



2020-2025
**STRATEGIC
PLAN PROGRESS
REPORT**

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN AND PROVOST



Over the past five years, SIU School of Medicine advanced all areas of its mission while navigating the compounding challenges of a global pandemic, workforce shortages, and financial instability across the healthcare sector.

All of this progress was made while leading through COVID-19, welcoming more than 100,000 new patients due to shifts in the insurance market, and adapting to significant change among our external partners. We have provided support to hospitals facing financial crises and partnered with many during these turbulent times to ensure access to care and mission-driven collaboration.

We created a new fully rural four-year medical track through the Lincoln Scholars Program. Our leadership in medical coaching, global education, medical simulation and AI-powered learning tools earned international recognition.

We began investing over \$4 million in workforce compensation, built new clinical and education pipelines, and led statewide behavioral health workforce development. Flexible staffing models and group hiring improved recruitment and retention across key roles.

Research operations were modernized with commercial IRBs, new compliance systems, STEM pipelines, a graduate umbrella program, and lab space for entrepreneurial use. Our research enterprise was a major contributor as SIU-Carbondale achieved Carnegie R1 top-tier research institutional status.

We expanded access to care through telehealth, launched new clinics, and entered value-based contracts aligned with national goals. Patient experience efforts were bolstered by new leadership, training, and data tools.

Our internal culture prioritized leadership development, wellness, and equity with initiatives and faculty engagement that reshaped practices across departments. Significant improvements were made in clinical finance, revenue cycle, managed care relationships, and credentialing.

New partnerships extended our impact statewide—from doula certification and correctional health to rural mental health support.

A new centralized marketing strategy, “Champions and Advocates” brand platform, traditional marketing and digital tools helped us better tell our story and connect with patients, learners, and the public.

Together, these milestones reflect our commitment to purpose-driven, community-centered innovation and position us to lead with even greater impact in the years to come.



EDUCATION

STRATEGIC NEED

The current health care environment is characterized by poor population-based health care outcomes, high costs for health care and health care education, scarcity of health care professionals in small urban and rural environments, and a chronic mismatch between health care resources and essential population health needs. The future calls for new models of care built on interprofessional coordination and teamwork. This environment will demand innovative education to train healthcare professionals with progressive skill sets, which begin in childhood and continue through one's career. A bold new educational model will require state-of-the-art educational practices, including virtual and experiential active learning, evidence-based curricula and assessments, and greater emphasis on critical thinking and clinical reasoning. The SIU School of Medicine must capitalize on its international excellence in education innovation to lead the development of the new models.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Established the **Lincoln Scholars Program** in Carbondale
2. Launched **five longitudinal medical student pathways**
3. Expanded **P4 Pathway Program enrollment** from **40 to 156 students**
4. Gained **international recognition in educational coaching and innovation**
5. Developed and patented **AI-powered avatars for medical learning**

Over the past five years, SIU School of Medicine has strengthened its educational mission with innovation, pride, and purpose—expanding access, enhancing academic quality, and elevating our global leadership in medical education.

We established five new four-year, longitudinal pathways for medical students focused on Health Equity, Medical Education, Research, Leadership, and Interprofessional Complex Care (team-based care for those most vulnerable and at highest risk). These programs allow students to pursue specialized training aligned with the evolving needs of patients and communities.

In 2021, we launched the Lincoln Scholars Program, a pioneering rural medical education initiative that enables eight students to complete all four years of training in Carbondale. These students are paired with physician assistant students in interdisciplinary tutor groups, forming nation's first fully integrated, interprofessional medical education cohorts.

Our commitment to community-based workforce education led to the expansion of the Community Health Worker (CHW) training and certification program, now unified under the Executive Associate Dean and supported by both the Department of Family and Community Medicine and the Office of External Relations. In partnership with the SIU College of Health and Human Sciences in Carbondale, we are also developing an embedded nursing program that will place clinical instruction directly within Springfield healthcare environments beginning in 2025.

Through the 2023-2024 LCME accreditation process, we clarified and aligned the structure and objectives of our medical education curriculum, ensuring cohesion across medical student education, residency and fellowship programs, and the physician assistant curriculum.

Simultaneously, we expanded the P4 Pathway Program from 40 to 156 students, launched a second post-baccalaureate program in Carbondale, rejuvenated the MEDPREP program, and extended outreach through partnerships with elementary and high schools to strengthen the pipeline of future healthcare professionals.

SIU SOM is now recognized as a global leader in educational coaching and innovation. We regularly convene the International XII, a global network of medical educators, and serve as the editorial home of Teaching and Learning in Medicine, one of the top three international peer-reviewed journals in the field. Our medical education faculty members are helping shape new medical schools internationally, including a new institution in Madagascar, and maintain active collaborations with educators in Japan, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and South Korea. In 2020 we were awarded one of two inaugural Stellar Awards by AMEE, the largest health professions educational organization in the world. This institutional lifetime achievement award recognized SIU SOM as one of only two medical schools in the world to hold as many as five AMEE Aspire to Excellence Awards. We have also applied for a sixth AMEE Aspire Award, which would honor sustained excellence in faculty development.

In educational technology, faculty and students are developing AI-powered avatars for use in problem-based learning, with new avatars created at a rate of three to four per month. This interdisciplinary project engages medical students, English majors, and PhD candidates and is already gaining national recognition, with work protected through patents and copyrights.

Finally, SIU is planning for the future of health education in rural communities. The Institute for Rural Health has received temporary approval from IBHE, and we are actively exploring the concepts of new educational structures, including a School of Rural Public Health, a Health Sciences High School, and rural-focused fellowships that strengthen the healthcare pipeline in underserved areas.



WORKFORCE

STRATEGIC NEED

As technology advances, care delivery models evolve, and the demographics, desires and expectations of society change, health professions' educational institutions must adapt to train a diverse workforce appropriate in number and balanced in terms of specific career tracks and medical specialties. These institutions must collectively produce both the workforce and the care models that improve outcomes, lower cost, assure equity in both access and care delivery, and improve the experience for patients and healthcare workers. They must also produce the next generation of scientists who discover new knowledge and breakthrough applications to meet these critical goals.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Invested over **\$4 million in compensation adjustments**
2. Expanded the **Community Health Work model**
3. Developed a **multi-level pipeline with local high schools**
4. Led the statewide **Behavioral Health Workforce Center**
5. Introduced **flexible, part time scheduling models**

SIU School of Medicine has made bold, strategic investments in building and sustaining a dynamic healthcare workforce that reflects our mission and values. One of the most significant undertakings was a comprehensive compensation analysis aimed at ensuring fairness and competitiveness across the organization. In 2022, we increased the school's minimum wage and adjusted civil service salaries to address compression. By 2023, a full civil service compensation review resulted in an investment of over \$3.1 million, followed by an additional \$942,000 in 2024 for compensation adjustments for principal administrators, including advanced practice professionals.

Our Community Health Worker (CHW) program, first launched in 2018, has expanded significantly. Integration of CHWs into SIU's FQHCs has enhanced patient access, supported care coordination, and addressed social drivers of health in underserved communities. Beginning with pandemic health workers, the CHW model has now been introduced across multiple clinical departments. In 2024, we launched a full market analysis to guide the future of CHW integration across specialty departments, paving the way for long-term sustainability and statewide impact. To coordinate and further expand these functions, we established the Office of Community Health Work in the Office of the Executive Associate Dean.

To support both traditional and non-traditional workforce pipelines, we created a multi-tiered Medical Assistant series that now includes four levels and new roles such as Public Assistants and Healthcare Technicians. In partnership with a local high school, this pipeline is producing a new generation of healthcare workers. Since its inception, we have hired 29 Healthcare Technicians and 7 Clinical Assistants. In 2024, we began development of an Accelerated Nursing Program for non-traditional students, focused on outpatient training, with a satellite location on the Springfield campus scheduled to launch in 2025.

As the lead institution for the Illinois Behavioral Health Workforce Center, SIU SOM is shaping the future of behavioral health across the state. We created an advisory board, launched a strategic plan, and implemented tools like a behavioral health workforce dashboard, job board, and training modules. These efforts aim to expand access to integrated care and enhance the education, retention, and diversity of the behavioral health workforce. A new investment by the Department of Human Services funded training positions for more psychiatry resident physicians and other health care professional students, with significant new training experiences in State of Illinois psychiatric hospitals.

We also improved recruitment processes through group hiring practices and events that reduced time-to-hire and standardized candidate experiences. Our efforts expanded the clinical workforce pipeline, especially in nursing. Two cohorts of nursing students have completed clinical rotations in Pediatrics, with additional sites and a grant application in process to support disadvantaged students.

Recognizing the need for flexibility, we introduced part-time scheduling and expanded hybrid and remote work options. By 2024, over 50 percent of positions offered some level of flexibility. This approach has helped address staffing shortages with timely, adaptive solutions. As of April 2024, we had hired 30 RNs (16 active, 10 onboarding), 9 Certified Medical Assistants, 2 Licensed Practical Nurses, and 3 Sonographers under this model.

Major investments in workforce development included a new umbrella graduate program and expanded residency and fellowship offerings including new fellowships in gastroenterology, cardiology, hematology/oncology and addiction medicine, a new family medicine residency program in Alton, and expanded residency/fellowship positions in pulmonary/critical care, emergency medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics. We also enhanced research and innovation capacity by appointing a Director of Research and Innovation.



RESEARCH

STRATEGIC NEED

New knowledge, methods, and innovative strategies are required to advance earlier detection, better treatment, improved resilience and the prevention and cure of medical conditions that afflict our population. Improvement in data analytics and more multidisciplinary input are needed to sustain advances in all areas of research. Robust institutional scholarly activity will attract and retain the best and brightest faculty members, researchers and trainees, and will be attractive to those who might seek our care. SIU Medicine must invest in tools and technologies to advance research and better engage our faculty, the staff and trainees in scholarly pursuits across the continuum of research, from discovery through application.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Streamlined **research compliance**
2. **Upgraded core facilities** and **research infrastructure**
3. Created a **regional STEM pipeline**
4. Strengthened **regional innovation ties**
5. Contributed **R1 research institution status**

In the past five years, SIU School of Medicine has significantly strengthened its research infrastructure and improved processes to support growth and innovation. We streamlined clinical trial oversight by adopting commercial IRBs for most industry-sponsored studies, increasing speed and compliance. We also began the process for a comprehensive, integrated system for regulatory oversight, combining and grants management functions. Grants administration through the Kuali software, in collaboration with SIUE and SIUEC, is expected to launch in 2025, with the full regulatory system under active review and development.

We improved research contracting efficiency by developing templates for participant payments, consulting agreements, and revenue-generating studies. Legal Affairs and Grants & Contracts established foundational templates, and the ClinCard portal was adopted for secure participant compensation. In addition, core research facilities at the Springfield campus received major equipment upgrades, and we launched a preventive maintenance program for the Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM), alongside a multi-year facilities improvement plan for research buildings.

To inspire the next generation of researchers, we launched a system-wide STEM and biomedical science pipeline with SIUE, supported by an NIH Science Education Partnership Award R25 grant. This initiative offers a “P4-like” program for high school and undergraduate students interested in STEM fields. Simultaneously, we prepared four lab spaces in the 911 building for commercial rental and entrepreneurial use. These spaces are being cleaned and readied for occupancy, with rental proceeds earmarked for research infrastructure.

Our research enterprise has also forged stronger ties with regional innovation networks, including the Illinois Innovation Network (IIN), Innovate Springfield, and the UIS Innovation Center. These relationships expand our reach and position SIU SOM as a hub of translational research and discovery in central and southern Illinois.

Southern Illinois University has joined the nation’s top research institutions. The university has been designated a Research 1, or R1, institution in the latest Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, placing it among the top 5 percent of research universities in the country. This milestone reflects the combined academic strength of the SIU campuses in Springfield and Carbondale and affirms the university’s national leadership in discovery and innovation.

SIU School of Medicine plays a central role in the university’s research growth. Its faculty conducts high-impact research that fuels discovery, informs clinical care and improves lives across the region.

SIU faculty conduct high-impact research that fuels discovery, informs clinical care, and improves lives across the region.



CARE DELIVERY

STRATEGIC NEED

To optimize patient outcomes and population health in our communities, and as healthcare models transition from fee-for-service to value-based reimbursement, clinical services must deliver exceptional value to individuals and communities. Keys to this value are the engagement of patients, staff members and health professionals; the skillful delivery of services by interprofessional teams; a commitment to address the complex social determinants of health; and, the identification and care of those most vulnerable. It is imperative that we develop and implement innovative new models of care delivery, interprofessional care, and compensation that reflect the elements of the Triple Aim plus One - models that are effective, efficient, equitable and enjoyable for all. Finally, given the pervasive mental health needs of our communities, the scarcity of mental health resources, and the strong interconnectivity between sound mental health and overall health outcomes, a particular emphasis on mental health is imperative.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Expanded **telehealth** from **2,000 to over 30,000 annual visits**
2. Introduced **new clinical services** in our primary service area
3. Signed **value-based contracts** including with the Medical Home Network ACO
4. Created a dedicated **patient experience infrastructure**
5. Developed **clinical dashboards** to improve access, volume, and efficiency

The last five years have marked a transformative period for SIU Medicine's clinical care, with significant expansion, modernization, and innovation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we rapidly scaled telehealth operations—from just 2,000 visits in 2019 to over 30,000 annually by 2024—ensuring uninterrupted care for patients across central and southern Illinois.

We expanded our clinical footprint in our Springfield primary service area region. We introduced new services in Decatur, including Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery, and OB/GYN. We also broadened access to Maternal-Fetal Medicine and Neonatology across the region.

Patients in central and southern Illinois will now have expanded access to expert kidney care, as SIU Medicine expanded its nephrology specialty services. SIU Medicine Nephrology will now provide high-quality kidney care, supported by the strength of academic medicine and a team-based approach to treatment.

In a moment when patients across Illinois were struggling to find care, SIU Medicine stepped forward with agility, commitment, and a deep sense of responsibility to the communities we serve. Defying the perception that we lacked the capacity or infrastructure to scale, we proved not only that we could but that we would. Through a coordinated response grounded in clinical excellence, operational flexibility, and community trust, we welcomed more than 100,000 new patients into our system—individuals who, in many cases, had nowhere else to turn. These gains were made possible by strategic negotiations with major insurers, including Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois and Centene Meridian, ensuring access for tens of thousands who would otherwise have remained outside the formal healthcare system. Our teams rose to the occasion—expanding availability, enhancing efficiency, and embodying our mission at every level. This accomplishment wasn't just about numbers. It was about showing what's possible when an academic health system refuses to accept limits and steps fully into its role as a regional anchor for care and compassion.

In 2024, our FQHC added its first Express Care location in Springfield, offering same-day care and easing the burden on emergency services. Innovations in Family Medicine continue as we have launched online patient scheduling for the department.

As healthcare shifts toward value-based care, SIU Medicine has taken proactive steps to align with these models. In 2024, our FQHC entered into a value-based agreement with the Medical Home Network (MHN) ACO. We now participate in multiple value-based contracts and have earned Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) and Patient-Centered Specialty Practice (PCSP) recognition for Family and Community Medicine and Pediatrics.

To improve the patient experience, we restructured our patient experience teams and tools. For the first time ever, we have dedicated a Deputy Director of Patient Experience. Since then, colleagues in patient experience have worked with colleagues in marketing and other departments to launch new feedback tools and implement customer advocacy training across departments.

Our Office of Information Technology developed clinical dashboards using the Azara DRVS platform, enabling leaders to monitor patient access, volume, and appointment lag times. These tools now guide decision-making to improve both clinical outcomes and operational performance.

Our total clinical activity has risen by over 56% from FY19 to FY25 and patient visits have increased nearly 30% over the same timeframe.

We proved not only that we could scale—but that we would.



WORK ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC NEED

Competitiveness, stress, and rapid change are among the powerful factors that undermine the goal of a healthy, happy, engaged and inclusive work culture. At all levels, institutions often fail to deal effectively with systemic problems such as bias, inequitable treatment and communication gaps. Many struggle with inefficient and outdated hiring and advancement processes, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and loss of personal autonomy. Left unchecked, these issues lead to medical errors, job dissatisfaction, decreased productivity, mental and physical health problems, group dysfunction, and poor learning. A comprehensive and integrated approach is needed to address these challenges. SIU Medicine must address adverse systemic issues, enhance resilience, foster personal and professional growth, and promote wellness for all personnel.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Launched multi-level **leadership development programs**
2. Expanded **wellness offerings, coaching, and restorative spaces**
3. Established **Employee Resource Groups and inclusion infrastructure**
4. Enabled **flexible and hybrid scheduling** across more than half of roles
5. Integrated **inclusive policies and anti-discrimination protocols**

At SIU School of Medicine, we believe our people are our most vital asset. Over the past five years, we have worked intentionally to cultivate a workplace rooted in growth, wellness, and belonging.

To foster leadership at every level, we introduced development programs including Accelerate for emerging leaders, BOOST for early-career faculty, and a new HR Supervisor Training series. These initiatives have equipped our teams with tools to lead with confidence and clarity.

We also expanded our commitment to wellness by offering trauma-informed coaching through cHOP, reflective community forums like Balint groups and story slams, and opening new spaces such as Beth's RX Café and a dedicated wellness room. These efforts have helped normalize rest, recovery, and mental health as professional priorities.

Belonging and inclusion became structural imperatives. We updated institutional policies, revised promotion and tenure guidelines, and implemented robust anti-discrimination protocols to align with state and federal standards. Through events like the Kenniebrew Conference, the Kenniebrew-McNeese Community Forum and the work of the Massey Commission, we deepened accountability and connection to our broader community. Programs like Health DEPOTS (Delivering Equity in Places Outside Traditional Settings) extended care to underserved settings, underscoring our commitment to equity in action.

Staff and faculty members were invited to lead culture change through the creation of Employee Resource Groups, a dedicated anti-bias curriculum committee, and widespread use of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). These tools helped departments make data-informed improvements to climate and communication.

Finally, we transformed our approach to work itself. Today, more than half of roles offer flexible or hybrid schedules, and in 2024, we introduced part-time clinical and administrative options—supporting both workforce sustainability and individual balance.

Together, these actions signal a clear truth: when we invest in our people, we create the conditions for long-term impact.

When we invest in our people,
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EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

STRATEGIC NEED

SIU Medicine will continue to embrace its role as a community-based medical school. We understand that our mission and goals can be realized only if we have effective sustainable partnerships, including those with teaching hospitals, community healthcare professionals, health systems, and public health agencies. We must also creatively consider partnerships with other governmental and non-governmental agencies, private industry, individuals, foundations, and organizations that address the social determinants of health. These relationships must be of mutual benefit to SIU Medicine, our patients and the collaborating organizations.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Co-founded the **Behavioral Health Workforce Center**
2. Expanded the **Farm Family Resource Initiative**
3. Expanded the **Office of Correctional Medicine**
4. Developed **Project ECHO** into a 12-topic hub
5. Created the **Office of Certification Strategies**

Our mission to improve health outcomes across Illinois is strengthened by bold, intentional partnerships. Over the past five years, SIU School of Medicine has deepened its engagement with state agencies, community stakeholders, and fellow institutions to tackle some of the most complex health and workforce challenges facing our region.

In 2023, we joined forces with UIC, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and the Illinois Board of Higher Education to launch the Behavioral Health Workforce Center (BHC). This is a transformative statewide initiative to recruit, retain, and diversify behavioral health professionals. We built a dedicated team, implemented a strategic plan, and engaged a broad network to drive impact across sectors.

We also expanded our longstanding partnership with the Illinois Department of Agriculture through the Farm Family Resource Initiative (FFRI). What began as a targeted mental health support effort in 2020 has grown, thanks to USDA funding, into a statewide resource now reaching all 102 Illinois counties.

Recognizing the unique health needs of justice-involved populations, we launched the Office of Correctional Medicine in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Corrections. This initiative began with a state-funded feasibility study and has since evolved into a long-term program that strengthens care delivery and support for incarcerated individuals.

In 2023, we also established the Office of Certification Strategies, working closely with the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to launch Illinois' first Doula Certification Program. This initiative ensures that doulas serving Medicaid patients are certified, trained, and equipped to provide culturally responsive, high-quality care.

Our reach extended into the Metro East region with the creation of a Family Medicine Residency Program in Alton and a new partnership clinic with SIHF Healthcare, BJC Healthcare and Alton Memorial Hospital. We also deepened our impact through support of the Choate Project, advancing workforce and care improvements in collaboration with the Division of Developmental Disabilities at DHS.

Finally, Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes), supported by the Illinois Hospital Association, grew into a statewide hub for professional learning. Since 2019, we've launched 12 ECHO learning tracks for rural health providers and established the Illinois Campus Cares Technical Assistance Center to support the mental health needs of students across higher education institutions.

These partnerships illustrate a defining feature of our approach: when we collaborate across systems, we drive systemic change.

When we collaborate
across systems, we drive
systemic change.



STEWARDSHIP

STRATEGIC NEED

With the acceleration of change in medical education, research, the delivery of healthcare and the management of population health, it is imperative that SIU Medicine has state-of-the-art facilities and information systems, an adaptable and effective organizational structure, and a robust system of data analytics. Changes in organizational structure and advances in technology must be embraced while caring, healing relationships endure. Financial health and wise use of assets must be assured as resources are integrated across mission areas.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Achieved balanced **growth across all mission areas**
2. **Diversified and stabilized revenue** through consistent financial performance
3. Established new offices for **strategy, project management, and business intelligence**
4. Made targeted **facility investments and acquisitions** across multiple areas
5. Launched **digital transformation initiatives**, including Epic and AI integration

Amid the unprecedented disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, SIU School of Medicine demonstrated not only resilience but forward momentum. As one student described, we navigated the turbulence “with aplomb” by advancing our mission with assurance and adaptability. Our stewardship has focused on strategic growth, financial discipline, and positioning the organization for future success.

We achieved balanced growth across all four mission areas. Clinical services expanded by 50-60 percent, enabling increased investment in academic and educational programs. With a stable bottom line, we supported education through direct clinical reinvestments, realigned overhead structures, and completed a comprehensive space inventory. Our reserve funds remain strong, providing security and flexibility for what lies ahead.

To meet emerging institutional demands, we reshaped our leadership and operational infrastructure. This included the creation of the Office of the Associate Provost for Strategy, Communication and Engagement, the Office of Project Management, and the Office of the Executive Associate Dean. A new Business Intelligence (BI) Team has quickly become essential, enabling rapid, data-informed decisions with more than 20,000 monthly interactions and growing.

We also invested in strategic organizational growth through new departments and centers, such as the Center for Human and Organizational Potential and the Department of Biomedical Science in Carbondale, while streamlining legacy structures for greater efficiency.

Our digital transformation is well underway. We began the implementation of Epic, an enterprise-wide electronic health record in partnership with Memorial Health, and have begun work with the SIU System to transition to a new ERP system. Our use of artificial intelligence is expanding rapidly, from avatars in problem-based learning to virtual reality surgical tools, ensuring we remain at the forefront of technology-enabled healthcare and education.

Financial stewardship also meant protecting our people. We avoided pandemic-related layoffs, implemented retention bonuses, adjusted for wage compression, and introduced updated compensation benchmarks. With Medical Home Network, we are laying the foundation for a shared savings model under Medicare and exploring new incentive structures tied to research and teaching excellence.

Finally, our long-range facilities plan is taking shape. New buildings, including a flagship educational facility and a neurosciences institute are in development. We acquired additional properties, upgraded key sites in Springfield, Decatur, Quincy, and Carbondale, and addressed deferred maintenance. Welcoming spaces like Beth’s Café, the Dean’s Lobby, and the Atrium reflect our commitment to environments that support healing, learning, and belonging.

Taken together, these achievements reflect an institution not merely enduring change, but directing it with purpose. The financial impact is felt by many. Southern Illinois University School of Medicine is one of the top employers in central and southern Illinois and has become an essential economic engine in the Mid-Illinois Medical District and its clinic sites across the region. SIU Medicine has an annual economic impact in Illinois of more than \$1 billion, generating 5,542 jobs in health care and supporting industries in the state.

Not merely enduring change,
but directing it with purpose.

THE MESSAGE

STRATEGIC NEED

There is a broadly understood need for a unified and trusted brand in highly complex, and often confusing, environments. We need to assert control over how our identity and brand are perceived. Otherwise, outside forces will do it for us - and not necessarily to our benefit. We have a great story to tell in terms of our educational, research and clinical excellence. Our SIU Medicine story must be known internally, locally, nationally, and internationally, and promoted consistently and expertly.



TOP 5 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Launched a **unified website and brand platform** to tell a cohesive institutional story
2. Optimized **The Hive** for internal communications and culture-building
3. Developed the **“Champions” brand story** through strategic market research
4. Expanded traditional and digital advertising to **increase regional visibility**
5. Introduced **Customer Advocacy Training** to support brand-aligned experiences

Over the past five years, SIU School of Medicine has invested deeply in shaping a clear, compelling, and unified narrative—one that reflects both our mission and our momentum. These investments have not only strengthened internal culture and communication but have also increased external recognition, fueled patient acquisition, and elevated brand preference across the region.

In 2020, the Office of Marketing, Communications, and Engagement (OMCE) launched a fully redesigned, mission-driven website to serve as our flagship digital platform. With integrated content, streamlined navigation, and compelling visuals, the site now delivers a consistent, engaging user experience that invites patients, learners, and partners into the story of SIU Medicine. It has become a foundational tool for both outreach and recruitment.

Internally, we reimagined how we communicate with our people. The Hive, a secure collaboration and information-sharing platform, was optimized just before the COVID-19 pandemic—and proved essential for real-time updates, organizational alignment, and culture-building during times of disruption. Today, it remains a vital space for celebrating our people, reinforcing institutional values, and building community.

Recognizing the need to sharpen our external voice, OMCE partnered with SPM Marketing to conduct extensive brand and market research. This work led to the development of the “Champions” brand story. This narrative that highlights SIU’s unique role as an academic medical institution that champions healthcare access, educational innovation, and equity. This story has elevated our institutional pride while also resonating with patients, partners, and prospective learners and differentiating us in a crowded healthcare market.

To amplify this message, we doubled the central marketing budget and expanded advertising through TV, radio, billboards, and digital channels. This increased visibility has translated into greater public awareness, improved patient acquisition, and stronger brand recognition throughout central and southern Illinois. Our centralized marketing model, with dedicated account managers, ensures that all departments tell their part of the story in a way that is coordinated, strategic, and aligned.

Finally, in 2023, we launched Customer Advocacy Training to ensure every patient, learner, and colleague experience reflects our brand values. This initiative equips staff with tools to embody empathy, professionalism, and service excellence reinforcing SIU Medicine’s identity as a provider and employer of choice in a highly competitive, consumer-driven healthcare environment.

Together, these efforts have not only unified our message. They’ve positioned us as a trusted, recognizable brand, ready to grow with purpose and clarity.

With innovation, pride, and purpose, we’re expanding access and elevating academic quality.

FINISHING STRONG

Remarkable progress was made in advancing our five-year strategic plan despite the two-year imposition of the COVID-19 pandemic. The accomplishments outlined in this update reflect the resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment of our entire SIU Medicine community. We are proud of what we've achieved and even more determined to finish strong.

To honor that commitment and sustain our momentum, we are formally extending the current strategic plan through December 2026. This extension allows us to fully realize remaining goals, deepen impact, and carry forward the collaborative energy that has defined the last five years.

We hope you are as proud of this progress as we are. May it deepen your dedication to our shared mission and inspire all of us to finish this plan with purpose, unity, and excellence.



SIU MEDICINE

