

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEAN'S REPORT 2018

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
EDWARDSVILLE

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES



Dean's Column

The College of Arts and Sciences continues to be an innovation engine for Southwestern Illinois. Our faculty, staff, alumni and students help “shape a changing world” with their creative energy and ideas. In this issue you will get to meet some outstanding examples of this creativity and innovation.

You will meet Tiana Clark, the acclaimed poet who joins the Department of English Language and Literature for the new Master of Fine Arts in creative writing program. Tiana comes to us after spending the past year as a fellow at the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing following her winning the national Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize. From the Department of Social Work comes our outstanding student, Brianna Scott, and her passion for working with our communities. Our alumni profile introduces us to Brian Henry, graduate of the Department of Mass Communications, who has utilized his SIUE education to help craft an extremely successful career in industry.

The College is at the forefront of technological innovation and state-of-the-art science education. You can read about the geospatial technology being used by our geography faculty and students. Anyone who has used a map application on their cell phone understands the power of geographic information systems (GIS) technology. Our Geospatial Technology Lab and Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis help provide students the backgrounds they need for the many interesting careers now available in this field. We are also extremely excited about the renovation of Science East and its reopening. With the completion of this construction project, our programs in the sciences have lab and classroom spaces that are second to none in the state of Illinois.

Finally, read about two great events that will mark the year. Created by Professor Lisa Colbert in 1998, the Black Theatre Workshop will celebrate its 20th anniversary, continuing its long impact on our region. In addition, the inaugural Lazerson Lecture, funded through the generosity of former SIUE President Earl Lazerson, will occur in spring 2019, offering another outstanding event for our campus and community.

Thank you for your commitment for our students and programs in the College!

Best wishes,

Greg Budzban
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Programs and Degrees

Undergraduate Majors

- * *Teacher Licensure Available*
- Anthropology
- Applied Communication Studies
- Art*
- Art and Design
- Biological Sciences*
- Chemistry*
- Criminal Justice Studies
- Economics
- English*
- Environmental Sciences
- Foreign Languages and Literature*
- Geography*
- History*
- Integrative Studies
 - Leadership in Organizations
- International Studies
- Liberal Studies
- Mass Communications
- Mathematical Studies*
- Music*
- Philosophy
- Physics
- Political Science*
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Theater and Dance*

Graduate

- Applied Communication Studies
- Art and Design Studio*
- Art Therapy Counseling
- Biological Sciences*
- Chemistry*
- Creative Writing
- Criminal Justice Policy
- English*
- Environmental Science Management
- Environmental Sciences
- Geography
- History*

- Integrative Studies
 - Applied Environmental and Communication Studies
 - Communication and Marketing
 - Cultural Education Advocacy
 - Cultural Heritage and Resources Management
 - Digital Media and Public Relations
 - Diplomacy and Communication
 - Diversity in Organizations
 - Diversity Issues and Global Affairs
 - GIS Development and Database Administration
 - Marketing Communications
 - Media Management
 - Organizational Communication and Management
 - Organizational Design Thinking
 - Sustainability
- Mathematics*
- Media Studies
- Music
- Public Administration
- Social Work
- Sociology

Post-Baccalaureate Certificates

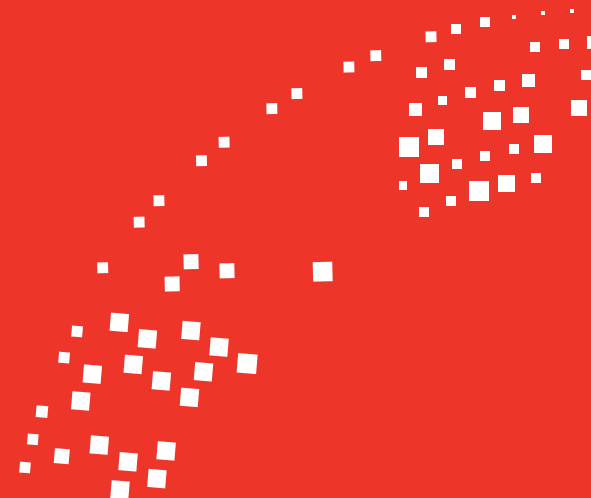
- Digital Media Literacy
- Integrative Studies
 - Environmental Management
 - Marketing and Public Relations
 - Sustainability
- Literature
- Museum Studies
- Piano Pedagogy
- Teaching English as a Second Language
- Teaching of Writing
- Vocal Pedagogy

Doctoral

- Cooperative PhD programs with SIU Carbondale*
- Environmental Resources and Policy
- History

About the College of Arts and Sciences

The College of Arts and Sciences is committed to a mission of intellectual transformation for our students in which they explore a rich tapestry of ideas, experiences, and people. The College fulfills this mission with our exceptional teacher-scholars providing innovative experiential learning opportunities and excellent degree programs, in addition to the outstanding liberal arts and sciences foundation for undergraduate students across the University. The College promotes scholarly and creative activity, community engagement and public service, and cultural and art programming, all of the finest quality.





Sadegh Khazaeli, PhD

Scholarships Ensure Student Success

Outside of commencement, the College of Arts and Sciences' annual Honors Day convocation is the single biggest gathering on campus to recognize student scholastic achievement. In April 2018, students received 299 scholarships and awards presented from 22 departments and programs at a total value of nearly \$165,000.

Approximately 600 guests and 70 award sponsors attended Honors Day, and sponsors had an opportunity to meet their student awardees after the ceremony.

"Our donors' continued generosity has a profound impact on the lives of our students, an impact that could not be replicated without their support," said Greg Budzban, PhD, dean. "We are extremely grateful."

"Scholarships are vital to ensuring the academic success of our students," said Kyle Moore, director of development for the College of Arts and Sciences. "It's wonderful to see several new scholarships that have been established in the past year."

Three such scholarships are highlighted on these pages. For information on establishing a scholarship, contact Moore at 618-650-5048 or kymoore@siue.edu.

The Courtneyess Award

When Courtney Littell, of Bloomington, Ill., died last November, her family immediately began looking for ways to remember and honor the 22-year-old. They established the Courtneyess Award Fund as a way to recognize deserving junior or senior theater and dance majors interested in stage management.

A senior at the time of her death, Courtney was studying English and theater and dance. English was a constant love of hers since she was old enough to read and write, and theater began as a side interest that Courtney found she enjoyed and wanted to explore.

■ *"Theater was a new, passionate love that was given to her by SIUE," said her father, Louis Littell. "SIUE gave her the opportunity to explore, and theater helped her to discover some truths about herself."*

Recipients of this new award will be students with passion, energy, and a fun, caring, generous, supportive spirit—just like Courtney.

"While Courtney took everything else seriously—her studies, her future, her duties—she didn't take herself seriously," Louis said. "'Courtneyess' is a whimsical term we created which represents our memory of the best of her."

Dr. Sadegh Khazaeli Scholarship

Sadegh Khazaeli, PhD, received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Iran. In 1977, he and his family moved to the United States where he earned a PhD in chemistry from Michigan State University. In 1982, he began to pursue post-doctoral studies at SIUE.

He accepted a professorship, and the family decided to make Edwardsville their permanent home. After 34 years of teaching and sponsoring hundreds of graduate students, he retired in 2016. In 2017, he was granted Emeritus status and awarded the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Faculty Award. Khazaeli passed away December 25, 2017.

Khazaeli inspired and taught analytical chemistry to thousands of students. His dedication to the profession and to his students endeared him to many.

As part of his legacy, Khazaeli wanted to create an endowment that would continue to impact students through annual scholarships for the Best Chemistry Teaching Assistant, the Best International Student in Chemistry and the Best Graduate Student in Analytical Chemistry. Funds are still being raised to sufficiently endow these three scholarships.

"Our dad's legacy lives on in all of the people who studied under him and all of the international students he helped bring to the United States," said his son, Javad Khazaeli. "SIUE is better today because of these students. We hope that the recipients of these three scholarships continue his mission of lifting those who need and deserve it most."

Nathan Jatcko Memorial Scholarship

As a music student at SIUE, Nathan Jatcko had an unquenchable thirst for learning and a passion for jazz performance and music theory. He attended the University from 2004-2008 after having attended jazz camps during junior and senior high school, where he began working with music faculty and other jazz students. After studying at SIUE, he went on to become an accomplished, highly regarded musician, playing jazz across the U.S. and progressive rock in Europe.

After Nathan died in January 2018 at age 31, his family established a music scholarship in his memory. It will support undergraduate students pursuing degrees in jazz performance, music theory or composition, or graduate students in the areas of music education, jazz performance or piano accompaniment.

John Jatcko, Nathan's father, said the endowed scholarship was an important way for the family to give back to the University that played a crucial role in his son's development as an artist and a young man.

■ *"Nathan thrived at SIUE, always pushing himself in his theory and performance studies," John said. "His talent came from heaven. Refinement and encouragement, discipline, and depth of knowledge came from SIUE."*

John, along with Nathan's mother, Barbara, are SIUE alumni. Barbara works on campus as an office support specialist in the Departments of Physics and Mathematics and Statistics.

"Our family is grateful for the support of the College of Arts and Sciences and the SIUE Foundation for helping us get the scholarship established, and to all who contributed to the establishment of the scholarship fund, particularly Nathan's music family," Barbara said.



Nathan Jatcko

Photo by Madison Thorn Photography (used with permission)



Targeted Funding Initiative Supports Upgrades to Geospatial Technology Lab

With a \$20,934 grant from the College of Arts and Sciences' Targeted Funding Initiative (TFI) program, the Department of Geography received a much-needed technological upgrade in its Geospatial Technology Laboratory.

"Modern geography research uses a wealth of technology, including infrared or visible spectrum satellite imagery, to view our planet in ways that previously were simply impossible," said Greg Budzban, PhD, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. "This technology upgrade allows us to offer our students the state-of-the-art educational experience they need for today's competitive professional landscape."

The geography department combined its TFI grant with other funds in its existing equipment budget to purchase 25 new Dell computer towers. The new workstations enable students to download larger datasets at faster speeds, display high resolution datasets with greater clarity, and conduct GIS (geographic imaging systems) analyses in less time.

The new computers and accompanying software were installed in the lab before the fall 2018 semester began. Nearly 280 students utilize the Geospatial Technology Laboratory annually for 15 distinct geospatial technology courses such as cartography, introduction to GIS, and digital elevation modeling.

A new course in business geography will also be offered in the spring 2019 semester. Specialized software in the lab includes ArcGIS, Erdas, Geoda, R and Flowmap. Students also use the space to complete lab exercises, senior assignment projects, master's theses, and non-thesis research projects.

The enhancements will also assist the department in providing students with industry-standard knowledge needed to advance in the rapidly evolving field of geospatial technology. This further prepares students for internships and careers with private companies and government agencies.

"Increased computing power offers opportunities to add new software and propose new geospatial techniques courses," said Susan Hume, PhD, associate professor and chair of the Department of Geography. "For example, new course offerings this academic year include GIS for medical geography and a business geography course that teaches students how to use geospatial techniques for retail location analysis and road network flow analysis."

■ *"Our ability to keep up with cutting-edge geospatial technology is crucial for the future success of our undergraduate and graduate programs," Hume said.*

Spatial Analysis Lab Provides Resources for University and Beyond

When budget constraints forced the Illinois State Library System to operate as lean as possible, it looked to the Laboratory for Applied Spatial Analysis (LASA) at SIUE for more efficient routes for interlibrary loan. By understanding capacity of the transport vans, travel routes, traffic patterns, demand from each library hub and more, LASA helped the system develop optimum efficiency.

Edwardsville Community Unit School District #7 contracts LASA's services to determine maximum bus route efficiency. LASA has provided recommendations for the most appropriate boundary lines for elementary and middle schools based, not only on current population, but also on historical data and an understanding of neighborhood trends.

For the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR), LASA has scanned and georeferenced more than 10,000 underground mine maps from the state archive, building a vast digital archive of this data. LASA is currently developing an internal website that will be searchable by address to show the DNR if the area is undermined, and if so, to what extent.

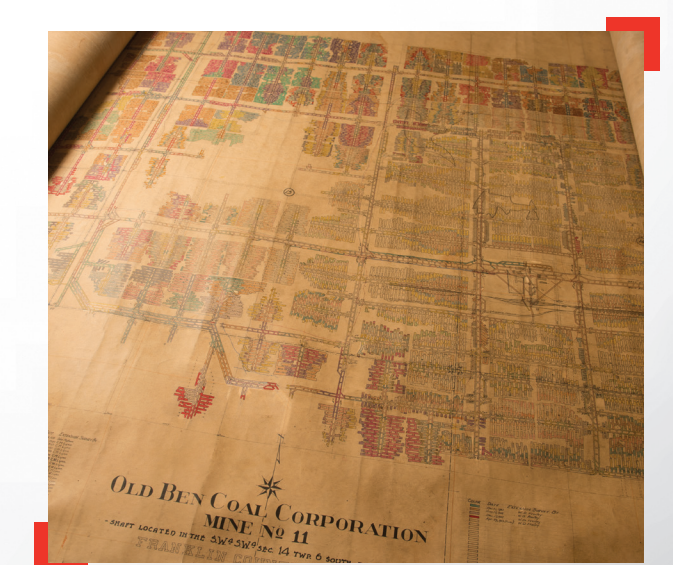
■ *"Everything in this world has a spatial context to it, and we live in a world that is getting figuratively smaller," said Randall Pearson, PhD, professor of geography and director of LASA. "We are a resource to address spatial problems in ways our constituents may never have considered."*

LASA relies on geographic imaging systems (GIS), which are computer systems capable of capturing, storing, analyzing and displaying data that is identified according to location. GIS allows many types of information about the same geographic location to be layered upon each other. These layers can include virtually anything: underground maps, topographical and hydrologic information, power systems, weather models, population densities, disease statistics, and so on. When this information is compared, new patterns and relationships can emerge, providing key findings that were not clear earlier.



"GIS has been a great mechanism of connecting our students and our faculty to a wide variety of opportunity," Pearson said. "It is instrumental in all we do in geography."

LASA is a resource not only for community, state and regional industry, but also for the University. Approximately 10 undergraduate students work with LASA each semester, many conducting site and field work. An additional three to five graduate students work at the center each semester. Since LASA began in 1996, approximately 45 undergraduate and 150 graduate students have benefited from experiential learning opportunities in spatial analysis.





Science East Provides State-of-the-Art Teaching and Research Space

SIUE students are reaping the benefits of the University's ongoing commitment to campus growth with the renovation of the original Science Laboratory Building, now known as Science East. The renovations were the final phase in a \$79 million construction and infrastructure improvement plan to the Science Complex, which includes Science East and the new Science West.

Built in 1966, the original Science Laboratory Building has housed classrooms, laboratories for teaching and research, and offices for science and various other programs. Growing enrollment and demand for science and math curriculum created an increased need for teaching and laboratory space, as well as updated equipment.

The redesign of Science East was completed in 2006, and funding was appropriated in 2009. Renovations were well underway when work was completely halted in the summer of 2015 due to the state budget impasse. With the beginning of the fall semester quickly approaching and a full roster of classes scheduled in the two 200-seat auditoriums in the building, SIUE "forward funded" the remodeling of those two spaces, which remained open during construction. Those expenses were eventually repaid with the approval of a state budget in 2017.

"Though it took time, it was worth the wait," said Rich Walker, vice chancellor for administration. "This is the capstone project to more than \$310 million worth of improvements to our teaching and research space at SIUE."

The renovation project followed the completion of Science West in 2013. Science East contains offices and workspaces for the Department of Physics; the Department of Mathematics and Statistics; and the Center for STEM Research, Education and Outreach. The Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Environmental Sciences are housed in Science West.

Science East contains safe, state-of-the-art facilities that enhance opportunities for cutting-edge teaching and research by faculty, and also provide opportunities for more student engagement in experiential learning.

■ *"Our new lecture rooms allow for many more students to be taught and in an immeasurably more comfortable environment than the previous classrooms," said Jack Glassman, PhD, associate professor and chair of the Department of Physics. "Also, our research spaces are well outfitted with equipment that allows our professors to perform their research and train our students at all levels."*

Newly created labs in Science East include:

- Two biophysics labs, one of which is dedicated to X-ray crystallography
- Three photonics research labs, all of which are light-tight and shielded from vibrations, with portholes allowing light from the laser lab to be shared with researchers in connecting labs
- One optics teaching lab that accommodates five tables, each with its own screened-in area

Science East is equipped with the same high-end equipment students will find in the research labs of future employers. Modern offices for the faculty, as well as dedicated spaces for collaboration in teaching and research, are central in the new building. Large tutoring rooms provide extra help to students, and dedicated work spaces give students room to conduct course- and research-related tasks.

"Each physics faculty will have their own research lab instead of sharing space," said Abdullatif Hamad, PhD, professor of physics. "We will be able to acquire more equipment and involve more students in our research, since space will no longer be an issue. This will help us recruit world-class researchers to join the physics faculty at SIUE."



More About Science East

Science East is designed and constructed to the standards of the U.S. Green Building Council as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) silver-rated building. As such, it is highly energy efficient and has high levels of wall and roof insulation; double insulated, polarized glass windows; and the latest technology for the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems.

Motion sensors turn off lights when a room is not in use. Solar roof panels help reduce consumption and demand from the power grid. Exterior bracing adds seismic stability.

Originally \$81.8 million was budgeted to invest in the Science Complex, but the project was completed \$2.7 million under budget. Of the total investment, \$32.8 million was dedicated to renovating Science East. Architecture services were provided by Hastings + Chivetta Architects Inc. River City Construction provided general contracting.

“I am thrilled to join the fabulous SIUE faculty and to share my passion for creative writing, especially poetry. I bring a fresh infusion, a younger voice, vivacious energy and being a person of color, a diverse perspective to SIUE.”

Tiana Clark, Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature



Poet Tiana Clark Ignites Spark Behind New Creative Writing MFA Program

According to the Association of Writers & Writing Programs, there were 229 total creative writing Master of Fine Arts (MFA)-conferring institutions in 2015—a more than 100 percent increase from a decade ago. A terminal degree for poets and fiction writers, the MFA qualifies students for careers in academia and writing-related fields.

The Department of English Language and Literature introduced a new MFA in creative writing this fall which offers a unique service-learning component and boasts talented faculty, including the nationally recognized poet Tiana Clark, who is in her first semester of teaching at SIUE.

“We have the faculty and curriculum for an excellent graduate education in creative writing, but we have been unable to compete with MFA programs with only our Master of Arts in creative writing,” said Joel Hardman, PhD, professor and chair, Department of English Language and Literature. “The terminal MFA degree will be much more useful to our students.”

Unlike most programs in the country, the MFA at SIUE includes a service-learning component that encourages experiential learning. During the second year, students will engage in the “Writer in the World” sequence, which allows them to study community-based pedagogies and then partner with a local organization to enrich the community with a service program of their own design.

“This sequence will better prepare students for meaningful employment in or outside of academia, and help students sustain a rich writing life beyond graduation,” Hardman said.

A recent graduate of Vanderbilt’s MFA in creative writing program, Tiana Clark is the author of *Equilibrium*, selected by Afaa Michael Weaver for the 2016 Frost Place Chapbook Competition. She is the winner of the 2017 Furious Flower’s Gwendolyn Brooks Centennial Poetry Prize, a 2016 Academy of American Poets University Prize and a 2015 Rattle Poetry Prize. Clark was also recently awarded the 2017 Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize for her poetry collection *I Can’t Talk About the Trees Without the Blood*.

Clark brings a variety of teaching techniques and strategies with her as well. “I’m really interested in learning from the old-school poets, but also learning from the new-school, living, breathing poets,” she said. “That is my pedagogical approach: What can we learn from the old, and how do we make it new and fresh and push literature forward?”

“Tiana will make a profound difference in the lives of our students and the SIUE community, and her work is going to make a profound difference in the lives of her readers,” said Geoff Schmidt, professor of English language and literature and director of SIUE’s creative writing MFA program.

Impassioned Social Work Graduate Ready to Impact Clients’ Lives

As part of a tight-knit family that includes many social workers, Brianna Scott grew up seeing the direct impact of this profession. When it came to selecting a college, Scott sought a university that offered an accredited social work program. This, and her desire to stay close to her hometown of Belleville, Ill., made SIUE the ideal choice.

SIUE’s Department of Social Work combines traditional classroom learning experiences with simulated training labs, which enhance clinical practice skills. Students in the training lab gain valuable experience by interacting with actors who simulate patients, families and groups of people in need of mental health counseling. This realistic experience had a large impact on Scott’s undergraduate education.

■ *“It was completely nerve-wracking the first time I sat down to work with someone one-on-one,” Scott said. “That lab taught me to be comfortable with eye contact, and how to communicate through my body posture and tone of voice. I learned real life skills that I’ve continued to build on.”*

Bryan Duckham, PhD and associate professor in the Department of Social Work, encouraged Scott to apply to SIUE’s Master of Social Work (MSW) program just before earning her bachelor’s in social work in May 2017.

“Brianna has a capacity to think about an issue from multiple perspectives, showing knowledge and depth of the subject,” Duckham said. “She demonstrated an advanced intellectual curiosity and took lectures and readings quite seriously.”

His prompting, along with the support of her family, gave her the confidence to continue her education. Scott was admitted to the MSW program and began her coursework in July of the same year. Graduate social work students not only learn in a traditional classroom setting, but also by involvement with community agencies and organizations. They assist with providing services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, poverty and mental health challenges.



“As a crisis worker at Provident in St. Louis, we answer suicide or crisis prevention hotlines,” Scott said of her practicum experience. “It’s extremely rewarding to be in a position where you can talk with countless people who trust you enough to explain what’s going on and what they’ve been through so you can start to provide healing.”

Scott has been an active member of the Graduate Student Social Work Association and received the Department of Social Work Graduate Student Award. In August, she completed the advanced standing track program and earned her master’s in one year with a 4.0 GPA. Once licensed, Scott aspires to work as an adolescent therapist.

“Brianna is passionate about helping others and championing those who are marginalized and oppressed,” Duckham said. “Her many gifts will lead her to be a very effective social worker.”

■ *“It hasn’t been easy, but it’s been immensely rewarding,” Scott said.*



From SIUE to VP: Alumnus Finds Success in Corporate Communications

When Vice President of Corporate Communications for Express Scripts Brian Henry was making his college plans, he applied to just one university and applied for a single scholarship. Luckily for him, he was accepted at SIUE and received a Presidential Scholarship, now known as the Meridian Scholarship, which awarded him full tuition, room and board.

■ *“If I hadn’t been accepted, I don’t know what else I would have done. For me, SIUE was the only fit, and it turns out, it was the best fit,” said Henry, who graduated in 1995 with a Bachelor of Science in mass communications.*

Henry double majored in journalism and television/radio and earned a minor in political science. After graduating, he moved to Chicago for an internship at a public relations agency. That turned into a full-time job, which eventually led to opportunities in Texas, New Jersey, Minnesota and, in 2011, to Express Scripts. Henry heads corporate communications for the pharmacy benefit management company based in St. Louis. Express Scripts ranked 25th on the 2018 Fortune 500 list.

“My hardest day at work is nothing compared to my hardest day at SIUE,” Henry said. “When I graduated, I understood the value of telling a good story and how to do it. When you have that as your foundation, you can work anywhere in communications or media.”

Henry said he was fortunate to be at SIUE at a time when extraordinary faculty had come together to build something none of them could have ever expected. “It was an incredible place to learn and had an amazing collection of talented professors, including giants like Jack Shaheen,” he said.

“I have many people to thank for the life that I have today, but none more so than Professor Bill Ward,” Henry said. “He demanded excellence. He demanded discipline. He demanded that we always work to find a better version of ourselves. And, he demanded that the story was worked until it was truly great.”

The late Bill Ward and Jack Shaheen were founding members of the Department of Mass Communications. Both started in the department in 1969, and retired from teaching courses in the mid 1990s. Ward founded the department’s journalism program and died in November 2014. Shaheen was a noted researcher on Arab media stereotypes who died in July of 2017. The College of Arts and Sciences recently opened a state-of-the-art digital media integration lab in Dunham Hall that honors Ward’s and Shaheen’s service to the University and their dedication to students.

Henry made a significant donation to support the new lab that honors the former professors he respected so much. “I was compelled to support the media integration lab, because, for me, it was a natural extension of what we were offered when I was in school,” he said. “Students will collaborate and create in a way they can’t anywhere else. They will have everything they need to be successful.”

2018 Alumni Hall of Fame Honorees

On September 28, two remarkable alumni from the College of Arts and Sciences were honored at the Alumni Hall of Fame Ceremony, “A Night Among the Stars.” Through their leadership, character and hard work, these impressive alumni have made exceptional contributions in their chosen fields, in their communities and at SIUE.

The Honorable David R. Herndon

BA Government '74

The Senate confirmed David Herndon as district judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois on October 21, 1998. His federal tenure followed seven years as an associate judge in the Third Judicial Court of Madison County, Ill. He served as chief judge from October 2007 through September 2014.

Herndon, who received his juris doctor degree from SIU Carbondale, spent 14 years as a trial attorney prior to becoming a federal judge.

■ *“Working and attending SIUE gave me my first glimpse at being incredibly busy and working hard to achieve what was required to succeed,” he said. “Knowing that the place where you got your start now seeks to honor you provides a huge sense of accomplishment.”*

Herndon currently serves as chair of the Judicial Conference Committee on Judicial Security and was inducted into the Trial Lawyer’s Hall of Fame in 2017.



Dr. Roderick Nunn

BM Jazz Performance '93

Roderick Nunn is the executive vice president and head of education and employment at Concordance Academy of Leadership in St. Louis. The national organization assists former inmates in successfully reintegrating and becoming productive members of their communities.

Before joining the Academy, he served as president of St. Louis Community College-Forest Park, and vice chancellor of economic development and workforce solutions. Under his leadership, the college won several national, state and local awards for excellence and innovation in workforce development.

■ *“At SIUE, you can create an ideal future for yourself if you approach every activity inside and outside the classroom with great expectation,” he said. “Each ingredient necessary for future success is at your fingertips.”*

Aside from his position at the Academy, Nunn also serves as an adjunct professor in the doctor of management program at the University of Maryland University College.



Black Theatre Workshop Celebrates 20th Season

For two decades, the Black Theatre Workshop (BTW) at SIUE has been an avenue for students to perform works of the African-American theater canon. In honor of its 20th anniversary, BTW will celebrate with a special reunion in February 2019.

Formed by the late Assistant Professor Lisa Colbert in 1999, BTW welcomes students of all disciplines to participate as writers, performers, designers and audience members. Dedicated students write original pieces and perform works by noted black playwrights. Students have also collaborated with professional artists and alumni from St. Louis.

“I am honored to continue the legacy that Lisa began,” said Kathryn Bentley, associate professor in the Department of Theater and Dance, BTW artistic director, and director of the black studies program. “When I was a theater student in the 1980s, black students didn’t have the same outlet to explore works that spoke to our unique experiences.

“The opportunity for our students to be a part of collaborative creative experiences like BTW is valuable to their development.”

Over the last 20 years, BTW has taken many forms. While it continues to integrate student-written and directed pieces, BTW has ventured outward and worked with several community theater troupes and organizations around the St. Louis metropolitan area.

“We have collaborated with A Call to Conscious theater in St. Louis, performed with professional actors at the Missouri History Museum, and been invited to perform annually for high school and college students at Lewis and Clark Community College,” Bentley said.

This year, BTW plans to increase outreach into the community by touring at regional high schools, churches and community centers.

■ *“BTW offers a creative outlet for black students to explore and educate others about their culture,” Bentley said. “It tackles issues of social justice in ways that challenge audience members to assess pre-determined beliefs, and encourages communication around difficult topics.”*



Many BTW alumni have gone on to become professional playwrights, directors, performers and producers. Some of those alumni, including actor, director and playwright Joel P.E. King; writer, actor and producer Curtis Lewis; Broadway actress Sophia Nicole Stephenson of *The Lion King*; and actress/singer Olivia Neal will be among those performing at and/or contributing to the BTW 20th anniversary event in February.



Former President Lazerson Endows Fund for Lecture Series

Through a \$100,000 gift, Earl and Ann Lazerson established funding for the Lazerson Lecture Series in the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dr. Earl Lazerson Mathematical Symposium in the Lovejoy Library. The speaking events will alternate years with the inaugural Lazerson Lecture Series taking place in April.

Earl Lazerson, PhD, served as SIUE’s president from 1979-1993. He joined the SIUE faculty in 1969 and taught mathematics until he took over as University president on an interim basis in 1979, and then permanently in 1980.

Through this gift, the Lazersons will make Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)-related research available to SIUE and the local community.

■ *“There is a need for strong academic units in STEM, with particular emphasis in bringing in women and minority populations,” Lazerson said. “These groups represent a very rich resource for the community and the country as a whole. The possibilities available to them in some of these emerging STEM fields promise to be extraordinarily exciting.”*

The Lazerson Lecture Series will give faculty the opportunity to collaborate with prominent researchers to enhance their own research and spark new ideas while giving guests an outlet to showcase their findings to the public. Lazerson was pleased with Dean Budzban’s selection of John Q. Walker II, PhD, as the first speaker in the lecture series.



Earl Lazerson, PhD



John Q. Walker II, PhD

“John models what the founders of SIUE envisioned—that the University would enrich the community through its graduates who go on to do important work in their fields. He is a tremendous example of a person who has done just that,” Lazerson said.

A three-time SIUE alumnus, Walker earned bachelor’s degrees in math studies and music in 1976, and a master’s in computer science in 1978. As chief technology officer and a co-founder of uMETHOD Health in North Carolina, Walker works closely with experts in fields outside of computer science to build highly-complex systems that implement their vision. He has been collaborating with leading researchers in bringing precision medicine to neurological conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease and depression, since 2013.

Walker will present “Solving Alzheimer’s,” to discuss his pioneering work in a “multivariable” approach that brings mathematics, statistics, artificial intelligence and bioinformatics to a medical topic that has failed to yield to a “one disease, one drug approach.”

This inaugural Lazerson Lecture is an *Arts & Issues* event and will be 7:30 p.m., April 12, 2019 in the Meridian Ballroom of the Morris University Center. Visit artsandissues.com or call 618-650-5194 for ticket information.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
EDWARDSVILLE

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Box 1608
Edwardsville, Illinois
62026-1608

NonProfit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 4678
St. Louis, MO



SIUE is proud to support responsible use of forest resources.