



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**SIMMONS
LAW SCHOOL**



Acting Dean's Note

Dear SIU Simmons Law School Alumni and Friends,

We have had a great start to the new academic year! I wanted to share some exciting updates with you from SIU Simmons Law School.

This semester, we have welcomed several new faculty members, including a new Director of Law Library. As you can see from their biographies below, they bring a diversity of perspective and training to the school. We will be able to expand our offerings in agricultural, environmental, and business law. They are also contributing to our legal writing and appellate advocacy training. Our students have already responded positively to their presence in the building. We also have welcomed our new Director of Admissions, Layla Murphy, who brings energy and experience to her position.



We are currently completing our nationwide search for our next permanent Dean. I am excited to welcome that person to our SIU Simmons Law School team.

We continue to pursue initiatives aimed at enhancing the student experience. In addition to our regular speaker's series, we will be hosting the Illinois Supreme Court on campus this spring. We have been actively working on bringing practical skills training into our classes to ensure that our students are well-prepared for their careers. Our clinics and experiential learning opportunities continue to equip our students to make a positive impact in the world.

We're also thrilled to announce upcoming alumni events (listed below). We hope that you take advantage of these wonderful opportunities to reconnect with each other and meet our current students. If you are available, we would love your help serving as a moot court judge in our upcoming National Health Law Moot Court Competition on November 1st and 2nd. As always, we love hearing from you. Whether you have updates to share, stories to tell, or simply want to connect, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your feedback is invaluable as we plan our future at SIU Simmons Law School.

We cherish the strong connections we've built over the years, and we hope to see you continue to be an integral part of SIU Simmons Law School.



Acting Dean's Welcome



Meet Our New Faculty

Greg Nies,

Assistant Professor of Law

Gregory Nies is currently an Assistant Professor of Law at the Southern Illinois University Simmons Law School. Greg earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Grace University, Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Master of Arts degree in Church and State Studies from Baylor University, Master of Science degree in Agriculture and Natural Resources from the University of Tennessee Martin, and Juris Doctor degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law.



[Read Full Bio Here](#)

Kaitlyn Poirier,

Assistant Professor of Law

Kaitlyn Poirier joined the SIU Simmons School of Law faculty in fall 2024. Prior to

joining the faculty, Professor Poirier was employed as a Trial Attorney at the United States Department of Justice for over eight years. During her time at the Department of Justice, she specialized in environmental and administrative law.

[Read Full Bio Here](#)



Carly Toepke,

Assistant Professor of Law

Dr. iur. Carly Toepke, J.D. joined the SIU faculty as an Assistant Professor in 2024. Dr. Toepke earned a J.D. from University of Illinois at Chicago School of Law in Chicago, Illinois in 2011. While earning that degree, she studied abroad at the University of Lucerne during 2L year. This experience is what sparked her journey into the Human Rights Law field and passion for educational exchange.

[Read Full Bio Here](#)



Kurt Webber,

Visiting Professor of Law

Currently a Visiting Professor of Law at Simmons, Professor Webber teaches contracts, agency and partnerships, business organizations, and transactional skills. A retired real estate finance and development attorney, he started his career as a litigator, trying numerous jury and bench trials and prosecuting appeals on matters of substantial import.

[Read Full Bio Here](#)



Candle Wester,

Director of Law Library &

Associate Professor of Law

Professor Candle Wester joined the faculty as the Director of the Law Library and Associate Professor of Law in 2024. She received her J.D. from the University of Nebraska and her M.S.L.I.S from the University of Illinois.

[Read Full Bio Here](#)



We would also like to welcome Layla Murphy, our Director of Admissions!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, October 11

Alumni Barristers Social Event

5:00 PM

Havisham Bourbon, Brew, and Sprints Bar
Alto Pass, IL

[See flyer for more details.](#)

Ticketed Event

[Purchase Tickets Here](#)

Saturday, October 12

SIU Simmons Law Alumni Tailgate

11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Saluki Row

Free Event

[Register Here](#)

Friday, November 1, and Saturday, November 2

National Health Law Moot Court Competition

We and would be honored if you were able to judge one or more rounds of the oral argument competition on **Friday, November 1, and Saturday, November 2, 2024**. This year we have 18 schools participating with 24 teams. We look forward to hosting the advocates and know our success each year is largely because of the contribution from the alumni and friends such as yourself who generously give their time to come and judge during the competition.

If you are able to assist, please fill out this [form](#).

SIU Simmons Law School Launch



FAQs About Our Gift

We are excited to start our new school year as SIU Simmons Law School after receiving our incredible \$10 million gift – the largest gift in SIU Carbondale's history – from John and Jayne Simmons!

What happens to the Lesar Law Building?

The good news is that founding Dean Hiram H. Lesar's name is still going to be on the building the same way it is now! The building is still the Lesar Law Building, so his name on signage, in the building, etc. is going to remain the same.

What will the funding go to?

Funding will remain within the law school, supporting faculty, students, staff, and law school programming.

Does this mean the law school has all the funding it needs?

The law school will need to continue to fundraise and need alumni, community, and donor engagement! While this gift is substantial and will make an incredible impact, we need continued support in order to achieve our mission of supporting students to reach their goals. When only 20 percent of funding comes from the state and we strive to keep tuition low, we depend on the generosity of our donors.

What will change?

What will change is that instead of "Southern Illinois University School of Law", we will now be "Southern Illinois University Simmons Law School." We will always be Southern Illinois 's law school. No matter what. Now, we have the backing and support of the Simmons family that will elevate our recognition to new heights.

This gift is just the beginning of wonderful things to come. Day in and day out, our alumni are doing incredible work in the legal community, and we hope this transformational gift to the school makes you even more proud of your Juris Doctorate from Southern Illinois University!

SIU Simmons Law School | 1150 Douglas Drive | Mailcode 6804 | Carbondale, IL 62901

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