

# THE SALUKI FLYER

JANUARY 2025



## SIU Flying Salukis hit 13 straight regional titles

By Pete Rosenbery

CARBONDALE, Ill. — Winning each of the nine events they competed in, the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Flying Salukis used a dominating performance to easily win their 13th straight National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) Region VIII championship.

Mateo Torres, a junior in aviation flight and technologies from Park Ridge, Illinois, won top scoring honors, and teammate Grant Gillespie, a four-year team member and senior from Fort Worth, Texas, won three events. In winning both the ground event and flight event titles, the host Flying Salukis had six of the top seven scorers to overwhelm Purdue University and Lewis University, Oct. 23-26, at Southern Illinois Airport near Murphysboro.

Coach Nathan J. Lincoln, a senior lecturer in aviation

management and flight in SIU's School of Aviation, is pleased with the team's results after just over a month of practice following tryouts.

"The way everyone came together the last few weeks was enjoyable as a coach to watch," he said. "Everyone was pushing themselves but also helping each other so that the team was ready as a whole. When this happens, you know that they are truly invested in the success of the team."

The title propels the nine-time national champions to the NIFA championships for the 55th time in 56 years. The championships, where the Flying Salukis have finished in the top five in the nation for 15 straight years and in the top three overall in 12 of the last 13 years, will be May 12-17 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. All 18 team members will return to compete in May.

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# Welcome to Spring Semester

## Greetings from the SIU School of Aviation!

As we begin Spring 2025, we're thrilled to share several exciting updates and accomplishments that highlight our school's growth and achievements in Fall 2024. Excitingly, we received a gift-in-kind donation, a Cessna C421, to enhance our executive transportation services and increase high-performance flight training capacity. In parallel, we are planning to expand our maintenance hangar to accommodate the increasing demands of our maintenance workforce in the near future. We've also reached another new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for our maintenance technicians, ensuring financial satisfaction, continued airworthiness and excellence in aircraft maintenance safety. In addition, efforts are underway to enhance our capabilities through strategic engine stocking initiatives, further optimizing aircraft readiness as well as classroom upgrades for Aviation Technology program.



Our commitment to academic and operational excellence remains steadfast. Our colleagues attended conferences in relation to aviation education, mental health, and program accreditation showcasing the dedication and effort in improve teaching and research outcomes. While improving our website and social media platforms, we are actively recruiting tenure-track faculty members for Aviation Technology and Aviation Management programs as well as an Associate Director of Aviation Flight to support our programs. Internationally, we've initiated another official agreement with Chaoyang University of Technology (CYUT) in Taiwan, opening more collaborative opportunities for global partnerships and engagements.

We sincerely welcome our new Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) members who met in November 2024 to provide valuable insights that will help shape the future of our programs, while our Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) have been bustling with off-campus visits that enrich student life and professional development and improve job placement.

As we prepare for the new year, the momentum continues to build, and we remain focused on delivering top-tier aviation education and training for the next-generation professionals. Thank you for being part of our journey. Your support and involvement make our successes possible.

Dr. Chien-Tsung Lu  
Director of School of Aviation

SAVE THE DATE: the next remote

School of Aviation

Advisory Board Meeting has been scheduled for February 6th, 2025

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“Staying competitive every year is an extremely difficult thing to do. It takes dedication and commitment from all involved to keep our performance high,” Lincoln said. “I commend our students for putting in the time necessary as well as all my coaching staff being able to guide them to success.”

Results are available on the NIFA website.

The squad has just two seniors, along with six first-year team members.

“Even though we are a very young we have a lot of talent within our team. I think this shows the quality of our aviation students as well as the flight program. I am extremely proud to represent our university and showcase it to our peer aviation programs,” Lincoln said.

“Being able to win every event we competed in shows the team mentality. Everyone who competes wants to do well, but more importantly, they are driven to make the team better. They freely communicate how to perform better in the events, even if that means the other team member might do better than them. For our success, this is a foundational necessity.”

As a team, the squad placed:

- The top five scorers in computer accuracy.
- The top two finishers in aircraft preflight inspection and ground trainer events.
- Five of the top seven scorers in short field landing.
- Five of the top eight, including the top four finishers, in power-off landing.
- Five of the top eight, including the top three finishers, in message drop.
- Five of the top eight in SCAN, or simulated comprehensive aircraft navigation.

• Four of the top seven scorers in aircraft recognition.

• Three of the top four scorers in traditional navigation.

Taking home individual event titles were:

- Aircraft preflight inspection — Ben Campbell, junior, aviation management and aviation flight, Richmond, Illinois, fifth place.
- Aircraft recognition — Grant Gillespie, senior, aviation

technologies and aviation flight, Fort Worth, Texas, third place.

- Computer accuracy — Jake Mack, junior, aviation technologies and aviation flight, Lake Zurich, Illinois, tied for sixth place.

- Ground trainer — Grant Gillespie, Fort Worth, Texas.

- Message drop — Liam Harrison (dropmaster), sophomore, aviation management and flight, Libertyville, Illinois, and Thomas Nguyen (pilot), sophomore, aviation management and flight, Broomfield, Colorado. Harrison and Nguyen tied for 15th place.

- Power-off landing — Vassilios Georges, senior, aviation management and flight, Chesterfield, Missouri, fourth place.

- SCAN — Alana Stahl, sophomore, aviation management and flight, Sandwich, Illinois, 23rd place.

- Short field landing — Grant Gillespie, Fort Worth, Texas.

- Traditional navigation — Jeremy Murray (pilot), sophomore, aviation management and flight, Lockport, Illinois, and Michael Chebuske (safety observer), sophomore, aviation management and aviation flight, Louis, Missouri. Murray tied for sixth; Chebuske finished 10th.

Other Flying Salukis who scored points were:

- Kyra Hilsabeck, sophomore, aviation management and aviation flight, Edelson, Illinois, 24th place.

- Mateo Torres, junior, aviation flight and aviation technologies, Park Ridge, Illinois, 1st place.

- Luke Trout, junior, aviation management and flight, Holland, Indiana, tied for 12th place.

Additional Flying Salukis are:

- Luke Barry, freshman, aviation technologies and aviation flight, Benton, Illinois.

- Gabriel Booth, freshman, aviation management and aviation flight, Murphysboro, Illinois.

- James Cone, sophomore, aviation management and aviation flight, Byron, Illinois.

- Brady Noble, sophomore, aviation flight, Sussex, Wisconsin.

- Ryder Schwoerer, freshman, aviation management and flight, Monticello, Illinois.

- Thomas Van Dorpe, junior, aviation management, Charles, Illinois.

Lincoln believes the team will continue to improve over the coming months.

“Coaches and team members are still working on a few weak areas that we know exist. The level of competition at a national level is extremely high and requires everyone to be performing at their best. If we can take what was done this semester and build upon that, anything is possible,” he said.



Friday is wear  
Maroon Day!  
Go Salukis!



# Able Flight Donates Planes

*Adapted from article by Pete Rosenbery, pictures by Rusty Bailey, both of University Communications*

The partnership between Southern Illinois University Carbondale's School of Aviation and Able Flight, an aviation nonprofit for people with physical disabilities to receive intensive flight training, continues to grow.

After a successful inaugural cohort last summer where five Able Flight students trained with SIU Aviation instructors to become licensed pilots certified to operate light sport aircraft, the organization is formally transferring ownership of two Vashon Ranger Light Sport airplanes to the university, along with donating funds for program expenses at SIU for several years.

Charles Stites, who founded Able Flight in 2006, said that based on SIU Aviation's "outstanding response" in working with Able Flight students, the incorporated nonprofit "is comfortable in going forward with a long-term partnership of a minimum of seven years."

"From the beginning of this new partnership, it has been gratifying to see how not only SIU Aviation, but the university as a whole, has stepped forward to welcome our scholarship recipients and provide them with a positive experience during their time there," Stites said. "That includes the university administration, housing and the staff at the airport. By the time our students completed this demanding and intensive training program and earned their pilot certificates, they felt they had become a part of the SIU community."

The relationship continues the university's longstanding commitment to providing accessibility for people with disabilities. SIU School of Aviation Director Chien-Tsung Lu said the program is an example of the university's responsibility and mission.

"We appreciate the sponsorship from Able Flight that is able to give us the opportunity to provide this special service to the community," Lu said.

Able Flight has licensed 98 pilots in 14 years, with several earning more than one rating or certificate through the support of the organization's scholarship program. Stites anticipates five or six scholarship recipients will attend the six-to seven-week program at SIU beginning in May 2025.

## 'Incredible gift'

The donated modified airplanes SIU is receiving are valued at approximately \$170,000 apiece, Stites said. The airplanes are dedicated solely to Able Flight scholarship recipients during its annual program, which runs from May through July, and will then be available for use by SIU students the remainder of the year.

Steven Goetz, chief flight instructor and SIU Aviation



Mr. Stites hands over the keys to Provost Cheryl Tucker. Pictured from l to r: Chien-Tsung Lu, Charles Stites, Cheryl Tucker and Chris Mullins.



Pictured from l to r: Mr. Stites, Victoria Mathieu, Miguel Marroquin, Provost Tucker and Zachary Martine. they pose with one of the new planes.



Discussing the modified plane are Zach Martine, Charles Stites, Steven Goetz and Provost Cheryl Tucker.

associate professor, called the addition of two planes and continued relationship an "incredible gift to SIU Aviation and a huge opportunity and responsibility."

"Able Flight has carved out a unique place in the aviation industry, and I am truly honored and humbled to carry on that legacy of service and education to a population that may never have considered flying as possible."

In reflecting on the first Able Flight cohort, Goetz explained that there was a lot of learning for everyone. The program was "incredible," and Goetz said he's thrilled SIU Aviation will continue the work.

"Our Able Flight students were awesome. They overcame lots of challenges but were all successful in the end," Goetz said.

# News around Aviation

## New NTT Faculty



David "Dave" Mitchell has returned to SIU Aviation after a 32-year career with Delta Air Lines. He attended SIU Aviation from 1982 to 1984, where he obtained his instrument rating and commercial airplane license. After his time at SIU, he joined the U.S. Air Force, flying the T-37, T-38, and C-130E.

Dave began his career at Delta in 1991, where he held various positions

flying the B727, B737, B757/767, and B717. For 16 of his 32 years at Delta, he served in Flight Standards as a Line Check Airman and Lead Line Check Airman, training and evaluating new Captains and First Officers and giving FAA observations on new Captains.

### New Flight Instructors in 2025

The following CFIs began working in School of Aviation starting January 1, 2025. Jacob Chapman, Seth Wildoner, Ripley Tomlinson, and Samuel Lang. Please be sure to welcome all our new faculty to SOA.

## New Advisors in the School of Aviation

Please meet Brandon Arrowood our new academic advisor for Aviation Technologies. Brandon replaces Chris Milazzo, who left to become the Aviation Technologies Office Manager, right across the hall.

Hello, my name is **Brandon Arrowood**, and I am the new advisor for Aviation Technology. I started in October 2024 and have been working with a great team at SIU to learn all about the AVT program. Christopher Milazzo and Dr. Karen Johnson have been incredibly helpful, and I have also received a lot of assistance from Willie and Brittany from Aviation Flight.

Before becoming an advisor at SIU, I worked as a project manager at Aisin Manufacturing Illinois, where I was responsible for managing production changes for Toyota and Subaru sunroofs. That role taught me a great deal, and I hope to apply some of those skills to my new position.

I am excited about the start of the Spring semester. While I know I still have much to learn, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you may have.

## Congratulations to Retirees

Congratulations to our recent retirees - **David Kampe** has been a Senior Assistant Chief for many years before coming back to work in 2021.

**Susan King** joined us in 2019 as an academic advisor for Aviation Management and Flight. Susan has a total of 20 years at SIU. Enjoy your retirement!



**Susan King**

## Welcome to our Civil Service Employees

One of our Flight Line Attendants in Line Service, **Zachary Mileur**, recently joined the Maintenance crew as a Sr. Aircraft Mechanic. Zachary recently earned his A & P certification and a degree in Aviation Technologies from SIU.

Taking Zach's place as a Flight Line Attendant is **Brian Ely**. Brian was hired in September as extra help and was upgraded to a permanent employee after Mileur's move to maintenance. Please welcome Brian to the School of Aviation and congratulations to Zachary on his new position.

My name is **Abigail Wheetley** and I am one of the two AVM/AF advisors for the Aviation Program. I have just returned home from a year and a half in Savannah Georgia where I was a Student Success Advisor at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

SIUC and Carbondale are truly home for me! I'm a proud two-time alumnus from SIUC, with my bachelors in English and a master's in creative writing. I also have a second master's from the University of Illinois in Library Science!

I've previously worked at SIUC as a librarian, professor, and archivist and I'm excited for this new challenge.

It's a wonderful place to learn and work! I look forward to each and every opportunity to help and support students during their time in our aviation program.

**Katie Patterson** has replaced Susan King as the Aviation Management and Flight Advisor. Katie has worked at SIU previously in the Social Work area. Please stop in and meet Katie and our other new advisors.

*Welcome to all!*



By Pete Rosenbery

CARBONDALE, Ill. — More than 130 Chicago-area high school students was introduced to Southern Illinois University Carbondale's nationally recognized aviation program when United Airlines brought them to Southern Illinois Airport near Murphysboro on Saturday, October 19.

United Airlines Captain Tom Stewart, First Officer Trent Medernach, along with 29 United Airlines volunteers — many of whom also are SIU Aviation alumni — was among those helping students who are considering aviation careers to chart

The career day allows students to gain a better understanding of the program, curriculum and facilities, he said.

“These are prospective students whom we want to recruit to the aviation program, and they can understand the environment of the aviation program on campus,” Lu said, noting that many SIU Aviation graduates work for United Airlines.

“We want to continue to have a strong connection with the airline — a strong, solid pathway for our graduates so that they are able to go to United Airlines or elsewhere. This is a good

# United Airlines Career Day 2024

their own flight plans during the 24th United Airlines-SIU Aviation Career Day.

The career-oriented presentations to students included Q&A opportunities, tours of the aviation program's home — the Glenn Poshard Transportation Education Center at Southern Illinois Airport — and tours of the SIU campus. In addition to the high school students and United Airlines volunteers, five SIU Aviation staff and student ambassadors arrived on the plane as well. The airline's volunteers come from various departments, including maintenance technicians, pilots and flight attendants.

## Collaboration is a “win-win” for United, SIU

SIU's aviation program comprises aviation flight, aviation management and aviation technologies.

Chien-Tsung Lu, School of Aviation director, said the collaboration with United Airlines which dates back to 1994, is “win-win activity” for the participating students, United Airlines and SIU Aviation. The program was interrupted briefly by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the COVID-19 pandemic.

activity of events that create mutual benefits for all parties.”

The partnership extends beyond the career day. In September 2022, SIU and United signed an agreement that provides the most secure career path for aviation students interested in becoming professional pilots through United's Aviate career development program, which will also be part of the presentation to students. As members of an Aviate university partner, SIU aviation students and instructors who apply and are successful in the Aviate selection process will join the program, receive a conditional job offer from United and enjoy the benefits from a defined career path.

## SIU Aviation alumni piloting students

Stewart is a quality control line check pilot and flight operations manager in United Airlines' Chicago chief pilot's office. This is the first time Stewart has flown the trip.

A 1991 graduate of Lake Park High School, Stewart began his aviation studies at SIU with only a 30-minute introductory flight in his logbook. Over the next two years, he obtained his certificates and ratings to become a staff flight instructor

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his junior year and had an internship with United Airlines in Denver as a senior.

After graduating from SIU Carbondale in 1995 and returning to Roselle, Stewart worked as a flight instructor before being hired by Continental Express Airlines in April 1998. Hired by Continental Airlines in 2006, Stewart flew the 757 and 767 for six years before transitioning to the 737. After the airline was merged into United Airlines, Stewart upgraded to captain and in 2014 became a line check pilot.

Medernach joined United Airlines in January 2024 and flies the 737 out of O'Hare. A native of Batavia, Medernach began flight training when he was 16 years old at Aurora Airport in Sugar Grove, Illinois. He toured SIU Aviation as part of a United Airlines-SIU Aviation Career Day flight in 2014 and enrolled in fall 2015.

Medernach was a four-year member of the Flying Salukis and worked as a flight instructor his senior year. After graduating in May 2019 in aviation technologies and aviation flight, he returned to Aurora Airport, where he was a flight instructor and mechanic before spending three years

with SkyWest Airlines, including his final year as captain. Medernach volunteers his time as a flight team competition judge.

### Career opportunities on the increase

Over the event's history, more than 3,000 high school students have participated. While designed to introduce students to the wide range of opportunities within the aviation industry, organizers note, the career day serves as a recruiting mechanism, particularly for women and other underrepresented groups. While annual numbers vary, between five and 20 participants each year will return to SIU to pursue an aviation career.

The Boeing Pilot and Technician Outlook for 2024-2043 projects over the next 20 years the need for 2.3 million new commercial aviation industry personnel, including 674,000 pilots, 716,000 maintenance technicians and 980,000 cabin crew members, as worldwide fleets are expected to nearly double.



The plane arrives at KMDH



Tom Stewart shows his Saluki pride.

## Pictures of United Airlines Career Day 2024 taken by Russell Bailey, University Communications



The crew on United Airlines Career Day



Dr. Chien-Tsung Lu and staff greet the visitors.



Join us  
June 23, 2025

Proceeds benefit SIU Aviation



Pictures from the 2024 Golf Scramble

Boulder Ridge  
Country Club  
Lake in the Hills, IL



# Golf Scramble a Huge Success!

On Monday, June 24th, 2024 the 15th SIU Aviation Golf Scramble was held at the Boulder Ridge Country Club in Lake-in-the-Hills, Illinois.

The scramble has been organized by Dr. David NewMyer since it's beginning. Last year the golf tournament was renamed the SIU Aviation Dave NewMyer Golf Scramble in honor of Dr. NewMyer's tireless years of work to make the golf scramble a huge success. This year was no different. The golf scramble grossed just over \$149,000 and raised around \$73,478. Proceeds from the golf scramble go towards scholarships for Aviation students. In total 161 people joined us at the outing (golfers + lunch/dinner participants).

For the past 15 years, alumni, faculty and current students join together for a day of fun, food and more. The day includes golf, dinner, a Live auction and a Silent Auction.

Mark your calendar's for the 16th SIU Aviation Dave NewMyer Golf Scramble to be held June 23, 2025 at Boulder Ridge Country Club.

## Important Dates for End of Semester

### Martin Luther King Day

Monday, January 20, 2025 - No school

### Spring Break

Saturday, March 8 through Sunday, March 16

### Honors Day

April 12, 2025

### Final Examinations

Monday, May 5 through Friday, May 9

### Commencement

Saturday, May 10, 2025



*Thank you to all of our supporters.*



# SIU Carbondale grad succeeds in creating music and flying planes

by Pete Rosenbery

CARBONDALE, Ill. — Composing allows Thomas Edgar, a certified flight instructor in Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s School of Aviation, a bit more freedom and the opportunity to be more creative than when piloting a plane.

And Edgar, who graduated from SIU in May with degrees in piano performance from the School of Music and aviation flight, does both quite well.

This summer, Edgar won a Diamond Prize in the original composition category at the Saint-Saëns International Music Competition 2024 Season 2 for his work, “Inferno to Infinity.” Edgar also won the Saint-Saëns Special Award for Creative Innovation.

“I was very, very grateful that it was successful,” Edgar said. “I was glad that my music was well-received. It felt good. Sometimes you write something, and you have no idea how

people are going to take to it. You might think it’s good, but others might not understand.”

## ‘Inferno to Infinity’

Edgar said he likes to blend romantic classical music with jazz music “and make a fusion of those.” The work is of an imaginary track that begins at the Earth’s core and expands beyond the planet.

The 21-minute piece took about four months to write and comprises seven sections. In program notes, Edgar states the beginning “depicts the fiery unknown churning that is the center of the planet” that proceeds through the ocean’s bottoms into a “push for light.” A Latin/jazz influence section “symbolizes the energy, excitement and commotion of emerging at the surface and seeing all of the nature/ civilization” into a “brief respite to observe all the majesty of nature.” The adventure continues toward outer space and a break from Earth’s atmosphere. After reaching outer space, the final section “evokes the mystic beauty of viewing the depths of space, while looking back toward Earth in reflection of the journey.”

## Started composing as a teenager

Edgar, who is from West Chicago, Illinois, wrote his first composition when he was about 15 years old “trying to mess around in high school.” He has between 25 and 30 compositions and said he has “always been drawn to music.”

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Finding his passion: Award-winning composer Thomas Edgar has a degree in piano performance from the SIU School of Music and is working toward a career in aviation as a pilot from the School of Aviation. (Photo by Russell Bailey)

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Edgar started his own journey during his freshman and sophomore years in high school, trying to figure out how composers viewed as “unreachable giants” crafted their works.

“It was always in the back of my mind that I wanted figure out how they did it. At a certain point I was, ‘All right, I’m just going to start trying,’” he said. “I also had some really great teachers who either recognized potential or really encouraged me and showed me why it was worth it. My middle school band teacher really kind of lit the fire and got me hooked on music.”

### Difficult balancing act

There are a few SIU aviation students who also are music majors, but several have aviation as a primary major and then play in ensembles in the School of Music, Edgar said.

“I knew that music was always something I felt I was supposed to do. It felt natural,” he said. “I always enjoyed it, but I was a bit hesitant to go all in and make a career of it.”

It wasn’t until Edgar visited SIU and talked with faculty from both programs that he began to believe he could succeed in both music and aviation. He is grateful to faculty in each discipline for their willingness to work with him, mentioning music faculty Yuko Kato and Christopher Walczak and aviation faculty, including Nathan J. Lincoln, who also coaches the SIU Flying Salukis. Edgar was a team member during his sophomore and junior years.

“That was the big fear I had coming down here – I didn’t know how accepting people were going to be of doing dual degrees,” Edgar said. “I was very surprised they weren’t like, ‘just figure it out.’ They were willing to work with me and understanding of the different time commitments needed in scheduling.”

While on campus, Edgar has performed in numerous ensembles and concerts. He said he has learned a lot about time management, and concedes it was a challenge to keep track of exactly what was needed when there were big projects for both programs, particularly with piano recitals.

“It was quite difficult. There is no way around it,” Edgar said. “It was pretty hard, just balancing all the back-and-forth between the airport and on campus with music classes and then transitioning to flight instructing part-time the past year and a half. That was another challenge – finding a way to balance them both.”

### Plans a future with both passions

Composing is his “creative release,” Edgar said.

“It’s a way of decompressing, getting everything out that is up in my head. It feels very good to create, and it’s like a big puzzle in your mind,” he said. Edgar explained that while he constantly hears music in his head, except when he’s flying, he might see something while going about his day and hear a musical association to that experience.

Edgar said he’s focused on pursuing a job with a regional airline.

“I feel like I have put so much work into that, and it’s pretty close. I would like to see that through and see how I like it,” Edgar said. “Composing is my passion, so if one day, it overtakes aviation, so be it. But in an ideal world, I would do both in some way. I think composing is kind of a feasible way to continue with music because there is a lot of down time, and I can use that to work on my creative work.”

## Scholarship Donations

Would you like to help support aviation students, both current and future?

### Sure do! How can I help?

Now there is an easy way to make a tax-deductible donation to your favorite scholarship endowment. SIU Aviation has our Support Aviation Page at <https://aviation.siu.edu/support-aviation/index.php>. Here you’ll find a comprehensive listing of SIU Aviation scholarship endowments and funds used to support student training and activities.

Once on the page, simply enter the amount(s) you wish to donate, and click [Continue]. You will be directed to the SIU Foundation’s website where you can confirm your selections and enter your name and payment information. It’s just that easy!

### But does my little donation really make a difference?

YES! Every donation, large or small, is very much appreciated. Remember that when we all give a little, it adds up to a lot. During the past calendar year, we were able to award over \$80,000 in scholarships to deserving Aviation students. Please help us build our endowments to continue assisting more students well into the future! We look forward to your support.

To apply for scholarships go to  
<https://siu.academicworks.com/>

# Taco

# Tuesday

brought to you by AHP

11:00 - 1:00 p.m. Every Tuesday



# Fall Scholarship Winners

A total of \$81,270 was given out in Scholarship at the Fall Aviation Management Society Banquet on November 8, 2024. Congratulations to all the winners.

SCHOLARSHIP	WINNER	AMOUNT
<b>C. Gene and Robbi Seibert Aviation Management Scholarship</b>	Hubert Dybinski	2500
<b>James and Helen Newby Aviation Scholarship</b>	Karli Gallon	2500
<b>Larry B. Byerly Memorial Aviation Scholarship</b>	Alana Stahl	2500
<b>David NewMyer Aviation Scholarship</b>	Maya Marena	2500
<b>Matthew K. Meier Faith Family Friendship Fortitude Future Aviation Management Scholarship</b>	Megan Grey	2500
<b>George J. Priester Memorial Scholarship</b>	Landon Geyman	4000
<b>Kevin Duffy Moore Endowed Scholarship</b>	Erik Longo	4000
	Peyton Isenhardt	4000
	Karli Gallon	500
<b>William R. Norwood Aviation Scholarship</b>	Luke Trout	1000
	Benjamin Campbell	750
	Justin McGee	500
<b>Aviation Alumni Flight Instructor Training Scholarship</b>	Thomas Nguyen	5458
<b>Steven Staples Memorial Aviation Scholarship</b>	Timothy Jordan	2500
<b>Jerry L. Kennedy Aviation Career Advancement Scholarship</b>	Timothy Jordan	8062
<b>Stephen and Tricia Butler Scholarship in Aviation</b>	Ian Yeagle	2000
	Mitchell Malaney	2000
	Leslie Duran	2000
	Megan Grey	1000
	Luke Trout	1000
	Alana Stahl	1000
	Mary O'Neill	1000
<b>Joseph A. Messina II Aviation Explorers Scholarship for Aviation Students</b>	Logan Turner	8000
	Timothy Jordan	3000
	Melissa Pfaff	2000
<b>Michael R. Peters AviationInterviews.com Aviation Scholarship</b>	Luke Trout	4000
	Logan Turner	2000
	Mitchell Malaney	2000
	Cavan Cameron	2000
	Anthony Enciso	1000
	Ian Yeagle	1000
	Timothy Jordan	1000
	Megan Grey	1000
	Nicholas Sotello	1000



# In Memory of Tammera L. Holmes



We are deeply saddened by the passing of Tammera L. Holmes (Class of 2000), a trailblazing aviator who devoted her life to creating pathways in aviation for women, minorities, and underprivileged youth. Tammera's legacy is one of determination, innovation, and unwavering commitment to fostering diversity in the skies.

As the founder of AeroStar Consulting Corporation and the AeroStar Avion Institute, Tammera transformed countless lives by opening doors to aviation careers once deemed unattainable. Her visionary programs not only introduced young people to aviation but also provided them with the tools and confidence to soar. Tammera's work has reshaped the industry, creating a future where opportunity and inclusivity take flight.

A mentor, leader, and cherished friend to many in the Saluki family, Tammera inspired those around her with her passion and drive. Her impact will resonate for generations through the lives she touched and the changes she ignited.

While we mourn this tremendous loss, we honor Tammera's memory by committing to her mission. Let us continue her work, whether through supporting AeroStar's initiatives, mentoring aspiring aviators, or sharing her story to inspire the next generation. Tammera L. Holmes exemplified the best of what it means to be a Saluki: visionary, compassionate, and transformative.

To Tammera's family and friends, and to all those who had the privilege of knowing her, we extend our deepest condolences. The Southern Illinois University Aviation community celebrates her extraordinary life and contributions. May her legacy guide us as we strive for a brighter, more inclusive future in aviation.

<https://give.siu.edu/the-tammera-holmes-school-of-aviation-dei-faculty-endowment>

# SOA Research Projects

**Ken Wilkins** and **Gail Avendano** published an article in the most recent *Collegiate Aviation Review* that looked at the different transfer policies university aviation programs are using in working with students who enter collegiate aviation programs with a Private Pilot Certificate. They are building upon the research that Mike Robertson and Bryan Harrison did several years ago that focused on SIUC specifically. A second article is almost ready for submission that more closely examines the effectiveness of our AF 199 course, and should provide helpful guidance for us in deciding how well our own internal processes are working.

**Mike Robertson** and **Gail Avendano** are working on a research project that uses "The Attributes" assessment in ways that we hope will improve student retention and success within the aviation program.

**Amy Rutledge** is the PI for two research projects she hopes to complete this semester. The first one is entitled "*An Exploration of Collegiate Women's Experiences in Aviation Programs.*"

Currently, women account for just over 5% of airline transport pilots. Although the SIU School of Aviation is well above this number, with over 16% of our professional pilot students identifying as women, there is still a significant lack of diversity. The existing data led to the hypothesis that the lack of gender diversity uniquely impacts the experiences of our women students. With this in mind, Amy Rutledge, Dr. Stephanie Chambers-Baltz, Dr. Karen Johnson, Dr. Irene Miller, and Gail Avendano are conducting a qualitative phenomenological study aimed at understanding the experiences of SIU School of Aviation women students to identify ways to support them better and foster resilience. This study is a collaborative effort between the Schools of Aviation and Psychology. We are still recruiting participants and aim to complete the project this spring.

## **Evaluating the Mental Health of Air Traffic Controllers**

Over the past couple of years, a significant amount of media coverage focused on the pilot shortage and the mental health of pilots. However, until recently, there has been minimal discussion of the severe shortage of air traffic controllers. Even more importantly, the potential impact this shortage is having on their mental health. Air traffic control facilities nationwide are at approximately 81% staffing, which the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) considers a critical shortage. Despite staffing shortages, air traffic control remains a safety-critical environment where controllers must continue to perform while shouldering intensive cognitive demands and high levels of responsibility. With studies showing that high stress levels, shift work, long hours, and inadequate recovery time can result in mental health disorders, a need exists for the mental health

*continued on page 13*



### **What?**

Qualitative study exploring the experience of women collegiate aviation students.

### **Who?**

Must be 18 or older, identify as a woman, and either currently enrolled in the School of Aviation or graduated within the previous two years.

### **When & Where?**

Scan the QR code above for further details.

In-person & Online options available.

Contact [amy.rutledge@siu.edu](mailto:amy.rutledge@siu.edu) with questions.

Your information will remain confidential. Interviews will take approximately 60 minutes. You must sign an informed consent to participate. Participation is voluntary, and there will be no repercussions if you choose not to take part or withdraw later.



School of Aviation : Amy Rutledge, Irene Miller, Karen Johnson, Gail Avendano  
School of Psychology: Stephanie Chambers-Baltz

status of air traffic controllers to be evaluated to ensure the continued safety of the National Airspace System. There is a lack of research related to controlling mental health disorders. In response, Amy Rutledge, Matt Romero, and Elliott Benton conducted a quantitative study to fill the gap in recent research and provide possible recommendations for improving

controller mental health and reducing controller attrition rates. Two mental health surveys were used to capture the levels of anxiety and depression in a group of international and US controllers. We are currently working on analyzing the data and hope to complete the project this spring. The initial results were presented at the UAA conference this past fall.

# Around the School of Aviation RSO News



## Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance

### AWAM Chapter at SIU: Exciting Updates and Opportunities

The Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance (AWAM) chapter at Southern Illinois University has been hard at work this academic year, continuing our mission to uplift women and minority voices in the aviation field. With women making up less than 3% of Aviation Maintenance Technicians (AMTs), we're proud to be leading efforts to inspire change and provide opportunities for underrepresented groups in aviation.

### Fundraising Efforts for the Women in Aviation Conference

Our chapter is thrilled to announce that we are fundraising to attend the Women in Aviation International Conference in Denver, Colorado, from March 27-29. This conference is an incredible opportunity for our members to explore job opportunities in the aviation industry, connect with potential mentors, and network with leaders in the field. To support this, we've been selling custom merchandise, all designed by AWAM members and produced by a local print shop near the airport.

Thanks to the overwhelming support from our community, these sales have been a great success, and we're planning another fundraiser in February-March. This upcoming fundraiser will not only help us attend the conference but also contribute to the Joey Ermel Strive for Your Best Aviation Toolkit Scholarship. Our chapter is committed to assisting in raising enough funds to establish this scholarship as an endowment, ensuring long-term support for aspiring AMTs. For more information about Joey Ermel's scholarship, visit [joepilot615.org](http://joepilot615.org).

Stay updated on our fundraiser details and events by following us on Instagram at [@awam\\_siu](https://www.instagram.com/awam_siu) and through the official SIU Aviation Instagram and Facebook pages. You can also visit our website at [awamsiuc.squarespace.com/shop](http://awamsiuc.squarespace.com/shop) to support our efforts and view our merchandise.

Coming Soon . . . Watch for New Sweatshirt Designs



### Exciting National News: AWAM Conference

In other exciting news, the national chapter of AWAM will be hosting its first-ever conference from September 26-28 in Dallas, Texas. This event will provide a more intimate setting for exploring career opportunities, sharing experiences, and connecting with women in aviation maintenance who, like many of us, know what it's like to often be the only woman in the room. We look forward to attending and representing SIU on this new national stage.

The AWAM chapter at SIU is grateful for the support from our alumni, staff, and community. Together, we can continue paving the way for more diverse and inclusive representation in aviation maintenance. Thank you for being part of this journey with us!



## More RSO News...

### American Association of Airport Executives

This past 2024 Fall Semester was filled with exciting opportunities for our AAAE Student Chapter. We started the semester off strong with the great privilege of volunteering at the reception of the Fall Veteran's Honor Flight of Southern Illinois. There we helped raise money for the organization and cheer on the veterans as they arrived in Southern Illinois from Washington DC.

In September, we attended the UAA Collegiate Aviation Education Conference held in Memphis, TN. Shannetta Griffin, who was representing the FAA, discussed the role of the FAA in promoting aviation to students. That same day, our students also had the opportunity of touring Memphis International Airport. The airside operations team took our students all around the airfield, showcasing their deicing facilities, airfield, and maintenance shop.

During the month of October, SIU hosted the annual United Career day where AAAE handed out food to the high school students and United staff that came along. The next day we got an incredible tour of St. Louis Lambert International Airport, where we saw their air traffic control tower and ARFF station. We got to plane spot from the tower, speak with experienced air traffic controllers and our students even got to sit in one of the ARFF trucks for a demonstration. Furthermore, a handful of our members attended the Illinois Public Airport Association (IPAA) Conference in Galena, IL as well as the Great Lakes Chapter AAAE (GLCAAEE) conference in Rosemont, IL. They had the opportunity to network with aviation professionals from all over Illinois and the Great Lakes region. The conferences hosted workshops and presentations on various aviation issues such as the transition to F3 foam, the environmental impacts of AFFF, construction

projects in various airports across the region, the rehabilitation of ATC towers nationwide and more. It was all thanks to our industry liaisons, Tom Cleveland and Sandy Shore that made these opportunities available to our students.

In October, AAAE also hosted its first Halloween Road rally. Teams of students looked for clues around the airport and main campus for a chance to win fun, aviation themed prizes.

In November we toured Louisville Muhammad Ali International airport. Our members got to see their runway renovations, ARFF station and demonstration, an airfield tour, 747 exterior walk around, plane spotting from a taxiway, and a comprehensive tour of their administrative offices. Later that month, we received a tour of Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois. We got to see the many exciting construction projects that Veterans Airport will be seeing soon. This was also where we held our leadership elections for a brand-new board of leaders. Some of our members also got a tour of Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington, IL. They got to see their administrative facilities, airfield, ARFF station, the airport's multi-million-dollar General Aviation hangars, and most importantly shared insightful conversations about the industry with the airport's director and firefighters on duty.

Lastly, to close off the semester with a golden ribbon, we had the great pleasure of hosting Nate Hann, Executive Director of Evansville Regional Airport. He gave a detailed presentation on his experience in the industry as well as many great pieces of advice to students in our management program.

As this semester starts, we look forward to touring more airports and attending the AAAE National Conference this June in Atlanta, GA.

### National Gay Pilots Association

This past November, our NGPA chapter attended our national organization's first annual Student Summit in Washington D.C. There, we met together with other student chapters across the nation to learn valuable skills and career competencies to prepare us for our entry into the industry. Not only was this a great experience, but it was an amazing opportunity to reconnect with friendly faces and meet new people. Many of us were able to make it out to the National Air and Space Museums too. Being only a weekend event, it was a quick turnaround, and we were on our way back home. One of our close alumni, as well as two other chapters happened to be connecting on the same flight as our chapter: pictured is us in Washington National Airport. We are glad we were able to make it out there and hope to continue in the future! - Sid Hanson, Chapter President



## More RSO News. . .

### Women in Aviation

#### Saluki Aviators Inspire the Next Generation of Aviators

The Women in Aviation International (WAI) Saluki Aviators Chapter at SIU is committed to empowering women and inspiring future aviators. This fall, the chapter engaged the community through events like the Carbondale Middle School Fall Festival, Expand Your Horizons, and their flagship Girls in Aviation Day, which welcomed 48 participants aged 8-18 for hands-on aviation activities. In addition to outreach, the chapter built camaraderie through member socials and gave back to the community by volunteering with local schools and charities like the Lions Club in De Soto.

This March, they plan to attend the 2025 WAI Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado. The conference offers mentorships, scholarships, and networking opportunities that will help members grow professionally and inspire others.

#### Support Their Journey!

Donations are being accepted to help fund the trip—look for the link on their social media soon. Together, we can help the Saluki Aviators soar to new heights!

#### Social Media & Email

**Instagram:** [siousalukiaviators](#)

**Facebook:** [SIUC Women In Aviation](#)

**Email:** [salukiaviators@siu.edu](mailto:salukiaviators@siu.edu)

#### Upcoming Events

Aviation RSO Fair: Wednesday, January 22nd 10am-1pm

First Chapter Meeting: Monday, January 27th 4-5pm AVT146

#### Spring Fundraisers

SIU Basketball Game Concessions: Wednesday, January 22nd, 6pm, Banterra Center

Valentines Day Bake Sale Fundraiser: Thursday, February 13th, TEC lobby



*Volunteer Photo:* Photographed are a few of our SIU Saluki Aviators volunteering at the Carbondale Middle School First Annual Fall Festival. *Members left to right:* Fawne Maguire (Chapter President), Natalie Blair (active member), Vita Bartolotta (active member), Madelyn Stewart (active member), Mary O'Neill (Secretary), and Brooke Thomas (active member).



*GIAD Photo:* Photographed is most of the attendees of our GIAD 2024 event as well as some of our volunteers from the SIU Saluki Aviators Ch. 80 of WAI and AWAM Ch. 30. We also had many volunteers from the University like professors and flight instructors that aren't pictured.

### Alpha Eta Rho

Throughout this semester Alpha Eta Rho looks forward to strengthening and building our organization by getting involved in the university and aviation industry. As an organization we strive to constantly expand by welcoming new members. Throughout the semester we hold several events with our associate members so they can see how we run the fraternity. We strive to bring people together at the airport and have a strong sense of brotherhood. In the Fall and Spring semester, we hold roadside clean-up, which gives our members an opportunity to give back to the community that helps us out so much. To get involved with the airport and the university,

we are excited to be able to host and plan the semester's banquet and career fair for the students, faculty, and alumni. On a larger scale we are excited to attend the Collegiate Aviation Symposium hosted by Ohio State in late February. This event is sponsored by the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) and gives a unique look into the world of business aviation. This conference allows our members to connect with many people throughout the industry and throughout our national organization. It is a great networking opportunity for every member and their unique interest in aviation. We look forward to the many opportunities we have this semester to network, grow our chapter and get involved!



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Contact our Recruitment Specialist, Robert Clukey at [robert.clukey@siu.edu](mailto:robert.clukey@siu.edu)