

# e connection

The Magazine for Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Alumni Association & Friends



We're all  
in this  
together.



**“ In a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. ”**

— Eric Hoffer, *Reflections on the Human Condition*

*The COVID-19 pandemic brought about countless changes at SIUE this spring, from fully online courses to virtual commencement ceremonies. But one constant remained: our commitment to providing our students with high-quality educational experiences that will prepare them to become the leaders who shape a changing world.*

## On the cover

**econnection**



**We're all in this together.**

*We're proud of our alumni who are bravely serving on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic. From small towns to big cities, these SIUE Cougars are making a difference in the lives of countless patients across the country.*

## In this issue

Letter from the Chancellor	4
SIUE Today	6-15
University Advancement	16-17
SIUE Alumni Association	18-21
Class of 2020	22-23



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
**EDWARDSVILLE**  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



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The following alumni have contributed to the production of this magazine:

Heather Kniffel, '95, '13 • Karen Hertz '79  
Nick Niemerg, '15 • Cathy Taylor, '15



## Dear Alumni and Friends of SIUE,

Well, who could have predicted all that has occurred since this time last year? We have witnessed wonderful affirmations in recognition of our programs, including several “#1 in Illinois” and “top 10 in the nation” rankings. The points of pride listed on this page are just a sampling of the achievements of the year!

We have also witnessed dramatic circumstances calling for change. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the racial unrest that requires us to take a much-needed look at ourselves and our spheres of influence, now is the time for higher education to play a leading role in shaping our changing world. It has never been more important to open ourselves to dialogue and reflection and to practice the grace that can pave the way to understanding and acceptance.

Please see the following pages for exciting and innovative ways in which SIUE has responded to recent challenges. We welcome your input and invite you to be a part of influencing this rapidly evolving world by partnering with us to effect positive change. SIUE has a proven record of responsive programming and community engagement. If you would like to participate in activities that will make a lasting difference, please contact the SIUE Foundation to learn more about opportunities to influence within your areas of interest. Now is the time for us to commit to an impactful, safer and equitable tomorrow.

Stay safe and well and know that we value your support of SIUE.

 **SHAPING THE FUTURE, TODAY,**  
Randall G. Pembroke, '78, '79, '80  
Alumnus and SIUE Chancellor

# NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

**#2**

IN ILLINOIS

**#9**

IN THE NATION

**2020 SAFEST COLLEGE CAMPUSES IN AMERICA**

*YourLocalSecurity*

**#1**

IN ILLINOIS

**TOP 40**

IN THE NATION

**2020 BEST VALUE PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMS**

*Great Value Colleges*

## DOCTORAL/PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITIES CATEGORY RECLASSIFICATION

*Carnegie Commission on Higher Education*

**#1**

IN ILLINOIS

**#4**

IN THE NATION

**2020 BEST VALUE COMPUTER SCIENCE PROGRAMS**

*College Factual*

**#1**

IN ILLINOIS & MISSOURI

**TOP 40**

IN THE NATION

**SCHOOL OF PHARMACY CLASS OF 2019**

*North American Pharmacist Licensure Exam®*

## HIGHER EDUCATION EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY

*(one of only 35 schools in the nation to be awarded six or more consecutive years)*

*INSIGHT Into Diversity*

**#1**

EMERGING INSTITUTION IN THE MIDWEST

**#6**

IN THE NATION

**#3**

AMONG DOCTORAL/PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITIES

**RESEARCH EXPENDITURES**

*National Science Foundation*

**2020 BEST ONLINE MASTER'S IN HEALTHCARE INFORMATICS PROGRAMS**

*intelligent.com*

## 27 SEMESTERS COMBINED GPA 3.0 OR HIGHER

*SIUE Student-athletes*

**#7**

IN THE NATION

**BEST ONLINE MASTER'S IN NURSING EDUCATION**

*EduMed*

**#1**

IN ILLINOIS

**#12**

IN THE NATION

**2020 BEST VALUE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMS**

*College Factual*

## 2020 ASPIRING AFFINITY GROUP

**SIUE BLACK FACULTY AND STAFF ASSOCIATION**

*INSIGHT Into Diversity*



## Racism and Our Charge

The SIUE community has taken a number of steps to denounce racism and promote healing in our community. While we are proud of what has been accomplished so far, there is much more to be done. Following are snapshots of messages that have been shared with the campus community. Please visit [siue.edu/anti-racism](http://siue.edu/anti-racism) to view them in their entirety and for updates on our progress, communication and anti-racism resources, including virtual conversations and events.

*"Ahmaud Arbery. George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Their names have been added to the ever-growing list of those whose lives were cut short because of fear and hatred ... We recognize that racial trauma is a devastating phenomenon and we stand in solidarity with these individuals."*

— Message from the Chancellor and the SIUE Diversity Council

*"African Americans have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in the U.S. The roots of these outcomes run deep in our history with threads through economic, political and social disparities. Nevertheless, we are reminded that systemic and institutional racism has dramatic implications for African Americans. The work is far from over. Black Lives Matter."*

— Denise Cobb, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

*"We recognize there is hard work ahead, but creating change is critical to our University community and essential for nurturing a sustainable future ... We have heard the pain and frustration among our students, staff and faculty. Emails and town halls will not be enough. Action and urgency are essential."*

— Randy Pembroke, Chancellor

Denise Cobb, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Rachel Stack, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement

Rich Walker, Vice Chancellor for Administration

Jeffrey Waple, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

### THE SIUE ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE

- A symbol of the University's enduring commitment to racial equity
- A hub of activity to centralize cultural humility in our professional practices
- An affirmation of our institutional value of Inclusion

#### Goals:

- Engage thoughtful and synchronized action toward this outcome in ways that are measurable and consistent
- Center Black voices (e.g., lived experience, scholarship), while sharing in the burden of dismantling oppressive structures, including our own attitudes, decisions and behaviors

Much of the ongoing work of the Task Force will be undertaken by four subcommittees:

1. Sustained and Effective Communication: Developing a structure that encourages ongoing dialogue and education about the issues that are most important
2. Access and Success: Enhancing recruitment for students of underrepresented groups for both undergraduate and graduate programs and improving retention and graduation rates
3. Curriculum: Building a community that fosters learning, scholarship and creative activities that reflect understanding of global diversity and a commitment to inclusion and social justice
4. Faculty and Staff: Hiring, Retention, Promotion: Increasing and retaining the number of faculty, staff and administrators from underrepresented groups

Subcommittees include faculty, staff and students, as well as "consultants" from our community who will be part of focused conversations.

For up-to-date information, visit [siue.edu/anti-racism](http://siue.edu/anti-racism) 



## Academic Excellence Continues Online

“It is our collective responsibility to support one another and help ease the anxiety and risk during this period,” said Denise Cobb, PhD, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. “Our next priority is to support the successful completion of the semester for all of our students.”

The spring 2020 academic term at SIUE became one for the history books when the Provost emailed the University community on Sunday, March 15. All on-ground and hybrid courses would move online for the remainder of the semester due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the next week, faculty members determined how to best deliver their course curriculum online using tools such as Zoom, TechSmith Relay and the advanced features of Blackboard. The transition to an online format was straightforward for some academic areas, but was more complex for courses involving lab work; the visual and performing arts; and required clinicals, internships and practicums.

**“It is our collective responsibility to support one another and help ease the anxiety and risk during this period.”**

— Denise Cobb, PhD

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

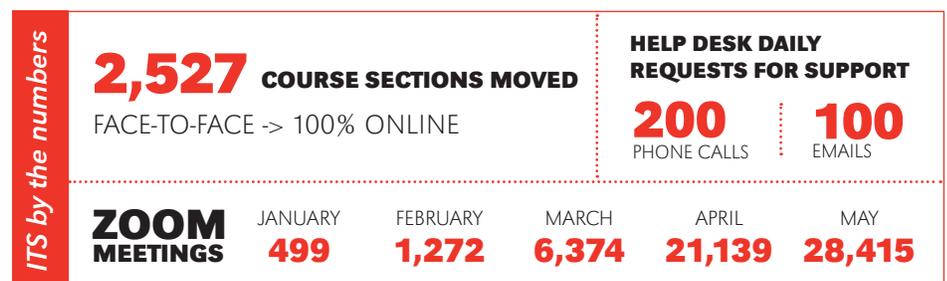
“Biology labs are by nature very hands-on, but the faculty were able to quickly develop online alternatives,” said Vance McCracken, PhD, associate professor and chair of the Department of Biological Sciences. “Using virtual tools and software resources, faculty members stayed connected with their students while effectively teaching new skills.”

Faculty and staff worked diligently to move more than 2,500 course sections online within the span of one week. Other offices across the University also made sure students had the resources necessary to be successful in a virtual setting.

The Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk responded to calls and emails and coordinated remote support. The ITS Instructional Design and Learning Technologies (IDLT) group conducted virtual training sessions, provided individual consultations and developed resources for faculty, staff and students. Additionally, ITS staff provided faculty, staff and students with the opportunity to check out iPads, laptops, webcams, headsets and document cameras; ensured software was available for remote use; and created drive-up wireless internet locations across campus.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continued to create new challenges for the campus community throughout the spring and summer semesters and into the fall, the health and safety of students, faculty and staff remained the University’s top priority.

“The SIUE community has responded to this global crisis with patience, thoughtfulness, creativity and commitment,” Cobb said. “Now more than ever, we remain dedicated to our mission of developing professionals, scholars and leaders who shape a changing world.”





## Helping Students Stay Connected

As stay-at-home orders and social distancing became the new normal for students, connecting with friends and mentors was a challenge. Recognizing this critical need, the Office for Accessible Campus Community and Equitable Student Support (ACCESS) began hosting daily Virtual Living Room sessions on Zoom for students to chat, hang out and check in with ACCESS staff members. The team also created a Netflix streaming guide of content that features characters with disabilities and/or promotes diversity and hosted virtual watch parties.

“We laugh. We joke. We share and offer individual words of encouragement,” said ACCESS Director Dominic Dorsey. “In many instances, the students are sharing stories and building connections and community just by offering support, guidance and tips from what has worked for them.”

ACCESS surveyed students at the end of March to learn the types of challenges they were experiencing during the transition to online learning. Results indicated a need for students’ approved accommodations to be better adjusted for the online setting, as well as decreased motivation, difficulty with time management and additional responsibilities with children in the home, to name a few.

In response, Dorsey and his team created and shared resources and positive messages with students through email and video. The ACCESS staff also ramped up support for faculty to help them meet their students’ accommodations.

*“ We may not be able to do all things in the ways we once did for the time being, but that doesn’t mean we stop trying to find joy and contentment whenever and wherever we can. ”*

— **Dominic Dorsey**  
ACCESS Director

“Mental health is paramount, and feeling whole is essential,” said Dorsey. “We may not be able to do all things in the ways we once did for the time being, but that doesn’t mean we stop trying to find joy and contentment whenever and wherever we can. Whatever measure of that we can assist with at ACCESS, that’s our goal.”



## Online Exercise Programs Help Create a Feeling of Community

Yoga Flow ... Total Body Burn ... Zumba ...  
Exercise improves mental health by reducing anxiety, depression and negative mood. But, how does one maintain an active lifestyle during a pandemic? Campus Recreation responded quickly to move group fitness, recreational and wellness offerings to online platforms, and shared health and wellness tips via social media.

*“ Our goal has been to provide some sense of normalcy by offering programs and services online and creating a feeling of community and belonging that we all need right now. ”*

— Natalie Hawkins  
Assistant Director, Recreational Programs

## Dining Services Prepares Meal Kits for Students

Dining Services staff members made two-week meal kits available for purchase by the 350 students who remained on campus this spring. The staff also prepared meals for families served by the SIUE Early Childhood Center and Head Start/Early Head Start who were in need of support.

*“ We wanted to help our students maintain social distancing while making meals available in order to alleviate as much stress and anxiety as possible during this uncertain time. ”*

— Melissa McEldowney  
Associate Director, Dining Services



# Helping Students Cope During Unprecedented Times

“Life has changed in dramatic and unforeseen ways,” said Courtney Boddie, PhD, director of Counseling Services. “As a result, perceptions, sensations, feelings, thoughts, behaviors and interactions outside of the norm are to be expected. High doses of grace are needed as we think about ourselves and those with whom we are in personal and professional contact.”

*“Life has changed in dramatic and unforeseen ways.”*

— Courtney Boddie, PhD  
Director, Counseling Services

To help students manage the challenges and uncertainties brought about by the pandemic, Counseling Services and Health Service turned to online tools to ensure continuity of care for students.

## Counseling Services

- Shifted completely to teletherapy through its secure Therapist Assisted Online program
- Offered extensive information on psychological crises, accessing counseling in the community and psychoeducation ([siue.edu/counseling/in-an-emergency](http://siue.edu/counseling/in-an-emergency))

## Health Service

- Offered telemedicine visits for physical and psychiatric concerns, as well as on-site care for students who remained living in the area
- Provided resources to students, faculty and staff to help them stay healthy and practice self-care
- Collaborated with the Illinois Department of Public Health and Madison County Health Department to assess the COVID-19 presence in Illinois and its potential impact on students, faculty and staff

“It was important for us to remain open and support students who were experiencing physical and mental health challenges in this unique environment,” said Riane Greenwalt, director of Health Service.

# Student-Athletes Cope with Loss of Spring Season

*“I’ll never take for granted a practice or a morning workout with my team again.”*

— Adam Albertsen  
Women’s Tennis Coach

“It shows you how much your team and season mean to you,” Albertsen continued.

With the unprecedented cancellation of the spring athletics season, SIUE coaches and student-athletes joined their peers from across the country in feelings of disappointment and loss.

Coaches checked in with their teams throughout the semester to ensure their wellbeing and share practice plans and ideas for continuing their training at home. Lindsay Ross-Stewart, PhD, associate professor of exercise and sport psychology and sports psychologist for Intercollegiate Athletics, counseled student-athletes on the mental aspect of dealing with the pandemic and staying at home.

“Student-athletes go through stages of loss when careers end due to injury or graduation,” Ross-Stewart said. “Certainly, this is the same thing, and it happened so suddenly.”



Former SIUE Women’s Soccer teammates Lindsey Fencel, BSN ’18, and Caroline Hoefert, BSN ’18, are registered nurses fighting on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## Keeping Front-line Workers Safe

Using the School of Engineering's set of 3D printers, Jagath Gunasekera, PhD, lab manager; and Brent Vaughn, lab specialist and lecturer in the Department of Civil Engineering; fabricated much-needed face shields for the SIUE Police Department.

Police staffing at the three SIUE campuses remained at full strength during the spring and summer, but with changes to policies and procedures in order to keep police officers and the University community safe. Officers responded to emergency calls in person, took as many reports over the phone as possible

and limited the number of traffic stops made. Police officers utilized personal protective equipment during all public interactions, making the face mask donation particularly beneficial.

When former chair of the Department of Construction, Narayan Bodapati, PhD, heard about the project, he donated \$10,000 to the School. The funds were used to purchase three additional 3D printers to increase production. Face masks also have been made and donated to the School of Dental Medicine, School of Nursing and the medical professionals at Anderson Hospital.



## Fine Arts Exhibition Goes Virtual

This year's annual Bachelor of Fine Arts and Master of Fine Arts Exhibition was creatively reimagined. The virtual version was not intended to replace the physical exhibition, but to recognize the students' hard work at the end of their final semester.

"I commend the students for getting creative with limited materials," said Abbey Hepner, assistant professor of photography. "Many had to photograph their work on kitchen tables and in their front yard, or provide sketches or digital mockups of their design plans. They were willing to share work in progress that I hope keeps us all excited to see their work in person in the future."

View the exhibition  
[siueexhibitions.com](http://siueexhibitions.com)



## Supporting Students Unable to Travel Home

SIUE student Jabari Ireland and his daughter enjoy a book from Cougar Village’s Little Free Library this spring. Members of the SIUE Alumni Association built and donated the library in July 2019. Ireland was among the 350 undergraduate and graduate students who were allowed to remain in on-campus housing after the majority of students left campus. Many international students were unable to travel home. For others, the resources and structure of on-campus living better supported their academic success.

“For many of our residents, this is their home. We are committed to supporting our students and providing a safe and secure place for them to live and learn.”

— Mallory Sidarous  
Director, University Housing



## Connecting with Prospective Students During a Pandemic



Like all college campuses across the country, SIUE closed its doors this spring and the Office of Admissions had to rethink new student recruitment. Going virtual was the only option, and information was quickly developed for counselors to share during live presentations. Student ambassadors also hosted livechats with prospective undergraduate students and their families.

“We have heard from prospective students and family members that they appreciate being able to talk to someone and have the opportunity to ask questions,” said Director of Undergraduate Admissions Todd Burrell.

Despite the uncertainty with COVID-19, excitement still surrounds the college admission process, and SIUE provided SIUE Bound yard signs so incoming freshmen and transfer students could show their SIUE pride! “Even though we had to develop new ways to work with students, we know that the most important part of what we do is make sure prospective students and their families know we are here for them,” said Burrell.

Prospective graduate and international students also relied on virtual experiences to learn about SIUE. With the cancellation of campus visits and international recruitment travel, “online communication strategies are now the only way to make an impression on prospective international students,” said Director of Graduate and International Admissions James Monahan, EdD.

## Pharmacists on the Front Lines



“Pharmacists play a vital role in ensuring patients receive the most effective and safest treatment possible, and that is as important now as ever,” said Jared Sheley, PharmD ’12, SIUE clinical assistant professor of pharmacy practice.

Sheley holds a joint appointment as a clinical pharmacy specialist at HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in O’Fallon, Ill. While still seeing patients with a variety of health challenges, he began serving individuals battling COVID-19 in March.

“I regularly educate our physicians and other medical staff on treatments and evidence for treatments. This has been important

with COVID-19, as it is such a new disease for everyone, and we continue to learn more about it every day.”

Dawn Dankenbring, PharmD ’11, pharmacy residency program director at HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, began providing direct patient care to COVID-19 patients in the Intensive Care Unit.

“The biggest challenge in these circumstances is trying to pharmacologically manage the relative unknown, and with limited drug availability,” she explained. “Pharmacists continue to work diligently, on and off the clock, to review the rapidly emerging scientific evidence for treatment from around the globe.”

*“Thank you to all who are doing your part, whether staying home or serving on the front lines. We see you. We appreciate you. We will come out stronger as a nation. This too shall pass.”*

— Ashley Dicks

BS ’08, PharmD ’12

Pharmacist Manager, Michelle’s Pharmacy, Gillespie

At Michelle’s Pharmacy in Gillespie, pharmacist manager Ashley Dicks, BS ’08, PharmD ’12, noted that major precautions were implemented to ensure everyone’s safety, including a one-person limit in the store to lessen exposure.

“Our staff are wearing PPE, including gloves at all times and masks when in contact with any patients,” she said. “We are wiping down all surfaces and doors hourly with medical grade cleaners. We are also encouraging our patients to call for curbside pick-up or utilize our delivery service.”

## Changing Times Call for Creative Measures

*“This pandemic is going to change the future.”*

Megan Gugliotta

BS Early Childhood Education ’20

For recent graduate Megan Gugliotta, the shift to online learning took place during her student teaching experience. While the lost opportunity to connect face-to-face with her young students and teach in a classroom was disappointing, Gugliotta found ways to remain involved by assisting her current and former cooperating teachers in their move to e-learning. Gugliotta participated in Zoom meetings, recorded book read aloud videos, and posted activities like scavenger hunts, sing-along games and more for her cooperating teachers’ students.

“It’s important to be involved, because this pandemic is going to change the future. Look at the technological impact on education alone. In just hours, teachers changed their physical classroom to virtual learning environments at every level. Parents and families are stressed just as we all are in this time,” she said. “They’re now needing to teach, on top of doing their job or experiencing the stress of losing their job. As a future educator, I want to do anything I can to help families keep their children actively learning and on track. It’s my job.”



## Continuing Emergency Dental Care

“As dentists, we have committed to a career of providing quality dental healthcare to our patients. That commitment is unconditional of a pandemic,” said School of Dental Medicine Fellow Katie Hanser, DMD.

Five School of Dental Medicine residents and fellows worked in rotating shifts to keep the dental clinic open for dental patients in need of emergency treatment. Teamwork among the residents and fellows in scheduling and evaluating patients, along with

strict safety protocols, were critically important during a time when the clinic, usually run by hundreds of dental students and staff, was limited to these five dentists.

“This will definitely be something I will never forget and will change dentistry for years to come,” said Fellow Sable Muntean, DMD. “There is a new normal we will not only have to find but also adjust to, and I look forward to contributing to its outcome!”

## Triplets Graduate During COVID-19 Pandemic

“Graduating from SIUE was a huge accomplishment, and we are really excited to start our careers!”

From left, triplets Hailey, Olivia and Emily Stewart each earned a bachelor’s in computer management and information systems from the School of Business in May 2020.

“Although graduation did not go as planned this year because of COVID-19, we still made the best of it,” the sisters said collectively. “SIUE did a great job quickly transitioning everyone into online classes. It was challenging not getting to have our last few weeks of college on campus, but we still felt like the community came together to make the graduating class feel special despite the challenges of social distancing.”



## Virtual Tools Help Students with Experiential Learning

The Speech-Language-Hearing Center offers an extensive range of services for children and adults with hearing, articulation, language, voice and fluency disorders.

Beginning in June, graduate-student clinicians used Zoom to provide treatment under the direct supervision of a licensed and certified speech-language therapist.

“Transitioning to teletherapy was essential to resume our clinic’s ability to provide a needed community service, as well as continue in our mission to provide quality clinical education for our graduate students,” said Speech-Language-Hearing Center Coordinator Jaime Henderson, MS, CCC-SLP, ’13, ’15. Henderson is shown here with graduate student Amira El Daibani.

“Our program is rising to the challenge to be flexible and creative to meet the needs of our clients and students.”



## Nursing Alumni Fight Coronavirus



From fast-paced hospitals in the St. Louis area to New York City, the early epicenter of the pandemic, School of Nursing alumni bravely fought the battle against the coronavirus.

Brooke Buffington, ’17, Doctor of Nursing Practice student, traveled to New York City to help patients and relieve her medical colleagues during the height of the city’s outbreak.

“I chose to pursue a career in nursing so I could serve people in their most vulnerable state,” Buffington said. “It’s important that we think about the many families who have been affected by this pandemic, as well as the numerous healthcare professionals working tirelessly to treat these patients.”

*Photo left: Robert Ehrhardt, ’18, a registered nurse in the Emergency Department at DePaul Hospital in Bridgeton, Mo., faced changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, including treating patients in an outdoor medical tent.*

*Photo right: May 2020 graduate Kathleen Antos battled the pandemic on the front lines as a nurse assistant at Ranken Jordan Pediatric Hospital in St. Louis while completing her bachelor’s in nursing.*

# Staying Social While Social Distancing



**Southern Illinois University Edwardsville**  
April 14 · 🌐

The SIUE Morris University Center and Student Success Center are lit up blue in support of our essential workers on the front lines. Tag an essential worker to thank them for their contributions. ❤️



**SIUE Alumni Association**  
May 11 at 10:30 AM · 🌐

So many #SIUEalumni are on the front-lines doing their part to help during the #COVID19 epidemic.

We want to continue recognizing and thanking alumni from each school or college who are doing just that.

To all SIU School of Dental Medicine alumni, thank you for what you're doing! ... [See More](#)



**SIUE** @SIUE · May 29

#SIUE has undergone major operational changes as the institution worked to ensure everyone's health & safety. Many employees continue working hard to prepare for a future when campus can resume its vibrant, student-filled atmosphere. #SIUEproud #thankyou 🙌 [bit.ly/2MeuhJO](https://bit.ly/2MeuhJO)



6 16



**SIUE Cougars**  
April 8 · 🌐

We want to take the time to thank our awesome SIUE Cougars Alums who are working on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic!

Today we are honoring Raven (Berry) Zachery, a 2013 graduate of SIUE who also was a member of the women's basketball team.

We appreciate everything that Raven and all those on the frontlines are doing to keep us safe!



Photo left: Faculty members recorded motivational Facebook videos to encourage students during the spring semester.



# University Advancement



## Dear Alumni and Friends,

This issue of the *eConnection* celebrates YOU, all of the students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members and donors who have helped the SIUE community survive and thrive in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. We all have pulled together to ensure our University and our community have stayed as healthy and strong as possible during this unprecedented time.

Thank you to all of the donors and volunteers who have reached out to help the University. I especially appreciate those who contributed to the Student Emergency Assistance Fund. Those funds have been essential in supporting our students

with food security, housing, medical emergencies and other unforeseen expenses related to the pandemic.

Thank you to the community members who we are highlighting in this issue. You are our hometown heroes and heroines!

The future of SIUE is strong, and we remain committed to excellence in education and a strong community. However, the pandemic continues to provide uncertainty for our community. Your support for our students and programs remains critically important. Please visit [siue.edu/give](http://siue.edu/give) to learn how you can become more involved in SIUE.

#SIUEcares

Best regards,

**Rachel C. Stack**

Vice Chancellor Advancement, CEO Foundation



## Alumni Focus Fundraising on Neighbors in Need

Edwardsville Neighbors, founded by Chad, '03, and Kathie, '06, Opel, raised \$127,000 for Edwardsville area residents struggling with health issues or sudden loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When the organization's largest fundraiser of the year, the Taste of Edwardsville, was canceled this spring, the event was reimagined as a virtual experience. Local restaurants delivered "Taste at Home" tote bags filled with food and drinks to more than 400 area families. The event also included livestream concerts and an online auction.

"We quickly saw the impact the virus was having on our restaurants and local businesses, so we wanted to do our part to help," said Chad, a member of the SIUE Foundation Board of Directors. "It was amazing to see our community rally to support the cause."

[edwardsvilleneighbors.org](http://edwardsvilleneighbors.org)



## Aspiring Doctor Inspired to Help

SIUE junior Lexi Reinders and her friend Shannon Strom decided to be difference makers in their Peoria area community this spring. After seeing a call for volunteer help from the JOLT Foundation, the pair began hosting weekly food drives at Reinders' home to collect items needed for sack lunches. After connecting with JOLT in early April, Reinders and Strom provided more than 920 lunches for the individuals served by the nonprofit, filling the void until local food pantries reopened in June.

"COVID-19 has made a lasting impact on my outlook on life," explained Reinders, an SIUE Alumni Association scholarship recipient who is pursuing a bachelor's in biological sciences, medical science specialization. "It reminds me that nothing can be taken for granted and showed me how important we all are to each other, during a pandemic and always."

# SIUE Student Emergency Assistance Fund

While the SIUE Student Emergency Assistance Fund provides year-round support to students facing unexpected challenges, the importance of this fund has increased tenfold during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite receiving federal funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the need to assist SIUE students remains.

“Unfortunately, the federal act does not fund those students who are already participating in fully online programs, our international students or our DACA students,” said Kara Shustrin, SIUE dean of students. “But with the help of the SIUE Foundation, we are able to assist those who may not be eligible for CARES Act grants.”

“Since the state’s stay-at-home order in March, we have been able to assist students who lacked the necessary resources to continue classes online or cover essential expenses,” Stack said.

*“As we face these unprecedented times as a global community, your SIUE family needs your support now more than ever.”*

— Rachel Stack

Vice Chancellor for University Advancement

“We are supporting international students who were unable to return to their home countries. We’re helping to ensure students have access to food.”

As the global pandemic continues to impact higher education and SIUE students, the need for support also will continue. “The number of students who can be served is subject to the availability of funds,” said Julie Babington, director of annual giving. “The fund is sustained by contributions from alumni, parents, faculty, students, staff and friends of SIUE.”

## SUPPORT THE SIUE STUDENT EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND

All donations, no matter the size, will help ease some of the financial burden for our students who:

- Do not have financial access to the necessary resources to continue their classes online
- Are unable to return to their native land
- Have had their employment hours reduced or eliminated

Visit [siuegive.com](https://siuegive.com) to donate today. 



## Students Supporting Students

*“We’re all in this together.”*

The Student Nurses Association (SNA) proved this statement to be true when they decided to raise money for the Student Emergency Assistance Fund. SNA members sold 300 T-shirts and 150 face masks featuring the mantra during a two-week flash sale. With a \$485 donation from Casual Tees in Edwardsville, a total of \$3,000 provided much-needed support for students across the University.

“Service to the University is a major aspect of SNA,” said Sydney Kesner, senior nursing major and SNA president. “We know there are many students who have lost their jobs or have parents out of work.”

# SIUE Alumni Association



## Planning Continues for Homecoming 2020

SIUE is working to determine how to best celebrate Homecoming 2020 this September while ensuring the safety of our alumni, students, faculty, staff and community members. Be sure to check the official SIUE Homecoming website for the latest information.

[siue.edu/homecoming](https://siue.edu/homecoming) 



Join fellow alumni and friends from all over the world for this year's Cougars Unleashed Virtual Homecoming Run! Complete a 10K, 5K or one-mile run any way you choose during the week of September 20-26.

10K and 5K Registration:  
\$30 for non-SIUE students (includes T-shirt), \$5 for SIUE students  
One-Mile Run Registration: \$5 for all  
T-shirts may be added to any registration for \$15 each.

Help us celebrate the fifth year of this SIUE alumni tradition!  
All proceeds from this run benefit scholarships for SIUE students.

### Want to go the extra mile?

Join the Cougar Pack!

Help us raise even more money for student scholarships.

Raise at least \$500, and we'll send you an exclusive Cougars Unleashed pullover and a refund of your run registration fee.

### Register today!

[runsignup.com/cougarsunleashed](https://runsignup.com/cougarsunleashed)

SEPTEMBER 20-26



Are you interested in creating or joining an alumni chapter/network?  
Are you part of an existing group that wants to be affiliated with the Alumni Association?  
**Email us! [sieualumni@siue.edu](mailto:sieualumni@siue.edu)**

## Connect with Your Fellow Cougars!

Looking for opportunities to connect with fellow Cougars? Engage with alumni who share your passions, profession or personal interests through an alumni network or chapter!

Alumni networks are communities based on affinity that help alumni stay connected to their alma mater. An alumni chapter is a community of alumni that comes together to celebrate their alma mater wherever they may roam geographically, while acting as local advocates for SIUE.

We hope you will consider joining one of our established or newly created chapters/networks:

- Chicago Chapter
- \*NEW\* Springfield, Ill., Chapter
- \*NEW\* St. Louis Young Alumni Network  
*(open to recent graduates in the St. Louis and Metro East area)*

The Alumni Association can provide leadership, guidance and resources in support of networks and chapters as they engage with alumni, friends and current and prospective students.



# SIUE DAY 2021 *Community*

**Save the date for the SIUE Day 2021  
Community Networking Breakfast  
coming this spring!**

We look forward to highlighting our healthcare and hometown heroes, sharing the big plans about the University's new Health Sciences Building, plus much more! Watch your inbox this spring for more information.



## Virtual Happy Hour

More than 40 SIUE alumni and friends came together via Zoom for our inaugural Virtual Happy Hour in April. Participants watched as past Alumni Association president and resident mixologist Alan Kehrer, '92, '12, demonstrated

how to make four delicious SIUE-themed cocktails, including the Goshen Sour and Red Lot Cosmopolitan. Visit [youtube.com/SIUEalumni](https://youtube.com/SIUEalumni) to watch the Virtual Happy Hour and other fun SIUE alumni content!



## Cougar Connections

Even though we can't all be together, we want to stay connected. We have compiled activities for you and your family to enjoy from home. You can even download SIUE coloring pages! Be sure to check this page for upcoming virtual events and initiatives. If you have any ideas you'd like us to consider, please email them to us at [suealumni@siue.edu](mailto:suealumni@siue.edu).

[siue.edu/connect](https://siue.edu/connect) 



# SIUE Alumni Perks



500+ Popular National Brands

Corporate discounts from over 150,000 restaurants, retailers, theme parks & more.

- Savings of up to 50% off
- Online print-and-save coupons
- Show-your-phone mobile coupon app



(Search "MyDeals")



For a complete list of providers, go to: [siuealumni.enjoymydeals.com](http://siuealumni.enjoymydeals.com)

## SIUE Alumni Perks Program Offers Free Discounts

The FREE SIUE Alumni Perks program can save you up to 50% off on top brands, retailers, restaurants, entertainment and recreation, including Runza, Papa Murphy's, Walt Disney World, Office Depot, AMC Theatres, Jiffy Lube and many more. Simply search by zip code or type of discount using the Alumni Perks website or free mobile app. Download the app, sign in using the registration code "SIUEPERKS" and start saving today!

## From your Alumni Association Board President



### To the Class of 2020,

I have thought of you often throughout the spring. I am sure that your final moments on campus were not like you had imagined. It certainly was not what we imagined for you either. While the vibrant buzz on campus was silenced, we celebrate you emphatically. You have earned this incredible final accomplishment and the many achievements that have brought you to your graduation celebration.

I am so proud to share the same alma mater with you and eagerly welcome the Class of 2020 to the SIUE Alumni Association. You have overcome great challenges and I have confidence in your future as an SIUE alumnus. As you pursue your future endeavors, we will continue to celebrate your success, as you are now a chapter in SIUE's story.

I invite you to come back for a campus visit and stay in touch with classmates, faculty and mentors. Please continue to engage with the SIUE community, whether it is to cheer on the Cougar athletes or mentor a student. I look forward to meeting you at future events hosted by the Alumni Association.

Congratulations, Cougars!

**Eileen Martindale, '08**

President, SIUE Alumni Association Board of Directors

### CONNECT WITH US



# class of 2020 KUDOBOARD

The SIUE community came together to celebrate the Class of 2020 in a fun, socially-distant way thanks to the help of a Kudoboard. Faculty, staff, parents and friends left congratulatory messages and photos on the virtual greeting card, recognizing this momentous occasion for the Class of 2020.



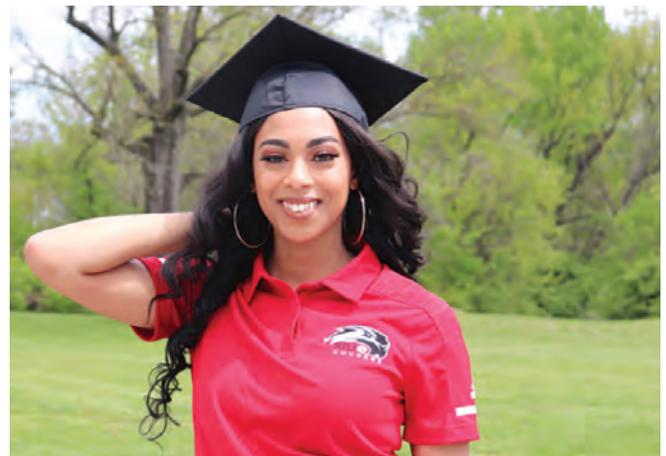
***Congratulations and GO COUGARS!***



## ***Congratulations Class of 2020!***

The last few months of your senior year certainly did not go as expected. As you leave the comfort and familiarity of campus life, you will find that you will also encounter obstacles and challenges. Life is often unpredictable; however don't give up, but stay true to yourself and your values. Always remember, you can make a difference in the lives of others.

Ric Stephenson, '70, '74, '77



## ***Congratulations!***

Congratulations to One of my Favorite Cousins/Sister on graduating with her Bachelor's in CMIS!!! I am SOOO Proud of the woman you've become, Beautiful, Smart and Fearless. Don't let NOTHING stop you and remember to keep God First. I Love you now lets get them Big Bucks Babyyy



## ***To the awesome social work students!***

Congratulations on completing your degree! The social work department is proud of your accomplishments and will continue to support your social work practice! Keep in touch.



## Virtual Commencement Celebrates Class of 2020

Saturday, May 9, was not the day many members of the Class of 2020 had envisioned. Instead of gathering with their family and classmates in the SIUE First Community Arena at the Vadalabene Center, students gathered with their loved ones around laptops, tablets and phones as they watched Chancellor Randy Pembrook confer their degrees during the virtual commencement ceremonies.

The Class of 2020 overcame more adversity during their final semester than most had ever imagined. But the challenges they weathered during the COVID-19 pandemic only made them stronger, more resilient members of society.

“Throughout it all, we have continued to thrive,” said College of Arts and Sciences commencement speaker Hayley Smith. “We have and will continue to persevere.”

Congratulations to the Class of 2020!

[siue.edu/commencement](https://siue.edu/commencement) 

### CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Several annual graduation celebrations took place online this year:

- Black Graduation
- Gateway/ACCESS Graduation
- International Graduation
- Latinx Graduation
- Non-traditional Graduation
- Rainbow Graduation



**Moneque Young**  
Bachelor of Science, Exercise Science



**Bailey Hilmes**  
Bachelor of Science, Computer Management and Information Systems



**Claire Pees**  
Bachelor of Social Work



**Myles Nelson**  
Bachelor of Science, Political Science

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**#SIUEcares**

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**Number of trees saved: 17 trees, Total energy saved: 8 million BTUs, Greenhouse gases prevented: 10,000 lbs., Wastewater reduction: 4,000 gallons, Solid waste reduction: 80 lbs.**