

# SIUE Faculty Unions Express Outrage Over In-Person Return

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
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The SIUE Faculty Association, Non-tenure-track Faculty Association and the Professional Staff Association recently issued a joint press release responding to SIUE's [recent decision to return to in-person learning](#) in the wake of surging COVID-19

variants. The three unions represent over 850 faculty and staff on campus. In the release, faculty voiced their disapproval over the decision and expressed frustration over the quickly changing orders from administration.

“The Board and President are putting students, faculty, and staff at risk at a time when the positivity rate, both on campus and in the community in which we live and work, has never been higher,” said President Ed Navarre, representing 400 tenure-line faculty. “We can’t help but feel that we are being treated as expendable.”

According to the release, the most recent guidance comes just five business days after faculty and staff were ordered to shift classes to an online format for the first week of the semester.

“We had only two days’ notice to completely overhaul the first week of classes, and now in the middle of the first week, we get two days’ notice to shift everything back,” said Navarre. “This is not how quality, thoughtful teaching is done, and it is certainly not how faculty and staff want to do things at SIUE.”

Michele Lorenzini, President of the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Association, added that without proper procedures and equipment, the campus isn’t prepared for a full return to in-person learning.

“The Board and President’s mandate is not well-organized,” said Michele Lorenzini, President of the Non-Tenure Track Faculty Association. “For example, there is no mechanism for mandatory campus testing to be enforced. Also, faculty won’t know by Tuesday which students were not tested, or tested positive, and are not allowed in the classroom. The administration promised to provide KN95 masks to all faculty, too, but those masks won’t be here by Tuesday.”

The release also points out that SIUE is home to the Head Start Program, which serves students who are too young to be vaccinated. President Kim McClellan voiced her concern over the lack of guidance concerning this population.

“The community we serve includes families, students, and staff from among the most vulnerable populations,” McClellan wrote. “The mandate is silent about how we should keep trying to keep staff and students safe with such limited resources and options.”

Faculty union representatives ended the joint release by expressing their confusion over what they see as a dangerous decision made at their own expense.

“We look at how difficult things are in the District 7 schools in our community,” said Navarre. “So many people are sick and this variant spreads so quickly. We want our

SIUE community to be as safe as possible, so we're uncertain why these decisions from the Board and President in Carbondale put our community in danger."

"SIUE's eventual decision to shift to remote learning on January 10th was the responsible one," said Lorenzini. "The SIU System's decision to go back on-ground en masse January 18th defies all of the data."