

## **Legence Bank invests in student success at SIU**

CARBONDALE – With a commitment of \$137,500 to Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Legence Bank is helping bring a Saluki education within reach of local students.

The Legence Bank Saluki Commitment Scholarship will provide tuition funds for 11 students each year as part of the Aim High/Saluki Commitment program, which covers tuition for eligible in-state students. The students will be chosen from the 11 Southern Illinois communities served by Legence Bank.

“This partnership with Legence Bank is going to go a long way to keeping students right here in our own backyard. That is extremely important to us,” said Chancellor Austin Lane during a check presentation Tuesday, March 25, in the Student Services Building at SIU.

Kevin Beckemeyer, president and CEO of Legence Bank, noted the bank’s enthusiasm for partnering with SIU.

“At Legence Bank, we believe in the strength of our community and the importance of investing in the future. Our motto – Legence Loves Local – demonstrates our commitment to supporting local scholarships, and this reflects our dedication to empowering the next generation of leaders in Southern Illinois,” said Beckemeyer, a 1983 graduate of SIU’s College of Agricultural, Life and Physical Sciences. “Together, we can foster growth, inspire change, and create a brighter future for all.”

“This initiative is not just about funding; it’s about investing in our community’s future,” Beckemeyer added. “By providing full-ride scholarships to students in the market areas we serve, we are empowering the next generation of leaders and innovators. We believe that education should be attainable for all, and this partnership exemplifies our dedication to making that a reality.”

The donation comes as part of the SIU Foundation’s ongoing Imagine SIU 2030 fundraising campaign, which has a goal of raising \$500 million by June 2028, it is the fifth largest such campaign in the history of Illinois higher education. More than \$390 million has been raised thus far, and corporate partners such as Legence Bank have made an enormous impact.

“The partnership between Southern Illinois University and Legence Bank represents a significant step forward in our commitment to educational accessibility,” said Tricia Overturf, vice president of marketing and communications at Legence Bank. “By collaborating on this initiative, we aim to bridge the gap between existing grants and scholarships, ensuring that students from Southern Illinois have the opportunity to pursue their educational dreams without the burden of financial stress.”

To learn more about the campaign or make a gift, visit [siuf.org](https://siuf.org).

## **Committed to Salukis**

The [Saluki Commitment](#) guarantees that tuition and mandatory fees are fully covered for four (transfer students) or eight (freshman students) consecutive semesters at no cost to students or families.

Recipients must meet the following criteria:

- Be a first-time incoming freshman enrolling full-time on-campus in the fall 2021 semester or later.
- Have a cumulative high school GPA of 2.75 or higher.
- Have an annual family income less than \$103,040 with assets less than \$50,000 based on your FAFSA.
- Be an Illinois resident who attended an Illinois high school.
- Be a dependent student under age 24.
- Be eligible for federal financial aid.

“I want to thank our partners from Legence Bank. You are making a difference in students’ lives,” said Wendell Williams, vice chancellor for enrollment management. “Your generous contribution is going to close the gap for students and bring them to a place they may have never imagined they could get to.”

SIU recently joined the ranks of the Ivy League, being named a Research 1 (R1) university by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Southern is one of only three public universities in Illinois with that designation, and it is the only one within 100 miles of Carbondale.

“There is no reason in the world for a student from any county in Southern Illinois to attend any other university than the one in their backyard,” Lane said. “You’re not going to find another school that’s close to you that’s an R1 higher research institution.”

## **About Legence Bank**

With more than 115 years of service, Legence Bank is a trusted community bank committed to excellence, honesty, integrity, and personalized customer care. Through its “Legence Loves Local” initiative, the bank continues to support local individuals, families, businesses, and now students—providing not just financial services, but a deep investment in the long-term success of the communities it serves.

“Our long-term vision for this initiative is to create a sustainable model that continuously supports students in Southern Illinois,” Overturf said. “We are excited about the potential

impact this partnership can have on our local economy and the personal growth of our students. By fostering an environment where education is accessible, we are cultivating a thriving community.”

To learn more about Legence Bank, visit [legencebank.com](https://legencebank.com).