

Metro East legislators urge study on possible SIU system split

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SPRINGFIELD – As a result of the changing financial needs of the Southern Illinois University system, state Reps. Katie Stuart, D-Edwardsville, Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea, LaToya Greenwood, D-East St. Louis, and Monica Bristow, D-Godfrey, are calling upon the Board of Higher Education to explore whether the universities should seek independence.

“As a former instructor at the Edwardsville campus, I have seen Edwardsville outpace Carbondale’s campus while not receiving our full allotment of state resources under the funding plan for the SIU system,” said Stuart. “Asking an independent entity to assess the true necessities for both schools is not an unreasonable request, and we should explore that course of action.”

“While the SIU system has enjoyed great success over the years, it has become increasingly evident that independence between the two schools may be necessary to meet their unique financial situations,” Hoffman said. “We believe that the Board of Higher Education should lead an effort to evaluate the separation of the schools, given their financial differences and polarizing enrollment figures, to explore a new path forward.”

“The SIU system has been a leading institution for higher education in the Metro East area for many years, attracting students from all over the state, country, and even abroad” Greenwood said. “However, due to the disproportional growth between Carbondale and Edwardsville, it could be time to consider moving forward with a plan to allow the schools to operate independently, enabling them to better achieve their individual missions.”

“As a lifelong resident of the Riverbend region, I have seen firsthand the way that SIU Edwardsville has become a shining star in our state university system. This campus continues to grow, while Carbondale has seen a decline in enrollment for years,” said Bristow. “With equal student populations at both campuses, I think that it is valid to investigate the feasibility of separating the SIU system.”