



# **SIUE's Cobb Among Illinois Innovation Network's Inaugural Officers**

by Doug McIlhagga  
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EDWARDSVILLE – Southern Illinois University Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Denise Cobb, PhD, has been named secretary for the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN) as it installed its inaugural slate of officers, approved bylaws and created four working committees to address key statewide priorities during a Sept. 26 meeting of the IIN Council at Governors State University.

The IIN is a group of 15 university-based hubs across the state that aims to boost Illinois' economy through entrepreneurship, research, education and workforce development. The IIN Council is the IIN's governing body, comprising a representative from each hub.

“It is so encouraging the way these leaders from the state's public universities have come together to set the IIN up for success,” said Ed Seidel, University of Illinois System vice president for economic development and innovation, whose office is responsible for development of the IIN and Discovery Partners Institute. “They have prioritized the development of key programs that address state needs and created a clear organizational framework. We have witnessed more cooperation among the state's public universities in the last two years than many people can remember, and that is very inspiring. The IIN is going to chart a remarkable course forward, which will greatly benefit all of our communities and the entire state of Illinois.”

Cobb is honored to serve the inaugural INN council and looks forward to supporting the new collaboration. “The IIN has the potential to enable powerful connections among Illinois public universities and all of its members,” Cobb said. “As we build our hub, SIUE will be able to strengthen our efforts to serve the region and state by fostering economic development and supporting research and innovation that will promote sustainable communities and spur entrepreneurship in the greater metropolitan region.

“It is a tremendous opportunity to be able to draw on the expertise in this network, contribute to the programming, encourage partnerships, and to advance innovation and discovery. Together, Illinois' public institutions can leverage our resources and campuses' expertise to confront the challenges of our region and disciplines to make a difference for our communities and state.”

Chair of the IIN Council is Gerald C. Blazey, vice president for research and innovation partnerships at Northern Illinois University. Vice Chair is Leslie K. Roundtree, interim provost and vice president of academic affairs at Chicago State University. Joseph A. Rives, senior vice president for strategic planning and initiatives at Western Illinois University, is an at-large member on the executive committee. Kyle Harfst, associate vice president for economic development and innovation for the U of I System, will be the IIN's executive director.

The bylaws approved by the council establish policies around IIN membership, organizational structure, officers, elections, and committees.

Initial working committees created by the council will lead development of programs and initiatives in IIN's core areas, and will serve as a conduit for the network's hubs. Committee chairs are:

Education and Workforce Development - Elizabeth A. Cada, provost and vice president of academic affairs at Governors State

Entrepreneurship and Corporate Engagement - Bruce Sommer, director of economic development and innovation at the University of Illinois at Springfield

Research and Collaboration - Ryan C. Hendrickson, vice provost of sponsored research at Eastern Illinois University

Public Policy - Ryan Spain, vice president of economic development at OSF HealthCare, will chair the committee

The committees will be made up of representatives from the hubs as appointed by each IIN hub leader.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.