

## Open Pathway Quality Initiative Report Institutional Template

---

The institution uses the template below to complete its Quality Initiative Report. The institution may include a report it has prepared for other purposes if it addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the narrative in the template. This template may be used both for reports on initiatives that have been completed and for initiatives that will continue and for which this report serves as a milestone of accomplishments thus far. **The report should be no more than 6,000 words.**

### *Submission Instructions*

The report must be submitted by June 1 of Year 9.


Submit the report as a PDF file at [hlcommission.org/upload](https://hlcommission.org/upload). Select "Pathways/Quality Initiatives" from the list of submission options to ensure the institution's materials are sent to the correct HLC staff member. The file name of the report should follow this format: QIReport[InstitutionName] [State].pdf (e.g., QIProposalNoNameUniversityMN.pdf). The file name must include the institution's name (or an identifiable portion thereof) and state.

**Date:** May 31, 2024

**Contact Person for Report:** Dr. Elza Ibroscheva, Associate Provost and ALO

**Contact Person's Email Address:** eibrosc@siue.edu

The enclosed Quality Initiative Report represents the work that the institution has undertaken to fulfill the quality improvement requirements of the Open Pathway.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor*

*May 31, 2024*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Dr. James T. Minor, Chancellor  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed/Typed Name and Title*

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Institution*

Edwardsville, Illinois  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*City and State*

## Report Categories

---

### Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a one-page executive summary that describes the Quality Initiative, summarizes what was accomplished and explains any changes made to the initiative over the time period.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's (SIUE) Quality Initiative (QI) was an institutional change effort focused on improving retention and graduation rates of Black students. SIUE began its planning effort for the QI in Fall 2019 with the work of the University Quality Council (UQC), which designed and distributed a campus-wide survey to gauge what members of the university community (e.g., faculty, staff, students) saw as the most pressing themes warranting our collective attention. According to both the survey data and information gathered at a series of listening sessions, campus stakeholders identified the following pertinent themes: improving graduation and retention rates, enrollment as a university-wide priority, student well-being and mental health, and diversity and inclusion.

As the University progressed through its QI planning efforts in the spring and early summer of 2020, we did so against the backdrop of a global health pandemic and amid protests in response to the murder of George Floyd, a Black man killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota while in police custody. These events laid bare the persistence of structural injustice and systemic racism in U.S. society and prompted deep reflection about the University's responsibility to dismantle racism as a system. It became clear that the focus of our QI should not only align with our ongoing strategic planning efforts but also affirm anti-racism as an institutional priority. In June 2020, former SIUE Chancellor Randall K. Pembroke convened an Anti-racism Taskforce (ARTF), charged to recommend meaningful actions to dismantle racism on campus. The ARTF brought forth 78 formal recommendations. As a demonstration of an enduring commitment to centering antiracism at SIUE, 58 of the 78 ARTF recommendations (74%) formed the basis of our proposed QI and were to be implemented during the QI period, with plans to persist beyond this window.

Since the approval of SIUE's QI project in the summer of 2021, we have undergone some major institutional changes, including the appointment of a new Chancellor in March 2022, James T. Minor, Ph.D., and the unveiling of a new strategic plan in September 2022. We are fortunate, however, to have the full commitment of our new Chancellor to the principles of equity and anti-racism; and to have a university strategic plan with goals and objectives consistent with those of the QI project. Accomplishments of the QI project include refinement of enrollment strategies to recruit and yield more African American students; an increase in the retention rate of first-year African American students, expansion of professional development opportunities for faculty and staff focused on creating an inclusive and equity-minded campus culture; and additional investments in the Strategic Hiring Initiative, leading to the hire of additional African American tenure-track faculty members.

Perhaps the most significant change with a direct impact on the QI was the launch of Black Scholar Experience (BSE) in Fall 2022. The Black Scholar Experience is a comprehensive academic and advising program designed to engage students and strengthen their ability to graduate.

### Scope and Impact of the Initiative

2. Explain in more detail what was accomplished in the Quality Initiative in relation to its purposes and goals. (If applicable, explain the initiative's hypotheses and findings.)

The purpose of SIUE's QI was to acknowledge structural racism as a predictor of educational and career outcomes among Black students and to build a multilevel program designed to enhance their daily experiences by reducing incidence, prevalence, and impact of minority stress and cultural trauma

perpetuated by the institution. It invited all members of the campus community to participate in transforming SIUE's culture into one where Black students thrived. The interventions designed were envisioned to directly address students and indirectly address faculty and staff concerns as they may be currently impeding progress toward the goals stated below.

## **Goal 1: Support Black students along the educational pipeline by developing a pathway for their enrollment at SIUE**

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected in our growing representation of racially-minoritized students and enhanced campus support systems. In 2018, 18% of the SIUE undergraduate population comprised students identifying as either African American or Latinx. In 2023, that percentage rose to 21.1%, with African American students constituting an increasing share of undergraduates at SIUE (14.7%), slightly above the rate across all other Illinois public universities (12.7%) and only 0.5% below the high-water mark of 15.2% in 2015.

SIUE's strategic plan has a goal to increase the enrollment of prepared and diverse students to 14,500, ensuring strategic growth that reflects SIUE's commitment to inclusive excellence. As part of an evolving enrollment management plan, we are establishing enrollment targets that will match the state demographics, while growing 5% in areas where we currently reflect the state demographic and devising strategies for achieving our goals. The expansion of [pre-collegiate programming](#) over the last several years and the rollout of the [SIUE Commitment](#) have contributed to efforts to boost African American undergraduate student enrollment.

## **Goal 2: Improve retention and graduation rates of Black students at SIUE by achieving year to year increases in retention, and by increasing the six-year graduation rate**

### **Black Scholar Experience**

One example of SIUE's efforts to support students historically underrepresented in higher education and specifically African American students are the SOAR and FAME/GAME programs, respectively. SIUE's [Student Opportunities for Academic Results](#)' (SOAR) intentional, culturally relevant programming and culture of care have proven to significantly increase the odds of African American students being retained and graduating. SOAR facilitates the Project FAME (Females of African-descent Modeling Excellence) and Project GAME (Goal-Oriented African American Men Excel) leadership programs. The purpose of FAME and GAME is to provide cultural and educational enrichment, and holistic services and support to first-year Black students. Project GAME has successfully served African American men at SIUE since 1999, offering comprehensive academic support services and addressing various retention issues relating to this population of students. Project FAME, a parallel program designed for African American women, was created in 2003. The overall goal of FAME and GAME has been to improve retention and graduation rates of African American students and provide them with fulfilling culturally distinct educational experiences by focusing on Black subject matter in the arts and humanities.

A 2020 study conducted by Dr. Carrie Butts-Wilmsmeyer, Director of SIUE's Center for Predictive Analytics (C-PAN) provided statistical evidence of the positive impact that being advised in SOAR and/or enrollment in the FAME or GAME programs had on retention of African American students. She conducted a longitudinal analysis (2013-2019) of all students, identifying which student cohorts are less likely to graduate SIUE and when. However, the critical time points for student groups differed. For our Black male students, that time point was during the first year. Therefore, she examined one-year retention rates for this group. Focusing on just Black males, she identified three variables that were highly predictive of success at SIUE: advisement in SOAR and enrollment in GAME, reducing their unmet need, and high school grade point average (GPA). These last two variables are also important for other student groups, but in a different fashion. Campus-wide, the most predictive variable was high

school GPA, followed by unmet need. However, for our Black male students, this trend is reversed. Furthermore, the social engagement provided through SOAR and GAME is even more important than financial and academic predictors. By providing social and financial support, both the predicted and observed one-year retention rates of Black male students improved. Not only did these rates improve, but their retention rates also closely mirrored those of other student groups. Between 2013-2019, Black male students at SIUE who did not participate in SOAR/GAME had a 38.4% likelihood of being retained and graduating. By contrast, Black men advised in SOAR and enrolled in GAME had a 77% chance of being retained and graduating. For our female Black students, participation in both FAME and SOAR as well as on-campus housing during their first year were found to be significant predictors of success. Between 2013-2019, Black female students at SIUE who were neither advised through SOAR nor participated in FAME had a 38.4% likelihood of being retained and graduating. By contrast, Black women advised in SOAR and enrolled in FAME had a 67.9% chance of being retained and graduating.

While these experiences have been deep and impactful, participation was capped due to limited human resources. Between fall 2004 and spring 2021, FAME and GAME were taught by a sole instructor. As a result, students had to apply to participate and space was limited to 40 to 50 students each year. Institutional investment to hire two tenure-track faculty in the Department of English the last two years have allowed for expansion. These new hires have been especially critical given our efforts to accommodate the participation of all incoming Black students in FAME and GAME in Fall 2022, with a rebranding of the programs as the Black Scholar Experience. In fall 2022, 309 first year Black and multi-racial students participated. In just the first year of expansion, the first to second year of retention rate for Black students increased by 10.2 percentage points.

### **Equitable Access to High Impact Practices: [Community Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars \(CODES\)](#)**

High-Impact Practices (HIPs) are recognized for their positive impact on retention and learning outcomes for students across many backgrounds. A major challenge faced by SIUE has been how to increase access and equitable distribution of these high impact practices in ways that will benefit all students, especially historically underserved students, and in the process improve their chances of obtaining their degrees.

Parallel to the QI, the University launched the **Community-Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars (CODES) program**, a three-year project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and led by Dr. Jessica DeSpain, Director of the [IRIS Center](#) and Professor of English. CODES is a competitive general education program for incoming first-year students who are Black, Latinx, Pell-eligible, or first-generation. CODE Scholars take their education beyond the walls of the classroom and into the communities of the metro-east Illinois and St. Louis region. Scholars work alongside community partners to research the local manifestation of a global problem and share their work publicly. CODES offers an innovative approach to transdisciplinary problem-solving, with content from fields such as history, literature, anthropology, biology, and sociology. Currently, there are 21 students in the 2022 cohort and 25 students in the Fall 2023 cohort.

An illustrative example of this innovative curriculum comes from one of the CODES student cohorts, which is currently working with the Missouri Botanical Garden, focusing on an inclusive theme of reparative justice, an approach centering on those who have been harmed, focusing on healing, and repairing past harms to prevent them in the future. CODE Scholars have been exploring the institution's history of enslavement, retracing the erasures of Black and Brown residents who lived in the area that is now Shaw Nature Reserve, and studying the indigenous knowledge and cultural context underlying specimens in the Herbarium. CODE Scholars plan to help MOBOT tell these stories with intentionality and sensitivity to welcome more diverse guests to the Garden.

The CODES program has already demonstrated several milestones related to student retention and student success:

- In the Spring 2023 semester, 11 of 23 students made the Dean's List (up from seven in Fall 2022).
- In Fall 2022, 88% of students were in good academic standing, in Spring 2023, all 23 students finished the semester in good academic standing.
- The program retained 21 of 25 students into year 2, or 84% of students. This compares to 73% retention in the general student population in 2022 (66.2% for African American students and 74.5% for Latinx students).

We are currently developing a plan to scale CODES from 25 to 100 student participants, beginning in Fall 2025. We are also examining how to ensure equitable and inclusive access to HIPs for all students through a general education reform project Changemakers. As reflected in [pillar 2](#) of our strategic plan, we have set the goal of a minimum of 2 HIPs by graduation for all undergraduates.

### **Goal 3: Develop and nurture pathways to graduate and professional school and/or employment for Black students graduating from SIUE**

We did not make much progress with respect to goal 3, at least in terms of intentional programming and tracking. Plans for the future are described in the response to question # 9.

### **Goal 4: Provide ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion education, training and resources, through various modalities, to support self-awareness and professional development**

The University continues to make critical investments in professional development for faculty and staff focused on improving course outcomes. Over Spring and Summer 23, SIUE partnered with the [Association of College and University Educators \(ACUE\)](#) to support SIUE faculty and staff engagement in stackable courses that provide micro-credentials and, more importantly, a range of tools to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based interventions to improve academic progress, decrease DFW rates, and increase students' sense of belonging. Two groups of faculty and staff were enrolled in Fall 23 to complete the Fostering a Culture of Belonging (FCB) and Cultivating an Inclusive and Supportive Learning Environment (LE) courses. This cohort was by invitation only and targeted faculty scheduled to teach courses where students' success has been below institutional goals. In total we had 13 faculty and staff complete the FCB course and 6 faculty complete the LE course in the summer of 2023. Upon completion of this cohort, we solicited feedback from individuals who completed the program via surveys and focus groups. They requested two main changes to SIUE's implementation: 1) increased communication and 2) opportunities to interact with fellow course takers outside of the ACUE platform.

In rolling out the second wave of ACUE courses in spring 2024, we increased the communication about course commitment, content, and structure with the advantage of increased lead time. For the five courses in the second run, we opted for an open enrollment model broadcasting the advertisement to faculty via the typical faculty development channels. We also targeted units with personalized recruitment emails to Deans and Directors soliciting registrants for specific sessions. Additionally, we coupled the targeted sessions with learning communities where course takers could meet, interact, and share out.

So far, the summer 2024 cohort consists of:

- 106 SIUE faculty and staff enrolled across two sessions of FCB and three sessions of LE.
- Across the three learning communities, 13 faculty and staff have signed up for online synchronous meetings that will occur at the beginning, middle, and end of LE1, FCB1, and LE3

- We also invited our sister campus, SIU Carbondale (SIUC) to participate in two cross-campus collaborative sessions (LE2 and FCB2) and have enrolled 43 SIUC faculty and staff in these two sessions.
- Three faculty will have taken both LE and FCB after this summer session.
- A dozen SIUE faculty members who teach in those courses that have student success metrics historically below institutional targets will have taken at least one ACUE course.

Additionally, over the period for the QI, the Center for Faculty Development and Innovation offered 74 events focused on student success, with 1,1194 attendees in total. Topics included Understanding Multiple Identities, Belonging: The Science of Creating Connection and Bridging Divides, and How Can I Build an Antiracist Syllabus.

### **Goal 5: Enhance efforts to recruit and retain Black faculty and staff**

SIUE is committed to recruiting, retaining, and supporting the advancement of the most diverse faculty among Illinois public higher education institutions. A diverse faculty enhances the breadth, depth and quality of our academic programs and supports the retention and graduation of SIUE’s diverse student population, thus strengthening and expanding the global workforce.

Between 2016 and 2021, the Office of the Chancellor invested \$4M dollars in the Faculty Strategic Hiring Initiative (SHI). This pool of funding was used to provide competitive salaries and start-up packages to recruit and hire scholars from racially minoritized groups for tenure-track and tenured positions.

Between Fall 2016 and Spring 2021, 18 new tenured track faculty members in departments across SIUE’s schools/College were hired as part of the SHI. \$1.2M of those funds supported the addition of six tenure-track faculty in the School of Education, Health, and Human Behavior. The six African American faculty were intentionally recruited and have successfully built a supportive community of belonging and support. The impact of this cluster hire has been captured in a [documentary short](#), produced by Dr. Candace Hall, graduate program director and assistant professor for the higher education and student affairs program. Plans are currently underway to build upon these previous efforts.

3. Evaluate the impact of the initiative, including any changes in processes, policies, technology, curricula, programs, student learning and success that are now in place in consequence of the initiative.

As an institution of higher learning committed to anti-racism, student access and success, we have engaged in several transformative activities in support of our QI to develop a holistic retention program for our Black students. We took a data-informed approach to determine the interventions needed for Black students to persist in their academic journey. The Black Scholar Experience at SIUE has significantly contributed to improving retention rates by fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that empowers Black scholars to thrive academically, socially, and culturally. Through targeted mentorship, tailored support services, and a vibrant community of care, the program has effectively enhanced student engagement, persistence, and success, leading to notable advancements in retention outcomes among our Black scholars—our first-year retention rate for African American students increased by 10.2 percent. Additionally, we have created an exciting and unique general education experience for our underrepresented scholars through the CODES program. The program has seen notable retention rates, and we are currently working on scaling the program and seeking external funding to support its continued growth. Through comprehensive training programs, we have introduced our faculty and staff to the tools to recognize and address bias, promote inclusivity, and support all students effectively. These programs have fostered a more inclusive campus culture.

#### 4. Explain any tools, data or other information that resulted from the work of the initiative.

SIUE benefits from robust data maintained historically which allows for data mining to answer tough research questions. Utilizing Power BI, the university provides data transparency on admissions, enrollment, retention, and graduation, delivering insights into student success and institutional performance.

Data analytics using Power BI dashboards inform strategic decisions, allow users to identify equity gaps and inspire innovative support for students. Currently, SIUE manages a platform to share the dashboards from one source and includes the following:

- Admissions Funnel for undergraduate, graduate, and international students
- Enrollment numbers with year-to-date comparison for the same time point as prior year. These are broken out by level, program, student category, race/ethnicity, and class
- Online undergraduate bachelor's degree admission and enrollment details by program
- Ten-year historical overview of first-year cohort retention and 4- and 6-year graduation rates
- Grade distribution report displaying course with pass/fail rates by term

The funnel reports and enrollment numbers are shared widely across campus. Access and understanding are encouraged as our university is responsible for each student's success. Limited access is currently available for the Grade distribution report (DFW report), as internal planning and discussions take place to develop a planned pathway for faculty and student support.

One of the outcomes of the QI has been the development of user-friendly and intuitive dashboards. Equipping the campus community to examine reliable, disaggregated data more readily is a critical component of our strategy to improve student retention. A team of sixteen faculty and staff recently completed the [California State University Student Success Analytics Certificate Program](#). The team is developing a data action project focused on building our collective capacity to use data and equity-minded sense-making to better serve students.

#### 5. Describe the biggest challenges and opportunities encountered in implementing the initiative.

##### Challenges:

The QI was a transformative undertaking for the University. As such, it taught us a lot about the need for coordination, a centralized structure of implementation and consistent assessment of efforts. One of the challenges we have identified was change in leadership across the university as the QI began. Shortly after we received HLC approval, our former Chancellor, Randy Pembroke, Ph.D., announced his retirement. Moreover, during the duration of the QI, we experienced additional changes in leadership as a majority of the individuals who were initially responsible for leading implementation of primary activities either resigned, retired, or took on additional responsibilities at the university. These changes impacted some of the coordinating efforts around the different primary activities. As a result, a very large portion of the coordinating effort was carried on by our newly established division of Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion under the leadership of Vice Chancellor of Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Dr. Jessica Harris, whose responsibilities included creating a foundational organizational structure for a new division on campus, while also leading many of the QI activities. Simultaneously, the University was engaged in the finalization of the strategic plan which required significant effort in planning and coordination, highlighting the necessity to better centralize efforts related to the QI goals and their implementation across the layers of our complex university structure.

## Opportunities:

While acknowledging that we experienced hurdles and challenges along the way, we also recognized that the foundational work that has stemmed from the QI has served as a launching pad for a university-wide transformation of the culture surrounding student access and success. The QI's timing and foundational goals aligned and further informed our efforts, parallel to putting the final touches on our [strategic plan](#), built on five pillars and firmly grounded in equity, access and student success.

Additionally, the University just submitted a comprehensive equity plan to the Illinois Board of Higher Education, which provides another opportunity for expanding the work of the QI, creating accountability structures as well as institutional buy-in, which will elevate further the importance of the QI milestones, while also creating multi-level, visible metrics that will recognize all university stakeholders' roles and contributions to the success of our Black students.

## Commitment to and Engagement in the Quality Initiative

6. Describe the individuals and groups involved at stages throughout the initiative and their perceptions of its worth and impact.

When the QI was proposed, the leadership team was as follows:

Dr. Scott Belobrajdic, Associate Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management (retired)

Dr. Courtney Boddie, Associate Dean of Students for Diversity & Inclusion and Director of SIUE Counseling Services (resigned)

Dr. Denise Cobb, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Dr. Geoffrey Edwards, Director, Retention and Student Success

Dr. Jessica Harris, Vice Chancellor for Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Dr. Elza Ibroscheva, Associate Provost for Accreditation, Assessment and Academic Planning

Dr. Earleen Patterson, Director, Student Opportunities for Academic Results (SOAR) (expanded role)

Rachel Stack, Vice Chancellor for Advancement (retired)

Dr. Morris Taylor, Vice Chancellor for Administration (no longer in role)

Lindy Wagner, Director, Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion (expanded role)

Dr. Jeffrey Waple, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (no longer in role)

Dr. Jerry Weinberg, Associate Provost for Research & Dean of Graduate Studies & Research (soon to be retired)

A number of the individuals who were part of the leadership team when the QI was proposed have either retired or transitioned to other roles at the university or elsewhere. While we were able to accomplish a number of goals, coordination of efforts was difficult. However, for the leaders, faculty and staff who participated in these activities, the challenging work of coordination and building new holistic support networks was perceived as transformative for the Black students who were positively impacted by these efforts and continued to thrive at SIUE.

7. Describe the most important points learned by those involved in the initiative.

One of the most important points we have learned in this process has been that despite the willingness of individuals to contribute to the successful outcome of a university-wide initiative which is not only mission-aligned, but fundamentally at the core of what we do as a University, there is the necessity for a **centralized implementation structure** that is intentionally assessing the outcomes of each individual activity and recognizing and celebrating the successes we have been able to achieve. There is still the need for a larger push for wide-spread buy-in among faculty and staff. We also discovered that an **intentional, meaningful and holistic support for our students** can indeed move the needle on student success. Our work was multifaceted by design and ambitious by scope, which also helped us



learn the importance of **shared vision and commitment** that is front and center to faculty and staff. Finally, we also learned that **transparency and democratization of data** are key elements in creating a culture of data-informed solutions which continue to guide our University towards meeting its ongoing and ambitious commitment to making social mobility possible for individuals and entire families, as we close equity gaps and build a diverse community of professionals and a global workforce ready for the future.

## Resource Provision

8. Explain the human, financial, physical and technological resources that supported the initiative.

The Quality Initiative required the commitment of **human resources** from key divisions on campus such as Academic Affairs, including Enrollment Management and Retention and Student Success, the Center for Faculty Development and Innovation, and Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. These divisions work collaboratively to create the infrastructural support needed for the expansion of the Black Scholar Experience and CODES, involving advisors, student success coaches, faculty members and other staff who committed time and effort to support the different activities directly or indirectly. Diverse and complementary areas of expertise in supporting and mentoring students were committed to supporting this project.

**Technological resources** were also key in supporting this initiative. Two major platforms, PowerBI and Starfish, were instrumental in providing the data analysis capabilities that supported the planning and analyzing of data, as well as the communication, outreach and support channels that provided opportunity to engage with the students about their successes and address challenges. Starfish allowed us to implement the use of our early alert and connection tool, Starfish, as a resource for faculty and staff to assist in the retention efforts. Additional communication and education were provided to faculty in order to improve early alert participation and create greater connections for students.

## Financial Resources

2 Student Success Coaches in SOAR	90,000
Faculty Support for teaching in Black Scholar Experience courses	40,000
CODES Scholars Provost Scholarships	833,563
ACUE certification training	138,000
IMPACT Academy	241,000
Strategic Hiring Initiative	1,200,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,404,563</b>

The University has invested a total of over \$ 2.4 million, with an intentional increase to funding for the strategic hiring initiative. We hope to continue to support this investment towards meeting our goals as set forth in our strategic plan, [pillar 3](#). Additional funds were invested to support several key positions mentioned in the report earlier.

## Plans for the Future (or Future Milestones of a Continuing Initiative)

9. Describe plans for ongoing work related to or as a result of the initiative.

### **Goal 1: Support Black students along the educational pipeline by developing a pathway for their enrollment at SIUE**

As part of an evolving enrollment management strategy and in support of the goals outlined in Pillar #1 of SIUE's strategic plan, our goal is to increase the percentage of African American students by 5 percent (from 14.7% to approximately 20%). We will leverage existing partnerships with organizations like Hope Chicago and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri and expand our pre-collegiate programming and recruitment and yield efforts in Chicago, St. Louis, and East St. Louis, to support us in reaching this goal. Additionally, we will continue our investment in the expansion of Summer Success, CODES as well as the SIUE Commitment and the [Gateway Opportunity](#).

### **Goal 2: Improve retention and graduation rates of Black students at SIUE by achieving year to year increases in retention, and by increasing the six-year graduation rate**

SIUE will continue to refine programming offered through the Black Scholar Experience (BSE) and expand programming beyond the first year. Interventions will also include the development of a Black Male Initiative (BMI). The BMI will promote activities to encourage positive identity development, build self-efficacy and support holistic well-being for African American males upon their enrollment at SIUE. We will continue our work expanding access to ACUE, targeting gateway courses with high DFW courses and leveraging data dashboards to monitor and develop plans to close equity gaps.

### **Goal 3: Develop and nurture pathways to graduate and professional school and/or employment for Black students graduating from SIUE**

During the QI period, SIUE submitted a proposal for funding through the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. Although the McNair program proposal was unsuccessful, we will use the grant proposal as a basis to develop structured research opportunities for African American students to inspire interest in and support preparation for graduate studies.

### **Goal 4: Provide ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion education, training and resources, through various modalities, to support self-awareness and professional development**

We will continue to expand SIUE's relationship with ACUE and augment offerings provided through the [IMPACT Academy](#).

By the end of summer, we have the possibility of 125 SIUE faculty and staff completing at least one ACUE course on fostering belonging and/or creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Ideally, this fall we would like to offer another Fostering a Culture of Belonging session as this is the only offering that provides examples in relevant contexts for our non-teaching campus community members. We would also be excited to offer another, different course in the ACUE Effective Teaching Framework to move our faculty closer to becoming certified in Effective College Instruction. We see this as another opportunity to collaborate within the SIU system to offer courses across the ACUE platform for new faculty and new adopters to take LE courses and faculty who have previously engaged with our ACUE content to level up with new courses like "Promoting Active Learning," "Inspiring Inquiry and Preparing Lifelong Learners," and the like.

SIUE's IMPACT (Immersive Meaningful Practices for Accountable Campus Transformation) engages faculty, staff and students as catalysts and leaders in transforming SIUE into an environment where racism and all other forms of bias are not tolerated. IMPACT Academy Trainers support campus colleagues by cultivating a more equitable and inclusive learning environment for the campus community.

The goal of the IMPACT Academy is to provide faculty, staff, students and community partners with tools and resources to build the awareness and competencies needed to foster cultural humility as the standard of interaction and practice to advance inclusion, equity and social justice (IESJ) at SIUE and the metropolitan area. The objectives are as follows:

- Offer accessible diversity and inclusion training and resources, delivered through various modalities.
- Support the integration of knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom to better serve the academic and social needs of our diverse student population.
- Encourage faculty, staff, and students to model cultural humility in their interactions with each other.

The IMPACT Academy has been offering workshops for faculty, staff, and students since its inception in 2019. Workshops have been offered face to face and via zoom and have been open for all members of the campus community. The workshops include:

- **New Faculty Onboarding (EDI Retreat):** Inclusion, equity, and social justice (IEJ) are foundational areas for faculty's personal and professional lives, including our engagements with students, colleagues, our institution, and community, in our curriculum and classroom, as well as in service and research.
- **Using Communication to Build an Inclusive Classroom Online:** As the modality to online teaching becomes the reality for most of us, there may be hesitancy in how to build an inclusive community of learners in this new environment. This workshop lays a foundation of effective communication strategies that lead to a more equitable environment where students can feel comfortable interacting with each other.
- **Strategies for Making STEM Courses and Majors More Inclusive:** In this workshop, the facilitators will identify exclusive and inclusive teaching practices in STEM education and highlight what other STEM programs have done to build a more welcoming major for underrepresented groups. Student engagement and ultimately success can be linked to a sense of right fit, of belonging, of alignment of interests and skills with opportunities and support. This workshop explores what we can do to make these disciplines more welcoming to underrepresented students and advance equity and inclusive excellence at SIUE.
- **IMPACT Academy Players-Theater for Social Change:** An ensemble of professional actors and students write and perform original vignettes on topics such as bias, microaggressions, privilege and anti-racism that can be performed at department meetings, in classrooms or other approved settings. These interactive modules encourage audience participation to deepen the experience of all involved.

## Goal 5: Enhance efforts to recruit and retain Black faculty and staff

Plans are underway to build upon previous efforts. To broaden SIUE's visibility and recruitment base for tenure-track faculty positions, the University has launched a postdoctoral fellowship program. Following the two-year fellowship period, postdocs may be transitioned to tenure-track faculty appointments. The Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship is funded by the Office of the Chancellor and administered through the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The first cohort of

postdoctoral fellowships will arrive on campus in fall 2024. Over half of the postdoctoral fellows identify as African American, Latinx or Asian, with a 1/3 identifying as African American.

The Vice Chancellor for Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is currently establishing a baseline and target for staff diversity. Once complete, programmatic actions to improve staff diversity will be put into place.

10. Describe any practices or artifacts from the initiative that other institutions might find meaningful or useful and please indicate if you would be willing to share this information.

While the Black Scholar Experience (BSE) and the Community Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars (CODES) programs are currently operating on the SIUE campus, we are interested in building communities of practitioners with peers at other institutions, dedicated to improving outcomes for African American students and developing long-term strategies for scaling and sustaining impactful interventions and programming. Ongoing assessment of the programs on our campus will inform efforts for adoption at other institutions.