

# BUSINESS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS | FALL 2021

***GRADUATE LEADS  
WITH DISTINCTION***



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
**EDWARDSVILLE**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

*Innovation. Engagement. Impact.*



# About the SIUE School of Business

## OUR VISION

The SIUE School of Business aspires to be recognized for its excellence in developing highly skilled professionals who shape the global business environment in an ethical, inclusive, responsible, and innovative manner.

## OUR MISSION

The SIUE School of Business provides a high-quality, accessible business education that empowers learners to make a difference in a dynamic, diverse, and connected world.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF OUR MISSION

### HIGH QUALITY

We provide a high-quality business education by: (1) offering business programs that are accredited by AACSB; (2) creating a learning environment for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education students that fosters creativity, critical thinking, ethical behavior, sociocultural competence, and appreciation of global issues; (3) placing a strong emphasis on the application of cutting-edge business practices and technology in our business programs; (4) hiring and retaining faculty that deliver a business curriculum based on the combination of contemporary research, relevant business practice, and teaching effectiveness.

### ACCESSIBLE

Our education is accessible in several ways: (1) we offer courses in fully online, hybrid, and traditional face-to-face formats, depending upon our students' and degree programs' characteristics; (2) we foster a welcoming community for students from a diverse set of backgrounds by being sensitive to their social and educational concerns; (3) we connect students with the business community in the St. Louis metropolitan area; (4) we have faculty that are excited to engage with students both during and outside of class.

### A DYNAMIC, DIVERSE, AND CONNECTED WORLD

We prepare our students to function and thrive in a rapidly changing global business environment by developing an appreciation of different world views, an international perspective, and technological skills in the business curriculum.



**11** STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS  
including two national honor societies



**NEARLY 300**  
employers engaged with SIUE business students through career fairs and campus events last year.

**15**  
YEARS

For the 15th consecutive year, the School of Business is named an outstanding business school by *The Princeton Review*. "The Best Business Schools for 2021" by *The Princeton Review* recommends the School as one of the best institutions in the U.S. from which students can earn an MBA.



**TOP 5%** INTERNATIONAL  
RECOGNITION

Only 5% of business schools worldwide are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International. Even fewer have earned dual AACSB accreditation in business and accounting, placing the SIUE School of Business among the elite 2% of business schools around the world to have earned this dual distinction.

## SIUE IS AMONG AN ELITE FEW:

*2% of business schools worldwide are AACSB-accredited in both business and accounting.*

## GRADUATE SPECIALIZATIONS

Master of Marketing Research  
• Business Analytics

MS Accountancy  
• Business Analytics  
• Taxation

MBA

- Business Analytics
- Healthcare Administration
- Management
- Management Information Systems
- Project Management

MS CMIS  
• Business Analytics  
• Project Management

## 2 UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

- BS Accountancy
- BS Business Administration

## 11 UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SPECIALIZATIONS

- Computer Information Systems
- Cybersecurity
- Economics
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance
- General Business Administration
- Human Resource Management
- International Business
- Management
- Marketing
- Supply Chain Management

## 4 GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Marketing Research
- MS Accountancy
- MS Computer Management and Information Systems

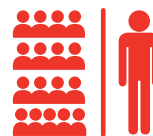
## FACULTY

**56**

Full-time

**17**

Part-time



## SIGNATURE COURSES

*Business Transitions I:*  
Planning for Success

*Business Transitions II:*  
Commitment Beyond College

# Letter from the Dean

Welcome to the Fall 2021 edition of SIUE Business. I hope this finds you in good health and good spirits. As I compose this letter, I can look out of my office window in Founders Hall and see the leaves are starting to change color on our beautiful campus. Despite the much appreciated cooler weather, I enjoy thinking back to the heat of the first day of classes this August, when I walked out of our office suite and heard the noise of students talking to one another at the study tables that line the third-floor hallway. That was a sound and scene I greatly missed last year.

SIUE began this academic year with a “phased approach” to returning to in-class learning. While most of our courses are face-to-face this fall, in the School of Business, we anticipate over three-quarters of our classes will be face-to-face in the spring. That’s pretty close to “normal” for us, given the heavy emphasis placed on online coursework in many of our graduate programs. Enrollments this fall are solid, both for the University and for the School. In fact, our graduate enrollment is the highest we’ve experienced in nearly three decades.

Since the campus was founded, SIUE’s portfolio of academic programs has evolved to one that places a heavy emphasis on the health sciences. The School has adjusted its academic programming to respond to this evolution. For several years, we have offered concurrent degree programs with the Schools of Pharmacy and Nursing so students can graduate with a Doctor of Pharmacy/MBA or a Doctor of Nursing Practice/MBA. To that mix, students pursuing a Master of Public Health (MPH) now can earn an MBA along with their MPH. On page 5 of this magazine, our recently developed MBA specialization in healthcare administration is described; later in the issue on pages 12-13, critical faculty research in the area of healthcare economics and occupational licensing is discussed. While we may not be a healthcare program, our School is well aligned with the University’s direction.

Despite the pandemic, the School has developed a new five-year strategic plan. That plan is discussed in more detail on the next page. Key elements include an increased focus on recruiting and retaining undergraduate business students, building a more diverse population of business students and graduates, encouraging faculty excellence, improving online learning, and ensuring we offer academic programs that meet



market needs. We have a head start on several of those objectives, and those efforts are described inside this issue.

Finally, for me, a personal highlight from the past academic year was awarding Larry Heitz an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. Larry was our very first MBA graduate and is a member of our Alumni Hall of Fame. For years, he has been very generous in sharing his time and financial resources with our School and his record of business achievement makes him worthy of this honor. Speaking of financial support, generous donations from alumni and corporate partners allowed us, once again, to award a record amount of scholarship dollars to business students last spring. Thank you so much for your support of our business school.

I hope you enjoy reading this year’s issue of SIUE Business!

Tim Schoenecker, PhD  
Dean



SIUE received the 2021 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award from *INSIGHT Into Diversity* magazine, the oldest and largest diversity-focused publication in higher education. SIUE joins a select group of 11 institutions that have earned the distinction for at least eight consecutive years.

# School of Business Strategic Plan Supports Increased Student and Faculty Diversity

Broadening and strengthening its efforts to attract more Black, Latinx and female students into undergraduate business programs is one of several critical components of the School of Business' 2021-2026 strategic plan.

The planning process began with an all-faculty retreat, and subsequently three faculty-led task forces drove the development of a new five-year strategic plan that aligns with the long-term goals of the University.

"Of the University's six long-term goals, the School is especially concentrating on goal number two to 'optimize high-quality undergraduate and graduate academic offerings to prepare students to become leaders who will contribute to a dynamic and diverse global community,'" said Dean Tim Schoenecker, PhD. "The School of Business trails the University in terms of the percentage of Black and Latinx students enrolled in business. That's also true for female students. Although we're in line with our peer business schools, we can and need to do better."

Proactively doing more of its own recruiting to supplement the University's overall recruiting efforts is one objective found in the School's new strategic plan. Adjusting scholarship dollars to recruit minority students into business programs is an action item under the plan. Schoenecker says recruiting more minority faculty is always a priority, too.

"In our Department of Computer Management and Information Systems, for example, approximately half of our faculty members are female but only 15% of our students are female," he said. "This is an example of an area that our 2021-2026 strategic plan addresses in terms of increasing diversity and inclusion. We're working to change that."

The School's vision statement undergirds its strategic plan, lending support to its strategy to recruit and retain minorities and females.

"We're committed to earnestly recruiting and retaining students and faculty who mirror the community and the society in which we live and work," Schoenecker said. "This strategic plan guides and supports us in doing that."

Other strategic objectives included in the plan are:

- Continuously improving the engagement of students enrolled in online programs
- Broadening and diversifying the School's executive education offerings
- Growing undergraduate enrollment through improved outreach activities
- Adjusting the academic program portfolio to meet career opportunities
- Encouraging faculty excellence in teaching, scholarship and service
- Initiating the planning process for a dedicated School of Business building

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**For more details about the School's new strategic plan, visit [siue.edu/business](https://siue.edu/business).**



## Finance Students Gain Information Access with WRDS Data Platform



School of Business students now have access to an expansive web-based platform that's a gateway to vetted financial data from more than 50 independent industry vendors.

Beginning last spring, the School became an active subscriber of Wharton Research Data Services (WRDS). The global data repository containing more than 350 terabytes of data offers undergraduate and graduate students an opportunity to download and save custom data sets from myriad sources with one login. Students can pull stock and financial data for thousands of companies that can be used for analysis and class projects. WRDS also has built-in teaching modules that can be incorporated in business courses.

"WRDS consolidates a lot of different data sets for streamlined research," said Shrikant Jategaonkar, PhD, associate professor of economics and finance. "Our students and faculty are benefitting from the ability to tap into this important data asset. Schools offering PhD programs in finance and accounting are usually those that subscribe to WRDS, but SIUE values research and has made the commitment to provide the platform for us. It's an immensely useful resource."

Luke Luchtefeld is a regular user of WRDS. The SIUE junior, who is pursuing majors in accountancy and business administration with specializations in economics and finance, attests to the value of WRDS in his Merger, Capital Structure and Distribution course. He also taps into the WRDS platform in preparation to vie in hedge fund competitions.

"Prior to using WRDS, we accessed a number of separate databases and had to pay for the data each time," Luchtefeld said. "Pulling data could be tedious. For example, accessing 10-Ks (corporate financial reports) meant individually downloading each company's 10-K from the SEC website. Thanks to WRDS, we can pull all the reports at one time, creating custom filters, formatting and saving the data sets in case we need to come back to them at a future time. WRDS is very convenient."

**“Our students and faculty are benefitting from the ability to tap into this important data asset.”**

– Shrikant Jategaonkar, PhD  
Associate Professor of Economics and Finance

Jategaonkar's finance students frequently turn to WRDS to complete class projects involving tracking specific companies and industries over time. "WRDS is immensely popular among all leading universities," Jategaonkar said. "Access to historical stock-level and industry-level data is equipping our students with a wealth of real-world intel, providing a mechanism through which they can practice and hone their real-world financial analysis skills."

# School of Business Launches Supply Chain Management Specialization



The School of Business introduced a new undergraduate specialization in supply chain management this fall. Students pursuing a Bachelor of Science in business administration are required to take 18 credit hours of supply chain management coursework during their junior and senior years.

Associate Professor of Management Gertrude Pannirselvam, PhD, and Assistant Professor of Management Stanislaus Simon Solomon, PhD, supply chain management specialization coordinators, are recruiting students with an interest in a career developing solutions in the production, coordination and movement of supplies, and service delivery in the manufacturing, transportation and service industries.

The supply chain management specialization reflects the demand in the region for people with expertise in the supply chain areas of operations management, purchasing, logistics and transportation—at all levels of organizations. “The St. Louis region has always been a hub for regional and national logistics,” said Solomon.

The geographical advantage of St. Louis as a transportation hub (water, air, rail and roadway) has helped increase the expansion of not only warehousing and fulfillment centers, but also assemblers needing to be close to incoming global supply.

According to Solomon, “Transportation plays a major role in the demand for supply chain management professionals. We’re preparing students in this specialization with the knowledge they need to secure careers in a number of jobs such as logistics

analyst, transportation manager, purchasing manager, supply chain manager, logistics manager and logistician.”

Learning and honing the skills involved in streamlining the logistics of projects, processes and events in any industry sector is a pathway to jobs that are in great demand, according to Pannirselvam.

“Having a broader perspective of organizations and understanding how and where supply chain management fits is valuable to business professionals in any field,” Pannirselvam said.

“Developing solutions for firms that translate into greater operational efficiency involves an expertise in supply chain.

Beyond the management of goods and materials, supply chain includes managing inventories, information, processes, people and quality improvement. Students in this specialization have an opportunity to learn and discern how theory and the work world connect, because operations bleed through every stage of a business.”

“Demand for supply chain management experts is also strong in a variety of service organizations such as retailers, healthcare providers, financial services, traded services and business consulting services,” Solomon said. “Healthcare supply chain management experts are highly sought after in St. Louis due to the city and region’s numerous hospitals, medical centers and specialty clinics located here.

“Knowledge of operations and supply chain will give you a 360-degree view of whatever organization you find yourself working in.”

# New Specialization Prepares Graduate Students for Healthcare Careers

A new MBA specialization in healthcare administration is equipping graduate students for career opportunities and advancement.

“The School of Business added a healthcare administration specialization to the MBA program as an increasing number of students were enrolling in the program from healthcare careers,” said MBA Program Director and Associate Dean Janice Joplin, PhD.

“Students pursuing this specialization realize the need for business skills in healthcare operations, whether in hospital, clinic or ancillary services,” Joplin added.

Bogdan Goncharuk, a graduate assistant in Facilities Management at the University’s Student Fitness Center, is pursuing the new specialization. His career goals include facility operation with an emphasis on healthcare.

“I am thinking about assisting in the operation of a small physical therapy clinic and am also interested in medical fitness facility operation,” said Goncharuk. “SIUE’s MBA with the healthcare specialization is providing the foundation to embark on a number of healthcare and fitness-related paths.”

Searching nationwide for MBA programs that supported his interest in facility operation, Goncharuk chose SIUE not only for the strength of its MBA curriculum and new healthcare emphasis, but also for the graduate assistant opportunity in facility operation.

Damon Harbison, president of SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital in Centralia, knows firsthand the value of an MBA within a healthcare setting. The School of Business alumnus and Advisory Board member initially followed a clinical career path as a radiation oncology therapist. Soon after earning his undergraduate degree, Harbison decided to pursue SIUE’s MBA program in the evenings.

“That’s when my true focus on leadership began,” he said. “My MBA equipped me with general foundational leadership and the capacity to work hard, build business relationships and excel in critical thinking.”

Earning an MBA in 2004 while serving as director of oncology services for Tenet Healthcare, Harbison joined SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children’s Hospital in St. Louis in 2010 and filled a succession of leadership roles including interim president and chief operating officer. He joined SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital as president three years ago.

“The healthcare administration specialization readies you so that when you climb into that C-suite position, you’re better prepared to face leadership and operational challenges specific to our industry,” Harbison said. “This specialization gives MBA graduates a leg up and no doubt equips them to manage and lead through an unprecedented chapter in our nation’s healthcare systems.”

Megan Ross, a registered nurse working in the ICU and telemetry unit at SSM Health St. Mary’s, earned a bachelor’s in nursing at SIUE and chose to continue with an MBA.

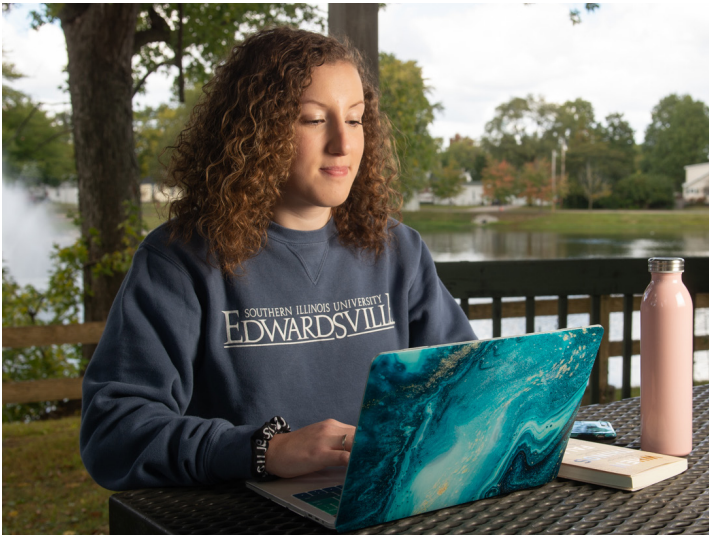
“I was specifically attracted to the healthcare specialization because of its flexibility for those like me who work full-time,” Ross said. “My goal is to eventually become a chief nursing officer or hospital president. I’ve seen the way my administration successfully handles a great number of daily challenges, especially during the last year. It’s inspiring.”



“Students pursuing this specialization realize the need for business skills in healthcare operations.”

– Janice Joplin, PhD  
MBA Program Director and Associate Dean

# Online Tutoring, Interviewing Platforms Equip Students to Succeed



*Three online platforms are actively supporting SIUE students in their studies and career opportunities. The School of Business introduced these additional resources in fall 2020 to provide remote support for students after the COVID-19 pandemic caused SIUE to shift the majority of its courses online.*

## **PitchVantage**

PitchVantage is an interactive, real-time public speaking and presentation delivery platform that coaches students in becoming strong verbal and visual communicators. Instead of using Zoom to practice and record presentations, PitchVantage gives undergraduate management students unlimited opportunities to hone their presentation skills before a simulated audience of internet bots.

“The bots provide nonverbal feedback during the presentation,” said Gloria Sweida, PhD, assistant professor of management and marketing. “For example, if a student is speaking in a monotone, the bots display disinterested facial expressions or look at their phones.”

Following the presentation, the student receives scores in 10 categories and additional feedback on areas needing improvement.

“It gives our students a safe space in which to practice becoming solid presenters,” said Sweida. “Even if students don’t go on to make official presentations regularly, the ability to learn how to be a strong communicator will still go a long way during job interviews and in other settings.”

## **Knack**

Knack is a mobile and web application connecting students who are interested in giving or receiving tutoring services. Students log in, request a tutor, specify for which course and are given a selection of available tutors to choose from. The sessions are timed and tutors are paid at an hourly rate.

“This is a time when a lot of students are still feeling disconnected and somewhat disengaged,” said Knack Co-founder and CEO Samyr Quereshi. “Knack serves as a vehicle to drive more connections between students, promote and support their individual academic success and offer an opportunity for students to earn money tutoring.”

Knack supplements the School’s on-campus tutoring program by connecting students who need tutoring with fellow SIUE students who have mastered the specific course.

## **PluggedIn**

PluggedIn is an online platform that offers students a safe and efficient place to store, save and upload their resumes and short videos when applying for jobs. Employers, alumni and students can interact directly on the platform in real time via messaging and video chat.

The platform powered six virtual hiring events for SIUE last year that supplemented the University’s traditional in-person career fairs. A total of 26 employers and 90 students participated in the virtual version of the School of Business’ annual “Meet the Firms” event.

“During the event, we captured 168 video interviews and 2,532 messages between employers and students,” said PluggedIn Founder and CEO Colleen Jenkins. “Our video-based platform empowers job candidates to demonstrate who they are and establish a strong virtual presence.”



# London Study Abroad Leads to Career Opportunities for School of Business Grad

When May 2020 School of Business graduate Matthew Healy made the decision to step out of his comfort zone and into the unknown, it transformed his life and his career.

Through SIUE's partnership with London-based Foundation for International Education (FIE), Healy spent the fall 2019 semester studying in London and interning three days a week at a real estate firm. The experience not only supported his course of study back home as a business administration major with a concentration in marketing and finance, but according to Healy, it also opened his eyes to new cultural practices, languages, foods and how to interact with different kinds of people.

"I'm from a town of 1,200 in Effingham County, Illinois," said Healy. "So when I went to SIUE, Edwardsville was a big city to me. Thanks to SIUE and FIE, I had the opportunity to live, study and work in London. It was my first experience traveling abroad. It gave me the chance to gain a broader understanding of how businesses operate and experience one of the most exciting, diverse cities in the world."

**“ I would study abroad again in a heartbeat and recommend it to anyone. Remain open minded and take the risk. You won't regret it. ”**

– Matthew Healy, BSBA '20

Healy was among 135 students nationwide FIE selected for internship placements during 2019.

Fortunately for Healy, the timing equipped him to return to the U.S. in time to interview and secure his first full-time job a few months prior to graduating—just before the pandemic struck.

"I flew to New York City in March 2020 and began interviewing for positions," said Healy. "My study abroad internship experience helped me accept a job offer in May, graduate from SIUE that same month and begin working in New York two months later."

Today, Healy is living his dream in the Big Apple as a recruitment consultant for global financial recruiting agency Selby Jennings, recruiting senior-level executives as quantitative portfolio managers. Ironically, several Londoners at Selby Jennings are now working in the company's New York office and are Healy's colleagues.

"I would study abroad again in a heartbeat and recommend it to anyone," Healy said. "Remain open minded and take the risk. You won't regret it."



# CARES Act Dollars Fuel Small Business Success Across Southern Illinois



Thanks to Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, two small businesses—a manufacturer and a retailer—are gaining expertise and technical support for their companies.

West Frankfort-based Special Mine Services (SMS) and Belleville-based Eureka’s Ware Boutique are recipients of CARES Act funding in the form of consulting services from the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the Metro East at SIUE and its International Trade Center (ITC), also at SIUE.

## Special Mine Services

“SMS, which manufactures industrial-size electrical connectors, gained expertise in identifying their top 10 export markets and received market analysis and research support from the ITC,” said Silvia Torres Bowman, ITC director. “CARES Act dollars facilitated one-on-one consulting expertise from Laurel Delaney, founder and president of GlobeTrade.com, and Paul Jarzombek, COO of LR International, Inc.”

Despite the pandemic and the loss of opportunities to attend in-person trade missions and expos, the ITC equipped SMS to participate in virtual international trade shows and connected the manufacturer with experts who helped the firm scale its operations and collect payments more efficiently from overseas customers.

“Silvia connected us with a number of valuable experts and resources,” said Marshall Girtman, international sales director at SMS. “She also assisted us in applying for ISTEP (Illinois

State Trade and Export Promotion) program grants to equip us with financial and technical assistance to increase our exports.”

According to Torres Bowman, SMS is indicative of the high caliber of small businesses that are present across the region.

“SMS is an excellent representation of the energy and deep commitment to growth that coexists among business communities in southern Illinois,” she said.

## Eureka’s Ware Boutique

When many retailers’ doors remained closed due to the pandemic, East St. Louis native Eureka Ware opened the doors of Eureka’s Ware Boutique, thanks in part to CARES Act-funded expertise from the SBDC.

SBDC consultant Devon Moody Graham instructed the boutique owner on how to grow and engage her online and storefront audiences, manage inventory, develop new revenue streams and cater to target customers through pop-up shops and special events.

Ware’s colorful boutique features handmade jewelry she creates onsite, reasonably priced clothing with a designer look, signature footwear and more.

“I’m grateful to Devon and to SBDC Director Jo Ann Di Maggio May for providing expertise when I needed it most,” Ware said. “Thanks to the SBDC, I’m learning about additional sources of funding to help me succeed.”

# Office of Internship Services Connects Students with Employers for Real-World Experience

Without a doubt, students who participate in an internship have an advantage when seeking their first job.

“You are 80% more likely to secure a full-time job with an organization if you’ve worked an internship with that firm,” said Amanda Russell, School of Business internship coordinator. “From the company’s perspective, they’ve already trained you in the job, the company culture and more. An entry-level job opportunity could well lead to further positions within that company.”

Russell works with undergraduate business majors seeking real-world experiences as they complete their coursework, helping them navigate the process of discovering and applying for internship opportunities. She’s also working intently with employers seeking young talent.

“I work with a variety of employers that are looking for bright, hard-working students ready to augment their academics with an immersive professional experience,” said Russell.

The Office of Internship Services connected more than 200 SIUE business majors with internships aligning with their program focus during the 2020-21 academic year. Many of these internships involved virtual interactions rather than in-person shadowing at the worksite, allowing students to fulfill internships with companies located beyond the St. Louis region. Russell says regardless of where the experience takes place, the rewards are evident.

“Now more than ever, future employers expect college graduates to have relevant work experience,” she said.

“Gaining hands-on experience through an internship or co-op gives students an edge over their competition.”

Senior marketing major Dayton Doering interned virtually from December 2020 through May 2021 for the professional indoor soccer team, the St. Louis Ambush. She interviewed players, created social media content and produced live fan events. When Doering’s internship concluded, she was hired full-time.

“I’ve learned much through this hands-on experience,” Doering said. “I’m grateful to the School’s Office of Internship Services for connecting me with this opportunity.”

Patrick Longo, Doering’s supervisor and chief communications and community relations officer for St. Louis Ambush, attributes her personality, genuine enthusiasm and work ethic for her spot at the top of the list of 70 internship applicants.

“Since we’re a small organization, Dayton wears plenty of hats,” Longo said. “We appreciate having Dayton onboard. She’s gaining a wealth of real-world experience.”

Russell agrees that taking knowledge acquired in the classroom and applying it to the real world rounds out students’ educational experiences. She says internships also teach students valuable soft skills such as professionalism, team-building prowess, business communications, problem-solving abilities and work ethic.

Through internships with corporations, government, small businesses and nonprofits in the St. Louis metro area, SIUE business students can find themselves positioned in many of the largest companies and fastest-growing organizations in the region.

“The School of Business works to ensure students and employers are able to connect and find quality experiences regardless of size and industry,” Russell said.



“ I’m grateful to the School’s Office of Internship Services for connecting me with this opportunity. ”

– Dayton Doering, Senior Business Administration, Marketing



Jack Pfeffer and  
Maryanne Lange-Pfeffer

## Faithful Donors Exemplify a Lifetime of Giving

School of Business donors C. Jackson “Jack” Pfeffer Jr., BSBA ’69, and Maryanne Lange-Pfeffer and Larry, MBA ’69, and Sharon Heitz learned the importance of giving from their parents.

Pfeffer’s father modeled giving by serving on the school board and giving regularly when the church offering plate came around. Lange-Pfeffer’s father, who was SIUE’s bursar, actively served and gave financially to his church.

Sharon Heitz learned how to give from the time she held her first job at 16. Her father taught Sharon and her siblings to take a dedicated amount from every paycheck and donate it to the United Way. Larry Heitz saw his parents give every Sunday at their church. Every Christmas, the Heitzes give each grandchild the funds to contribute to a charity of their choice. In 2019, Sharon Heitz took her teenage grandson to Africa to see a well that was being built because of his giving.

As all four SIUE donors raised families and honed their careers, they never forgot the impact regular giving has upon recipients and givers alike.

“We were taught from a young age onward if you see something that needs to be done, you do it,” Lange-Pfeffer said. “You do it because it’s the right thing to do.”

To that end, in 2020 the Pfeffers structured their financial giving to SIUE to establish the C. Jackson & Maryanne Pfeffer Student Excellence Endowment, which supports the School of Business and its students in myriad ways. Additionally, they sent immediate funds for technology curriculum needed when the pandemic struck. The Pfeffers’ giving also meets individual needs of hardworking students.

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**“We were taught from a young age onward if you see something that needs to be done, you do it. You do it because it’s the right thing to do.”**

– Maryanne Lange-Pfeffer  
School of Business Donor

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“SIUE means a great deal to me,” Pfeffer said. “The School of Business helped me earn my undergraduate degree and really steered my rudder on a course toward a rewarding career. Giving back makes sense.”

The Heitzes’ financial giving is manifested in many ways at SIUE, including through the Heitz Faculty Research Award, which rewards faculty for research that makes a lasting impact on society. Contributing financially to the Cougar Business Resource Center is another.

“We believe it’s important for some financial gifts to be long-lasting,” said Larry Heitz, “and for other gifts to be enacted fairly quickly and make a permanent difference in someone’s life. Our giving to the SIUE School of Business is intended to make a lasting impact upon the lives of learners and educators. We’re delighted to be able to give in this way.”



Larry and Sharon Heitz

# Heitz's Honorary Doctorate Embodies Gift of Time, Talent and Financial Support



Distinguishing true opportunities in business and service is a talent that longtime engineering executive and entrepreneur Larry Heitz has honed for decades.

Fortunately for SIUE, its faculty and students, Heitz and his wife Sharon have deemed service and support of the School of Business to be a true opportunity, demonstrating their support in time, expertise and financial gifting.

A 2021 recipient of an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from SIUE, Heitz's academic distinctions also include earning the first MBA awarded by SIUE in 1969. His service to the University is extensive and ongoing. For more than 10 years, Heitz has served as an executive in residence for the School, guest lecturing and mentoring faculty and students. In 2010, he established an annual scholarship and endowed the Heitz Faculty Research Award in 2017. He is a 2011 Alumni Hall of Fame inductee and a financial contributor to the Cougar Business Resource Center.

Over the course of his career, Heitz has developed a talent for discerning a true opportunity from one that appears strong on the surface but, in reality, is weak. He began honing this talent when professional doors opened as a result of pursuing his MBA. Heitz's MBA led to a successful career in mergers and acquisitions which involved meeting with investment bankers and industry buyers and sellers. His career also includes launching his own firm.

"My SIUE MBA gave me the chance to apply for many positions for which an MBA was a requirement," said Heitz. "The fact that I had an MBA opened the door. It taught me how to develop strategy and how to analyze financial statements of companies we considered acquiring. Higher education teaches you how to become an expert in critical analysis."

Although he and Sharon live in Phoenix, Heitz regularly visits SIUE to connect with and mentor the School's faculty and students. After Associate Dean Janice Joplin, PhD, invited him to reconnect with fellow School of Business graduates in 2009, the Heitzes hosted a dinner for SIUE alumni in their home a few years later. "That led to several opportunities for me to lend my support," he said.



Joplin agrees that meeting and reconnecting with the Heitzes has led to their tangible support of the School, its faculty and students.

"Larry and Sharon have been gracious contributors to the School of Business with time, talent and monetary contributions that improve the lives of our students," said Joplin. "We're very appreciative of the contributions they make."

# Economics Faculty Members Use Research to Broaden Healthcare Access



Two SIUE economics faculty members are harnessing their expertise to broaden access to healthcare.

Professor Ariel Belasen, PhD, and Assistant Professor Alicia Plemmons, PhD, are each collaborating with federal and state policymakers to develop and modify financial models and legislation to make healthcare less costly and more accessible.

Belasen, the third recipient of the Heitz Faculty Research Award at SIUE, searched for a research grant that led him to a fellowship with the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Innovation Center (CMMI) in 2018-2019, where he

continued to serve in an advisory capacity until March 2021.

His work included analyzing data, tracking where Medicare receipts were being billed the most and utilizing the data to develop financial models leading to patient and taxpayer cost-cutting quality measures. Belasen helped create an innovative model that empowers healthcare entities such as hospitals to manage Medicare payments on their own, competitively bidding for a portion of the billing and growing their own independent networks, and paying doctors directly for Medicare-billed services. This feature of the model is meant to deal with the long-existent Medicare overbilling problem.

“Discovering how to calculate the reimbursements to doctors, what gets covered by Medicare and which providers are eligible enabled us to target a trifold goal of reducing taxpayer costs by about \$2 billion annually, improving health outcomes for six million Medicare beneficiaries and broadening access so Medicare beneficiaries can go to more doctors and seek additional services,” said Belasen. “We’re trying different models to see how we can improve Medicare. Medicare today may look vastly different than what we see it as in the future. This financial model will roll out in January 2022.”

Another facet of Belasen’s research contributed to the development of a financial model to improve efficiency of Medicare reimbursements to dialysis clinics and nephrologists providing care to end-stage renal disease patients.

“Our goal of this financial model was to broaden Medicare access and coverage to include anyone of any age with chronic kidney disease rather than only those with end-stage renal disease,” he said. “We met with the National Kidney Foundation and leading nephrologists to create a model that satisfied the doctors and the dialysis clinics yet expanded coverage to enable patients to receive care much earlier on, hopefully avoiding the need for a kidney transplant later in life. This financial model is operating now.”

While Plemmons’ research takes a different focus, she is also working to broaden access to healthcare coverage. Her impact on bi-partisan state and federal legislation governing occupational licensing changes is making healthcare more accessible to those in rural communities.

Plemmons’ expertise is also coming into play as many states consider revamping healthcare procurement regulations that proved onerous during the pandemic.

“I’ve had the privilege of being invited to testify and advise legislators on bills specific to my research focus of occupational licensure access to healthcare by those in rural areas,” said Plemmons, who also serves as a research affiliate at the Knee Center for the Study of Occupational Regulation at the John Chambers College of Business and Economics at West Virginia University and is co-founder and leader of the Scope of Practice and Medical Licensure Research Group at the University of Central Arkansas.

Plemmons is actively serving as a consultant on nurse practitioner and other healthcare licensing issues for the state legislatures of Michigan, Arkansas, Louisiana and Utah as they craft and recraft public policy on the scope of practice and mobility of these healthcare professionals. In addition to being on call to guide state policymakers, Plemmons is also advising members of the Republican Study Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives on how to structure a bill that develops standards on periodic reviews and data collection for occupational licensing.

Several other states are utilizing Plemmons’ expertise as legislators attempt to loosen currently restrictive guidelines regarding the purchase of significant assets that require a legal document known as a certificate of need (CON).

“Large purchases such as MRIs and ventilators require a CON,” Plemmons said. “In some states, the CON requirement can delay such a purchase by 30 days or longer. During the pandemic, too many hospitals dealt with the very real impacts of these delays. I’m working with legislators and policy groups in Alaska, South Carolina and Colorado to revise bills to make the procurement process less burdensome.”



**“ I’ve had the privilege of being invited to testify and advise legislators on bills specific to my research focus of occupational licensure access to healthcare by those in rural areas. ”**

*– Alicia Plemmons, PhD  
Assistant Professor of Economics*

Plemmons’ public economics students benefit from her research, testimony and consultation in the areas of occupational licensure and CON-mandated healthcare procurement because they’re able to learn how laws have intended and unintended implications.

“My students in Economics of the Public Sector are analyzing the economic impacts of policies, laws and bills and writing policy briefs,” she said. “The experiences I’m able to share with them add perspective.”



## **ROTC Cadet Makes SIUE History as First Recipient of Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement Award**

Spring 2021 graduate Kevin Kerkemeyer is one of only 12 Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) cadets in the country to receive the ROTC's Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement Award. He is the first ROTC cadet in SIUE history to be awarded this honor.

Kerkemeyer, 22, achieved a 4.0 GPA while earning a Bachelor of Science in business administration with a specialization in computer information systems.

According to former SIUE Professor of Military Science Lt. Col. Timothy Clark, Kerkemeyer embodies the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement Award criteria of outstanding scholarship, physical fitness, leadership and citizenship/volunteerism.

"Every year we commission about 5,000 officers across eight brigades," said Clark. "There are close to 40,000 cadets in the ROTC at any given time, and up to two per brigade are eligible to receive this award. Not only has Cadet Kerkemeyer excelled academically, but he has also proven himself to be an exceptional leader. He has mastered the talent of leading through others."

Between 100-120 cadets begin the ROTC program annually at SIUE, according to Clark. That whittles down to a corps of about 75 committed cadets over the course of each school year.

"Very early on, Cadet Kerkemeyer's dedication to the program during early mornings and late nights, through good weather and bad, was evident," said Clark. "Being an active member of



one's team—participating in on-the-ground, direct-level leadership decisions—is critical. As cadets move up in the program every year, an increasing degree of leadership is expected. Cadet Kerkemeyer emerged as a leader made of grit and character. Leadership is a science and an art. He has the X factor of both.”

Kerkemeyer's evidence of physical fitness excellence manifested in his score of 570 out of 600 on the Army Combat Fitness Test on his first try. To put this score in perspective, only two individuals out of hundreds of thousands have scored a perfect 600. “His score is likely in the top 10% of the entire Army,” Clark said.

While striving to achieve excellence in all categories, the SIUE cadet has done so with a leadership mindset, according to Clark.

“He is an individually high performer, capable of leading himself,” said Clark, “but Cadet Kerkemeyer is also a ‘right place, right time, right uniform, right attitude’ individual with charisma, to whom peers look for leadership and motivation. As a platoon sergeant during his junior year, he was the direct-level leader of about 40 cadets, responsible for executing the day-to-day tasks and short-term planning for that group. He displayed a keen problem-solving ability and the rare ability to lead through others. This position allowed him to master direct leadership and employ a hands-on, participatory leadership style.”

Clark selected Kerkemeyer to serve as chief of operations during the cadet's senior year. “This put him in charge of planning and coordinating everything the battalion did and required him to learn how to work through others to develop a delegator-mentor style of leadership,” Clark said.

Anne Powell, PhD, professor and chair of the Department of Computer Management and Information Systems (CMIS), has seen fewer than 20 CMIS students achieve a 4.0 GPA out of 800 students over the 20 years she has worked at SIUE.

“Kevin is the hard worker,” Powell said. “He's the one who is going to take everything he has been given and get everything out of it. He is built of perseverance, hard work and dedication.”

Kerkemeyer credits the ROTC program and his academic courses at SIUE for equipping him with a bright future as a U.S. Army officer and leader.

“The ROTC actively develops you as a leader,” he said. “It puts you in key leadership positions among your peers. You fail a lot, and you learn by trial and error how to become a strong leader. I've also learned how to develop my own personal leadership style, which is hands-on. I've learned how to step back and lead through subordinate leaders, and to develop them so they can lead through others.”

Kerkemeyer identifies retired aviation officer, Vietnam veteran and SIUE CMIS instructor Jim Mussulman as a role model and mentor.

Citizenship/volunteerism is another facet of the national ROTC recognition in which Kerkemeyer excels. When he returned home to St. Charles, Mo. during the summers, the cadet faithfully volunteered at Oasis Food Pantry. This followed service during his high school years at the St. Louis Area Foodbank.



Kerkemeyer was commissioned on campus May 8. Two weeks following his commissioning at SIUE, he reported to temporary duty at Fort Knox, a U.S. Army installation in northern Kentucky. Choosing aviation as his Army branch, Kerkemeyer then moved to Fort Rucker in southeastern Alabama to fulfill his basic officer leader course.

At his commissioning ceremony, Kerkemeyer and his fellow cadets received a special coin Clark presented to all SIUE ROTC cadets at their commissioning. The coin bears the words, “endure and conquer.”

“It's a message that says, ‘Don't quit on yourself too early,’” Clark said. “When cadets can internalize that, anything is possible.”

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- Peer-to-Peer Tutoring
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