

McAllister steps down as SIUE head cross country, track and field coach

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EDWARDSVILLE – SIUE track and field and cross country Head Coach Eileen McAllister announced Wednesday that she will step down as the program's leader.

"I am grateful for the wonderful memories and experiences afforded to me the past 10 years as a Cougar," said McAllister.

McAllister informed her teams that the time had come for her to focus on family. She plans to join her husband, Brett Halter, who currently resides in Columbia, Missouri.

SIUE Director of Athletics Dr. Brad Hewitt also announced that Scott Block, an alumnus of the program and current assistant coach, will take over as the interim head coach for both cross country and track and field effective immediately.

"We are very thankful to have had Eileen as the leader of our cross country and track and field programs," said Hewitt. "Her work ethic and dedication to the program has been outstanding. We wish her well in her future endeavors."

McAllister has held numerous roles in her 10 seasons at SIUE. In 2004, she was named the head coach of the cross country program as well as the University's first strength and conditioning coach. Her roles with the cross country and track and field programs varied over the past decade until the 2013-14 season when she took over as the head coach for both track and field and cross country.

The Cougars flourished under McAllister's direction. Since joining the [Ohio Valley Conference](#), SIUE has recorded 19 league individual champions in both the indoor and outdoor championships as well as four relay titles. Braxton Klavins was named the OVC Male Athlete of the Championship at the 2014 Outdoor Championships.

McAllister oversaw the emergence of La'Derrick Ward who was a two-time All-American in the long jump, placing sixth at the outdoor championships in 2015 and fourth during the 2014 championships. Ward also was the Field Athlete of the Year in the OVC during the 2015 indoor and outdoor seasons.

School records continued to fall under McAllister. There have been 42 indoor and outdoor records broken by SIUE student-athletes in the past three seasons alone. Every women's record for NCAA events from the 800 to the 10K are held by student-athletes coached by McAllister.

The SIUE cross country program saw continued improvement under McAllister's leadership culminating with a third place OVC finish by the men in 2014. The first two-time All-OVC performer for the Cougars in men's cross country came last season. Clint Kliem placed 10th at the 2013 OVC Championships and improved to eighth in 2014. He broke the 10K school record last fall in 31 minutes, 34 seconds, at the NCAA Division I Regional Championships in Peoria. Three men's cross country Cougars earned All-OVC honors in 2014. Joining Kliem were fellow juniors Keith Meyer and Nick Moore, who finished 13th and 14th.

Under McAllister's watch, the SIUE cross country course has undergone several enhancements, including directional signage to allow all area runners to enjoy the challenging course.

McAllister's teams also performed well in the classroom. The SIUE men's team was one of 15 OVC programs to earn a public recognition award from the NCAA for top academic performance. Each of the cross country and track and field programs have played a role in SIUE's department success of 18 consecutive semesters of better than a 3.0 grade point average.