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SIUE and SIU School of Law Team Up to Offer Students Joint Law, MPA Program

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and the Southern Illinois University [School of Law](#) have joined to offer a JD/MPA program, which allows students to earn both degrees simultaneously with fewer courses, in turn providing enhanced career opportunities for leadership in public agencies and other fields.

The School of Law and the SIUE [Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis](#) have [entered into](#) the first memorandum of understanding for concurrent degrees across the two campuses, both of which are within the SIU System. Prospective post-baccalaureate students can attend law school classes in Carbondale to pursue their Juris Doctor while earning a [Master of Public Administration degree online](#) from SIUE.

“I want to congratulate and thank our system and campus leaders who have worked together so well to create this opportunity allowing students to obtain their JD from the SIU School of Law in Carbondale and an MPA from SIUE. A priority in our [System Strategic Plan](#), this is the first of hopefully many similar efforts where academic programs on both campuses are linked together. This important agreement is an example of how our system is aligning resources for the benefit of students,” said SIU System President Dan Mahony, PhD.

SIUE’s Drew Dolan, PhD, professor and MPA program director, notes the link between a law degree and an MPA has grown considerably in popularity over the past two decades.

“We are proud to offer this opportunity to SIU School of Law and MPA students,” Dolan said. “Graduates with both degrees are highly qualified to pursue careers in many local, state, federal and nonprofit agencies.”

Career opportunities include professional administrators in public agencies or an array of focus areas including law, consultancy, media, academia and more.

SIU School of Law Dean Camille Davidson, JD, said the offering provides opportunities for students and strengthens the law school’s presence in the Metro East. In August, the law school started the [Metro East Criminal Justice Clinic](#) in Belleville, where third-year law students participate in a semester of practice in the region.

“When we can provide opportunities for more interdisciplinary projects and collaboration throughout the SIU System, it strengthens our overall brand,” Davidson said. “There are some wonderful opportunities for more interdisciplinary projects and collaboration throughout the SIU System.”

SIUE launched its online MPA in spring 2021, and has actively pursued collaborative opportunities for students, said Nancy Huyck, DPA, chair of SIUE's Department of Public Administration and Policy Analysis.

"I am thrilled that with the support of leadership across both campuses, this concurrent degree option is now available," Huyck said.

Under the agreement, law students can have up to 12 hours of completed law courses applied to the MPA degree elective hour requirement. A select number of MPA credits will count towards law school elective courses.

"The online modality combined with fewer courses to complete each degree will provide students with a convenient and accelerated pathway to complete the MPA and JD degrees concurrently," said SIUE's Jill Smucker, director of graduate education.

By preparing the next generation of leaders in a knowledge-based economy, SIUE's [Graduate School](#) fulfills the region's demand for highly trained professionals. Graduate program offerings include arts and sciences, business, education, engineering, nursing and interdisciplinary opportunities. SIUE professors provide students with a unique integration of theoretical education and hands-on research experiences. Students can obtain graduate certificates or pursue master's degrees, and be part of a supportive learning and rich intellectual environment that is tailored to the needs of adult learners. The Graduate School's Office of Research and Projects supports and raises the visibility of research and creative activity at SIUE, which ranks highest among its Illinois Board of Higher Education peers in total research and development expenditures according to the National Science Foundation's Higher Education Research and Development Survey.