

New SIU Carbondale Program Puts 4-year Degree Closer To Home For Illinois Community College Students

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CARBONDALE — A new agreement between Southern Illinois University Carbondale and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is bringing the education of a 4-year research university to place-bound students in community colleges throughout Illinois.

The Saluki Step Ahead program provides qualified community college students the option to earn their bachelor's degrees remotely and at a lower cost in six academic

programs: accounting, business administration, health care management, radiologic sciences, criminology, and criminal justice, and psychology.

“This is a game-changer and provides a valuable option to working adults and other students with limited pathways,” said SIU Carbondale Chancellor Austin Lane. “Many community college students can’t uproot their lives and come to Carbondale to earn their bachelor’s degrees. We’re taking SIU Carbondale to them in an accessible and affordable way. Students want our brand of degree. They prefer to take classes from SIU Carbondale.”

Following graduation with an associate degree from an Illinois community college, qualifying students can immediately advance to complete their bachelor’s degree online from SIU Carbondale without leaving home.

Through Saluki Step Ahead, students pay the community college rate for their first two years of study with SIU Carbondale. In the third and fourth years, they receive an annual \$4,000 scholarship, significantly reducing the financial barriers to earning a bachelor’s degree.

“Illinois community colleges are always looking for ways to increase access and affordability for its students and the Saluki Step Ahead partnership does both. This program allows students to immediately accelerate their education with guaranteed and seamless transfer of courses to an established four-year institution at a fraction of the cost. It also gives them tremendous flexibility by allowing them to complete their bachelor’s degree at home while maintaining other life responsibilities,” said ICCB executive director Brian Durham.

Illinois has the third-largest Community College System in the nation with 48 colleges throughout the state. Community colleges serve more than 600,000 Illinois residents each year in credit and noncredit courses and many more through their public service programs.

The statewide agreement between SIU Carbondale and ICCB allows individual community colleges to seamlessly join the Saluki Step Ahead program, including Shawnee Community College, which entered into an agreement earlier this month.

The university is in discussions with several other community colleges throughout the state regarding similar partnerships.

About SIU Carbondale

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is a doctoral research university, with several colleges, a School of Law and a School of Medicine. With 200-plus majors, minors and

specializations, the university offers unique opportunities, including undergraduate research often reserved for graduate students elsewhere, and it is committed to access and student success. The beautiful campus includes a lake, a forest, university-owned farms, and world-class facilities.

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About the Illinois Community College Board

The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating organization for the Illinois Community College System - the third largest in the country and the leading public workforce development trainer in the state. The ICCB has statutory responsibility for administering state and federal grants to community college districts and adult education providers and managing high school equivalency testing for Illinois. Illinois community colleges serve over 600,000 residents each year in credit, noncredit, and continuing education courses. Illinois is home to 48 colleges in 39 community college districts that provide high-quality, accessible, cost-effective educational opportunities to the entire state.