



Marsden Fisher

English major with minors in Japanese and marketing

Anna Wingert is a senior from Arenzville, IL. She is majoring in English with minors in Japanese and marketing. She came to SIU with the goal of working for a publisher but has since decided to follow in her mother's footsteps and become a teacher. So many opportunities at SIU have allowed Anna to discover how passionate she is about learning and teaching. She will be applying for the JET program to be an assistant English teacher in Japan. Following that, she plans to earn a master's degree from a Master of Arts in Teaching program or from a Teaching English as a Second Language program.

Since her freshman year at SIU, Anna has been a member of Saluki Service Dawgs, and this will be her second year serving as the RSO's secretary. Currently, she is training a "start to finish" dog named Enya. Anna has been Enya's primary handler since the dog entered the program, and Anna will help Enya and her new handler work together as a team when she graduates from training in November. Anna also works in the writing center as a consultant, and every session inspires her to think about writing as an integral part of learning. As she is particularly interested in children's literature, during her sophomore year, she worked with Dr. Jane Dougherty to develop an honors seminar called Exploring Children's Literature. Anna has drafted two children's novels of her own so far with the intention of preparing them to present to agents and eventually publish.

Anna is excited to experience her final year at SIU and is grateful to all of the faculty that have been supportive in the classroom, in professional environments, and by recommending her for departmental scholarships.



Keeley Whitmer

Physiology major and minors in Chemistry and Forensic Science

Grace Lehnhoff is a senior undergraduate from Herrin, IL, majoring in Physiology and minoring in Chemistry and Forensic Science. She is graduating in Spring and will continue her studies towards receiving her Pathologist Assistant's license through a master's degree in health science. Her goal is to work directly with a forensic pathologist to help determine the cause of death in postmortem autopsy exams.

During her time at SIU, Grace has been conducting undergraduate physiology research in Dr. Buck Hales' lab, where she studies the effects of Flaxseed and CBD as a preventative for ovarian cancer. She was a part of the Simmon's Cancer Institute internship program during the summer of 2021 and received the REACH award for the 2021-2022 school year. Throughout both of the programs, she spent most of her free time working on her quantitative CB-1 and CB-2 analysis measuring how prominent the receptors are in chicken ovarian and liver tissues.

This past summer, Grace shadowed a Pathologist Assistant in Peoria, IL, where she was able to get hands-on experience within her future career. Grace plans to shadow another PA before she is set to apply to the West Virginia University Pathologist's Assistant program, which will begin in the spring of 2024.



Kaylee Wobig

Zoology major specializing in wildlife biology and a minor in art

Julia Beckner is a senior majoring zoology with a specialization in wildlife biology and a minor in art. She is a member of the Honors Assembly, the President of Zeta Theta Omega, and part of the leadership team at The Wesley Foundation. Since last fall, she has also done undergraduate research in Dr. Jennifer Weber's lab on plant evolutionary ecology. Julia is assisting in a study of mixed mating systems and the pollination patterns in the plant genus, *Triodanis*. Julia enjoys going to Project Human X in her free time and contributed a piece to their Earth Month Art Show last year.

Over her time at SIU, Julia has found a love of painting and uses her paintings to showcase an invasive species of comb jelly, *Mnemiopsis leidyi*. Through her art, she has been able to connect with many people and spread awareness of multiple environmental issues. She hopes to continue spreading awareness and wants to explore other ways art can be utilized for scientific communication to the public and build public engagement with the environment.

This past summer Julia spent the month of June helping a PhD student from Dr. Guillaume Bastille-Rousseau's lab capture and collar white-deer fawns around the Touch of Nature and Giant City. She also traveled to Anchorage, Alaska with the Weber lab to participate in Botany 2022, a conference hosted by The Botanical Society of America. After graduating in the spring, Julia plans to continue her education and work towards a master's degree in ecology or conservation biology, but also is hoping to find a program that will allow her to continue connecting science and art. She wants to eventually work in invasive species management.



David Gomes

Physiology (premed) major and minor in Spanish

Wyatt Smith is a senior majoring in Physiology (premed) with a minor in Spanish. He is a member of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, having led a bible study for 3 semesters and served on the leadership board for four. He is also a member of the Pikmin Bloom RSO, which is fun and keeps him motivated to stay in shape. He highly recommends both RSOs to strengthen both your spiritual and physical muscles.

Wyatt is a premed student who spends a lot of his time working towards graduate school applications and studies. He is involved in undergraduate research in Dr. Buck Hale's lab researching Ovarian Cancer. He assists in using High Performance Liquid Chromatography to quantify CBD uptake in the Laying Hen Model.

In his free time, he enjoys playing with his cats who he and his wife have raised for a little over a year now. He also enjoys spending lots of time with his close friends during game night, movie nights, epic pranks, and church on Sundays.



Olivia Jackson

Computer Science with a specialization in Animation

Alexis Stallman is a senior majoring in Computer Science with a specialization in Animation. She has had the honor of receiving the College of Engineering's "Top Female Junior/Senior GPA" award for the past two years. Alexis is also currently working full time here at SIU in the Office of Information Technology. This job has given Alexis some great experiences and has proven to her that she is on the right path with her degree.

Alexis has always aimed to find a balance between her love for art and her love for coding, this semester, she has done just that. She is currently working on an independent study project that involves building her own 2d platformer game from scratch. Over her years at SIU, Alexis has found a passion for coding and animation, and she is very excited to continue working on this project and can't wait to share the game with her peers.

In her free time, Alexis loves to spend time with her family and her fiancé, whether that means going on a hike, playing a board game, or watching the Amazing Race. She has a love for animals and currently has five guinea pigs, two crested geckos, a hamster, and a dog that she loves taking care of and spoiling. Alexis is extremely grateful for all the opportunities that she has had here at SIU and cannot wait to graduate in the spring and see where life takes her.



Charlee Stewart

Pre-medical track working towards a B.S. in Physiology with minors in Chemistry and Psychology

Charlee is a senior at SIU on the pre-medical track working towards a B.S. in Physiology with minors in Chemistry and Psychology. She is from the small town of Robinson, IL about 3 hours from SIU. Charlee is on the SIUC Equestrian Team as well as a member of the Timmy Global Health organization. Charlee decided to pursue a career in medicine as she has always had a passion for both biological sciences and serving others. She is currently working as an ER scribe at Union County Hospital to gain valuable clinical experience in preparation for medical school. While in the University Honors Program, she has had the opportunity to make multiple honors seminar courses that have helped her become a well-rounded student, such as the yoga and meditation.

Charlee has been able to fuel her passion for serving others through the title of Miss Rodeo Illinois 2022. As Illinois' First Lady of Professional Rodeo, she was able to travel across the country representing our state at numerous PRCA rodeos. Not only was she able to ride in the performances, she volunteered at numerous special needs rodeos, soup kitchens, class visits, and therapeutic riding centers while in these locations. At the end of the year, she represented Illinois at the Miss Rodeo America Pageant held in Las Vegas, NV. While competing, she had the opportunity to speak about her platform, Fighting Hunger. This opportunity has given her countless experiences that will help her in the future.



Alexis Hamon

Psychology major, minoring in Chemistry and Psychology

Alexis Hamon, who also goes by Ally, is a Senior majoring in Physiology and minoring in Chemistry and Psychology. She is on the pre-medicine track and is currently in the process of applying for medical school. Ally recognized her passion for medicine while shadowing physicians and grew in her passion while working as a medical scribe and aiding in treatment of local patients. This passion stems from a deep interest in science and a love for people that motivates her in pursuit of a career as a physician. On campus, Alexis is involved in several student organizations including the University Honors Program, Timmy Global Health, Pre-Professional Association, and Saluki Ambassadors. Within these organization she volunteers her time packing at gumdrops, giving new student campus tours, advocating for the physiology program, and educating students on the importance of health.

Along with RSO involvement, Ally is involved in research on campus. She works with Dr. Buck Hales in the investigation of ovarian cancer. Ally is specifically analyzing the impact of dietary intervention on collagen deposition in both normal and cancerous ovarian tissue. She was able to grow in her research abilities and knowledge last summer through the SIU medicine Simmons' Cancer Research Institute Internship and continues to grow as a 2023-2024 REACH award recipient. Through research, Ally has been able to expand on her classroom knowledge through hands-on experimentation and recommends that all students give research a try!

In her free time, Ally enjoys spending time with friends, visiting the farmer's market, trying new recipes, and reading romance novels. Somethings that she looks forward to in the coming year is graduation, traveling to Italy, and, hopefully, planning for medical school next fall!



Madison Piazza

Elementary Education major with a Spanish minor

Madison Piazza is a junior in Elementary Education with a Spanish minor. She was born in Okinawa, Japan and also lived in Lambsborn, Germany and Little Rock, Arkansas before spending most of her childhood in Bloomington, IL. She lived on various Air Force bases which inspired her to join the Department of Defense in becoming an elementary teacher in overseas bases post-graduation. Madison also aspires to complete a master's degree, and eventually a Ph. D., in education at SIU. She hopes to touch the lives of students across the world, especially those with limited resources in low-income areas.

At SIU, Madison is a part of the Chancellor's Scholars Program, University Honors Program, Circle K Kiwanis, Triathlon Club, SENSE, and is a Golden Apple Scholar and School of Ed Ambassador. Through the Golden Apple Foundation, Madison has gained over 100 hours of teaching experience in rural and urban schools across Illinois. This past summer, she aided in a 4th/5th grade bilingual summer school classroom where she connected with students from Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, and Mexico. Madison has also taken numerous Honors seminars, such as Exploring Children's Literature, that have expanded her knowledge. Madison loves to volunteer with Circle K Kiwanis in serving local children in the Southern Illinois area. Outside of the classroom, Madison loves to run, crochet, and spend time with the people most important to her.



Bailey Bullock

Biological Sciences with a concentration in Biomedical Science and a minor in Chemistry

Bailey Bullock is a senior graduating in December 2023 with a degree in Biological Sciences with a concentration in Biomedical Science and a minor in Chemistry. She plans to attend physician assistant school after graduation.

In addition to being part of the University Honors Program, Bailey is involved in the Pre-Health Professions Association and Timmy Global Health RSOs. She is a senior member of Saluki Ambassadors, where she gives weekly campus tours to future Salukis. She is also a University Excellence Scholar.

Bailey works in Dr. Keith Sudheimer's Affective Research Collaborative (ARC) lab at SIU. The research is focused on the neural networks that control emotion and the application to treat psychiatric disorders, such as depression and anxiety, as well as the stress hormone cortisol. She will soon be a published author of a research paper. Bailey also works as a medical scribe in both an emergency department and orthopedic clinic.



Dawson Compas

Civil Engineering major

Dawson Compas is a senior in Civil Engineering, graduating in December 2023. He is the winner of Klasing Pvt Foundation scholarship, twice, the Murray Scholarship and is a University Excellence Scholar. While pursuing his degree, Dawson was a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), Concrete Canoe Team, and the Tau Beta Pi National Engineering Honors Society.

Throughout his time in college, Dawson has had many internship opportunities ranging from Construction Inspection and Materials Testing, Highway Design, Traffic Studies, and a co-op opportunity with Ameren in Transmission Substation Design. Upon graduation, Dawson has accepted a full-time job to continue working with Ameren in Transmission as a Substation Design Civil Engineer and hopes to become a licensed professional engineer (PE) in a few years.

Outside of class, he likes to be active. He is an avid sports fan cheering on the St Louis Cardinals and Blues, Kansas City Chiefs, Boston Celtics, and more recently, the St Louis SC. He also enjoys hiking and watching movies.



Kennedie Marks

Physiology major minoring in Chemistry and Psychology

Kennedie Marks is a Senior from the small local town of Cobden, Illinois. She is a third-generation legacy student majoring in Physiology and minoring in Chemistry and Psychology. When she was in high school, had the opportunity to earn her Associate of Science with her local community college. When she graduated high school in 2021, she later earned her Associate that summer. After she graduates next spring, she plans on applying for SIU's Master of Biomedical Sciences. Then she aims to go to medical school. She hopes to stay in the Midwest for medical school because of its beauty and sense of community. While in college, she has been a part of the Pre-Health Professions Association, Alpha Chi Sigma (the chemistry fraternity), Saluki Science Ambassadors, and Saluki Science Dawgs. Kennedie is the President of the newly revived Saluki Science Dawgs, the Secretary for Alpha Chi Sigma, and is the Social Media Coordinator for Saluki Science Ambassadors.

This semester, she is an Intern with SIH where she is gaining more experience with the clerical and clinical aspects of healthcare. She is an active member of her church and volunteers with them when possible. In the long run, she aims to become a Cardiologist or Pediatrician and provide access to healthcare to regions in the Midwest that have little to no healthcare access. In her free time, she enjoys spending time reading her Bible, reading classical literature (Little Women and Dracula are her favorites) watching Gilmore Girls, and playing with her psychotic cat, Juno



Yara Hindi

Double major in Paralegal Studies & Language Studies and a minor in Political Science

My name is Yara Hindi and I am a Senior at SIUC. I am pursuing a double major in Paralegal Studies and Language Studies with a German specialization and a minor in Political Science. My passion lies in law and advocating for those who need their voices heard. I am dedicated to making a positive impact on my community and actively attempt to accomplish this goal.

I hold officer positions in RSOs such as German Club, OPS, and Pre-Law Association Club. I have also had the privilege of working for our local Jackson County Government, where I partook in projects to help our community better. I enjoy volunteering for organizations such as the Carbondale Springs Group, WSIU-SIRIS, and For Kids' Sake, which are all organizations that are dedicated to aiding people in various ways.

One of my most valuable experiences in my involvement in assisting with county received grants that helped mitigate the economic damages that resulted in the COVID-19 pandemic. I have also had the opportunity to teach German in an after-school program at Murphysboro High School, providing foundational language learning skills to the younger generation. Being involved in diverse communities has allowed me to empathetically comprehend the adversities people face and attempt to alleviate these challenges. I am fascinated by cultural diversity and find value in learning about people's backgrounds, customs, and livelihoods.



Sarah Lukavsky

Senior majoring in zoology with a minor in environmental studies

Sarah Lukavsky is a senior majoring in zoology with a minor in environmental studies. She has always had a strong passion for the environment and aims to broaden the field of plant-animal interactions in order to help conserve the biodiversity seen today. This idea was really cemented for her after seeing the great conservation work done in Costa Rica on an honors study abroad trip. After graduation this May, she plans to pursue a graduate degree in the field of evolutionary ecology with the intent of one day becoming a professor. She is the president of The Honors Assembly, Zeta Theta Omega, and Diversify STEM while also being a member of the Saluki Reefers and Wildlife Society. Sarah also spends as much time as she can volunteering with Green Earth, Keep Carbondale Beautiful, and any other outdoor focused group.

She has spent much of her time here at SIU conducting research in the plant biology department with Dr. Jenn Weber. Under the SUPERB Fellowship in her third year, Sarah conducted a summer of field work throughout the Midwest to determine the pollinator assemblage for the flowering plant genus *Triodanis*. She then presented this work at two conferences, with one of them being an international conference in Alaska. This past summer, she again participated in field work across the South to determine what maintains hybrid zones while conducting her own project on the advancing phenology of *Triodanis perfoliata* through the McNair Program. This year, Sarah will be finishing up her research journey here by completely mapping the plastid genome of each species in *Triodanis* and using this to trace hybridization throughout the genus through the REACH program. When not researching, participating in RSO's, or learning, Sarah loves to hike, read, and drum.



Aron Taylor

Senior majoring in Mechanical Engineering and specializing in Energy Engineering

My name is Aron Taylor, currently a senior majoring in Mechanical Engineering and specializing in Energy Engineering. Alongside my academic pursuits, I'm an active member of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), where I've been honing my leadership skills. Beyond my studies and military training, I find fulfillment in volunteering with ROTC and contributing to the Touch of Nature organization from time to time. I also enjoy the outdoors and just embracing any activity that involves it. I love to run(a lot), climb, hike, backpack, camp, and many other outdoor recreational experiences. At SIU, I've embraced the belief that one's university experience is what they make of it, and this philosophy has driven me to take on various meaningful roles.

Throughout my journey, I've accomplished a range of significant milestones that highlight my versatility and determination. I've had the privilege of interning with a Nuclear Science research firm in Arlington, Virginia, gaining practical experience in a field that aligns with my chosen field. Additionally, my commitment to military service led me to complete the US Army Airborne school training and excel in the official ROTC summer evaluation training. After summer training this summer '23 I spent four thrilling weeks in Italy with the 173rd Airborne and even had the incredible opportunity to parachute from an aircraft in a foreign country, Georgia. I encourage all new students to never be afraid of stepping out of their comfort zones. This is real, you have four years to capitalize, don't let them slip away.



Grant Kelly

junior majoring in Chemistry with a Comprehensive specialization

Grant Kelly is a junior majoring in Chemistry with a Comprehensive specialization. From a young age, he had a natural curiosity about how the world around him worked, and through science classes in high school, fell in love with chemistry. Furthermore, his father took a similar education path and this made Grant want to follow in his footsteps. Once he graduates, he wants to work his way up to a quality control position just like his father did. Choosing to come to SIU after reading about its research reputation and beautiful campus, Grant soon found his way into Dr. Deria's lab helping out with their research on photocatalysis and metal-organic frameworks (MOFs). He has greatly appreciated his experiences thus far at SIU, meeting amazing professors and growing his chemistry knowledge, all things that motivate him in his classwork and research.

As a member of the Honors Program, taking Honors Seminars has greatly enriched his time at SIU and allowed him to branch out into interesting topics and talk to students of all perspectives. Another aspect of the Honors Program that Grant engages with is the Gumdrops Group Service, which he always does his best to attend each session if possible. Getting to give back to the southern Illinois community through Gumdrops has grown an appreciation for the region which he had previously never been to prior to coming to SIU. Choosing to join the Honors Program was one of the best decisions he made at SIU and he is grateful that it has come back to allow him in this showcase.



Angelique Amaral

Senior majoring in Radiation Therapy

Angelique Amaral is a senior majoring in Radiation Therapy. As a child, she looked at the fascinating pictures in her mom's nursing book. Her interest in health and anatomy never faded, and she decided to pursue a career in the medical field. In January, she will be working closely with cancer patients during her clinical internship. She plans to further her education and apply for the Medical Dosimetry program at SIU.

Outside of her studies, she loves to explore the world and connect with nature. In March, she studied abroad in Costa Rica through the Honors Program. She traveled to many different cities and experienced the beauty of the Arenal volcano and La Fortuna waterfall. She hiked through a canopy in the rainforest and learned about unique spiders and birds. The trip inspired her to bond more closely with nature and live sustainably.

During the latter half of the semester, Angelique volunteered for Toys for Tots to help families during Christmas. Although she will not be on campus next semester, she will continue to seek volunteer opportunities and engage with her new community.



Hannah Lavender

Sophomore majoring in Biological Sciences Education

Hannah Lavender is a sophomore majoring in Biological Sciences Education. She has always been fond of the concept of education and school as a whole: the structure, environment, educators, etc. She was previously, and still is, motivated by her passion to help other people understand difficult or unfamiliar material. She firmly believes that there is so much value in knowledge and that it can be so rewarding to retain. She strives to help young people realize that as well.

She was motivated by the educators she encountered during her high school years who had a deep impact on her. She adored the varying teaching styles she observed and was thoroughly inspired by them. Those teachers helped her to realize that educators have the ability to do much more than simply teach; they are key players in shaping the future of society. They can also serve as mentors for students, helping them navigate difficult times in their lives.

She is involved in the marching and pep band as well as Intervarsity. Last semester, Hannah volunteered at the Carbondale Middle School and tutored students. She hopes she can continue doing this service this semester, as it aligns very well with her major. In the past, she has volunteered for the Special Olympics, hosted at Herrin High School, and hopes to return to this as well. She has also been a volunteer for Gumdrops and Herrin House of Hope, two organizations that help distribute meals and canned goods to those in need. She is not currently involved in any research projects but would love to partake in a chemistry research project in the near future, either working as a physical lab assistant and performing more hands-on tasks, or researching/evaluating data behind the scenes. She would also be interested in volunteering or working at a local underfunded school.



Elisa Lopez

Fourth-year Business Student

Elisa Lopez, a fourth-year business student at SIU, is deeply passionate about marketing and social issues. In a previous honors project, she crafted a marketing strategy for Senator Fowler to boost tourism in Southern Illinois. Always seeking new marketing projects, Elisa is also a co-founder of "Latinos Unidos in Business," an organization enriching the College of Business with Latin culture and inspiring Latino students in the Chicagoland area to pursue higher education. The organization hoped to help Latino students in business reach their fullest potential and beyond.

Actively engaged on campus, Elisa serves as the vice president of social media and outreach for the Honors Assembly, and is a member of Ad Lab and ASCM. Beyond campus, she volunteers with the conversation partner program and is involved with the non-profit organization Y'all Rock.

Her current research venture focuses on biodegradable leaf packaging, a collaboration with professors Dr. Ulu, William Mishk, Dr. Fakhrai, and Dr. Anterola. Together, they aim to create a multidisciplinary sustainability course under the College of Business, centered around a hypothetical leaf-packaging business to educate students on sustainable business practices.

Her vision includes making her leaf-packaging business a reality, advocating for environmental responsibility, and providing educational opportunities for students and the Carbondale community. Looking ahead, Elisa plans to gain work experience before pursuing a master's in marketing at Northwestern University.



Prisha Kittu

Sophomore majoring in Physiology with a minor in Chemistry

Prisha Kittu, a Sophomore majoring in Physiology with a minor in Chemistry on the pre-medicine track, is preparing to apply to medical school towards the end of her college career, fueled by an unwavering passion for medicine. For Prisha, medicine is a gateway to contributing to the well-being of individuals, especially the upcoming generation, a responsibility she holds dear and views as a privilege. This realization intensifies Prisha's commitment to her chosen path. Her firsthand experiences during pivotal shadowing opportunities reinforced the vital role pediatric care plays in shaping a mentally and physically healthier and more resilient future.

On campus, Prisha actively participates in organizations such as Timmy Global Health, the Pre-Health Professions Association, the University Honors Program, Student Alumni Council, Saluki Science Ambassadors, and the Saluki Ambassadors. Under the mentorship of Dr. Ellsworth, she is devoted to researching Pituitary Hormone Deficiency in Children, aligning her academic pursuits with a mission to make meaningful contributions to pediatric healthcare. With this, Prisha actively loves performing volunteer work for any RSO she is in ranging from tutoring kids through Saluki Scholars in Action, giving campus tours to future dawgs, or volunteering at Gumdrops. Community service through kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and underrated agent of positive human change!

Beyond her academic and research endeavors, Prisha passionately advocates for the holistic well-being of individuals within her campus community. At the 2023 Spring SIU Speaker's Forum, she fervently addressed the crucial intersection of physical and mental well-being, emphasizing its positive impacts, particularly for the younger generation.



Penny Bordewick

Sophomore majoring in Political Science with double minor in History and Preprofessional Writing

Penny Bordewick is a sophomore Political Science major with a double minor in History and Preprofessional Writing. She is a member of Students For Kids' Sake International, and RSO that works with a local nonprofit organization, President of SIU Model United Nations, and is currently the Chief of Staff for Undergraduate Student Government. She also works as a Student Worker at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute and is a Writing Consultant at the Writing Center.

Penny greatly enjoys volunteering with an organization called HOBYS that works with high school students from around the globe on personal, group, and service leadership development. Working with this organization has earned her a Gold Status Presidential Student Service Award in both 2022 and 2023. This summer Penny hopes to work in a Michael Curry Internship in the Office of the Governor. Wish her luck on her application!



Madeline Johnson

Senior majoring in Geography & Environmental Resources with a minor in Philosophy

Madeline Johnson is a senior majoring in Geography and Environmental Resources with a specialization in GIS with a minor in Philosophy. Upon graduating in May, she aspires to use her education as well as her independent research to work within the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency in St. Louis, Missouri. Her long-term goal is to improve the sustainability of society's resources, methods, and lifestyle through city planning, construction, and solar and wind energy utilization. To prepare for this, Madeline has written a number of papers on the environment, current issues, the effects of energy output, sustainable resource solutions, and sustainable design and development. Most recently, she participated in a study abroad semester to Greece and Turkey. Throughout her time abroad, she researched the sustainable practices the countries have in place. When she returned home, she used her experiences to write an extensive research paper on sustainability obstacles and solutions, summarizing her observations and assessments of normalized sustainability within five areas of focus in Greece and Turkey.

Madeline transferred to SIU just one year ago and has since been selected for several venerable honors. She is a recipient of a 2022 "Top of Class" distinction, the 2023 Women of Action's "Above and Beyond Award", a spot on the Fall 2023 CALPS Dean's List, and several scholarships including the Transfer Achievement, CoLA Academic Excellence, Senator Penny Severns Character Counts, and Energy Boost. Her favorite service activities are packing lunches at Gumdrops and cleaning up around the campus. Madeline is thankful for all of the opportunities SIU has provided her and looks forward to what the future holds!



Victor Mansour

Senior majoring in Biology on the pre-medical track

Victor Mansour is a senior majoring in Biology on the pre-medical track. While biology may be complex, he has always had a passion for medicine. He believes this all started in his home country (Lebanon), where there is a vast lack of accessible medicine. Along with these, some life-changing events have made him the man he is today and keep him going! His family in Lebanon, the dream of making a change in the medical field, and the desire to help anyone in need motivates him every day. This semester, he is busy preparing for the MCAT, research, and work. He has served as the president of the Barbell Club and the Omega Delta Professional Fraternity; Vice President of the Hiking Club and member of the Pre-Health Professions Association Club. He is in Dr. Judy Davie's Research Lab, working on gene regulatory mechanisms and interlinked cascades of cytokine signaling pathways in skeletal muscle cells. Coupling this with deciphering how the normal process of myogenesis is disrupted in rhabdomyosarcoma cells (pediatric muscle cell cancer), the research is geared towards therapy for this kind of pediatric cancer. Having just recently joined this research lab, Victor feels he is only just beginning, but he is very excited to learn more and hopefully, be a part of the solution to this horrible disease.

Victor also works as a clinician at Comprehensive Prosthetics and Orthotics (CPO), a company that makes braces and prosthetics for those with mobility restrictions. Volunteering as an ER tech at a hospital in his hometown, gave him an inside view on how hectic the medical field can get (literally anything is on the table). Some fun facts about him: he is fluent in Arabic and has learned how to fly a plane!



Emma Ruemmler

Junior majoring in classics and history while minoring in mythology and ancient practices

Emma is a junior majoring in classics and history while minoring in mythology and ancient practices. She has been an active member and officer of the medieval combat RSO since her fall semester freshman year, and helped to host their Punic award event last spring. Emma does a variety of volunteering including helping with the partial solar eclipse event last fall, and directing traffic at the Green Earth pumpkin glow. As well currently as her final project for ancient practices Emma is working on weaving a peplos, through Ancient Greek method under Doctor Allen. After completing her bachelors she hopes to take a gap year where she can travel around the US and abroad after which she plans to start her masters degree in a field relating to history or classics.



Alayna Barba

Third-year automotive major

Alayna Barba is a third-year automotive major at SIU. She is deeply involved with and passionate about the automotive industry. She represents automotive students on the College of Health and Human Sciences advisory committee; the diversity committee to the Automotive Advisory Board; and serves as the vice president of the Women in Automotive Transportation Technology (WATT) club. She is also tutors peers. As vice president, she has brought new ideas to benefit the club and members. For instance, she organized a scholarship event for students on researching and applying for scholarships. She volunteers her time with the Saluki Food Pantry, Wesley Foundation, Gum Drops, St. Francis Animal Care, and with the Department of Sustainability.

During her entire college career at SIU, she has worked on-campus and off-campus jobs. She is an inspiration to many first-generation students, the Latino community, and women within the automotive program.

Overall, her experience with SIU has been very interactive and eventful. Her brother motivated her to pursue her major in Automotive, and from that point forward, she has been self-driven. She has had two internships with automotive and automotive related companies already, with a third upcoming this summer of 2024. Her goal upon leaving SIU, is to attain a bachelor's degree in the Science of Automotive Technology with two minors; Automotive Truck, Part, and Equipment Management and Advanced Vehicle Systems and Diagnostics and to also graduate with Honors.



Gracie Murphy

Sophomore double majoring in Agriculture Communications and Agribusiness Economics

Gracie Murphy is a sophomore double majoring in Agriculture Communications and Agribusiness Economics. She comes from Macomb, Illinois. At SIU, she is involved with the Collegiate Farm Bureau, Student Government, and works with Athletics in the ticket office. She plans to volunteer with service dogs and at schools around Carbondale. While she is not participating in any research projects at the moment, she may plan to in her future endeavors. Gracie loves agriculture, people, and new adventures. In the past, she has been motivated by opportunities to help or serve others, which led to her serving an organization in various positions. Currently, she is motivated by anything that brings meaning and purpose into her life, especially when it comes to agriculture. She took a somewhat unique route to college life up until this point.

Gracie graduated high school in 2021 but delayed college for a year to serve Illinois FFA as part of the National FFA (Future Farmers of America) Organization, as a state officer. In this position, there were only five people chosen to serve nearly 30,000 members (at that time). She then came to school for a semester in the Fall of 2022, until she was elected to serve as a National FFA Officer and was one of six chosen to represent over 950,000 members nationwide. This opportunity required her to take a year away from school, again. In this position, she traveled over 100,000 miles across the country, including visiting 30 states plus a trip to South Africa. She retired from that position this past November and now is back at SIU to stay, but she still helps out with local and state-wide FFA events, including leadership development conferences.

In the future, she plans to intern with John Deere this summer in the Quad Cities and Olathe, Kansas. She plans to pursue a career in agriculture, although she is unsure what exactly that career may be. She tries to not put blinders on so she does not miss any opportunity that may come her way. Studying abroad is something she is interested in as well, possibly studying agriculture in Australia or Greece in the near future. She is thankful for the opportunities she has had and the opportunities that have been presented to her as a part of being in the honors college as a Saluki. Go dawgs!



Phillip Hartke

Sophomore majoring in Industrial Engineering

Phillip Hartke is a sophomore studying Industrial Engineering. He is from a small town outside Champaign, Illinois. Here at SIU, Phillip is widely involved. He currently serves as the President of SIU's Undergraduate Student Government, proposing resolutions ranging from supporting mental health efforts to increased support of Touch of Nature. Phillip is also the Public Relations chairman and a founding member of Tau Kappa Epsilon, which returned to campus in 2022 and is now the largest fraternity at SIU. He was also a New Student Orientation Leader and Dawg Days counselor.

Beyond campus, Phillip is a firefighter on the Makanda Township Fire Department, a bouncer at Levels Nightclub, and an active member of his hometown church. Phillip loves to push himself and others to maintain active participation in their communities, ranging from the gym and church to the vibrant Carbondale nightlife.

Over this past summer, Phillip worked on Capitol Hill in Congressman Mike Bost's office serving the constituents of Illinois's 12th Congressional District. He was one of only two interns selected for the position, and while there was given official recognition for exemplary service by Congressman Bost's Chief of Staff, officials in Veterans' Affairs, and Bost himself. While he is studying engineering, Phillip hopes to one day run for public office and continue his family's legacy of serving the people of Illinois.

In the future, he plans to intern with either General Dynamics or the House Committee on Energy and Commerce in DC. Phillip plans to pursue a career in engineering, although it is too early to get much more specific than that. For now, he plans to open as many doors as possible and make the most of the four short years in college. Phillip is a strong supporter of the Honors Program, describing his Honors mentor, David Milley as "nothing short of awesome." Phillip is running again right now for Undergraduate Student Government President and looks forward to the work to come.



Hannah Connolly

Sophomore triple majoring in Political Science, History, & Classics with a double minor in Paralegal Studies & Art History

Hannah Connolly is a current sophomore triple majoring in Political Science, History, and Classics with a double minor in Paralegal Studies and Art History. She is also a swimmer for the SIU Women's Swim and Dive team. Here at SIU, she serves as a Senator representing Athletics in the Undergraduate Student Government, as well as Treasurer for the Pre-Law Association. Hannah also works for the SIU Writing Center as a writing consultant. Outside of campus, Hannah volunteers at the Saint Francis Animal Shelter and Touch of Nature.

Hannah is motivated to excel in academics thanks to all the opportunities SIU has offered. Taking classes within the Honors Program allowed Hannah to push herself, as Honors Courses like the History Seminar and Greco-Roman Art have inspired her to add those disciplines to her primary major. Even though she's a Liberal Arts student, she found a way to participate in a research study, and she has been analyzing the United Nations this spring in a study with Professor Jeremy Allen. In the future, Hannah hopes to intern with the state or federal government and later go to law school. Her career aspirations include working in constitutional law, although she's keeping her options open for now.

Hannah is looking forward to her next two years here at SIU, looking to better serve the SIU campus and the surrounding Carbondale community. When not in the pool or doing school, you can definitely find Hannah at the nearest Starbucks.



Lydia Phelps

Junior studying agri-business pre-law

Lydia Phelps is a current junior at SIUC studying agri-business pre-law. Despite this being her first year on campus, she has become heavily involved as a Senator At-Large in the SIUC Undergraduate Student Government, as the Alumni Relations Committee Chair for Sigma Alpha, and also participates in Collegiate Farm Bureau, ALE FFA, Block and Bridle, and holds a student worker position in the Career Services Department at the SIUC Law School. Additionally, she volunteers in her free time as a girls' basketball coach, a kid's worship leader at her church, and works with her sorority to volunteer for Jackson County's Ag. in the Classroom Program. This summer she will be relocating to Springfield, IL to work with Illinois Association FFA as their state center intern. Upon graduation she intends to pursue a law degree with the intent of practicing corporate law within the agriculture industry. Not only does she intend to use her law degree to better the industry that feeds, fuels, and clothes our world but also to inspire people. More specifically to inspire young women who find it difficult to find a career within agriculture that isn't teaching. While the agriculture industry needs educators, she believes that many women in agriculture feel caged by the notion that their only place in the industry is in a classroom. She wants to show women in agriculture that they are educators, but they are also, advocates, producers, lawyers, rural medical personnel, and so much more.



Gavin Melton

Radio, Television, & Digital Media Major with specialization in Video/TV Production

Gavin Melton is a second-year Radio, Television, & Digital Media Major with a specialization in Video/TV Production and a minor in American Sign Language. The two things that drive Gavin towards the media industry is the ability to create and the opportunities to meet like-minded individuals. He is a part of many RSOs on campus including Movie Camera Movement (where he currently holds the position of Secretary/Social Media Manager), Alt.News 26:46 (where he was given the opportunity to fly to Minneapolis for a documentary interview), and the SIU Kiwanis Circle K Chapter (where he currently holds a position on the Executive Board). Gavin is involved in many volunteer opportunities through University Honors, Circle K, and has even helped out with broadcasting on WSIU. Last semester, a University Honors Seminar that Gavin co-authored, with Associate Professor Kevin Mercer, took place. In November, he traveled with University Honors to the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Chicago, Illinois to further discuss how the course came to be, and how it was going as of that time. As for this summer, Gavin has applied for a number of internships, and is considering working with the SIU Hollywood Internship program in traveling to Los Angeles, California to meet up with Alumni and visit different production companies and studios. After graduation, Gavin plans to work in the media production industry, sticking close to the camera, and continuing his pursuit in meeting more like-minded individuals.