

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
EDWARDSVILLE

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES



DEAN'S REPORT

2021

Students, staff and faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) weathered the storm of risk and uncertainty during the 2020-21 academic year. Most of our classes were offered online, although students still came to campus for science labs and many courses in art, theater and dance. While students and faculty adjusted to the online learning environment, some students even discovered the online format enabled them to participate more actively in class discussions.

Throughout the year, we kept each other safe from COVID-19. Masks and social distancing were required in all indoor spaces on the campus. Only 3% of SIUE's more than 15,000 students, staff and faculty tested positive during the nine-month period, and no positive test resulted from interactions in classrooms, studios or laboratories.

The fall of 2021 has been different, even though the number of COVID-19 cases began increasing again in the summer. Most students, staff and faculty have returned to campus to learn, work and teach. More than half of the courses in CAS have a face-to-face component. Everyone continues to make health and safety their top priorities. We all continue to wear masks and maintain social distance in all campus buildings. It is exhilarating to see the campus buzzing with activity and excitement as faculty introduce their students to new ideas and research methods.

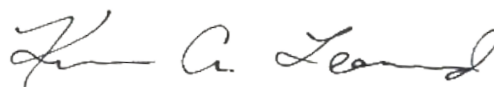
The return of some normalcy on our campus can be attributed, in part, to a few of our outstanding alumni who played important roles in the development of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. You can read their stories on page 10 of this report.

In my first year as dean, I focused on listening and learning about CAS. I met virtually with faculty and staff in most departments, and I met individually with many staff, faculty and department chairs. I gained a meaningful appreciation of CAS' history, its dedication to excellence and the challenges it faces.

In the 2021-22 academic year, I will be working with staff and faculty to achieve the goals identified in our strategic plan. Our first goal is to improve recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff and students. Last year, we made competency in promoting equity, diversity and inclusion a qualification for applicants for tenure-track faculty positions, and our hiring increased the diversity of our faculty. However, we still have much work to do. The CAS Diversity and Inclusion Committee will begin working this year to identify concrete actions that will lead to greater success in recruitment and retention of faculty, staff and students from underrepresented communities.

CAS has continued to thrive despite the pandemic, as evidenced by the growing number of scholarships established and the honors and awards our students, faculty and alumni have received. You can learn more about these scholarships and awards and their deserving recipients on page 6.

I hope the 2021 holiday season brings you and your family good health and happiness. Thank you for your commitment to our students, faculty and programs!



KEVIN LEONARD, PHD
Dean



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.

CAS fulfills this mission with our exceptional teacher-scholars, who provide innovative experiential learning opportunities; our excellent degree programs; and the outstanding liberal arts and sciences foundation we provide for undergraduate students across the University.

CAS promotes scholarly and creative activity, community engagement and public service, and cultural and arts programming, all of the finest quality.

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

CAS is excited to announce several new academic programs added to better serve our students:

Department of Chemistry and School of Pharmacy Partnership

- Bachelor of Science, Pharmaceutical Chemistry Specialization

Department of Political Science and Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis

- Bachelor's in Political Science and Master of Public Administration Accelerated Combined Degree

Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis

- Master of Public Administration Fully Online Option
- Professional Leadership Strategies Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

Department of Social Work

- School Social Work Post-Master's Certificate

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SOCIAL MEDIA

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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.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE PERFORMING ARTS THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique set of obstacles for the College of Arts and Sciences' performing arts students, faculty and staff. Despite the challenges with technological teaching and a socially distanced way of learning, SIUE's *Arts & Issues* series, the Department of Theater and Dance, and the Department of Music continued to thrive. Each program developed creative ways to provide enriching and engaging entertainment for the SIUE community and beyond.

SIUE's *Arts & Issues*

As the summer of 2020 approached, it was clear that live in-person performances were unlikely to occur. The program had to quickly and creatively determine how to pivot to a virtual setting.

"In April 2021, *Arts & Issues* finished the season with the filmed concert 'Iron and Coal,'" said *Arts & Issues* Director **Grant Andree**. "With the local connection of composer Jeremy Schonfeld and his father, and the tie-in with Jewish American Heritage Month in May, it was a great way to end the season. The concert included hundreds of performers in two choirs, an orchestra, a rock band, plus many others, and would have been impossible for us to present live. With this beautifully filmed version, we could afford to stream the production."

Other *Arts & Issues* virtual events included "Living the Legacy to Empower the Future" with speaker and author **Ilyasah Shabazz**, Malcolm X's daughter; "The Matrix of Race-Fostering Social Change and Justice" with sociologist and CAS sociology alumnus **Rodney Coates '75**; Manual Cinema's "Christmas Carol" and Third Coast Percussion, a Grammy Award-winning Chicago-based percussion quartet.

Department of Theater and Dance

The Department of Theater and Dance performed both indoors and outdoors with a limited audience during the 2020-21 academic year. Staying healthy was essential for members of these performances, as one positive COVID-19 test would result in a quarantine for the entire cast. Faculty quickly created a plan to keep as many classes face-to-face as possible through proper spacing and face mask usage. The pandemic created a learning opportunity for faculty and staff, who were required to conduct much of their work virtually through digital auditions for both acting and dance, digital portfolios, and livestreaming events for the first time.

"It is clear that many aspects of the theater and dance world are headed online in the future, and the pandemic forced us to jumpstart our offerings and knowledge of the format," explained **Chuck Harper**, professor and department chair. "Three of our major events that took place this past year were 'The Tragical Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood in the Land of the Wolf King,' 'Winter Dance Film Festival,' and 'Design and Devise.' All three were presented online via livestream."

Department of Music

Teaching music online can be a difficult task, because learning an instrument or voice is a hands-on experience and requires direct feedback from an instructor. In the 2020-21 academic year, the Department of Music began offering some socially distanced lessons in person, in addition to online lessons. Ensemble rehearsals also went ahead, though challenges included difficulty hearing one another due to distancing and shorter rehearsals for wind players due to aerosol concerns.

While there were no live concerts, each ensemble created a YouTube channel to archive their performances, including a 50-minute Beethoven symphony. Recorded over two sessions that took place a month apart, students were able to play with their peers in a way that felt normal.

"Student recitals took place with mostly only close family in attendance, but we were able to livestream," said **Michael Mishra**, director of orchestra and former department chair. "We ended up with quite a fruitful, if unusual, performance year, and these recordings became our point of contact with the community."





RUCKH AND DEGROOT CO-CHAIR THE ACADEMIC CONTINUITY TASK FORCE

In an effort to both support academic excellence and preserve the health and safety of the campus community during the COVID-19 pandemic, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs **Denise Cobb, PhD**, along with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, appointed **Eric Ruckh, PhD**, director of the Honors Program and associate professor in the Department of History, and **Josie DeGroot, PhD**, professor and assistant chair in the Department of Applied Communication Studies, co-chairs of the Academic Continuity Task Force (ACTF) in April 2020.

The ACTF consisted of 32 staff and faculty members from across the campus. To make the most informed decisions possible, the ACTF first divided into subgroups to gather information about the spring 2020 semester from students, faculty and staff. While brainstorming curriculum plans for the 2020-21 academic year and fall 2021 semester, the various teams consulted with Information Technology Services on the technological feasibility of their ideas.

“First and foremost, we were focused on safety,” explained DeGroot. “We wanted to be flexible and fair as we planned to have a wide range of plans for curriculum delivery, while still meeting the requirements for accreditation and academics.”

They continued to research and offer recommendations on several topics, such as options for course modalities; strategies and procedures for the coming academic year; support for new, returning and transfer students; continuity of research; sabbatical policy; tenure and promotion policy; and the use of student evaluations of teaching.

“We were asked to think about how to safely and effectively deliver the curriculum for the upcoming academic year,” Ruckh stated. “We were also asked how to maintain and onboard first-year students while sustaining and continuing to support returning students. One of the most important contributions, however, was to introduce the language and encourage the practice of grace.”

**CAS' HARRIS AND TAYLOR
APPOINTED SIUE VICE CHANCELLORS**

Both of SIUE's newest vice chancellors came from academic homes within the College of Arts and Sciences.



**VICE CHANCELLOR FOR EQUITY,
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Jessica Harris, PhD, was selected as SIUE's first vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion (VCEDI) in spring 2021. Harris previously was named assistant provost for academic equity and inclusive excellence in the SIUE Office of the Provost in 2020 after serving as the interim assistant provost for the previous two years. An SIUE faculty member since 2011, Harris has served as an associate professor in the Department of History and director of the interdisciplinary Black Studies program. She helped initiate SIUE's Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) and is a member of the core planning team for the SIUE Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center.

The VCEDI serves an integral role in two important current initiatives—the ARTF and the Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative focusing on anti-racism. Harris also works closely with the SIU System and its new vice president for diversity, as well as the Diversity Advisory Council. One of Harris' earliest tasks has been to realign and fold existing offices and positions into the new VCEDI unit.



**VICE CHANCELLOR
FOR ADMINISTRATION**

Morris Taylor Jr., PhD, began his role as the University's vice chancellor for administration (VCA) in October 2020. A 1992 graduate of SIUE's Master of Public Administration program, he previously served as an associate professor in the Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis for more than 20 years and as the department chair for six years. Taylor also chaired SIUE's University Planning and Budget Council, which provides guidance directly to the Chancellor on current and long-term financial concerns. He was also a longtime member of the St. Louis Area Regional Response System (STARRS), a consortium of key public and private organizations that address critical security needs in the region.

Before joining SIUE, Taylor was an administrator with the Social Security Administration and worked as a law enforcement officer in St. Louis City and County. These experiences are beneficial to the VCA position, which oversees the critical infrastructure of the University, including planning and budgeting, human resources, financial affairs, administrative services, facilities management and public safety.

FEDERER RETIRES AFTER LEADING CAS COPY SERVICE FOR 25 YEARS

Tina Federer estimates the CAS Copy Service duplicated or scanned a staggering 87.5 million documents during her 25 years supervising the area. Class assignments, tests, syllabi, lab books and event programs were common in the office, along with her cooperative spirit and institutional memory of SIUE's largest academic unit.

Federer hung up her crown as "Copy Goddess" when she retired in April 2021. She was hired as an operator in March 1996, less than one year after CAS was founded at SIUE. Administrators decided a centralized office to make copies would reduce costs and increase efficiency for the new academic unit.

"When I was hired, copiers were very low tech," Federer said. "We started out with an analog copier that made 75 copies a minute, and my computer still used the large floppy disks. Technology has changed and now the copiers are digital."

The CAS Copy Service has increasingly moved toward making digital files for faculty and departments rather than hard copy files. Current copiers "scan 110 pages a minute in color and place them in a PDF file that can be emailed to the faculty to place on Blackboard," Federer said. Equipment also can produce stapled booklets and punched copies that can be spiral bound.

Over the past two and a half decades, Federer supervised more than 75 student workers. "Quite a few of them still stay in touch with me and share all of their milestones," she said. Her last group of student employees connected with their predecessors to compile a special retirement gift for Federer.

Federer was in close contact with many faculty and staff throughout CAS and became a resource person who was often in the know. "I do have a lot of stories," she said. "I have often said that I should have started writing a book when I was hired. The happenings on campus would have made a great sitcom. Perhaps the most shocking story would be when the campus was shut down because of the pandemic. I will never forget the anxiety and apprehension we all experienced." Federer says the benefits of retirement include not relying on an alarm clock in the mornings and spending more time with her grandchildren. She also hopes to travel with her husband when the COVID-19 pandemic recedes.



**SCHOLARSHIPS SUPPORT
NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT'S
PURSUIT OF HER DREAMS**

Dana McLennan exemplifies her belief that it's never too late to live your dreams. The 47-year-old will earn a bachelor's in mass communications with a journalism concentration in December 2021.

"I am not your typical college student," she said. "I have children who could themselves be attending college at this very moment. I have grandchildren who are saving for their future education."

Two generous scholarships helped lighten McLennan's financial load in the 2020-21 academic year. She received both the Rising Communicators Scholarship and the Buezetta Meyer and Charlot Hentz Scholarship.

Brian Henry, BS mass communications '95, established the Rising Communicators Scholarship in 2018 to benefit students in his former program. Hentz's scholarship was created through an estate gift following her death in 2001. She graduated in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in English and had a 50-year career in the advertising field.

"Receiving these scholarships meant the world to me, because I have worked hard toward my education," said McLennan, who has been a cosmetologist for the past 20 years.

McLennan has continued working full time while attending college and raising three children. She enrolled at SIUE in 2020 after completing an associate's degree at Southwestern Illinois College.

In spring 2020 shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic began, McLennan found herself without a regular source of income as businesses closed during the stay-at-home order in Illinois. Later that year, an injury surfaced which further limited her ability to work and reduced her income to a fraction of what it had been previously. The scholarship support McLennan received allowed her to stay in college and concentrate on completing her bachelor's degree.

"I have always wanted to be a writer and a journalist," she said. "I am so happy to have not backed down from my dreams. This financial support has allowed me to stay focused on that dream uninterrupted." McLennan also appreciates the opportunity to push herself in new directions through her journey of lifelong learning. After graduation, she plans to continue her internship in publishing and eventually start her own company.

"I envision creating a company that seeks new authors and unheard-of talent," she shared. "I aim to showcase voices that young people can see themselves in by publishing fiction that not only entertains readers, but also empowers them.

"I also want to support and advocate for proper access to reading materials in low-income neighborhoods and school systems. Reading molded my childhood and is something I am very passionate about, because it fueled my desire to educate myself and continually push for my dreams."



NEW ENDOWMENT TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN STEM

Alumnus **Jim McPike** and his wife **Julie** have created a scholarship endowment with an initial gift of \$432,000 to support students in STEM.

The scholarship will cover one year of tuition and fees for junior or senior students, with preference given to qualifying women majoring in math, science or engineering within the College of Arts and Sciences or the School of Engineering.

McPike, who earned a master's in economics at SIUE in 1974 and served as the Majority Leader in the Illinois House of Representatives from 1983-95, donated his remaining political account funds to support the endowment.

“Mr. and Mrs. McPike’s generosity will advance CAS’ strategic goal of improving the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty, staff and students to enhance an inclusive environment,” said CAS Dean **Kevin Leonard, PhD**. “Their support will make it easier for individuals with financial need to pursue degrees in STEM fields.”

McPike resides in his hometown of Alton with Julie, who has worked in the science and technology field for over 30 years. He was honored with the SIUE Distinguished Alumni Award in 1985.



Vice Chancellor for University Advancement Rachel Stack and Rep. Jim McPike '74



To learn more about creating a scholarship for CAS students, contact **Kyle Moore**, senior director of development:

@ kymoore@siue.edu

📞 618-650-5048

Give online

🌐 siue.edu/give-now/cas

NEW COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES SCHOLARSHIPS

- Greg and Mary Ann Budzban Scholarship for Data Analysis
- Airman David Lee Jenkins Scholarship
- Jeffrey Kleckner Memorial Scholarship in Pottery
- Donald G. Loucks Music Education Scholarship
- Jim and Julie McPike Scholarship
- Jan S. Moore Memorial Scholarship
- Linda Perry Piano Performance Scholarship
- Dr. Regulus Scholarship
- David Seligman Environmental Philosophy Scholarship
- George Soule Scholarship in English
- Jonathan McOwan Theatre Explorer Scholarship
- Barbara Tirre-Regnell Scholarship in Broadcast Journalism



DEPEW NAMED ILLINOIS STUDENT VETERAN OF THE YEAR

Amanda Depew is dedicated to positively impacting the lives of women veterans like herself. A veteran of the U.S. Air Force, Depew earned a Master of Social Work at SIUE in August 2021. She was named Illinois' 2020 Student Veteran of the Year in recognition of her incredible perseverance and fierce commitment to veterans.

"My own life experiences are what make community service important to me," Depew shared. "I have been the homeless veteran, when my family and I found ourselves homeless within a year of my separation from the Air Force. I have dealt with, battled and won against suicide, substance abuse and mental health issues. I've pretty much been the poster child of nearly all of the negative things a veteran can go through after transitioning from the military back into civilian life."

Depew has been an integral part of SIUE's Office of Military and Veteran Services, the SIUE East St. Louis Center TRIO Veterans Upward Bound program, and the SIUE Chapter of the Student Veterans of America. Depew also has educated administrators, faculty and staff about the challenges encountered by student veterans.

The motivated influencer is co-founder of Women Veterans of the St. Louis Area, a group focused on servicing and mentoring women veterans in St. Louis and the Metro East.

"It's important for me to ensure as many veterans as possible avoid those experiences," said Depew about her own transition back to civilian life. "But, if there is a veteran going through any of those challenges, I want to be there to walk alongside them and see them through."



PERKINS USES METALSMITHING TO ILLUSTRATE RESEARCH IN U.S. RACE RELATIONS

Kylea Perkins, BA art studio '21, had the opportunity to stretch her creative limits as an associate in SIUE's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) program during the 2020-21 academic year. The result was a project that combined her passion for metalsmithing with her research on U.S. race relations.

"Since my sophomore year, I've been making work around the subject of race relations in U.S. history," Perkins said. For her URCA project, she researched the ideas and conceptual meanings behind chains and their significance in the Black community, discovering parallels between slavery and hip hop.

"In slavery, African Americans were exploited by white Americans for capital gain," she noted. "We see the same thing happening in hip hop."

The aesthetic connections between the chains of slavery and chains of hip hop piqued Perkins' interest about the financial and racial parallels of the two subjects.

"Chains have historically been used to control prisoners or slaves as a tool of bondage," Perkins said. "Blacks began to reclaim large chains and use them as an indicator of their wealth and success, which leads me down a rabbit hole of interesting questions about perceived value, material wealth and racial hierarchy."

To illustrate her research, Perkins hand-fabricated a large, four-chain necklace with thick copper grounding wire. "I wanted this necklace to be extremely heavy and uncomfortable, like its subject matter," she said. "I like to use copper as an analogy for Blacks, because we rely on it as a building material, but we don't value it in the same way as a precious metal like silver."

SIUE STUDENT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

The SIUE Office of Student Employment has named College of Arts and Sciences students as its Student Employee of the Year for the past two years. The award celebrates the accomplishments and contributions of the University's student employees.

2021 AMANDA MORGAN

Senior, Political Science and Sociology
Student Worker, STEM Center

2020 JASON PAPPAS

BS Integrative Studies, Applied Communication Studies and Sociology '20
Graduate Student, College Student Personnel Administration
Graduate Assistant for Marketing and Intramurals, Campus Recreation

2021 ALUMNI HALL OF FAME HONOREES

On September 23, two remarkable CAS alumni 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.



JESSICA MCCASKILL, BA MASS COMMUNICATIONS '06

Jessica “CasKILLA” McCaskill made her professional boxing debut in 2015. In the lightweight division, she earned the rank of number one female in the U.S. and number three in the world. Based in Chicago, McCaskill made history as the first female to headline in the state of Illinois. She has achieved numerous accolades, including being named *The Ring* magazine’s 2018 Most Inspirational Fighter after winning her first World Boxing Council title, and World Boxing News’ 2020 Women’s Fighter of the Year. McCaskill was featured in the 2018 Amazon Prime documentary, “Making McCaskill.” After moving to the welterweight division, she became the unified and undisputed welterweight champion in 2020. McCaskill is one of only three female fighters holding the undisputed title.



BILL LAND, BA MASS COMMUNICATIONS '73

Bill Land is the television play-by-play announcer for the San Antonio Spurs, where he has spent 18 years and earned three NBA titles. Land’s announcing career spans 17 sports, from basketball and baseball to water polo and power tumbling. From 1988-2016, Land served as the television sports announcer and program host for Fox Sports Net, where he covered play-by-play in the Big XII Conference, Major League Soccer and Texas Rangers baseball. Other notable accomplishments from his more than 40-year career include serving as sports director at radio and TV stations in Wichita, Kan. and Tulsa, Okla. During those years, Land was the play-by-play voice of Wichita State University, Oral Roberts University and the University of Tulsa.

BELTON TAPPED AS HUFFPOST EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CAS alumna **Danielle Belton '99** was appointed editor-in-chief at HuffPost in April 2021. Reflecting on her time as an undergraduate in the Department of Mass Communications and as editor of SIUE’s student newspaper *The Alestle*, Belton said it prepared her for the reality and competitiveness of journalism.

According to Belton, working at *The Alestle* “gave me a tougher skin. When I would get hate mail over my column or things we wrote about, I would cry and cry to my mother about how awful people were. I worked on controlling my emotions and the effect others had over me. Over time, the criticism and hate mail bothered me less and less. By the time I was a reporter in Bakersfield, Calif. I was fairly tough and ready for all the hate the internet can bring, so very little affects me.”

Prior to joining HuffPost, Belton worked as editor-in-chief for *The Root* and was the creator and writer of the award-winning blog, *The Black Snob*.

“As someone from the Midwest who was not connected and didn’t know anyone in the industry, I knew I’d have to blaze my own trail,” Belton explained. “Being grounded in reality really helped and that’s what SIUE did for me, along with training me, teaching me and preparing me for the field.”



ALUMNI MAKE AN IMPACT AT PFIZER DURING THE PANDEMIC

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many SIUE alumni have had an impact on the development of the Pfizer vaccine, whether directly working on vaccine production or by supporting other important initiatives while vaccine development continued to take place. As each dose begins production at Pfizer's Chesterfield, Mo. campus, the employees have been instrumental in the initial phases of development. Here are the stories of five College of Arts and Sciences alumni and Pfizer employees who played a role in supporting the development of the vaccine and other medicines for patients around the world.

QI LIU, MS CHEMISTRY '12 ▶

SCIENTIST, PROJECT PROGRESSION LINE
IN ANALYTICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Qi Liu joined Pfizer full time in 2016 after beginning as a contractor in 2015. During his time at SIUE, he gained extensive research experience and knowledge, but according to Liu, the most important skills he gained were teamwork and problem-solving skills.

"I am currently working on the AAV Gene Therapy projects to ensure the analytical data delivery to our Bioprocess Research and Development Department in a timely manner to meet the project timeline," said Liu.

"I also manage the analytical assays transfer to our partner lines to support the clinical trial manufacturing material testing results.

"I supported the plasmid sequencing analysis for the COVID-19 vaccine using the Next-Generation Sequence technique. I feel proud for working at Pfizer during the pandemic. I believe this is the time for scientists to innovate the vaccine to save people's lives."



◀ ANDRE CHAMBERS, BS BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES '10

SCIENTIST, CELL LINE DEVELOPMENT IN
BIOPROCESS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Andre Chambers' primary responsibilities involve advancing the portfolio of biotherapeutics through the development pipeline; researching and developing new technical methods to be used to optimize current processes; mentoring and training; and acting as the technical lead on cross-functional teams for projects. He credits his preparedness and success to the professors and those who curated the curriculum at SIUE.

"I was fortunate to be asked to work on the vaccine development in May 2020," said Chambers. "This effort was the most collaborative I have ever been a part of in my career to date. I executed on my specific technical portion of the vaccine development in conjunction with numerous other scientists, engineers and technicians. We all had a sense of the gravity of our end goal, and I'm proud to say my colleagues and I worked tirelessly toward that goal and ultimately achieved it."





◀ **JACQUELYNN SMITH, BS BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES '08**

SENIOR SCIENTIST, MASS SPECTROMETRY AND BIOPHYSICAL CHARACTERIZATION IN ANALYTICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Jacquelynn Smith began working with Pfizer in 2012 in protein sciences. During her time at SIUE, she worked in the greenhouse and The Gardens at SIUE. She was also chosen as an Undergraduate Research Academy scholar, where she worked on a research project with a principal investigator while pursuing a bachelor's degree. She credits these experiences in helping her prepare for a career in research and plant science.

"I supported the COVID-19 vaccine by reviewing and verifying data while simultaneously supporting an oncology project that has the potential to help so many people," said Smith. "I am responsible for supporting the characterization of vaccines, monoclonal antibodies and other modalities by Mass Spectrometry and Liquid Chromatography. I am responsible for characterizing various early and late stage programs."

ALAN JEFFERSON, BS CHEMISTRY '19, BA SPANISH '19 ▶

ASSOCIATE SCIENTIST, PHARMACEUTICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Alan Jefferson began working full-time with Pfizer after becoming a contractor in 2020. He is responsible for developing formulations to support experimental studies for various projects. Jefferson noted his education with SIUE provided a solid base of scientific knowledge and principles he currently uses in his role, as well as good documentation and lab practices that are needed to succeed in the industry.

"While the project team I work on does not directly deal with the COVID-19 vaccine, we are currently working on a vaccine for another disease which is not yet in production but currently in phase III of the development process," said Jefferson. "My job mainly deals with process development—making formulations to support studies that have a direct impact on production."



◀ **MARK POLLO, BA BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES '83, MS BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES '88**

MANAGER, GLOBAL CHEMISTRY, MANUFACTURING AND CONTROLS IN GLOBAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Mark Pollo develops next-generation protein therapeutics called antibody-drug conjugates, which have been shown to target tumor cells while sparing healthy cells, resulting in increased effectiveness for treating cancers with fewer side effects than traditional chemotherapy. He credits his time at SIUE for preparing him with a solid foundation in the life sciences and essential job skills in the areas of leadership, communication and critical thinking, as well as instilling in him a lifelong passion for learning.

"In a small but critical contribution to development of the COVID-19 vaccine, I provided testing to understand the cause of a difference observed when scaling up one of the many manufacturing steps," said Pollo. "It's humbling to recognize that only through the contributions of thousands of professionals supporting vaccine development, manufacturing, shipping and administration, thousands of lives have been saved from COVID-19."



SIUE CELEBRATES ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF CAS FACULTY

Several CAS faculty earned awards at the University level over the past year for their research and scholarly work that have made a significant impact not only on their teaching practices, but also on the broader community and world.



2021 PAUL SIMON OUTSTANDING TEACHER-SCHOLAR AWARD

JASON STACY, PHD
Professor, Department of History

This award recognizes a faculty member for being an outstanding teacher and researcher and for demonstrating the belief that to be a good teacher one must also be a good scholar. Stacy is a key contributor to work done by the grant-funded Walt Whitman Archive, which makes the poet’s work accessible to scholars, students and researchers worldwide. Along with his colleagues, he started an online encyclopedia and digital archive for Madison County, Ill. that has involved numerous undergraduate and graduate students.

2021-22 VAUGHNIE LINDSAY NEW INVESTIGATOR AWARD



ASHTON SPENO, PHD
Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communications



DEBORAH SELLNOW-RICHMOND, PHD
Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Communication Studies

This award recognizes faculty members whose research has the promise of making significant contributions to their fields of study, their respective school/department and to SIUE in general. The award will support Sellnow-Richmond’s research project titled “Strategic Messaging to Address the Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic among Health Disparities and Vulnerable Populations,” and Speno’s project titled “An Examination of the Intersection of Gender and Race in Tween Television Programming.”

2021-23 HOPPE RESEARCH PROFESSOR AWARD

ADRIANA MARTINEZ, PHD
Associate Professor, Department of Geography and Geographic Information Sciences and Department of Environmental Sciences

This award recognizes and supports SIUE faculty members whose research or creative activities have the promise of making significant contributions to their field of study. It will support Martinez’s project titled “The Hydrological Impacts of the U.S.-Mexico Border Fence along the Rio Grande River, Texas.”



CODES PROJECT SECURES \$100K NEH GRANT

SIUE has received \$100,000 in funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for its project “CODES: Community-Oriented Digital Engagement Scholars.” CODES is a three-year project that will implement a general education pathway to introduce underserved students to digital community engagement.

“Designed for first-generation, Black, Latinx and/or Pell-eligible students, CODES aims to help students understand the integral role of the humanities in transdisciplinary problem solving at the earliest stages of their college careers,” said **Jessica DeSpain, PhD**, professor in the Department of English Language and Literature and co-director of the SIUE Interdisciplinary Research and Informatics Scholarship (IRIS) Center, who serves as the project’s principal investigator (PI).

Connie Frey Spurlock, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Sociology and director of the SIUE Successful Communities Collaborative (SSCC) is the co-PI. Additional SIUE faculty on the project include **Jessica Harris, PhD**, vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion, and **Howard Rambsy, PhD**, professor in the Department of English Language and Literature. CODES is a collaboration with Lewis and Clark Community College.

DeSpain will handle most of the project’s curricular design and administration, while Frey Spurlock will focus on building community partnerships. The first cohort of CODES scholars will begin in fall 2022 and will work in small research teams that focus on a seemingly unsolvable problem, such as climate change or poverty’s manifestations across rural and urban environments.

“Embedded with community organizations, students will learn how to engage ethically and effectively in digital and face-to-face environments, a skill the humanities are uniquely equipped to address,” explained DeSpain. “Research team courses are designed to focus on the problem first and give students hands-on experience with essential 21st century career skills, including creative problem-solving, collaboration, ethical literacy and adaptability.”



SABBY JOINS DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IN \$3M SPACE INITIATIVE

SIUE has joined the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) for a three-year, multi-institutional collaborative: “Expanding the Pipeline and Enhancing Education of Students Pursuing Careers in Space.” The project has been funded by a \$3 million grant awarded through the Department of Defense’s National Defense Education Program.

SIUE will manage a \$900,000 subaward under the direction of Principal Investigator (PI) and Senior Scientist **Jeffrey Sabby, PhD**, associate professor in the Department of Physics. The School of Engineering’s **Michael Denn, PhD**, instructor in the Department of Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering, is a contributing professor and co-PI of SIUE’s subaward.

This project involves the creation of an integrated set of educational resources focused on space and the strategic implementation of these resources in undergraduate and K-12 classrooms, as well as at outreach events, teacher training events and workshops.

“The types of educational resources we plan to develop have been shown to greatly enhance student foundational knowledge, hands-on capabilities and overall engineering design aptitude,” explained Sabby. “They have also been shown to enhance student interest in STEM and the pursuit of STEM as a career choice.”

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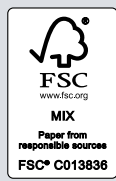
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