

SIUE's Healthcare Diversity Summer Camp nominated for Arcus Award

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE - The **St. Louis Regional Chamber** has yet again honored **Southern Illinois University Edwardsville** in its **Arcus Awards program**. This year, the **University's Healthcare Diversity Summer Camp** is a finalist in the Inclusion and Talent Attraction category.

The fourth annual [Arcus Awards](#), presented by RubinBrown LLP, will honor companies, organizations and institutions that are operating to make the St. Louis region a better place to live, work and invest. Winners will be announced live on stage. Networking begins at 5 p.m. and the program ceremony is at 6:45 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23 at the Hyatt Regency St. Louis at the Arch.

Vote for your business of choice at [arcusawards.com](#). Voting lasts until noon, Wednesday, Feb. 22. Businesses are competing in their respective categories and all nominees compete for the People's Choice Award.

“The purpose of the camp is to inspire and expose minority high school students in the region to healthcare careers they may have never considered nor thought were attainable,” said Lakesha Butler, PharmD, camp coordinator and School of Pharmacy clinical associate professor.

SIUE’s Schools of Nursing and Pharmacy, and the SIU School of Dental Medicine (SDM) have been working together for more than five years to offer the summer camp for area minority high school students.

The Healthcare Diversity Summer Camp extends across disciplines, the professions of nursing, pharmacy and dental medicine collaborate to promote the health sciences, added Jerrica Ampadu, PhD, assistant professor, Primary Care/Health Systems in the School of Nursing.

“Research shows that minority healthcare professionals are more likely to practice in medically underserved areas, which results in improved access to healthcare,” Butler continued. “Therefore, the lack of current and future minority pharmacists needed to serve the growing minority population will continue to have a profound impact on the health and well-being of our nation.

“We identified a problem of low minority representation in our healthcare professional schools, then we developed a solution in this pipeline program that is significantly promoting a diverse healthcare field in our region and beyond through exposure, education and experience.”

“The Camp enriches our region by providing a service where we can make a positive change for students to achieve,” said Cornell C. Thomas, DDS, assistant dean for Admissions and Student Services at SDM. “The camp exposes students to higher education, helps them overcome obstacles, allows them to interact with others and have hands-on experiences. It also allows them to gain insight into what treating patients is really like. The SIU system is a powerful institution and is involved in central and southern Illinois and the metropolitan region of St. Louis. We are making a difference that is good for all.”

“Participating in summer camp increases access to nursing and nursing opportunities for minority high school students,” Ampadu said. “By providing access to nursing, pharmacy and dental medicine, we are preparing students to live in a diverse society and to care for the most vulnerable populations.”

[About the St. Louis Regional Chamber](#): We are a broad community of leaders united for economic prosperity throughout the entire St. Louis bi-state region. Our aspiration is for St. Louis to be one of the Top 10 US regions in prosperity by 2025 as measured by

selected economic indicators. Our one purpose is to inspire a greater St. Louis. Together, we will make St. Louis a more attractive place for people to live, work and invest. We will win on today's regional strengths in focused economic clusters: financial services, health, multimodal logistics and biosciences. We will champion a better tomorrow through community leadership on three priorities: greater educational attainment, inclusion and talent attraction, entrepreneurship and innovation. We will help unite the public and private sectors to advance and secure policy necessary to support our plan.

Today's pharmacists improve patients' lives through the medication and education they provide. Dedicated to developing a community of caring pharmacists, the [SIUE School of Pharmacy](#) curriculum is nationally recognized as a model that offers students a unique combination of classroom education, research, community service and patient care. The School of Pharmacy's areas of excellence include a drug design and discovery core; pediatric practice; chronic pain research and practice; and diabetes research and practice. As the only downstate Illinois pharmacy doctorate program, the SIUE School of Pharmacy is addressing the growing need for highly trained pharmacists in a rapidly growing field.

The [SIUE School of Nursing's](#) fully accredited programs are committed to creating excellence in nursing leadership through innovative teaching, evidence-based practice, quality research, patient advocacy and community service. Enrolling nearly 1,300 students in its baccalaureate, master's and doctoral programs, the School develops leaders in pursuit of shaping the nursing profession and impacting the health care environment. SIUE's undergraduate nursing programs on the Edwardsville campus and the regional campus in Carbondale help to solve the region's shortage of baccalaureate-prepared nurses and enhance the quality of nursing practice within all patient service venues. The School's graduate programs prepare nurses for advanced roles in clinical practice, administration and education.

[The SIU School of Dental Medicine](#) students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.