

Gov. Pritzker Announces \$10,537,000 in Planning Funds for New SIUE Health Science Building

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker visited Southern Illinois University on Thursday afternoon and announced the release of \$10,537,000 in planning funds to create preliminary designs for a Health Science Building (HSB) at the school. The governor made the announcement at noon in the Morris University Center's Meridian Ballroom.

The complex includes approximately 221,000 square feet and the project's total cost is \$105 million. The new building will become the biggest on the SIUE campus.

"I love coming to this campus," Gov. Pritzker said. "In the first year of my administration, we have made big strides. We have a bipartisan balanced budget. That bipartisan budget allows funding for universities and community colleges and to invest in the facilities and services, which all will pay dividends for students. We have made college more affordable through the expansion of grants. We need to make college affordable for everybody in the state. We are finally reinvesting and restoring our college campuses. My goal has been to reshape our state for the future and we are doing it together.

"Today we launch the design stage for the new Health Science Building. SIUE has made such a name in science programs. Upon completion, this state-of-the-art facility at 221,000 square feet will be the largest on the SIUE campus and build on the way the

science programs integrate together, allowing students and professors to learn together across disciplines in a collaborative space. It will include modern classes, teaching, and research labs and increase the School of Nursing's enrollment capacity. Illinois faces nursing shortages. The high quality of the programs here means our students will be the leaders. All this couldn't happen without the support of organized labor.

Rep. Jay Hoffman thank you to the governor and legislators for bringing a fresh perspective and commitment to SIUE in general.

"Sen. Crowe, Representatives LaToya Greenwood, Katie Stuart and Monica Bristow all worked tirelessly to get the capital bill passed," Rep. Jay Hoffman said. "I was asked to serve on the transition team. It has been nine long years to address capital needs in Illinois, the governor promised this would be a priority roads bridges and other infrastructure needs in the state this all culminated with a \$45 billion capital bill passed last May."

SIUE operates a School of Pharmacy, a School of Nursing, a School of Dentistry in Alton, and related health sciences programs in various disciplines to serve Central and Southern Illinois. Currently, the SOP is located primarily in three buildings in University Park, while the SON is housed in Alumni Hall within the campus core. The School of Dental Medicine will remain in Alton.

The university has seen a broad expansion of the health and sciences program in the Department of Applied Health, including exercise science, kinesiology, nutrition and dietetics, public health, and speech-language pathology and audiology. Additional programs in education, psychology, and social work throughout the university support integrative learning opportunities for health services professionals on the core campus.

"This new Health Science Building is an incredibly exciting step forward, and will allow SIUE and the SIU System to expand its leadership in health science education in Southern Illinois," said SIUE Chancellor Randy Pembroke. "Specifically, the additional space will facilitate more simulation training, research, and allow growth in programs within nursing, pharmacy, and related health science areas. In short, it will improve the overall health of citizens throughout our area. We are extremely grateful to the governor's office and the Illinois legislature for supporting higher education and health science education in Illinois through this project."

Denise Cobb, PhD, SIUE provost and vice challenger for academic affairs, said the Health Sciences Complex has been a long-term dream for many of the facilities.

"Before SIUE experienced expansion in the health sciences, our faculty and administrators envisioned a future building that could enrich our programs, create

synergies in the health sciences, and expand our capacity to serve our students and the needs of our region. Our nursing and pharmacy programs have thrived and grown since those initial conversations. Their students' and alumni's impact on the region continues to be significant.”

The HSB will provide modern classrooms, teaching and research laboratories, faculty offices, administrative spaces, and student resources and study spaces. It would increase SON student capacity.

Renovations are expected for the existing SOP buildings and the surrounding proposed site in University Park, such as a parking lot design and reconfiguration, sidewalks, pathways, and roadway improvements.

Jessica Hammel, a senior nursing student from Carlyle, said the new building will provide SIUE nursing, pharmacy and applied health students the opportunity to learn professional skills in an innovative state-of-the-art simulation laboratory learning center.

“Students from the Southern Illinois region and beyond will be eager to attend SIUE in a new, modern facility,” she saded. “Specifically, the goal of attracting more SIUE nursing students to address the shortage of RN’s and advanced practice providers in the rural Southern Illinois region will be realized.”

Rich Walker, vice chancellor for administration, said traditional SIUE design elements will be considered.

“Redbrick towers, glass curtain walls, and tan colored bands reflect the existing campus design theme,” he said. “We expect to begin the one-year design process as early as this summer, followed by a two-year construction schedule.”

[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)