



Long-time SIC President set to Retire

Article provided by SIC Marketing

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After 35 years in higher education and 34 of those at Southeastern Illinois College, SIC President Jonah Rice, Ph.D., has decided to retire at the end of his contract (June 30, 2024) to begin a new phase in his life after leading the college through the most challenging times in the college’s history.

Rice began as junior faculty in 1990 and began the theatre program as well as helped coach multiple national championship speech and debate teams for nearly 20 of those years. He also led the college through successful reaccreditations with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

Rice was also awarded the Illinois Community College Trustees Association Advocacy Award in 2019 for his dedicated leadership in advocating for the needs of students and the Illinois community college system.

Rice said his 15 years at the helm included one Illinois fiscal disaster after another, including the great budget impasse of 2016, as well as a tornado, dropping district population, losses in the local economy, and finally a pandemic.

During Rice’s time, the college developed a fund balance policy ensuring a safety net for emergencies like state impasses and gross late payments. Rice said he’s so proud of what the college has done in the past decade plus. In terms of academics, Rice is proud of the biofuels program through the Technical Assistance Coordination Center grants early in his tenure as well as the Outdoor Recreation program.

The use of public health and safety bonds, private donations, state capital funds, and other creative venues have helped improve the campus appearance and function. Under Rice’s leadership, multiple spaces underwent substantial renovations, such as the Learning Commons area, gym, student center, bookstore, and so much more.

Rice’s leadership style has always been about equity interaction and servant leadership.

What is his advice for his successor?

“Take a deep breath. Put everything into perspective. Stick to your priorities. Enjoy change. Document everything. Listen more, talk less, and e-mail even less. And remember to laugh as much as you can—even in tough times. It’s better than the alternative.”

[To read the more in-depth on the article on the SIC website, click here.](#)



Dr. Jonah Rice has led Southeastern Illinois College as president since 2009. He will be retiring at the end of June.

Another Year of Forensic Falcons Finishing Strong at Phi Rho Pi Nationals

Article written by Kassidy Bean



The SIC Forensic Falcons took the bronze at the national Phi Rho Pi tournament in Reno. Pictured (front row, l-r) are Neva Wasson, Rachel Russell, Ethan Bordoy, and Abby Zirkelbach. Back row (l-r) are Carter Wiseman, Connor Fauset, Grant Dooley, Brock Newman, Braxtyn Baugher, and Bradlee Thomas.

Southeastern Illinois College's Forensic Falcons ended the season competing at the Phi Rho Pi National Forensics competition in Reno, Nevada. Fifty colleges from all over the United States came together with their best teams ready to win a title. To be more specific, all the colleges were broken down into five regions that resulted in 953 events containing 500 students. The Forensic Falcons competed in 40 events as a team, and 10 students each had four events.

The following students participated in this major event:

Braxtyn Baugher (Harrisburg), Ethan Bordoy (Harrisburg), Grant Dooley (Harrisburg), Connor Fauset (Benton), Brock Newman (Eldorado), Rachel Russell (Norris City), Bradlee Thomas (Harrisburg), Neva Wasson (Harrisburg), Carter Wiseman (Galatia), Abby Zirkelbach (Marion)

The following students earned semifinal (bronze) and final (gold) medals in their events:

Ethan Bordoy received bronze in Persuasion, Rachel Russell earned bronze in Dramatic Interpretation and Prose, Brock Newman received bronze in Informative and gold in Prose, Bradlee Thomas earned bronze in Program Oral Interpretation and Duo Interpretation and gold in Dramatic Interpretation, Neva Wasson received bronze in Prose, Dramatic Interpretation, and Duo Interpretation, Grant Dooley earned bronze in Duo Interpretation, Braxtyn Baugher received bronze in Duo Interpretation and Program Oral Interpretation and gold in Prose and Speech to Entertain, Abby Zirkelbach earned bronze in both of her Duo Interpretation events.

Coach Rachel Parish expressed her view of this year's speech team competing in this event; "I honestly think that our team is a very diverse group of talented individuals. We have some students that come from Benton, Harrisburg, Norris City. All the students on the team have different majors. They work hard on their events and have a big sense of personal accomplishment and motivation. They all really wanted to represent our school going to Nationals."

First-year competitor Carter Wiseman also shared his perspective of being on the speech team this year, "Speech wasn't what I thought it was. I thought it was going to be more of a presidential thing, but acting is actually a big part of it, so just learning to adapt to that and see other people do these crazy things was what I loved. Speech team for me this year has been amazing."

The Forensic Falcons are only getting better and better each year! Congratulations to everyone, you all deserve it!

Get to Know the Outfitter Wildlife Management Program

Article written by Gracie Behnke

If you're hunting for a career in the outdoors, SIC can help! SIC's Outfitter Wildlife Management program will prepare you for jobs in the rapidly growing commercial hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation industry. [To learn more about SIC's Outfitter Wildlife Program, click here.](#)



The Outfitter Wildlife Management Program here at SIC is perfect for anyone looking for a career outdoors and prepares students for jobs in the hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation industries. After interviewing the head of the department, Jordan Hammersley, he had a few good insights about the program.

When asked what makes the OWL program unique, Hammersley replied that his students “get to travel to off-campus locations for hands-on training in the field, such as Giant City State Park, Little Grassy Fish Hatchery, Rim Rock Wilderness, Land-Between-the-Lakes National Park, Crab Orchard National Refuge, all over the Shawnee National Forest, and many more locations within a 60-mile radius of campus. Students get to go on trout fishing trips at Ferne Clyffe State Park, overnight camping trips, Beall Woods for forestry and timber management, Earth Day projects at Cache River, Herpetological surveys at Heron Pond, and so much more! The uniqueness resides in the hands-on teaching methods: students must pass certain benchmarks to become eligible for the more fun curricular items. My graduates are high quality and ready to work in the industry.”

These opportunities give students the hands-on experience they need to be prepared for whatever career they are choosing. This also helps to break up the learning process, making it interactive and fun rather than just reading out of a textbook. Since the program is still fairly new, a lot of people don't know exactly what the program provides.

When asked what information interested students should know, Hammersley stated that “If a student is interested in ecology, conservation, wildlife law, fisheries, forestry management, guiding and outfitting, wildlife identification, our National Park system, the Department of Natural Resources, or simply wants to learn more about the wild world around them, this program covers all bases. The two years spent in the program prepare students for a plethora of options and opportunities in the wildlife industry. Students will build an amazing portfolio of certifications and experiences, including options for an internship. My office has a bevy of scientific permits, allowing the program to conduct fieldwork across the industry, on both state and federal lands. If a student loves to be outdoors, working with habitat and the species residing within, they might be a good fit for the program!”

As you can see, the program covers a wide variety of topics and provides a great learning environment for all who are interested in the world of wildlife management. Some of the student's favorite experiences include mist netting, bird banding, bat netting, controlled habitat burning, and trips to different places such as the Little Grassy Fish Hatchery. This program provides amazing opportunities and great experiences throughout southern Illinois and is a perfect outlet for those students wanting to further their knowledge in the world of the outdoors.

SIC Men's Basketball 2023-2024 Season

Article written by Skylar Edwards



Sam Swinford is the SIC Men's Head Basketball Coach

Charles King of Vienna is a guard on SIC's men's Basketball team.



The SIC's men's basketball team has been killing it this season! The team has made us Falcons immensely proud. Coach Swinford won Coach of the Year during Nationals, that took place in Richmond, Virginia, from March 7th to the 14th. We interviewed basketball player and student government senator, Charles King.

We asked Charles how he felt about his individual performance this season. He said that he was more delighted with his performance than he expected. We asked him what was the biggest lesson that he had learned from this season and he explained to us how he, as a freshman, was nervous to be playing at the college level with older and bigger guys, but the more games he played and the more he practiced, he learned quickly that he belongs here, he can play against these bigger schools, faster guys, and all that he needed to do was to be confident. Lastly, Charles recounted Vienna night as his most memorable moment so far this season. Vienna, Charles' hometown, came out on January 31st to express their support for our basketball team. The energy was unmatched and was an especially heartwarming moment for Charles.

Coach Swinford gave insightful and detailed descriptions of how he practices and enforces leadership in his team. He promotes to his players that they are only basketball players for two hours a day and everything else for twenty-two hours a day. They are responsible for going to class and getting their work done aside from basketball. They take part in food drives and interact with local schools. Their program's main core value is having a sense of togetherness: doing everything as a team; winning as a team and losing as a team. Other core values are working hard and living in the moment. As a junior college, it is easy for students to keep looking forward to the future. Coach Swinford likes to reinforce thinking and being mindful of the present, so he implements and preaches the acronym F.A.L.C.O.N.: Forget About Later Care About Now.

Coach Swinford expresses his gratitude for the award he unexpectedly received during Nationals, but he says that the award is more of a reflection of our entire campus than just himself. He conveys how grateful he is for the opportunity to show up and coach every day and to lead, but he feels as though it is an award that resembles and represents our community.

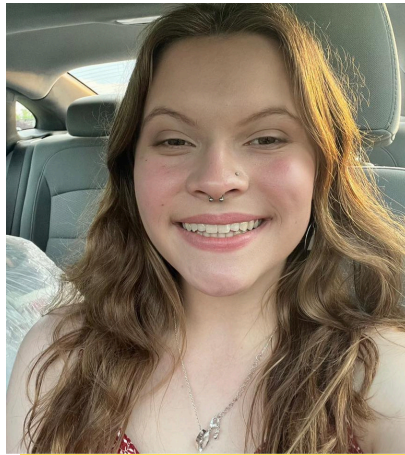
Student Life Over Summer Break

Article written by Halle Wallace



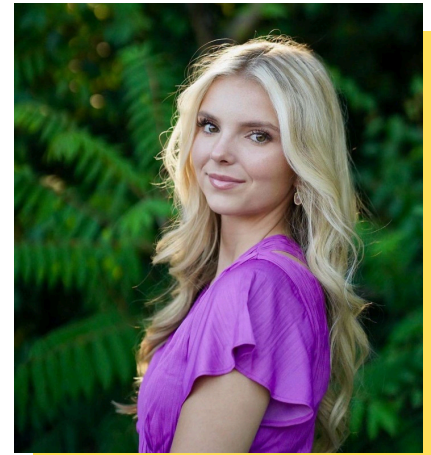
Willa January

"I plan on working a lot this summer before classes start in the fall. After SIC I plan to transfer to SIUE for Elementary Education.



Maddie Kaylor

"My summer plans are to enjoy my time off from school and work part-time. I will also get to go on a cruise sometime this summer. After I graduate from SIC this spring, I will start at USI in the fall and major in psychology. I hope to become a mental health therapist."



Kenlee Grisham

"My summer plans are taking A&P II and hanging out with my friends and family at the lake."



Austin Robinson

"This summer I plan to spend my time working to save up for my schooling later this fall. In my free time, I plan to hang out with friends and work out at my local gym. After this summer is over, I will be transferring to SIUE where I will be completing my pre-pharmacy classes. I love learning more about science as well as helping people in any way I can. My current plan is to major in research pharmacy, where we will research and test new drugs to be used for certain diseases or conditions."



Calista Conley

"This summer, I plan to devote most of my time to working and volunteering at local animal shelters and veterinary clinics. In my free time, I plan to be outside and hang out with friends. After I have completed my time at SIC, I would like to transfer to the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana to obtain my doctorate in Veterinary Medicine. I have always had a passion for animals and helping them. At UICU, I will be able to accomplish my goal while also being within a few hours of both sides of my family. I would then like to open my own vet clinic and animal rescue in Hardin County.