

SIU Carbondale, Girl Scouts' Pact Opens Opportunities For Girls

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CARBONDALE — An agreement between Southern Illinois University Carbondale and Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois will provide mentoring and educational opportunities, summer camps, and potential scholarships for junior high and high school students and encourage them to pursue STEM careers.

On Monday, Oct. 25, Austin Lane, chancellor of SIU Carbondale, and Loretta Graham, chief executive officer of Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA), which will help diversify STEM fields. Nationwide, women made up 29% of those employed in science and engineering occupations in 2017.

The MOA fits well with SIU Carbondale's Imagine 2030 strategic plan, which include pillars to foster student success, support diversity, equity, and inclusion, and build partnerships, Lane said.

"We are excited to partner with Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois and to encourage these young ladies to imagine themselves pursuing a college education and making an impact after they graduate, particularly in STEM fields," he said. "With this agreement, we can reach out to them as young as junior high and plant the seed early. We hope they will see that a world-class education, personal attention, and unique, hands-on learning opportunities are in their backyard."

This is SIU's fifth agreement this year with a school district or youth organization. It is similar to those with Carbondale Elementary School District No. 95, Girls Inc. of St. Louis, East St. Louis School District 189, and Cahokia Unit School District No. 187.

One of every seven school-aged girls in Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois' 40-county mostly rural jurisdiction is a Girl Scout. The four pillars of Girl Scouting are STEM, life skills, entrepreneurship, and the outdoors.

"I am excited to work in partnership with Southern Illinois University in providing opportunities for Girl Scouts within Southern Illinois to gain exposure, teaching, mentoring, program and scholarship opportunities with Southern Illinois University Carbondale," Graham said. "Through this partnership, we are building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place."

The agreement includes:

- SIU Carbondale will provide virtual or in-person educational and mentoring opportunities for Girl Scouts in junior high and high school members in any academic areas of interest with a special emphasis on STEM-related programs.
- Girl Scouts will have opportunities to attend summer camps, including leadership, STEM-related, and aviation camps.
- High school sophomores to seniors can participate in on-campus Experience SIU Day opportunities.
- SIU will work to establish scholarship opportunities for student members who meet established criteria. Qualifying students from Illinois are also eligible for the Saluki Commitment, the university's pledge to close financial gaps in tuition.
- High school seniors in the program will receive a personal visit from the SIU chancellor during the fall of their senior year.