



# Introduction

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## Southern Illinois University Carbondale Self-Study Report, 2009-2010

*Southern at 140: A Progress Report Toward Southern  
at 150 – Responsive, Diverse, Forward-Looking.*

*In preparation for accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central  
Association of Colleges and Schools*

### Introduction

We have chosen to title this self-study report for accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools “Southern at 140” because it is, in large part, a progress report on the university’s 2003 strategic vision statement, *Southern at 150: Building Excellence through Commitment*.<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the recommendations made by North Central’s site-visit team in 1999, this document set ambitious goals that frame Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s activities and planning to address the institution’s challenges and shape its future. This self-study, therefore, serves as an explicit acknowledgment of the university’s debt to a ten-year process, one punctuated midway by *Southern at 150*, which anticipates the institution’s sesquicentennial anniversary in 2019. These on-going efforts distinguish the university in 2009. As a result of this planning, Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) is, we believe, responsive to its many stakeholders, diverse in its historical commitments, and forward-looking in its collective decisions. The evidence provided by “Southern at 140” supports SIUC’s claims to this distinctive identity.

### A Brief Evaluative Profile of the University

Southern Illinois Normal College, established in 1869, began instruction in 1874. During its first thirty years, the college offered a two-year program in teacher training, and by 1904 students were able to enroll in four-year degree programs. During the following decades the school experienced gradual changes that eventually signaled its transition from a normal college to a university. In the 1930s, the two-year teaching programs were discontinued and in 1943 graduate course work was offered. This changing mission was recognized



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1 For the text, see <http://www.siuc.edu/s150/>.

in 1947 when the Illinois General Assembly renamed the institution Southern Illinois University (SIU). In 1959 SIU conferred its first doctoral degree.

As SIU began offering a diverse array of programs at every level, it was also fulfilling its mission to serve the greater southern Illinois region. In 1949 SIU started teaching off-campus academic courses in metropolitan East St. Louis, which led to the development of a separate campus in Edwardsville in 1965. The two campuses were recognized as separate universities of the SIU system in 1969 when they became known respectively as Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.<sup>2</sup>

Another chapter in SIUC's institutional history began in 1969 when approval was granted to develop schools of law and medicine. The addition of these important professional schools to SIUC adds further diversity to the already broad undergraduate and graduate programming in the institution's eight academic colleges: Agricultural Sciences, Business, Education and Human Services, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Mass Communication and Media Arts, Science, and Applied Sciences and Arts. The University Core Curriculum oversees general education for all undergraduates whatever their principal field of inquiry, and the Graduate School administers graduate programs across campus.

In keeping with the university's mission, SIUC's objective is to provide a comprehensive education meeting as many individual students' needs as possible. While providing excellent instruction in a broad range of traditional programs, SIUC also helps students design special programs when their interests are directed toward more individualized curricula. The university has the faculty and the facilities to offer general and professional training ranging from a few two-year associate degrees to many more doctoral programs, as well as certificate and non-degree opportunities to meet the needs of persons not interested in degree education.

SIUC currently has a student enrollment of 20,350 with about 7,360 full- and part-time employees. In the ninety-six years since 1913, when it was first accredited by North Central, Southern Illinois University has grown from a small regional college to a large research university with national prominence and international stature. The university now serves 18,044 undergraduate, graduate and professional students on the Carbondale campus, 284 medical students (212 at the medical school in Springfield and 72 in Carbondale), and another 2,022 through off-campus degree programs and international campuses and programs.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the "at" has since been dropped from the names of both campuses.

SIUC has 32 doctoral and professional programs, 74 master's degree programs, 101 bachelor's level majors (most with minors and specializations), and 2 associate degree programs. The institution was granted full accreditation at the doctoral level in 1964 and in 1970 met the qualifications to be designated a Category II research institution by the Carnegie Foundation. Today SIUC is a Carnegie Foundation Research University (high research activity, RU/H), the only one of its kind in the state south of the University of Illinois' flagship campus at Urbana-Champaign. In recognition of SIUC's broad undergraduate mission, the Carnegie Foundation has also designated SIUC as a "full-time four-year, selective, higher transfer-in" (FT4/S/HTI) institution.<sup>3</sup>

Liberal arts and sciences form the educational foundation of SIUC. All undergraduate students, including those in professional and pre-professional programs, take a significant number of liberal arts and sciences courses through the University Core Curriculum. In this curricular context, we have long been committed to providing access to high quality education to a large body of non-traditional students, the disabled, and students who have been disadvantaged by a lack of good foundational skills. In the most recent *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, SIUC placed thirty-third in the nation for the economic diversity of its student body, with one-third of undergraduate students receiving Pell grants for low-income students. One-fourth of these students also qualify for the state of Illinois' Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) grants.

These commitments, along with outreach programs to help solve problems in southern Illinois (through the Rural Health Initiative, Center for Soybean Research, and Coal Research Center among many other entities), continue to guide planning and budgeting processes. Historically, the university has been committed to providing educational opportunity for Illinois-based members of the armed services either through tuition waivers for veterans, who are enrolled full-time, or through the Office of Military Programs, which offers coursework on thirty-two United States military bases around the country.

Like other major public universities, SIUC develops, transmits, and preserves knowledge. These activities are addressed through teaching at the undergraduate, professional, and graduate levels; through basic and applied research; and through the application of that knowledge to improve the region, state, and nation. The university is dedicated to quality teaching enriched by the development of new knowledge through scholarship and research. In 2008 alone, the Office of Research Development and Administration oversaw more than \$70.16 million in total external awards.

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3 [http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup\\_listings/](http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup_listings/).

In the twenty-first century, SIUC must be flexible enough to take advantage of new opportunities as well as to reshape programs to meet emerging needs in the region and around the world. Rapid technological change, shifting financial demands and demographics, expanded accountability to a growing range of constituencies, the growing need for quality assessment of our programs, and the acceleration of the information explosion will significantly affect our structure and purpose, as well as the needs and expectations of our students. We are proud of the history of this institution and we are confident of its future.

### A Summary of Significant Changes Since 1999

Arguably the most significant change at SIUC in the past ten years is improved planning. The university's deliberations about its future are exemplified by the strategic vision, *Southern at 150: Building Excellence through Commitment*, which the present self-study for accreditation, "Southern at 140," explicitly references. Drawing on the expertise and generosity of more than 200 faculty, staff, and friends, *Southern at 150* targets ambitious goals within the framework provided by earlier institutional planning efforts, such as the Land Use Plan (2000), and by the state of Illinois, such as the Illinois Board of Higher Education's (IBHE) "Illinois Commitment" (1998). Since then, as a living document, *Southern at 150* has been revised by the need to accommodate changing circumstances and challenges, and also by the Southern Illinois University president's plans for the SIU system (2006) and the IBHE's new "Public Agenda" (2009) for all state institutions of higher learning. Consequently, SIUC has been much better prepared to develop and seize opportunities in a concerted fashion.

The university's most immediately visible changes are to its physical infrastructure, the most extensive since the 1960s after which campus growth effectively ceased. More than ten years in the making, this campus transformation is apparent in a long list of entirely new, renovated, or expanded facilities since 1999: Altgeld Hall, Morris Library, the Troutt-Wittmann Center, the Southern Illinois Research Park, the Student Health Center, the Wall and Grand residence halls, the SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute in Springfield, and the MacLafferty Road Service Annex. Also in keeping with the Land Use Plan, the new entrances to the university off Route 51 extend a formal welcome to visitors, just as the new signage and standing maps provide directions around campus. Less visible is the expanded support of information technology in part through the addition of a student technology fee: renovations and technology in all sixteen auditoria and more than fifty "smart" classrooms, and implementation of a \$16-million student information and



registration system purchased from SC Banner Corporation. In addition, approximately \$100 million has been authorized to pay for the repairs of campus buildings over the next ten years (FY09-FY18).

Two projects in particular deserve special mention. The first is Morris Library, a \$64-million renovation and expansion. Its top two floors are now being completed with funds appropriated by the state's most recent (2009) capital construction authorization, which will also fund a new Transportation Education Center at the Southern Illinois Airport and planning for the remodeling of the Communications Building. For all intents and purposes an entirely new building, Morris Library represents a substantial boost to teaching and research. The second project is "Saluki Way." In this project's first stages of transforming the east side of campus, an \$83-million sports complex is under construction, including a new football stadium and renovation of the basketball arena. In subsequent phases, the relocation of the football stadium to the south will allow for the construction of a student services building. The bonds to underwrite Saluki Way are backed by student fees, a \$20-million commitment by the city of Carbondale, and generous gifts from friends of the university.

In the past ten years, the university has also made a larger commitment to research. There is now a vice chancellor for research, who is responsible for a newly active Office of Research Development and Administration and several new research centers. The result is a rise in external funding and a dramatic increase in start-up packages for new faculty. Moreover, researchers have collaborated with local businesses in the Dunn-Richmond Center for Economic Development and the new Southern Illinois Research Park, bringing new technologies to market and creating employment opportunities in southern Illinois. One effect of this emphasis at SIUC has been a modest growth in its Graduate School, funded in part by extramural sources, and the use of overhead to support two new undergraduate research programs (REACH awards and Saluki Research Rookies). With some of the increased tuition and fees in 2005, the university established more than 150 undergraduate assistantships, the vast majority of which are awarded to students working with research faculty. In this way SIUC is bringing the advantages – and standards—of a research university to enhance undergraduate education.

Changes in teaching at the university have been more incremental, but no less notable. Despite a 10 percent drop in enrollment in the past ten years, the number of full-time instructional faculty positions actually increased slightly, thanks in part to the redistribution of tuition money to hire colleagues with special credentials or experience. More than half

of the \$50,000 of the new Excellence through Commitment Awards accorded to faculty and staff each year is dedicated to recognizing outstanding teaching and its support. Two new bargaining units—the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Association in 2007 and Graduate Assistants United in 2008—joined the Faculty Association in its affiliation with the Illinois Education Association. The University Honors Program has acquired new vigor and rigor, with an Office of Major Scholarships successfully shepherding undergraduate students toward major national awards. The Graduate School's Center for Graduate Teaching Excellence and the Saluki First Year program have transformed how we teach entry-level students.

Finally, the university has found additional income streams to support its operations. To offset at least partially a steady decline of state support—state appropriations now make up less than one-third of the university's annual budget—SIUC increased tuition and fees more than fifty percent in the past decade, most forthrightly after 2005. Similarly, the university successfully planned and implemented its first capital campaign, raising \$106 million in five years for programs, buildings, and scholarships. As is evident from its improved infrastructure, the university has also been particularly adept at raising money from internal, municipal, and state sources to authorize bonds and fund construction on campus. In the face of long-term structural challenges, discussed in more detail below, the university has done more than manage its day-to-day operations; it has significantly transformed many of those operations over the past ten years.

### **A Brief History of the University's Accreditation**

Southern Illinois University was first accredited in 1913 under the name Southern Illinois Normal College and has been continually accredited since that time. Accreditation was extended to cover master's degree programs in 1944, ten doctoral-level programs were given preliminary accreditation in 1964, and full accreditation at the doctoral level was attained in 1969. SIUC was reviewed by the North Central Association in 1979, in 1989, and again in 1999. All three reviews resulted in full accreditation.

### **An Overview of the Self-Study Process**

Preparations for our self-study began January 7, 2005, with an organizational meeting with then-Acting Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Robert Jensen. Attendees were selected by the associate provost on the basis of their broad familiarity with the university. From the very start, representation included interested parties campus-wide, from faculty, staff, and administrative ranks and from a range of disciplines and responsibility areas.

These participants became an advisory committee, co-chaired by Dr. Hasan Sevim, associate dean of the College of Engineering, and Dr. Kevin Dettmar, professor of English. In June 2006, the associate provost's office, then under the direction of Dr. Thomas Calhoun, sponsored a full-day workshop on assessment with Professor Doug Eder from SIUC's sister campus, SIUE. Besides tying assessment to institutional improvement, this training led to the creation of a database of sixty attendees who expressed interest in the self-study; the majority of the committee chairs and members were ultimately drawn from this database.

An official Steering Committee of twenty—again, drawn from across campus—began meeting monthly in fall 2006.<sup>4</sup> After Dr. Sevim was named dean of SIUE's College of Engineering a year later, Dr. Dettmar assumed full responsibility for the self-study's coordination. Meetings occurred twice a month in anticipation of a spring 2009 site visit. It was decided that the most efficient effort would be to focus on the Higher Learning Commission's five criteria for accreditation. Five subcommittees were formed, each of which was assigned to address one criterion. From then on, the Steering Committee consisted of the coordinator, the chairs of these five committees, and other faculty and staff serving as resources and liaisons to administrative leaders. The participation of a dozen Steering Committee members in the annual meetings of the HLC in Chicago at least once over the next three years helped this group develop a much better sense of its work.

In June 2008, Dr. Dettmar accepted the offer of an endowed chair at Pomona College; and Dr. James Allen, professor of history and women's studies, was appointed to replace him as coordinator. At the insistence of then-Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Patricia Elmore, Dr. John Dotson, professor emeritus of history and the university's self-study coordinator for North Central Association accreditation in 1999, was retained as part-time consultant and editor of the self-study document. Because of the change in administrative leadership in the chancellor and provost offices, as well as in the coordination of the self-study, however, the university requested from the HLC a one-year extension and the site visit was postponed until March 2010.

A first draft of the university's self-study was completed in August 2008, but it was disorganized, redundant, and incomplete. The assignment of a committee for each criterion resulted in a lack of coordination in various Core Components, which could be better addressed thematically. Consequently, a Phase 2 Thematic Task Group, consisting of senior faculty and mid-level administrators, was recruited to re-write the entire draft from nine different perspectives cross-cutting all five criteria: financial resources, physical

<sup>4</sup> See the composition of this group on the self-study's homepage: <http://ncaaccreditation.siuc.edu>.

resources, shared governance, campus climate, diversity, academic activities, research, services/external relations, and data coordination (the composition of this group is also on the self-study homepage).<sup>5</sup> In December, the resulting six drafts were edited into a single document.

The Steering Committee was still concerned that the latest iteration of the self-study was not sufficiently focused on the major challenges facing the university. Consequently, the Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor invited Dr. John Schuh, Distinguished Professor of Educational Advancement and Leadership at Iowa State University and an experienced HLC consultant-evaluator, to read and critique the document. During a campus visit in March 2009, Dr. Schuh identified six areas needing attention in the self-study; it was decided that these issues, discussed throughout the self-study, were best reviewed by campus policy-makers. Finally, after a campus visit by the HLC's liaison, Dr. Mary Breslin, in June 2009, the last chapter, dedicated to Criterion 5, was substantially re-formulated through contributions by faculty and staff of programs with extensive outreach and service activity.

While Dr. Dotson compiled and documented the self-study – whose many drafts were reviewed by Dr. Prudence Rice, Director of the Office of Research Development and Administration – Dr. Allen prepared for the site visit, including the provision for a resource center and a database of evidence used in the self-study for the HLC team of consultant-evaluators to use. Dr. Allen also oversaw the development and implementation of a marketing plan to share the self-study with the university community. The Offices of University Communications and Printing and Duplicating collaborated to reach university audiences about the self-study and the impending site visit. Their work led to the successful design of the document, website, and communications about the university's accreditation effort.

### **Major Issues Facing SIUC and its Response Since 1999**

Twice in the past twelve years, then, the university has prepared a thorough self-study for accreditation. In response to the 1999 SIUC self-study, the North Central site team noted the following concerns, none of which required either a progress report or a focused revisit from NCA:

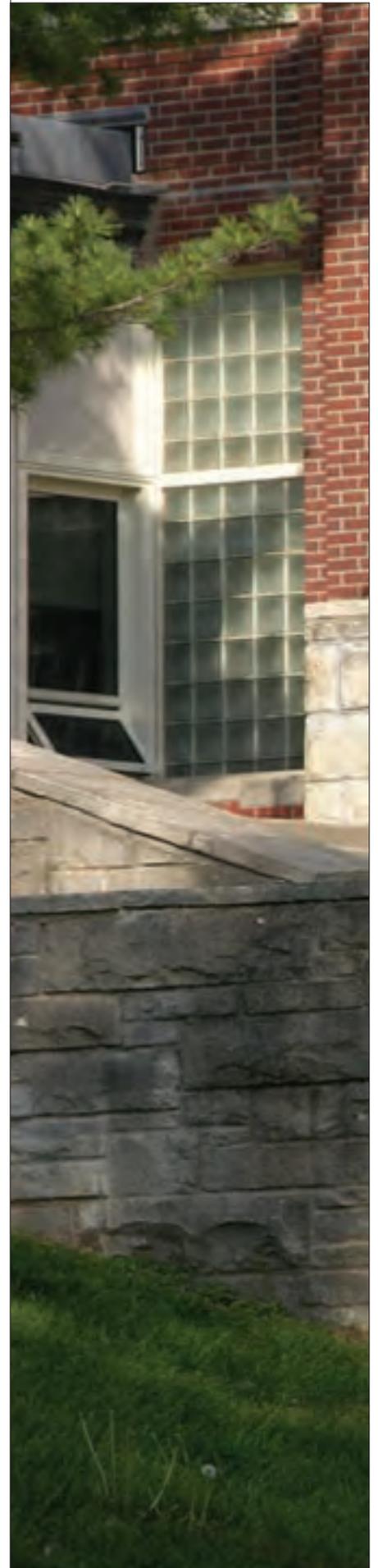
1. The extent to which the physical facilities have deteriorated through deferred maintenance and a lack of current maintenance, impairing the ability of the university to carry out its mission.

2. The need to secure capital funds for new physical facilities.
3. Inadequate instructional and research technology to support the teaching and research mission in a number of areas.
4. The need for the Office of the President and the Office of the Chancellor to develop clearly delineated roles and mutually supportive relationships.
5. In light of the new collective bargaining agreement and the number of interim or acting administrative positions, the need for all members of the university community to work cooperatively and positively to advance the mission of the institution.
6. The lack of faculty ownership of the institution's assessment program.
7. In spite of the recommendation of the 1989 NCA team, the continued inability to raise significant foundation funding and non-appropriated funds.
8. The need to establish the institution's priorities and to reallocate resources accordingly.
9. The need to attract and retain students through a campus-wide effort with adequate resources and organizational development.

The university has sought diligently to address these recommendations in the last decade and some of these concerns are much less or no longer germane. With respect to the first three points, SIUC has found the resources to repair, renovate, and expand older facilities as well as to build entirely new buildings and embark upon "Saluki Way." Through capital funding, external grants, and tuition increases, deficiencies in research and instructional technology are no longer so glaring. Nonetheless, deferred maintenance remains a serious problem—totaling more than \$450 million for FY10—with most of the campus academic and administrative buildings constructed in the 1960s.

Organizational culture has improved since 1999. Despite continued leadership turnover, which is addressed below, the SIU Board of Trustees and all three of SIUCs instructional bargaining units amicably reached their last contractual agreements. The university's labor associations have matured and become an integral part of the shared governance structure. Departmental program assessment has been readily embraced and only faculty ownership of the university-wide assessment program has yet to develop.

Finally, SIUC has found additional sources of support. The university conducted a successful capital campaign for the first time; it has reluctantly but significantly raised tuition and fees to sustain its general income fund; it has received bonding authority to rebuild much of the campus; and it has found mechanisms for allocating resources to essential needs and priorities, such as its enhanced research mission. In light of the



continued erosion of enrollment, however, SIUC still must address its recruitment and retention of undergraduate students.

In the present self-study, “Southern at 140,” several related, long-term challenges have been documented, two of which were evident ten years ago. Dr. Schuh’s reading of an earlier draft of this document in March 2009, suggested the following concerns, which the university is actively seeking to address:

1. **Finances:** The university’s most serious problem, one underlying all others and with no easy solution, is its budget (see the chapter on Criterion 2). SIUC is unlikely to see an improvement in its support from the state. If anything, this portion of university resources will shrink to less than 30 percent, much as it has at other state universities in the country. Double-digit percentage increases in tuition and fees cannot be sustained without admitting a very different socio-economic student profile from the one SIUC has traditionally served. Moreover, grants, contracts, auxiliary services, donations, and endowment accounts will not suffice to make up the difference. In the current economic climate, it will be exceedingly difficult to realize significant increases in any of these revenue streams. Meanwhile, operating costs will continue to grow, especially for salaries of a unionized, increasingly high-achieving research faculty.

SIUC is working hard to deal with its budget, primarily through growing its enrollment, identifying savings, and shifting more resources to programs in demand. Because so much of the university’s budget is dependent on the tuition students pay, increasing their numbers enhances an important revenue stream for operations. The chancellor has asked all programs to review their costs and propose more cost-effective delivery. The efficiencies enable the university to operate on less money, especially by re-allocating budgetary resources and faculty lines to programs, mostly in pre-professional fields, with more student applicants than positions. The result promises to ease the difficulties posed by the state’s revenue shortfalls during a major economic recession.

2. **Enrollment management:** For nearly two decades, with a few brief pauses, SIUC has experienced a steady decline in enrollments. We enrolled 20 percent fewer students in FY10 than in FY92, the most recent peak. On-campus undergraduate programs have been hit hard, offset in part by improvements in graduate and first-year student numbers. Long-term demographic trends in Illinois outside the Chicago area do not bode well for recruitment efforts<sup>6</sup> and the transfer-student market, long a reliable source of students, has become increasingly competitive. Particularly disturbing are the overall loss of out-

of-state and international undergraduates and the annual departure of juniors in good academic standing. The university continues to enroll far more men than women, precisely the reverse of enrollment trends nation-wide.

For the past year, the assistant vice chancellor for enrollment management, a new position created in 2007, has worked with a campus-wide committee to craft a Strategic Enrollment Management Plan for the university. Among its top goals are to develop a more student-centered campus culture, use better research into prospective student markets, coordinate satellite offices and university instruction at local community colleges, and recruit students in neighboring states. The university now offers an alternate tuition rate to students from Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Indiana, as well as selected international students. Similarly, in 2009 SIUC created the “Southern Stars” tuition rate, offering reduced tuition to qualifying high school students in our 34 southernmost counties. And the university is collaborating with Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, which offers a nursing baccalaureate on its campus. It is expected that these efforts, along with budgetary re-allocation, will improve enrollments of both undergraduate and graduate students.

3. Linkages between undergraduate education and graduate education/research: Since President Delyte Morris realized his vision of a major university in the poorest region of the state some 40 years ago, SIUC has remained committed to its mission of enrolling students who reflect the demographic make-up of Illinois perhaps better than any other public university. The university’s appeal to the sons and daughters of middle- and lower-middle income families has meant most recently a larger percentage of under-prepared students, more than 40 percent of them in need of high school remediation their first semester. While SIUC is justifiably proud of this commitment, it comes at considerable risk – for the students and for the university – when not every undergraduate is prepared to take full advantage of the rich resources that a research institution has to offer them. These students’ inability to persist contributes to a larger than normal attrition rate which tends to reflect negatively on SIUC.

With an eye to better retention, SIUC is now taking steps to develop a University College for entry-level students whose special needs can be addressed more effectively at a research institution. It does so by bringing together all the support services that already exist and coordinates them in a more focused way. The most significant component of the new unit, however, is the creation of the Saluki First Year, a program conceived under the aegis of John Gardner’s Foundations of Excellence for the First Year of College. Although the initial budget is small

and the plan requires elaboration as well as implementation, the Saluki First Year has two co-directors – one from academic affairs, the other from student affairs – reporting jointly to the provost and vice chancellor and to the vice chancellor for student affairs. By the end of AY 2010, the program is expected to have pre-major and college-specific iterations of University 101 required of all first-year students, the most significant change to the University Core Curriculum since its inception in 1996.

4. Commitment to university-wide assessment: In 1999 the NCA site visit team specifically expressed concerns about SIUC's uncoordinated university-wide efforts to assess student learning outcomes. Despite regional and national conversations about college student achievement, from the Boyer Commission Report in 1999 to the Spelling Commission Report in 2007, SIUC has not attempted to assess outcomes comprehensively across programs, either longitudinally with portfolios of student work or horizontally with nationally normed, standardized testing. Assessment for discipline-specific accreditation, such as the SIU School of Medicine (the AMA) and SIUC's College of Engineering (ABET), has been excellent, but campus-wide assessment is uneven if not inadequate.

In recognition of this institutional shortcoming, the chancellor has authorized the establishment of an Office of Assessment and Program Review. Its responsibility is to revise the university's assessment plan through the auspices of the Higher Learning Commission's Assessment Academy, which the university was invited to join in fall 2009. For the next four years, the Campus-Wide Assessment Committee will work closely with a team of administrative leaders to develop a new assessment plan, including making assessment a more integral feature of program review, which is required by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and represents best practice at comparable research universities. The university's assessment team attended the HLC's Assessment Academy workshop in November 2009.

5. Turnover in administrative leadership: Since the university's last accreditation self-study, SIU has an entirely new Board of Trustees; the system has had four presidents; and the Carbondale campus has had six chancellors and six provosts. Meanwhile, the university eliminated and then re-created one vice chancellor's office (administration) and created another (research). The university has also seen three deans in almost every college during this decade. The number of interims in important leadership positions has been unusually high. In light of this frequent administrative turnover, the result is most often a short-term perspective on long-term problems. This loss of institutional memory, especially of previous policies, procedures, and practices, is offset only partially by long-standing policies and mid-level management of individual programs.



Beginning with the formal appointment of Chancellor Samuel Goldman, the SIU Board of Trustees and the Office of the President have been addressing this problem. Besides permanent appointments of senior administrators, the university took a new approach to its search for a new chancellor. It decided not to retain the services of a placement firm, and instead to investigate the background of potential applicants who have been invited to learn more about the position and the university. Of thirty-six applicants and nominations, half of the semi-finalists were drawn from the initial contacts and constituted a strong pool for consideration. These semi-finalists were reduced to a list of six candidates who were engaged in “airport interviews” in October and two finalists visited campus in November. The SIU president has announced a new campus leader, effective June 1, 2010. The result promises to be a new leadership team with Dr. Rita Hartung Cheng, currently the Provost at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, who has accepted the President’s offer.

6. Benchmarking with institutional peers: Despite the best efforts of the Office of Institutional Research and Studies, the lack of sustained comparisons means that the university has few benchmarks, beyond those at the program level, to guide its policy-making. State-wide studies of teaching and research costs, for instance, have only recently been re-introduced to assist in program review and budgetary decisions. But these studies focus on costs and not on academic content or quality, and few colleges are actually using these data in their plans for staffing.

Until 2008, the IBHE nominally compared SIUC to twelve institutions the board identified as peers. During the *Southern at 150* planning process, eight of these continued to be recognized as peers and four more research-active institutions (LSU, University of Colorado Boulder, University of Kentucky, and University of Missouri Columbia) were identified as “aspirational peers.”<sup>7</sup> In 2008, however, the IBHE, with the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) as a consultant,<sup>8</sup> identified ten peers for the campus, retaining three of the old ones. These new peer institutions will be used in future reporting and planning exercises.

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7 *Southern at 150: Building Excellence through Commitment*, p. 10.

8 <http://www.ibhe.state.il.us/masterPlanning/NCHEMS.htm>.

