

2025 Vision Survey Report

January 2018

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2025 Vision Survey Report

BACKGROUND

On August 25, 2017, Southern Illinois University Carbondale Chancellor Carlo Montemagno launched a survey inviting SIU stakeholders to “share ... insights into what SIU should look like in 2025.” The invitation to participate was sent to all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors for whom valid email addresses were available. In addition, the university reached out to community members through messages to chambers of commerce and via the press. (See Appendix A for the survey invitation.)

The chancellor’s goal was to give all of SIU’s constituents an opportunity to provide input to the university’s future direction. Participants were invited to rate their agreement with the university’s mission statement. Additionally, they were asked open-ended questions about different areas of study, research, and creative activities they believed would be the most relevant or in-demand in 2025. Other questions focused on core skills or knowledge, cultural and experimental opportunities, campus culture, campus life, and collaboration with external partners.

Emails were sent to 187,289 alumni (open rate of 16%), 13,731 students (open rate of 59%), and 5,944 faculty and staff (open rate of 35%). Exact response rates are not calculated since many individuals received more than one invitation to participate given their multiple affiliations (e.g., as both an employee and an alumnus) but responded only once. The university received 2,933 responses by the time the survey closed on Friday, Sept. 8. Not all respondents answered every question. (See Appendix B for survey questions.)

We are grateful to the associates of Applied Research Consultants who analyzed survey responses for most of the qualitative survey questions. Their findings are incorporated into this report. (See Appendix C for information about ARC’s methodology and a listing of ARC’s evaluation team members.) ARC is a business and training organization housed within SIU’s Department of Psychology that has provided professional services in applied research, evaluation, and consulting to local, regional, and national clients since 1981.

Because most of the survey questions were open-ended, responses were categorized and grouped by topic or theme. Marketing, finance, and other business-related responses are grouped together under “Business,” for example, while medicine, biomedicine, and allied health fields are grouped under “Medicine/health.” Respondents sometimes gave general answers, such as “agriculture,” or more specific answers, such as “agriculture production” or “agribusiness”; all of these responses are grouped under “Agriculture.”

Similarly, in open-ended questions (9-12) about the ideal campus culture, student life, and external partners in 2025, responses were grouped into the top five themes, with examples provided for each.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Respondents were asked to identify all of their affiliations with the university in addition to, the affiliation they consider to be primary. Not surprisingly, many respondents had multiple affiliations as alumni, employees, donors, and community members, among others. Just under half of respondents indicated that their primary affiliation was as an alumnus, followed by current students, staff, and faculty respectively. This reflects the size of the individual groups contacted, with alumni being by far the largest. (See findings for questions 1 and 2 on page 5.)

More than 70 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each aspect of the university's mission statement. The strongest agreement was with the statement that "SIU should embrace outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success." The next highest levels of agreement were with the statements "SIU should embrace innovation in research and creativity" and "SIU should create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders." (See findings for questions 3 and 4 on pages 6 and 7.)

Categorized responses to two questions – one about future areas of study and one about future areas of research or creative activity – were identical, although they differed in order of frequency. Business fields were collectively the most frequently mentioned areas of study likely to be relevant in 2025, followed by technology (including areas such as computing and artificial intelligence) and medicine/health fields. Technology fields, followed by the sciences and medicine/health areas, topped the list of research and creative activities most likely to be relevant in 2025. Both lists also included agriculture, the arts, education, energy/sustainability, environmental fields, and engineering. (See findings for questions 5 and 6 on page 7.)

The top three areas respondents identified when asked what core skills or knowledge every graduate should have in 2025 included communication and interpersonal skills, critical thinking skills, and mathematics and computational skills. The top cultural and experiential opportunities every student should have in 2025 included cultural studies and courses, international study, and arts and exhibits. (See findings for questions 7 and 8 on page 8.)

Respondents were asked about their vision for the ideal campus culture in 2025. Important themes include quality campus/facilities, academic rigor, and diversity/inclusivity. For example, respondents indicated that increasing student activities and campus and facility quality (e.g., appearance, advanced technology, and safety) would attract and retain students, faculty and staff. Two other factors were indicated as ideal attributes by smaller groups of respondents: a focus on hiring quality faculty with competitive compensation and more emphasis on students' needs and recruitment. (See analysis of question 9 on page 9.)

Respondents indicated that the ideal campus/student life in 2025 would include quality education and research, a focus on diversity and inclusivity, and increased activities contributing to social and campus life. Professional and social development opportunities such as internships and community experiences were also cited. (See findings for question 10 on page 10.)

When asked how universities should collaborate with external partners in 2025, respondents mentioned internships and externships, community involvement, and business/industry partnerships. Respondents suggested that relationships with local government and school districts, as well as an emphasis on volunteering and service learning, should also be considered. (See findings for question 11 on page 11.)

In response to an open-ended question about additional ideas for 2025, respondents recommended becoming a destination university by ensuring that the campus is beautiful, adding student-gear ed entertainment, and improving the institution's image. Other suggestions included improving recruitment and retention, focusing on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines, hiring quality faculty and administrators, and providing students with professional skills that will give them an understanding of the workplace after they graduate. (See findings for question 12 on page 12.)

FINDINGS

QUESTION 1: ALL RESPONDENT AFFILIATIONS

Please indicate your affiliation with SIU Carbondale. Check all that apply.

Below are the number of responses as well as the percentages of total responses from individuals self-identifying all of their affiliations with SIU Carbondale. Many respondents identified multiple affiliations.

Answer choices	Responses*	Number of responses
Current student	16.0%	465
Alumnus/graduate/former student	64.7%	1,881
Donor	17.7%	514
Current faculty member	13.4%	388
Current staff member	13.6%	396
Former/retired faculty or staff member	9.2%	267
Member of a community in Southern Illinois	23.4%	680
Regional business owner/manager	3.8%	109
No affiliation	0.5%	13

**Percentages are based on 2,907 respondents to this question; the total exceeds 100 percent since individual respondents could select multiple affiliations.*

QUESTION 2: PRIMARY RESPONDENT AFFILIATIONS

Which of the following do you consider to be your PRIMARY affiliation with SIU Carbondale? Please select one.

Below are the number of responses as well as the percentages of total responses from individuals self-identifying their primary affiliations with SIU Carbondale.

Answer choices	Responses*	Number of responses
Current student	14.2%	407
Alumnus/graduate/former student	47.2%	1,354
Donor	2.2%	64
Current faculty member	12.6%	360
Current staff member	12.7%	364
Former/retired faculty or staff member	5.9%	169
Member of a community in Southern Illinois	3.7%	105
Regional business owner/manager	0.9%	25
No affiliation	0.7%	21

**Percentages are based on 2,869 respondents to this question.*

QUESTION 3: MISSION STATEMENT

Following is SIU Carbondale's current mission statement: "SIU embraces a unique tradition of access and opportunity, inclusive excellence, innovation in research and creativity, and outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success. As a nationally ranked public research university and regional economic catalyst, we create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders, improve our communities, and transform lives." Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

The table below lists percentages of respondents who agreed, disagreed and neither agreed nor disagreed with each statement. For purposes of comparison, it includes both all levels of agreement and disagreement (in middle three columns) as well as only those who strongly agreed and strongly disagreed.

Mission focus areas	Strongly disagree only	Disagree (total, all levels of disagreement)*	Neither agree nor disagree*	Agree (total, all levels of agreement)*	Strongly agree only
In 2025, SIU should embrace access, opportunity and inclusive excellence.	7.5%	17.6%	11.5%	70.9%	45.4%
In 2025, SIU should embrace innovation in research and creativity.	7.4%	13.7%	4.8%	81.4%	56.2%
In 2025, SIU should embrace outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success.	8.0%	12.2%	3.4%	84.4%	61.4%
In 2025, SIU should be a nationally ranked public research university.	7.4%	16.8%	11.5%	71.7%	44.3%
In 2025, SIU should be a regional economic catalyst.	6.8%	13.2%	7.9%	78.9%	49.4%
In 2025, SIU should create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders.	7.3%	12.9%	5.8%	81.3%	53.3%
In 2025, SIU should focus on transforming lives.	6.7%	15.6%	12.3%	72.2%	42.9%

**These three columns may not equal 100 percent for every area due to rounding.*

QUESTION 4: POTENTIAL ADDITIONS TO MISSION STATEMENT

If there are other areas you believe SIU should consider adding to its mission, please share them here.

Many respondents reinforced or offered comments about existing areas of the mission statement. Some suggested areas to add. Common themes included:

- Commitment to diversity
- Commitment to sustainability
- Serving as a cultural and arts center
- Creating a culture of learning and critical thinking
- Providing real-world experiences
- Being student-centered
- Engaging in community partnerships
- Commitment to integrity and ethics
- Being welcoming and safe

QUESTION 5: AREAS OF STUDY

What areas of study do you believe will be the most relevant, impactful or in-demand in 2025? Please list up to five.

The top 10 most-mentioned areas are listed below in order of frequency. For example, business-related fields were mentioned most frequently.

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Business | 6. Environmental |
| 2. Technology | 7. Education |
| 3. Medicine/health | 8. Engineering |
| 4. Science | 9. Arts |
| 5. Energy/sustainability | 10. Agriculture |

QUESTION 6: AREAS OF RESEARCH OR CREATIVE ACTIVITY

What areas of research or creative activity do you believe will be most relevant, impactful or in-demand in 2025? Please list up to five.

The top 10 most-mentioned areas are listed below in order of frequency.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Technology | 6. Energy/sustainability |
| 2. Science | 7. Business |
| 3. Medicine/health | 8. Engineering |
| 4. Environmental | 9. Agriculture |
| 5. Arts | 10. Education |

QUESTION 7: CORE SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE

What are the core skills or knowledge that you believe every graduate should have to be successful in 2025? Please list up to five.

The top 10 most-mentioned areas are listed below in order of frequency.

1. Communication/interpersonal skills
2. Critical thinking
3. Mathematics/computational skills
4. Technological/computer skills
5. Writing skills
6. Work ethic
7. Problem solving
8. Reading skills
9. Management/leadership skills
10. Bilingual/multilingual languages

QUESTION 8: CULTURAL AND EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

What cultural and experiential opportunities should be available to all students at a comprehensive university – one that offers programs across a wide range of subjects, including the liberal arts and humanities – in 2025? Please list up to five.

The top 10 most-mentioned areas are listed below in order of frequency.

1. Cultural studies/courses
2. International study
3. Arts and art exhibits
4. Speakers, presentations, and volunteering opportunities
5. Student skill learning programs
6. Music
7. Internships
8. Athletics
9. Historical/museum
10. Theater/theatrical presentations

QUESTION 9: CAMPUS CULTURE

Please share your vision for the ideal campus culture in 2025. What attributes do you think will help attract and retain students, faculty and staff?

The top five most-mentioned themes and accompanying examples are included below. Themes are listed in order of frequency.

Theme	Examples of individual responses
Quality campus/facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased student activities/entertainment • Improve campus appearance/buildings • Better technology and equipment • Safer campus
Academic rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher admission standards • Increased research funding • More hands-on experience
Diversity/inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative thinking/diversity of ideas • Balance of conservative and liberal views • Respect and appreciation for all cultures •
Faculty quality/focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, supportive, stable faculty • Better compensation/contracts
Student focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger recruitment • More student/faculty collaboration • Care for students' needs • Emphasis on student research

QUESTION 10: CAMPUS/STUDENT LIFE

Please describe your vision for campus/student life in 2025. What should the ideal student experience include?

The top five most-mentioned themes and accompanying examples are included below. Themes are listed in order of frequency.

Theme	Examples of individual responses
Quality education/research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive education experience • Curiosity and critical thinking • Technology/equipment
Diversity/inclusivity/support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of experiences, not just culture
Social/campus life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased activities, school pride, Greek life
Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship/internship opportunities • Increased faculty interaction
Social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community experience • Cross-department experience

QUESTION 11: EXTERNAL PARTNERS

Please share your vision for how universities should collaborate with external partners in 2025. Examples might be partnerships with communities, industry, non-profits, government agencies and other organizations.

The top five most-mentioned themes and accompanying examples are included below. Themes are listed in order of frequency.

Theme	Examples of individual responses
Internships/externships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applied job training/job shadowing • Onsite internship opportunities • Summer employment • Higher quality partnerships
Community involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community access to university facilities • Veteran groups • Renew local recruitment
Business/industry partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Park • Major companies from St. Louis area • Invite CEOs to campus
Local government/schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create better relationships • Town and gown
Volunteering/service learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising for charity organizations • Mentoring youth • Community service

QUESTION 12: ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Please share any additional ideas you have about your vision for SIU in 2025.

The top five most-mentioned themes and accompanying examples are included below. Themes are listed in order of frequency.

Theme	Examples of individual responses
Destination university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautiful campus • Student-gearred attractions/entertainment • Improve image
Improve recruitment/retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit locally • Make diversity of students a high priority • Focus on students
Focus on STEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build strong programs • Rework weak programs • Balance research and student success • State-of-the-art research infrastructure
Hire better faculty/administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More engaging/competent/high profile • Pay competitive salaries
Professional training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need real skills and understanding of the workplace • Offer practice educational opportunities • Graduating qualified students

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INVITATION



Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to join the Saluki family as chancellor of SIU Carbondale. SIU has a rich history and promising future.

I was attracted to SIU because of its academic strengths as well as the warmth and dedication I felt from the campus community. I look forward to working with you to develop a shared vision for the university's future.

I welcome your input as we shape that vision. You are invited to take a short survey to share your insights into what SIU should look like in 2025, just eight years in the future. I encourage you to respond to the survey without being weighed down by past challenges. What are your hopes and dreams for SIU?

[TAKE THE SURVEY](#)

Please respond by Friday, Sept. 8, to ensure that your feedback is heard. Your responses will be completely confidential; no response will ever be shared attached to your name or other information. If you have questions or technical issues about the survey, please email universitycommunications@siu.edu.

This survey is just one of many ways I will be inviting input that will help us shape SIU as it evolves. Your input is important, welcome and appreciated.

Sincerely,

Carlo Montemagno, Chancellor

Website: chancellor.siu.edu

Email: chancellor@siu.edu

Twitter: [@MontemagNANO](https://twitter.com/MontemagNANO)

2025 Vision Survey

1. Please indicate your affiliation with SIU Carbondale. Check all that apply.

- Current student
- Alumnus/graduate/former student
- Donor
- Current faculty member
- Current staff member
- Former/retired faculty or staff member
- Member of a community in Southern Illinois
- Regional business owner/manager
- No affiliation

Other (please specify)

2. Which of the following do you consider to be your PRIMARY affiliation with SIU Carbondale? Please select one.

- Current student
- Alumnus/graduate/former student
- Donor
- Current faculty member
- Current staff member
- Former/retired faculty or staff member
- Member of a community in Southern Illinois
- Regional business owner/manager
- No affiliation

Other (please specify)

3. Following is SIU Carbondale's current mission statement: "SIU embraces a unique tradition of access and opportunity, inclusive excellence, innovation in research and creativity, and outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success. As a nationally ranked public research university and regional economic catalyst, we create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders, improve our communities, and transform lives." Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

	Strongly disagree					Neither agree nor disagree					Strongly agree
In 2025, SIU should embrace access, opportunity and inclusive excellence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
In 2025, SIU should embrace innovation in research and creativity.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
In 2025, SIU should embrace outstanding teaching focused on nurturing student success.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
In 2025, SIU should be a nationally ranked public research university.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
In 2025, SIU should be a regional economic catalyst.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
In 2025, SIU should create and exchange knowledge to shape future leaders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
In 2025, SIU should focus on transforming lives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

4. If there are other areas you believe SIU should consider adding to its mission, please share them here.

5. What areas of study do you believe will be the most relevant, impactful or in-demand in 2025? Please list up to five.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6. What areas of research or creative activity do you believe will be most relevant, impactful or in-demand in 2025? Please list up to five.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

7. What are the core skills or knowledge that you believe every graduate should have to be successful in 2025? Please list up to five.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

8. What cultural and experiential opportunities should be available to all students at a comprehensive university -- one that offers programs across a wide range of subjects, including the liberal arts and humanities -- in 2025? Please list up to five.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

9. Please share your vision for the ideal campus culture in 2025. What attributes do you think will help attract and retain students, faculty and staff?

10. Please describe your vision for campus/student life in 2025. What should the ideal student experience include?

11. Please share your vision for how universities should collaborate with external partners in 2025. Examples might be partnerships with communities, industry, non-profits, government agencies and other organizations.

12. Please share any additional ideas you have about your vision for SIU in 2025.

13. Thank you for participating. If you have questions about the survey, please email us at universitycommunications@siu.edu. If you would like to us to contact you about anything related to SIU, please share your question, name and contact information here. Your survey responses will remain confidential.

APPENDIX C: METHODOLOGY

Methodology

Applied Research Consultants analyzed sections of qualitative data from the 2025 Vision Survey. Specifically, ARC analyzed qualitative responses to questions 6-12. (Staff in University Communications and Marketing analyzed the remaining questions, using ARC's categorizations for question 5.)

For questions 6-8, a text analysis was utilized to identify the most common themes for each question. The top 10 themes were selected for analysis. Then, for each item, a computer program randomly selected 25 percent of the responses. For example, the total number of responses for question 7 was 8,429; 2,107 were randomly selected for analysis. ARC associates assigned themes to each of the randomly selected responses. Each question had a minimum of two ARC associates coding responses. Inter-rater reliabilities and correlations were calculated for each item, demonstrating sufficient agreement. Finally, the top ten themes for each question were selected for inclusion in the final report.

For questions 9-12, a random sample (i.e., 25 %) of responses was selected for each item. ARC associates assigned themes to each of the randomly selected responses. Each question had a minimum of two ARC associates coding responses. Inter-rater reliabilities and correlations were calculated for each item, demonstrating sufficient agreement. Finally, top themes and examples for each were selected for inclusion in the report.

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