

# **SIUE's Walker Named 2020 Lincoln Academy Student Laureate**

by Megan Wieser  
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EDWARDSVILLE – Southern Illinois University Edwardsville senior psychology major Tessa Walker, of Glen Carbon, has been recognized by The Lincoln Academy of Illinois as a 2020 Student Laureate. The Lincoln Academy annually honors one senior from each of Illinois' four-year, degree-granting colleges and universities for demonstrating leadership and a desire to make a difference in the world through civic engagement.

As a recipient of the 46th Annual Student Laureate Recognition, Walker was awarded a certificate signed by Governor J.B. Pritzker, a Lincoln medallion, a challenge coin, and a \$500 stipend. Due to COVID-19, the Lincoln Academy will not hold its annual in-person recognition ceremony, but will instead celebrate Student Laureates via a virtual ceremony and on its social media sites.

"I am honored by this nomination and to be a part of the SIUE community," said Walker. "The faculty, staff and students have done so much for me, and the work that I have done is my way of showing appreciation."

For the past ten years, Walker has dedicated her academic and professional career to servicing the youth of both the St. Louis and San Antonio areas. With guidance and encouragement from mentors in the community, she decided to enroll at SIUE to further her education with the goal of supporting youth nationwide.

"I have been extremely fortunate to work alongside peers and faculty on a variety of psychology research initiatives, during field studies, and in teacher's assistant positions," Walker added. "Each of my mentors has influenced me to display professionalism and academic leadership."

Throughout her time at SIUE, Walker has worked as special events and day camp supervisor for the City of Fairview Heights, allowing her to grow as a community leader and continue advocating for youth.

Walker has also taken up leadership roles in organizations focused on fighting for equity of individuals experiencing injustices. Through her involvement in the FOURward Movement, a local group fighting against systemic oppression, she has worked to organize civil protests, voter education courses and civic engagement opportunities.

"To further this goal, I have also worked diligently to help create the Black Psychology and Allies Organization at SIUE," said Walker. "The members of this organization will continuously encourage racial and cultural equity within higher education, specifically in health and behavioral science fields."

Walker will graduate from SIUE in December 2020. She is currently applying to school psychology graduate programs.

The virtual ceremony honoring student laureates will be available Tuesday, Nov. 10 at [LincolnAcademyofIllinois.org](http://LincolnAcademyofIllinois.org).

The SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.