

Katherine A. Eilers

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Professional Experience

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

Director of Award Management in the Office of Research & Projects/Graduate School

Edwardsville, IL • September 2020 to Present

- Lead day-to-day management of more than \$30 million in sponsored project activity, ensuring regulatory compliance, fiscal integrity, and timely grant and contract administration across federal, state, corporate, and foundation sponsors.
- Supervise and mentor a team of five professional staff and one graduate assistant, fostering a positive, service-oriented culture while promoting accuracy, accountability, and professional growth.
- Serve as primary liaison to external auditors, preparing audit responses and documentation that consistently achieve clean audit results and minimize institutional risk, protecting SIUE's low-risk status for federal funding.
- Oversee post-award compliance, reporting, and internal controls, interpreting and applying complex federal (Uniform Guidance) and state regulations to safeguard University funding.
- Direct development and maintenance of Kuali Research Award data, post-award databases, and shared drives to ensure complete, accurate, and efficient data management and reporting.
- Produce institutional reports, including the NSF Higher Education R&D (HERD) Survey, annual ORP performance summaries, Schedule of Expenditures for Federal Awards (SEFA), and ad-hoc analyses for senior leadership and external agencies.
- Implemented a Power BI dashboard for grant expenditures and budgets, enhancing transparency, improving reporting accuracy, and equipping leadership and faculty with real-time insights into project financials.
- Drives continuous improvement by analyzing and refining post-award processes, implementing policy changes, and developing faculty and staff training on fiscal administration, compliance, and reporting to enhance efficiency, transparency, and campus-wide capacity for effective grants management.
- Provide expert judgment on allowability, allocability, and reasonableness of expenditures, balancing operational needs with institutional and sponsor risk management.
- Maintain strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders—including faculty, other departments, funding agencies, and auditors through clear communication, responsiveness, and strategic collaboration.
- Develops and maintains institutional fringe benefit and indirect cost rate proposals

Assistant Director in the Office of Student Financial Aid

Edwardsville, IL • March 2018 to September 2020

- Provided risk management for institutional liability and ensured compliance with state and federal regulations through policy development, training, and ongoing revisions
- Led and managed six full-time financial aid advisors, supporting office operations, programming, enrollment, and retention with a student-centered approach
- Chaired compliance-related committees (Policies and Procedures, Financial Literacy/Default Prevention, Dependency Overrides, and Special Expenses) to ensure alignment with regulations and improve systems
- Supported the University's enrollment management plan by contributing to scholarship programs, Foundation initiatives, emergency funds, and managing Client Services in alignment with recruitment and retention goals
- Served as top-level advisor for escalated student and parent concerns and maintained relationships with external stakeholders, including high schools, universities, ISAC, and the U.S. Department of Education
- Oversaw office marketing and communications to students and parents (website, social media, publications) in collaboration with Marketing, Communications, and Instructional Design

- Implemented virtual advising to better serve remote students and played a key role in administering emergency relief funds during COVID-19 (HEERF and Foundation awards)

LINCOLN LAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Director of Financial Aid

Springfield, IL • September 2016 to March 2018

- Responsible for the management and implementation of over \$13.6 million in federal, state, and institutional aid
- Supervised seven full-time staff members, including Veterans Affairs and Federal Work-Study; provide daily feedback, performance evaluations, and disciplinary action when necessary
- Served as top-level advisor for escalated student and parent questions, as well as liaison to the Department of Education, state agencies, other institutions, and internal departments
- Aligned Lincoln Land's financial aid policies and procedures with Department of Education regulations, including major revisions to Satisfactory Academic Progress, Return of Funds, Pell Recalculation, and course repeat policies
- Partnered extensively with Finance, Public Relations, and Marketing to ensure compliance, manage reconciliations, and deliver targeted messaging to students on aid deadlines and scholarship opportunities
- Created and executed departmental goals aligned with institutional objectives and master plan; responsible for data collection, non-academic assessment, and follow-through
- Successfully completed recertification of Title IV funds and multiple federal/state audits (including Veterans Affairs) with zero findings
- Superuser of Ellucian's Colleague with expertise in rule writing, report building, degree audit, and implementation of Self Service model; lead partner in Competency-Based Education pilot with the Department of Education

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY – EDWARDSVILLE

Financial Aid Advisor Coordinator • December 2015 to September 2016

Financial Aid Advisor • August 2014 to December 2015

ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

Southern Illinois Region, IL • June 2011 to August 2014

Regional Outreach Coordinator, ISACorps

- Managed and coached a team of twelve recent college graduates while serving as regional liaison to over 100 school districts; enhanced partnerships by coordinating with administrators and agency directors, organized training for 90+ staff, and supported colleagues through resource sharing, program development, community outreach, and presentations on barriers faced by low-income, first-generation students.

Community Worker, ISACorps • June 2009 to June 2011

Education

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Macomb, IL • Anticipated December 2025

Doctorate in Education, Higher Education Emphasis in Social Justice & Organizational Structure

Proposed Dissertation: Exploring the Crucial Influence of Research Engagement on Retention Among Underrepresented Students at a Midwestern Public University

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

Edwardsville, IL • August 2016

Master's Degree, Public Administration

MCKENDREE UNIVERSITY

Lebanon, IL • (May 2009)

BA Degree, Political Science

Minor: Speech Communication

Conferences & Presentations

- Presenter, *National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) National Conference – "Where Do I Go From Here? Career Ladder"* (2024)
- Attendee, Research Analytics Summit (2024)
- Attendee, Federal Student Aid Conference (2016–2020)
- Attendee, Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (ILASFAA) Conference (2017, 2021)
- Attendee, Chicago Regional Organizing for Antiracism (C-ROAR) Conference (2017)
- Attendee, National College Access Network Conference (2011)

Professional Associations & Memberships

- Phi Theta Kappa, Member (2022–Present)
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Member (2012–2013, 2016–2021)
- Illinois Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (ILASFAA), General Member (2012–2013, 2016–2020)
- ILASFAA, Committee Member (2016–2018, 2020–2021), including award-winning *Pre-Collegiate Programs Committee* (2019)
- Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling, Member (2012–2014)
- Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois (DFI), Institutional Representative (2019–2021)

Certifications & Training:

- NASFAA Certified Financial Aid Administrator Program (2021)
- NASFAA Certifications: Consumer Information, Verification, Satisfactory Academic Progress, Return of Funds, Awarding & Packaging
- Illinois Student Assistance Commission, Financial Aid Certification (score 90%+) (2010–2016)
- Microsoft Access Professional Development Workshop (2013)
- Individualized Career Coaching, Jody Michael & Associates (2011–Present)

Institutional Committee Service:

- Chancellor's Budget Workgroup, SIUE (2025)
- Tuition and Fee Refund Appeals Committee, SIUE (2018–2019)
- Transfer Initiative Group, SIUE (2018–2021)
- New Student Orientation Committee, SIUE (2018–2021)
- College Prep Summit, Executive Committee Member, ISAC (2016–2017)
- Curriculum Council, Lincoln Land Community College (2016–2017)
- Shared Governance, Lincoln Land Community College (2016–2017)
- Institutional Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals Committee, Lincoln Land Community College (2016–2017)
- Conducted state-wide training for Illinois Student Assistance Commission (2010–2013)