

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



QUICK FACTS

- Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and more than 30 individual, program-specific accreditations
- State-wide mission in computer science, cybersecurity, and visual and performing arts
- More than 200 areas of study, with nearly 1,600 courses offered each semester, and more than 380 courses offered online
- 1,750 students live on campus
- Redhawk Athletics competes at the NCAA Division I level and is a member of the Ohio Valley Conference

ENROLLMENT

7,682
UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS

1,200
GRADUATE
STUDENTS

8,882
TOTAL
HEADCOUNT

- 76% of students are from Missouri
- Students come from 43 states and 61 countries
- Four-year and six-year graduation rates are the highest they've been in a decade
- In fall 2025, SEMO saw positive enrollment growth in Cape Girardeau county, the wider Southeast Missouri region, online learners, early college students, domestic graduate students, and transfer students

TOP ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- Nursing - 513 students
- Psychology - 457 students
- Business Administration - 430 students
- Biology - 382 students
- Agribusiness - 217 students



SOUTHEAST MISSOURI
STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873®

ECONOMIC IMPACT

1,000+
EMPLOYEES ACROSS ALL CATEGORIES

\$1.4 BILLION
ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT TO THE
STATE OF MISSOURI

\$2.50
FOR EVERY \$1 INVESTED IN SEMO,
TAXPAYERS GAIN \$2.50 IN RETURN

ALUMNI

80,000+
TOTAL LIVING ALUMNI

56,000+
LIVING ALUMNI IN MISSOURI

22,500+
DEGREES AWARDED OVER THE LAST
10 YEARS

COST

\$10,194
ANNUAL IN-STATE COST FOR 30
CREDIT HOURS
(4TH LOWEST IN THE STATE)

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL PROGRAM

Provide **programmatic support** totaling **\$3.8 million for the development of an FAA-approved air traffic controller (ATC) program** to respond to current, and future, workforce needs.



THE NEED

The need for individuals with an ATC credential is significant over the next decade. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data projects approximately 2,200 openings for air traffic controllers on average each year over the next decade due to the need to replace workers who transition to different occupations or leave the labor force. The Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) makes similar projections. Per BLS, the median annual wage for air traffic controllers was \$144,580 in May 2024.

HIGH-LEVEL SOLUTION

SEMO proposes to establish an ATC program to respond to workforce needs in Missouri and throughout the country. The program will build on SEMO's existing aviation-related programs in professional pilot, unmanned aircraft systems, and aviation management.

COMPETITION

ATC training has traditionally only been available at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, OK. Institutions of higher education can now seek certification from the FAA to be an Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI) school. There is currently not an AT-CTI school in Missouri, or in the bordering states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Nebraska and Iowa.

INVESTMENT REQUEST

SEMO requests an appropriation totaling \$3.8 million to establish an FAA-approved ATC program. The investment requested will support the following programmatic components: critical, expanding workforce shortage within the National Airspace System. The requested investment will support the following programmatic components:

- Simulators and Equipment (\$1.9 million)
- Classroom and Lab Renovations (\$1.65 million)
- Curriculum and Program Development (\$250,000)

SUMMARY

The projected need for air traffic controllers over the next decade is significant. SEMO's history of successfully offering programs that prepare students for high-demand jobs; combined with its existing aviation-related programs supported by strong enrollments; its existing designation as a FAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems Collegiate Training Initiative (UAS-CTI) school; its pending application for consideration as an FAA designated Air Traffic-Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI) school; and its partnerships with the City of Cape Girardeau, the Cape Girardeau Regional Airport, Cape Girardeau Public Schools, and US Aviation Group (SEMO's flight training provider), make it well suited to enhance aviation programming in Missouri through the creation of an air traffic controller program.

MODERN CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION

Re-appropriate Capital project funding of **\$37 million for Transformational Capital Project.**

In collaboration with the State Budget Director, SEMO has committed the \$37 million capital improvement appropriation to the following components of the Modern Campus Transformational Project:

ROY BLUNT HEALTH PROFESSIONS HALL

\$18.5 million (total budget: \$37.3 million)

The Roy Blunt Health Professions Hall will be a new, multi-story, approximate 55,000-sf facility that will include classrooms, laboratories, offices, meeting venues, and other spaces to support health, life, and allied health sciences research and academic programs.



A portion of the \$37 capital appropriation (\$18.5 million) has been fully committed to the Roy Blunt Health Professions Hall Project, and a contract to construct Blunt Hall was awarded to Penzel Construction in August 2025. Site work began in fall 2025 and construction will begin in spring 2026. The Roy Blunt Health Professions Hall is scheduled to be completed in fall 2027.

SOUTH CHILLER PLANT

\$18.5 million (total budget: \$18.2 million)

The South Chiller Plant, which serves the entire south end of SEMO's main campus in Cape Girardeau, MO, is located in Kent Library, it has exceeded its useful life and needs to be replaced. To address this need, SEMO will construct a new 12,785 sq. ft. South Chiller Plant. The South Chiller Plant will be constructed near Blunt Hall, and it will be designed with elements to reduce the University's utility costs and space to accommodate future utility needs.



A portion of the \$37 million capital appropriation (\$18.5 million) has been fully committed to the South Chiller Plant Project, and a contract to construct it was awarded to Penzel Construction in December 2025. Construction of the South Chiller Plant will run parallel to the construction of Blunt Hall, with an estimated completion date of fall 2027.

**HAVE
QUESTIONS?
ASK US!**



DR. BRAD HODSON
UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT
bhodson@semo.edu
(620) 232-4208



CHRIS MARTIN
CHIEF OF STAFF
cmartin@semo.edu
(314) 225-1753



BRIAN GRACE
NEXUS GROUP
brian.grace@nexus-grp.com
(573) 230-9549



COPHE INSTITUTIONS

A SMART INVESTMENT FOR MISSOURI STUDENTS

Each year, COPHE institutions serve over 48,000 students from all walks of life, from all over the state of Missouri. We provide the degrees and other credentials that fuel economic growth for our students, families, employers and communities.

\$2.4 BILLION +

IN ANNUAL ECONOMIC IMPACT IS
GENERATED ACROSS THE STATE
COPHE INSTITUTIONS

COPHE PRIORITIES 2026

1 INCREASE STATE INVESTMENT IN EACH COPHE INSTITUTION

- Every higher education institution needs at least an inflationary increase in state support to maintain programs and services
- Additional investments beyond inflation, such as MoExcels, are crucial to better serving our students and overall workforce

2 BUILD ON AND PRESERVE RECENT SUCCESSES IN EASING ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUREAUCRATIC BURDENS ON HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

- Local governing boards and presidents need flexibility to adapt quickly to a changing world

3 MAINTAIN STRONG SUPPORT FOR STATE GRANT AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS SERVING OUR STUDENTS

- Accessibility and affordability are key factors in supporting student success