The text on the south wall of Morris Library's Hall of Presidents and Chancellors has a special place in the heart of many present and past students of SIU.
The text reads:

To exalt beauty in god, in nature, and in art,
teaching how to love the best but to keep the human touch:

To advance learning in all lines of truth wherever they may lead,
showing how to think rather than what to think,

assisting the powers of the mind in their self-development:

To forward ideas in our democracy,
inspiring respect for others as for ourselves,

ever promoting freedom with responsibility:

To become a center of order and light
That knowledge may lead to understanding
And understanding to wisdom.

These words were written by Charles D. Tenney, who came to Southern Illinois Normal University in 1931. In his ensuing forty-two years of service to the University, he “wore more hats” and received more academic and administrative appointments than possibly any other individual in the University’s history. He initially served as an assistant professor of English, and just prior to his retirement in 1973 he was Project Director of Resources for Tomorrow, but in between he was acting chair of the philosophy department which he organized, acting chair of the art department, an administrative assistant to Presidents Chester Lay and Delyte Morris, and a vice-president in several different capacities. He was instrumental in
the mid-1950s in organizing Southern Illinois University Press, and he even served as the men’s tennis coach from shortly after his arrival to the mid-1940s. In 1969 he was named a University Professor, one of but four persons so honored at the time, and in 1979 he received the University’s Distinguished Service Award. Tenney died in 1983 after suffering a stroke years earlier.

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