SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, HEALTH & HUMAN BEHAVIOR

SEHHB INSIDER

2026











LETTER FROM THE DEAN

A STRONG START TO FALL 2026!

The School of Education, Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB) is well into another academic year! As we move through the fall 2026 semester, I am reminded once again that the work of our School is broad, important, and deeply connected to the communities we serve.

It has already been a busy semester, and I suspect the months ahead will be no different!

Celebrating Our Students

Our students remain at the center of everything we do. This past year, we continued our tradition of celebrating student achievement through our SEHHB Honors Day and Research Expo, awarding scholarships and recognizing our students' outstanding academic and scholarly work. These events don't happen by themselves. They require tremendous coordination from our faculty and staff, our development team, department chairs, donors, and many others who work behind the scenes. Thank you to everyone who continues to invest time and resources in our students. It matters.

We also continue to build the pipeline for the next generation of educators and professionals. Our Future Teachers Conference has grown tremendously since its inception and has become an important opportunity to introduce high school students to SIUE, our programs, and, most importantly, the possibilities that exist within the teaching profession.

From Our Littlest Learners to High School

One of the things that makes SEHHB particularly special is the breadth of our work. We literally have the opportunity to impact students from infancy through college and beyond.

Our continued work with Head Start and Early Head Start allows us to be present at the very beginning of the educational pipeline. This work is challenging, but it is incredibly important to the children and families we serve in East St. Louis. I remain grateful to the faculty, staff, administrators, community partners, and others who have stepped forward to support this work. And yes, I still find my way to the baby rooms whenever I can. Some things don't change! At the other end of the K-12 continuum, the SIUE Charter High School continues its important work with students and families in East St. Louis. Under the leadership of Principal Kim Allen and her team, we are looking forward to a productive school year. The first day of school began with our students walking the red carpet — literally — into a new year filled with possibilities.

Community Is Part of Our DNA

Our work does not stop at the boundaries of campus. Whether through our clinics, schools, community partnerships, research, internships, practica, or other forms of experiential learning, SEHHB remains deeply connected to the region. Community engagement is not something extra that we do. It is part of who we are.

The same is true of our commitment to equity and inclusion. These commitments are embedded in our teaching, research, service, and relationships with the communities we serve. As we move into another academic year, I hope we continue asking ourselves not simply what we do well, but also where we can do better.

Looking Ahead

There is much to look forward to in 2026-27. Our faculty continue to produce important scholarship, secure external funding, develop innovative programs, and provide outstanding learning experiences for our students. Our staff continues to do the work that makes everything else possible. And our students continue to remind us why we are here in the first place. As always, there will be challenges. There always are. But there will also be opportunities to think differently, collaborate in new ways, and continue strengthening SEHHB. As we begin this academic year, I want to thank each of you for the work you do and for the many ways you contribute to our School.

Here's to a great start, a productive year, and — most importantly — an even stronger finish!

Robin L Hughes

Robin Hughes, PhD
Dean



Rethinking RETURN TO PLAY

Mark Jamison, SIUE Athletics associate athletic director for high performance and SEHHB adjunct instructor, released his book, "Rethinking Return to Play: The Practical Guide for Rehabilitation and Performance," in October 2025. The book challenges the traditional process of releasing an athlete to return to competition. Jamison identified a gap between rehabilitation and performance of athletes being cleared for play, realizing that athletes are often medically cleared to return but are not fully prepared for the demands of competition.

"In most environments, return to play is treated as a medical clearance process rather than a performance preparation process," said Jamison. "Over time, I realized we needed a more integrated, criterion-based system — one that connects rehabilitation all the way through to performance. I want to eliminate the idea that clearance equals readiness."

In his book, Jamison advocates for the shift from asking "Is the athlete cleared?" to asking "Has the athlete demonstrated the physical, mechanical, and cognitive qualities required for their sport?" He believes this change in mindset can help reduce reinjury risk and improve performance outcomes upon return.

"I want practitioners who read this book to think in terms of profiles, not phases alone," Jamison continued. "Each phase should have clear, objective exit criteria tied to movement quality, strength, plyometrics, locomotion, fitness, and ultimately sport readiness. We create a system that is more individualized, more objective, and ultimately safer and more effective for the athlete."

Jamison's book can be found on Amazon.

This book is the product of years of refining the return to play process at SIUE, aligning departments, and building a model that ensures athletes aren't just back, they're ready.

— MARK JAMISON
Associate Athletic Director, High Performance Adjunct for Advanced Techniques and Concepts in Strength and Conditioning



RESTORING HEARING CARE ACCESS

Access to audiological evaluation services is limited in southern Illinois, and the need for audiology services continues to grow. There are only three healthcare facilities south of Interstate 70 that provide audiology services, and none accept U.S. veterans or infants for testing.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is actively seeking providers for its QTC (Quality, Timeliness, Customer Service) program, and young children on state-funded healthcare often face long wait times for diagnosis and intervention. Delays in care can have lasting effects on a child's development and overall outcomes.

SEHHB is working to secure funding to revitalize the Speech-Language-Hearing Center to help meet these community needs. While the Hearing Clinic has provided hearing screenings for SIUE maintenance workers and children at the Early Childhood Center, and through partnerships such as the WE CARE Clinic in East St. Louis, the clinic needs updated diagnostic equipment to provide full follow-up testing for individuals referred after a screening.

The clinic's current diagnostic equipment is outdated, non-functional, and cannot be repaired. Replacing this equipment will allow the clinic to provide more comprehensive hearing healthcare services to the community while giving students hands-on experience with current diagnostic tools and assessments, including audiometers, air and bone conduction testing, otoscopy, otoacoustic emissions, tympanometry, and more. These opportunities help students build the practical skills and confidence they will carry into their careers.

"The hearing clinic became the foundation for developing my clinical skills and understanding," said Gavynn Baer, 2026 speech-language pathology and audiology graduate. "There is a significant need for hearing healthcare in the area, but people are not getting the care they need. I am hoping the Clinic will become an epicenter for free hearing healthcare for the region."

SUPPORT THE HEARING CLINIC AND
HELP EXPAND ACCESS TO AUDIOLOGY SERVICES
connect.siue.edu/g/donate/slh-center





URCA Research Assistant of the Semester

Gavynn Baer, a 2026 speech-language pathology and audiology graduate, was named SIUE's Spring 2026 URCA Research Assistant of the Semester for his work on a study examining middle ear disease in children receiving speech-language therapy. As a lead research assistant, Baer helped prepare Institutional Review Board materials, create parent packets, train fellow researchers, and collect data in local schools. He also helped present the project at the Illinois Academy of Audiology conference, where undergraduate students presented research for the first time in the conference's history.

Originally interested in speech pathology, Baer discovered his passion for audiology after taking his first audiology course. Through ROTC training and hands-on clinical experiences, he became a certified hearing technician and helped provide free hearing screenings through SIUE's WE CARE Clinic.

Baer has secured a position as an audiology technician at Jefferson Barracks VA and plans to pursue a doctoral degree in audiology, with the goal of serving military members and veterans.



DOCUMENTING *Black Futures* IN ACADEMIA

The Department of Educational Leadership hosted a screening of the documentary "Things We Imagined: Black Futurity and Academic Life." The documentary, produced by Candace N. Hall, EdD, assistant professor and program director of Higher Education and Student Affairs, explores the experiences and future aspirations of Black faculty in higher education.

The documentary is part of the larger Imagined Futures Project, an initiative co-led by Hall and documentary director Charles H.F. Davis III, PhD, assistant professor at the University of Michigan. The project blends artistic portraits, documentary interviews, illustrations, and written work from aspiring, current, and former Black college and university faculty. Through speculative methods and visual research, Hall and Davis use photography and film to bring Black faculty to the forefront of academia.

"This project, the film, the exhibit, and all of the moving pieces are better than I could have imagined," said Hall. "I remain grateful and deeply honored that colleagues who have blazed trails before me, share space with me, and are coming behind me shared their stories with us on film and on the page. The reception of this work brings me to tears."

"Hall's scholarly work is a powerful testament to intentionality, creativity, and innovation," said Robin L. Hughes, PhD, dean of the SEHHB. "She moves beyond traditional academic boundaries, using film and media to illuminate new pathways for understanding scholarship through artistic expression. Her work does more than inform — it inspires, challenges, and expands the ways we engage with knowledge."

Photo by Jaelin Collier of Curry Street Studios

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMAGINED FUTURES PROJECT
imaginedfutures.net



Attention and Behavior Clinic Moves into New Space

The Department of Psychology's Attention and Behavior Clinic is offering expanded opportunities for community care and student learning in its new home in Alumni Hall.

The clinic provides low-cost, comprehensive Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) evaluations for children, adolescents, and college-age adults who suspect they may have ASD.

Staffed by Clinical Child and School Psychology graduate students, the clinic provides supervised training and hands-on experience in assessment of youth and consultation with families.

"The new clinic space offers bigger, more comfortable workspaces for students, a spacious waiting area for families and community members, play spaces for younger children, storage space, and the ability to observe sessions live while they're occurring via one-way mirrors."

— ELIZABETH MCKENNEY, PHD, NCSP
Director, Attention and Behavior Clinic
Professor and Graduate Program Director, Clinical Child and School Psychology



The space includes additional rooms for Clinical Child and School Psychology graduate students to practice the assessment, consultation, and counseling skills they are learning in their courses.

The rest of the Department of Psychology will move to the second floor of Alumni Hall in spring 2027, relocating from its current basement space into offices previously occupied by the School of Nursing, which moved to the new Health Sciences Complex. The new location will give students easier access to faculty, research labs, and the department's Resource Center.

"We're hopeful that these changes will result in increased student traffic, more students using the Resource Center, and an increased sense of community for both students and faculty," said Dan Segrist, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Psychology.



New Department of Teaching and Learning Course Advances SIUE's Changemakers Initiative



SIUE's new Changemakers initiative prepares students to make a difference and live lives of purpose, whether that means leading change in their profession, contributing to their communities, or supporting causes that inspire them.

The Department of Teaching and Learning implemented the initiative this fall with a pilot course called Creativity, Problem Solving, and Critical Thinking. Supported by a University-funded Excellence in Undergraduate Education (EUE) grant, the course reflects the goals of the Changemakers initiative by giving students opportunities to apply classroom learning to real-world challenges while developing creativity, collaboration, and leadership skills.

Students will engage in project-, problem-, place-, and service-based learning while addressing environmental issues such as recycling, upcycling, and the circular economy.

The course is designed to challenge common misconceptions about creativity. Students will discover how creativity grows through purposeful experiences, collaboration, and problem-solving. Students will build lasting skills while developing a stronger connection to their academic experience.

"Students need to champion diversity of thought over conformity, and as they do so, they should foster imagination and curiosity in their future activities," said Barbara O'Donnell, EdD, professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning. "This offering will help undergraduate students see themselves as confident, motivated, and thoughtful individuals."

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHANGEMAKERS INITIATIVE | **siue.edu/provost/strategic-initiatives**



SIUE East St. Louis Charter High School (CHS) welcomed Kimberly Allen as its new director during the 2025-26 academic year. Allen previously worked at CHS for four years as a faculty associate in special education and returned to the school with a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Allen is a two-time SIUE alumna, having earned a bachelor's in special education in 2008 and a master's in educational administration in 2012. She reflected on her first year back at CHS and shared her hopes for the 2026-27 academic year.

Q&A

with ESTL Charter High School Director **Kimberly Allen**

How was your first year back at CHS?

It was filled with challenges and opportunities. It was truly a full-circle moment that fostered personal and professional growth while strengthening my capacity as a leader. Reconnecting with the school community was meaningful, allowing me to witness firsthand the spirit, commitment, and core values that make CHS exceptional. It is an honor to serve and lead CHS, and I am grateful for the relationships, accomplishments, and experiences that made this year memorable.

What are your hopes for the 2026-27 academic year?

As we move through the 2026-27 school year, our hope is to engineer excellence while educating and empowering the "whole child." Our mission is to elevate the CHS experience by becoming a premier destination for STEM-focused education. Our goals are rooted in the "whole child" philosophy, ensuring students are supported emotionally, socially, and academically as they prepare for life beyond our halls.

This year, we are focused on increasing enrollment, expanding STEM pathways, and strengthening college and career readiness.

What was a highlight of the 2025-26 academic year?

It is difficult to narrow the academic year down to a single moment. The year was filled with meaningful traditions, student achievement, and shared celebrations.

From our Day 1 Red Carpet welcome back event to the school-wide Thanksgiving Feast, Spring Easter Egg Hunt, and Staff vs. Student Basketball Game, each tradition reflected the strong sense of community that makes CHS special. We prioritized academic rigor and creative innovation through ACT Prep sessions, hands-on STEAM exploration, and quarterly awards celebrations.

The year concluded with the 2026 Ribbon Pinning Ceremony and Commencement, where we celebrated our graduates and launched them into their next chapters with a sense of pride and accomplishment.



Greetings!

It is truly an honor to be welcomed into the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior as the new Director of Development. I am looking forward to engaging with SEHHB alumni, faculty, and friends and connecting them with opportunities to help our students achieve success during their time at SIUE.

The SEHHB has a lot of momentum at present and a host of opportunities to continue to advance the School in significant and impactful ways. Psychology's Attention and Behavior Clinic has moved into a new space with the dual goal of expanding community care and student learning. Similarly, Public Health and Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology is actively working to enhance and update the Speech-Language-Hearing Center, also a project with great promise to meet a critical need in the community while helping our students learn the practical skills they will need in their careers.

Teaching and Learning is implementing SIUE's new Changemakers initiative this fall; Exercise, Sport, and Nutrition Sciences continues to expand its cutting-edge research into optimizing the performance of elite athletes; and Educational Leadership recently established a new scholarship endowment that will certainly enhance students' educational experiences. In short, I am excited by all the possibilities and prospects that will help SEHHB students be the best they can be.

Dean Hughes and I look forward to seeing you at SEHHB alumni events, on campus, regionally, and nationally. We hope you will consider helping SEHHB continue to build on our success. Your support will genuinely help our students graduate into fulfilling careers and truly have a positive impact on the communities they serve in their respective professions.

Stephen Schaus
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SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior
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Werners Establish SEHHB Scholarship and Endowment

SIUE Chancellor Emeritus David Werner and former First Lady Kay Werner donated $100,000 to establish an endowed scholarship in the SEHHB. The David and Kay Werner Endowment for Educational Leadership supports student scholars within SEHHB's Educational Leadership programs.

The gift reflects the Werners' long-standing connection to SIUE and their belief in the power of strong educational leadership. Dave Werner began his SIUE career in 1968 and served as dean of the School of Business, provost, and then chancellor. Kay Werner, a SEHHB alumna, spent 26 years at the University and earned a specialist degree in educational administration.

The Werners hope the scholarship will not only enhance students' educational experiences but also inspire others to consider giving back to SIUE.

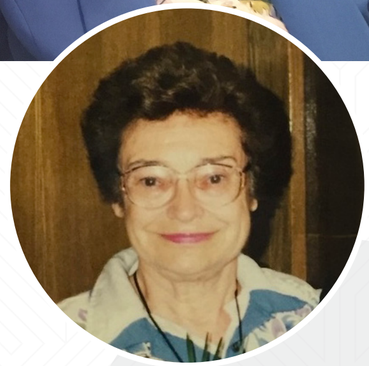
Read the full announcement.

siue.edu/werner-endowment



Remembering

Eva Dreikurs Ferguson, PhD



SIUE mourns the passing of Eva Dreikurs Ferguson, PhD, professor emerita of psychology and distinguished scholar, who died at the age of 96 in December 2025. Ferguson served the University for more than five decades, leaving a lasting legacy at SIUE through her teaching, scholarship, mentorship, and philanthropic giving.

Eva joined SIUE in 1965 and served as a faculty member in the Department of Psychology until her retirement in 2019. During her 54-year tenure, she was widely recognized as a distinguished scholar in motivation and Adlerian psychology, and for her dedication to advancing both theory and practice in educational and organizational settings.

"The driving force behind her lifelong dedication to psychology and SIUE was her strong desire to help people — help her students learn and think scientifically, help families apply Adlerian ideas to resolve conflicts, and help society by sharing Adlerian principles to treat people with respect and as equals," said Ferguson's daughter Linda Ferguson.

Ferguson stood for intellectual curiosity and academic freedom. One of the most enduring lessons Ferguson impressed upon those around her was her core belief in every person's worth.

"All people have inherent worth and value," her daughter added. "As such, no one was 'better' or had more worth than others. That was her core belief — that equality meant each person had value and could contribute positively to their family, workplace, and society."

As SIUE remembers Ferguson and her legacy, her daughter shared that she would want the community to "leave the world a better place because you can make a difference."

> **My mom gave her heart and soul to her research, her students, and the International Committee for Adlerian Summer Schools and Institutes.**
>
> **— LINDA FERGUSON**

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