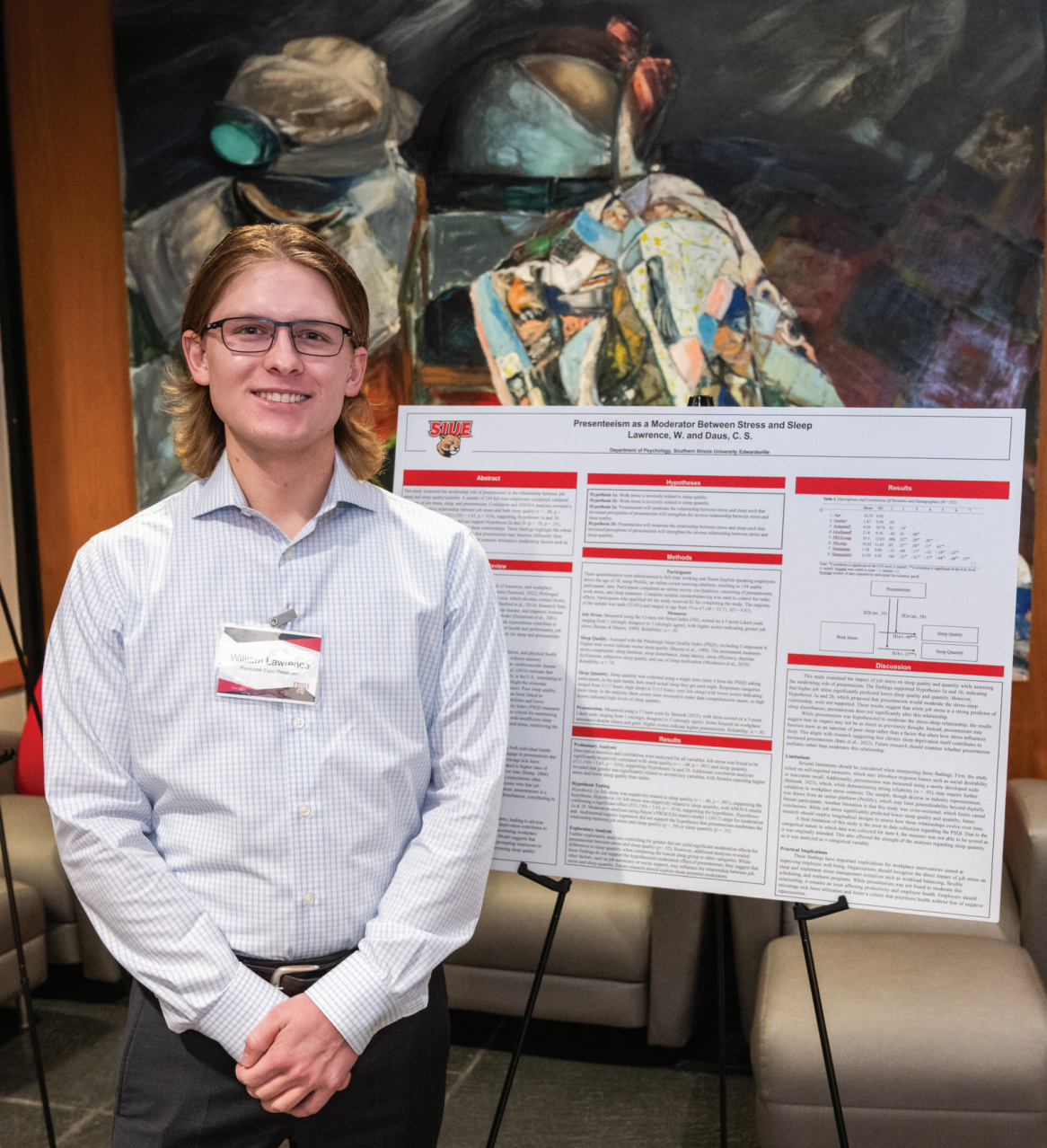
“This work stands out because there are few studies that focus specifically on school improvement planning and even fewer that focus on redressing inequities through that process,” said Marianno.

“I feel extremely honored to have this work recognized by such a prominent organization in my field. My hope is always to do work that is meaningful to educators and deeply connected to practice.

— LATRICE MARIANNO, PHD
Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership

Her findings revealed a critical disconnect. While district leaders emphasized equity, school leaders often didn’t see it reflected in the planning process. Marianno argues that bridging this gap is essential for meaningful and lasting school improvement.

Marianno also earned the 2025 Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award from AERA’s School Effectiveness and School Improvement Special Interest Group for her paper titled, “School Improvement for All? Critically Examining School Improvement Plan Templates for Equity.”



Psychology Enrollment Reaches Record Highs

The undergraduate psychology program is experiencing record growth, reflecting a surge of student interest in its major and courses.

SPRING 2024-SPRING 2025

Total Enrollment
21% increase
Online Degree Completion Enrollment
52% increase

“These numbers reflect record enrollment for the Department of Psychology and indicate the growing interest in our major and courses. Students choosing a psychology major have access to numerous courses and applied experiences that provide a well-rounded, engaging, rigorous curriculum taught by an exceptional faculty.

— GREGORY EVERETT, PHD
SEHNB Associate Dean,
Professor, Department of Psychology



Conoyer Honored as Research Mentor

Sarah Conoyer, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Psychology, was named SIUE’s Fall 2024 Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) Vaughn Vandegrift Research Mentor of the Semester. The URCA program gives undergraduate students from all disciplines the opportunity to participate in research and creative projects under the guidance of faculty mentors. Through URCA, students engage in hands-on scholarship, collaborate closely with faculty, and experience the process of discovery and creation that is central to a comprehensive education.

“Dr. Conoyer is supportive of all her students, always pushing us to the best of our abilities. She is great at giving constructive feedback and helping her students succeed.

— LEIGHANN NOTTKE, ’25
Psychology, Student Nominator



Meet Danielle Zykan

BS in Chemistry, Specialization in Secondary Education '25

Danielle Zykan graduated from SIUE this past spring with a degree in chemistry with a specialization in secondary education. Before graduating, she attended the American Chemical Society (ACS) Spring Meeting, where she learned from chemists tackling real-world challenges through cutting-edge research.

“As a chemistry educator, it was especially inspiring to hear from fellow educators about innovative strategies they are using to engage students and make chemistry more accessible and exciting,” Zykan said.

Her experience at the ACS meeting reinforced her passion for teaching and her commitment to creating engaging, inclusive learning environments. She is especially focused on encouraging students who are underrepresented in STEM fields to see themselves in science.

“SIUE’s SEHHB played a major role in preparing me for this path,” Zykan continued. “Through my coursework, I have developed a strong foundation in education theory, practical teaching strategies, and social justice principles. I also benefited from meaningful field practicum experiences that have given me firsthand insight into what it takes to create an inclusive and effective classroom environment.”

Zykan is now teaching chemistry at Belleville West High School in Illinois.

I believe that building students’ confidence and curiosity is key to unlocking their potential and I look forward to being a part of that journey.

— DANIELLE ZYKAN, '25
BS in Chemistry
Specialization in Secondary Education



SIUE Charter Track Team Races to State for Third Straight Year

The SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School Track and Field team qualified for the IHSA State Finals for the third consecutive year, with senior Jaylen Wiley leading the charge by qualifying in four events. Wiley reached the finals in both the 100-meter and 200-meter dashes, placing 9th and 8th respectively. Alongside teammates Isaiah Foster, Breon Johnson, and Xavier Lucas, the 4x100-meter and 4x200-meter relay teams both set personal records at state.

Since launching the program in 2012, Coach Roundtree has guided the team to five state appearances and continues to develop athletes who excel on and off the track.

Coaches Roundtree and Nelson built more than just an athletic team. They have built a community of discipline and growth.

— BREON JOHNSON
SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School
2025 Graduate

The track program has started to feel more like a community and family. We athletes have been influenced by how to carry ourselves, take accountability, and take on new responsibilities and challenges.

— ISAIAH FOSTER
SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School
2025 Graduate

It was a true blessing to have Mr. Roundtree as my coach and the work he made me do on myself in reference to being accountable.

— XAVIER LUCAS
SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School
Sophomore

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From SIUE to the Savannah Bananas

When Matt Graifer earned his master's in kinesiology from SIUE in 2010, he never imagined he'd one day be hyping up stadiums as the Chief Potassium Enthusiast for one of the most entertaining teams in sports.

Graifer serves as Cast Director for the Savannah Bananas, a viral baseball team known for dancing, comedy, and turning the sport of baseball on its head. It's a role that blends Graifer's passion for sports and crowd engagement, and in many ways, traces back to his time at SIUE.

"I was fortunate to work with Dr. Curt Lox, former chair of the Department of Kinesiology, who allowed me to tailor my curriculum to fit my career goals," said Graifer. "While my focus was on sport and exercise behavior, I was able to take valuable courses in sports marketing and business management. That flexibility was crucial and has proven incredibly helpful in my current role."

The Bananas made their St. Louis debut at Busch Stadium in July, with over 90,000 fans attending across two sold-out nights. As the Bananas' popularity continues to grow, Graifer finds himself thriving in a role that brings unique talents to life.

We Want to Hear from You!

Have an exciting career update, award, or accomplishment to share? We love celebrating the success of our SEHHB alumni! Visit siue.edu/alumni/stay-connected to update your contact information and share your story with us.



Greetings!

I continue to be honored to serve as the director of development for the SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior. Over the past year, I have been inspired and moved by the incredible generosity, energy, and pride of our SEHHB alumni and friends. Thanks to your increased support, we were able to award a record-breaking \$100,000+ in scholarships to deserving students, a testament to the collective power of our community.

This year also brought exciting momentum, including the successful relaunch of the SEHHB Advisory Board, which is strengthening partnerships and creating new opportunities for engagement and refining our curriculum. Establishing the SIUE Psychology Alumni Network will connect graduates in meaningful and impactful ways. Are you interested in learning more about how to get involved? **Contact Suzi Schieferdecker, development associate, at sseaton@siue.edu for more information.**

Your ongoing connection to your alma mater is vital to sustaining and growing these successes. Whether you choose to serve on an advisory board, mentor students, attend alumni events, or support our fundraising priorities, your involvement helps build a brighter future for our students. One especially meaningful way to make a lasting difference is through **planned or estate giving**, creating a legacy that supports future generations of educators, health professionals, and human behavior specialists long into the future. If you are interested in exploring these options, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Dean Hughes and I welcome your ideas and input as we build on this momentum. Together, we can continue to empower students and strengthen the communities we serve, both regionally and nationwide. Thank you for being such an essential part of our journey!

Nick Niemerg '15

Director of Development
SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior
nniemer@siue.edu, 618-650-5043



Save The Date!

**ONE DAY, ONE SIUE
APRIL 23, 2026**

Join us for the fifth annual ONE DAY, ONE SIUE Reception at the new Health Sciences Building! Last year's celebration was one for the record books, raising more than \$2.8 million from over 2,300 donors, including two new endowed scholarships in the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior. This beloved annual event unites our community and the entire SIUE family in support of SIUE students and programs.

“

The Bananas allow me to perform, produce, write, and build something from the ground up. I even get to hire and mentor others now. It's incredibly fulfilling.

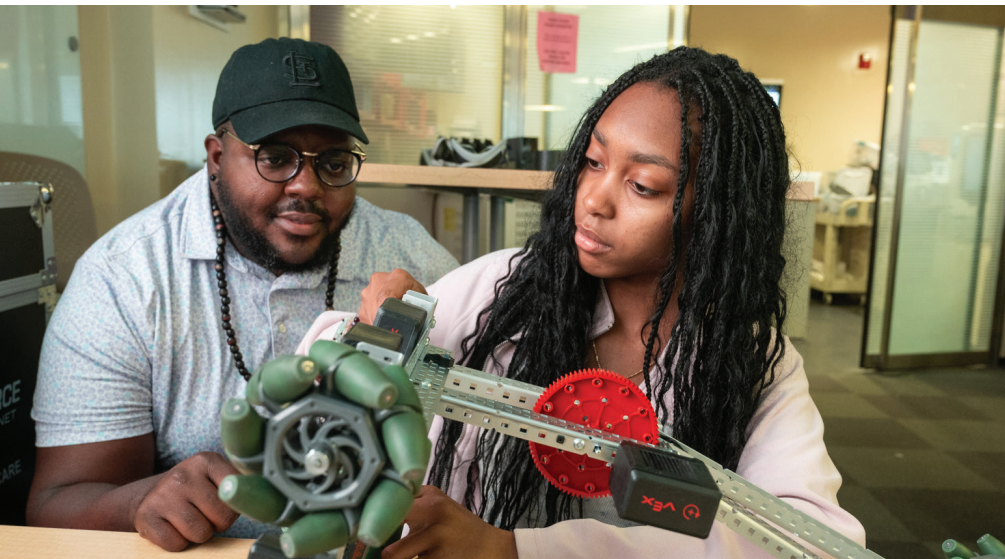
— MATT GRAIFER, '10
MS in Kinesiology

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