

SIU Trustees Approve Purchase of COVID-19 Testing Services for SIUE, Shimkus To Receive Distinguished Service Award

by Doug McIllaga
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Southern Illinois University (SIU) Board of Trustees, at its regularly scheduled meeting today, approved the purchase of COVID-19 testing services for the SIUE campus, along with a Distinguished Service Award to Congressman John Shimkus (R-15th District-Collinsville).

The one-year contract with RCA Laboratory Services, LLC (dba GENETWORx) is valued at \$1,463,020 and will provide services associated with PCR Saliva tests. The turnkey process provides personnel, infrastructure, test kits, specimen collection processes and shipping. Results will be provided within 72 hours. GENETWORx's web-based software platform, Aura, will provide scheduling, tracking, reporting dashboards and billing in compliance with government regulations. The initiative will be funded by University operating funds.

Shimkus will receive the Distinguished Service Award at the May 2021 Commencement ceremonies. The congressman finished his master's in business administration at SIUE in 1997, as he was beginning his first term in the House of Representatives.

Shimkus will join the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Political Science as an instructor for the spring 2021 semester following the completion of his 24-year career in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In November 2019, Shimkus donated his political records, correspondence, photos and more to create the "Shimkus Collection" at the Elijah P. Lovejoy Library on campus.

Among Shimkus' many accomplishments are expanding the use of biodiesel fuels, expanding 911 emergency number legislation and coverage, establishing an Internet domain to provide a safe place for young children to surf and learn, encouraging child safety with booster seat testing and placement of heart defibrillators in schools, and advocating for energy issues and a safe environment.

Shimkus' SIUE roots include many family members with his father, wife and son all earning SIUE degrees. A Collinsville High School alumnus, Shimkus graduated from the United States Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., in 1980. He then served as an active duty Army officer for more than five years. Shimkus earned a teaching certificate from California's Christ College Irvine (now Concordia University Irvine) and returned to his native southwestern Illinois to teach at Metro East Lutheran High School in Edwardsville before launching his political career.

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 nearly 13,000.