



Spring 2016

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From the Executive Director


Dear ACI Friends,

Welcome to our Spring Issue of *ACI Reporter*, which features President Ivan Filby and Greenville College, three of our scholarship winners, two new board members, new and continuing corporate partners, and special events planned for April 29.

Why April 29? It is a big day for ACI. In the morning we hold our Presidents Forum. In the afternoon we have our annual Board of Trustees meeting, and in the evening we hold our fund- and friend-raiser. All events will be held at the Aon Center in the Chicago Loop. Special thanks to Board Member Liz Neiderkorn of Aon Corporation, who helped us secure this meeting space. We encourage you to join us.

Last, we're completing plans for our next fiscal year including raising more scholarship funds, expanding our Peer Mentoring Program to six ACI members, growing our conference programming, and expanding our media presence to better advocate for liberal arts education and our member colleges and universities -- a busy ending to this fiscal year and a great start to next year.

Thanks for your continued support this past year, and we look forward to a better year coming up!



Mick Weltman
Executive Director

Upcoming Events

Join us for our Scholarship and Recognition Reception April 29



ACI hosts its "[Scholarship and Recognition Reception](#)" April 29 to raise funds for college and university [student scholars](#) and ACI's [Peer Mentoring](#) program, which matches mentors and selected students at member schools. We will also recognize ACI member presidents who will retire at the end of the academic year.

The April 29 reception begins at 5:30 p.m. at Chicago's [Mid-America Club](#), Aon Center, 200 East Randolph Dr., on the 80th floor.

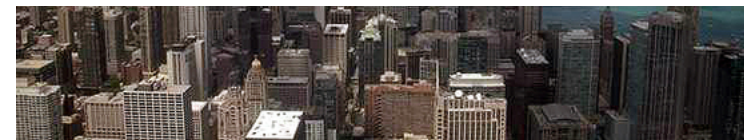
"We [invite](#) anyone with an interest in Illinois higher education to attend," says Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. "Our purpose is to raise funds to support first-generation, low-income, minority students who attend our 23 member colleges and universities. ACI scholarships help our members close funding gaps for students who need financial help. This is particularly important while Illinois' political leaders remain at an impasse about the state's budget, including the critical MAP grants."

"In addition, we think guests will enjoy this event. They'll meet interesting people, hear engaging speakers, appreciate fine music and see a great view of the Chicago skyline," Weltman adds.

ACI will recognize retiring presidents at four of its member colleges: Brother James Gaffney, FSC,



[Lewis University](#), Romeoville; Dr. J. David Arnold, [Eureka College](#), Eureka; Dr. Robert L. Head, [Rockford University](#), Rockford; and Dr. Larry A. Braskamp, [Elmhurst College](#), Elmhurst.



From the Mid-America Club, views of the city are outstanding.

Keynote speaker is [Dr. James L. Applegate](#), executive director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Springfield. Guests will also meet and hear from student scholars and leaders of ACI's Peer Mentoring Program. Entertainment will be provided by the Chicago Sinfonietta [Project Inclusion Ensemble](#), and donors who commit \$250 or more will receive tickets to a future Sinfonietta performance.

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ACI Scholars

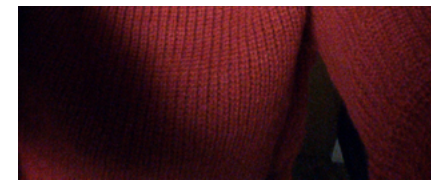
Shirquanna Freeman, Augustana College

Shirquanna Freeman has been interacting with people nearly every day of her life. Growing up with four sisters and a brother, Freeman has always liked working with children, particularly during one summer as a camp counselor for Rockford First Church in her hometown of Rockford, Illinois. "I loved their personalities, and watching them grow and learn," she said.

Her experiences led her to ACI member [Augustana College](#), where she has her sights set on becoming a child psychologist. The sophomore communication and psychology major is also working on a Spanish minor because "if I could speak Spanish fluently, that would be more families that I could help." Communication is also part of her career plan



because she understands that effective communication leads to better interactions with diverse cultures and people whose experiences are different from her own.



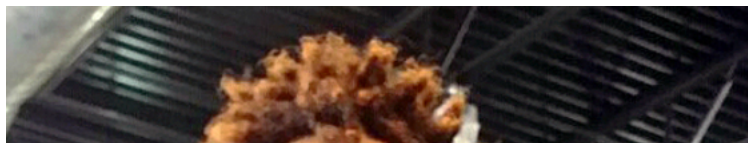
Freeman, the first person to attend college in her family, is a recipient of a \$2,000 McGraw Emergency Fund Scholarship from ACI through Augustana. These funds were critical for her to remain in school. "If I didn't get that scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to continue going to Augustana," she says. "It was the last thing I needed to remain in school. (The funds) helped me continue my education, and my education is very valuable to me."

Thanks to the ACI-McGraw scholarship, Freeman is able to advance her career goals, and help new students entering college. For example, she helped lead a late-summer program for multicultural students just beginning their college years at Augustana. Like Freeman, many are the first in their families to attend college. "We didn't have that program when I came here. It helps other people, and gives us a chance to inform them of things that we didn't know," she says. Freeman is also social chair of the college's Black Student Union, a place for students of color to share their college experiences, raise awareness for diversity on campus and engage in service.

Freeman tells newer students about the small class sizes at Augustana, and that professors know most students by name -- two reasons why she chose Augustana. The college's emphasis on the liberal arts is also an advantage, she says. "Coming into college, I thought I wanted to be a doctor, a pediatrician. Since we're expected to take classes in different majors, I found out pre-med wasn't for me, but I liked psychology, and that's when I switched." She developed an interest in communication the same way, through elective classes.

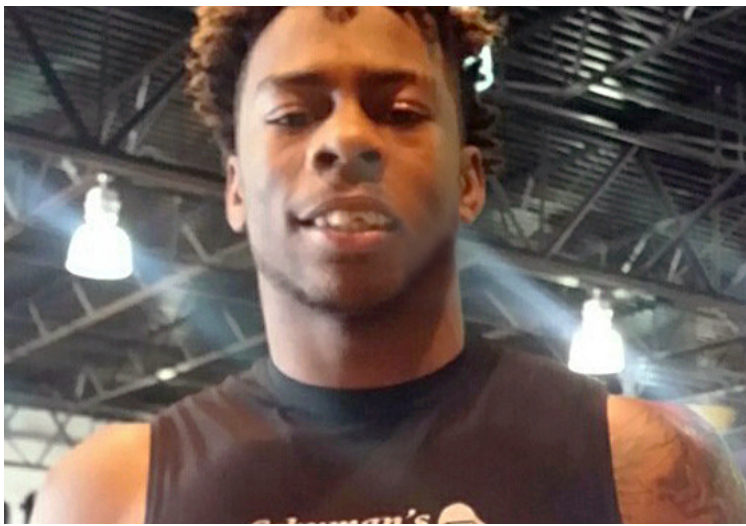
Taking classes in different fields is "really great," Freeman says. "Even if you're not in that major, you learn so much more. You're more well-rounded."

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Paris Edwards, Augustana College

Paris Edwards studies graphic design and video editing, dreaming of the day when he is a



Web designer. Edwards arrived at ACI member [Augustana College](#) from Tulsa, Oklahoma three years ago and became a graphic design major, a subject he learned to appreciate when he was a student at Tulsa's Thomas Edison High School.

"I chose graphic design because I like to create, and I like to draw," he says. "I also want to get into video editing, because it's creating something. Having people see my art – that's amazing, and that's pretty cool."

Edwards says he doesn't have a minor, but if he did, it would be psychology. Why? In previous classes on the subject, he was fascinated with how the human brain works and how it develops, particularly in adolescents.

What brought Edwards to Augustana from Oklahoma was the smaller, liberal arts atmosphere of the college, plus its academic opportunities. "The main reason is that I liked the professors here. I see my professors once or twice a week, and talk to them about how classes are going or how I need to better myself in class," he says. Another factor in Edwards' decision to attend Augustana was a "good group" of friends, he says, with whom he joined a fraternity, Beta Omega Sigma.

Edwards' has stayed on track with his college education thanks, in part, to a \$2,600 scholarship FIHE/UPS scholarship awarded him. The scholarship enables Edwards to register for future classes early because the funds help him demonstrate that he has the tuition money in hand. "With the help of this scholarship, I can register on time and get the classes I need for my major," Edwards says. Without the scholarship, Edwards would have to wait until many of his preferred classes are filled and make the best of the classes that remain. "Getting through college would be more difficult," he explains.

A junior, Edwards is also a busy athlete at Augustana, where he is a running back on the football team. This year, he plans to run short sprints on Augustana's track team, including 100- and 200-meter races, and the 4 x 100 sprint competition.

How does he stay in shape? Besides running and working out in the weight room, Edwards like to dance. He and friends have successfully competed in talent shows and dance competitions. "It also helps me on the football field with balance, and helps me avoid getting knocked over a lot," he adds.

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Katherine King, Concordia University Chicago

When Katherine King was a child, she recalls spending hours in her grandmother's basement, pretending she was a schoolteacher. She would teach her imaginary students, just as she experienced in her own school. "It was really cool to be in my own little world," she recalls, "because I was able to experience that before I came to college." Those early years were the beginning of a journey that led King to [Concordia University Chicago](#).

She began traveling from her home in Peoria to visit Concordia University when she was a sophomore in high school. The small-school university atmosphere at Concordia was ideal, King says, much like her small Lutheran grade school and small high school. Concordia's affiliation with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was also important in her college decision.



At Concordia, King majors in elementary education with a minor in theology. The two will help qualify her to teach in a Lutheran school and meet the theological requirements as well.

A vacation Bible school session at her home congregation helped her realize that teaching was her calling. "I was helping out the week of vacation Bible school, and I remember it hitting me that this was what I wanted to do with my life. I love kids, and I love being able to change their lives in some way. That's how I knew," she says. King hopes to teach grade school students foundational subjects

such as English, math and reading. One day, she may pursue a master's degree or a doctorate.

King is the recipient of a \$2,900 ACI-A. Montgomery Ward Scholarship awarded to her by Concordia University. The scholarship is for students with a 3.0 average or higher who need financial assistance. King's family includes her brother and mother, a stepbrother and stepsister. Her father passed away in 2011. For her, the scholarship funds were timely, she says.

"I had been paying for college all on my own, and I've been trying not to take out student loans," King explains. "Besides the financial aid that I'm given, I have to find other resources. It's definitely helpful. It makes my life at school a lot less stressful, because I know I don't have to worry about paying monthly bills and things like that."

King is not only learning in the classroom, but her extracurricular activities are teaching her as well. She is a co-leader in the campus women's ministry, and lives on a freshman dormitory floor, where she advises new students and helps them adjust to campus life.

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Funding Student Achievement

Make a Gift and Invest in Student Success

Your gift to Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) is an effective investment in America's future workforce.

Through scholarships and academic support, ACI



schools are helping to build the college-educated workforce our economy needs by removing barriers that hinder



underserved students from enrolling in higher education institutions and earning college degrees.

ACI colleges and universities have very high graduation rates, outpacing the rates at Illinois public universities as well as the national averages. More than 45% of all ACI students graduate in four years compared to 29% at Illinois public universities and 36% across the nation.

Graduates from ACI schools enter the workforce well-prepared -- with strong academic credentials and well-developed professional and interpersonal skills that today's employers demand.

A gift to ACI will directly support underserved students at all 23 member colleges and universities and help them to succeed in college and in the workforce.

To make your gift today, please visit our [website](#), or contact Mick Weltman at (312) 263-2391, ext. 0523, or mweltman@acifund.org. Gifts of any size -- large or small -- will make an immeasurable difference. Thank you!

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Meet ACI Members

Greenville College Prepares for its Future: New Name, Significant Anniversary





Greenville College serves about 1,100 undergraduate and graduate students. It was recently named the state's top higher education institution for online academic programs, by Accredited Schools Online.

Big changes are coming to [Greenville College](#), an [ACI member college](#) in Greenville, Illinois. On Sept. 20, 2017, the college will celebrate a new name – Greenville University -- which reflects its mission as both an institution with undergraduate- and graduate-level academic programs, an international reach, and a place of "open inquiry," according to its president. [Dr. Ivan Filby](#).

Founded in 1892, Greenville College is a Christ-centered college, one of six higher education institutions affiliated with the Free Methodist Church USA. Located about 50 miles northeast of St. Louis, today, Greenville's student body consists of 1,100 undergraduate and graduate students.

Its strategic plan, "[Extending Our Heritage, Expanding Our Reach](#)," points the way to the college's 125th anniversary in 2017, including its transition to Greenville University.

Filby is a person familiar with change and transition. A recently naturalized U.S. citizen, he is originally from England, and came to the United States by way of Ireland where he held a senior-level job at the University of Dublin Trinity College. There, he worked in the business school and headed the school's international operations. In that position, he routinely met ambassadors and high-level government officials from various countries. He worked on education reform with the European Union and held a leadership role with the Cornerstone Church, Dublin.

What led Filby to move with his family to a new life at Greenville College was a lunch meeting with a young couple, both graduates of a faith-based U.S. college. The couple wanted to serve as missionaries to Ireland with a base in his church, he recalls. Their interests led Filby to do some dreaming of his own.

"We really don't have faith-based institutions of this nature in Europe," Filby observes. He did some research on such colleges in the United States, eventually finding Greenville College. "It had a tagline that said this: 'Greenville College: Because God has created you for great things.'"

That theme inspired him. Filby and his wife, Kathie, flew to Greenville. "It was so different, a small town of 7,000 people. As I started to meet people, I thought I could actually be used here to help the school, to work with the students." Filby accepted an appointment to teach in Greenville's business school management program, where he stayed for seven years. After a yearlong appointment as dean of the Fermanian School of Business at Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego, he returned to Greenville three years ago as its president.



Dr. Ivan Filby became president of Greenville College in 2013.

Filby describes Greenville College as a place "of open inquiry,

ACI scholarship funds have been "a wonderful godsend for us. The money we got this semester has helped us keep two to three students in school. The grants from ACI really do make a difference."

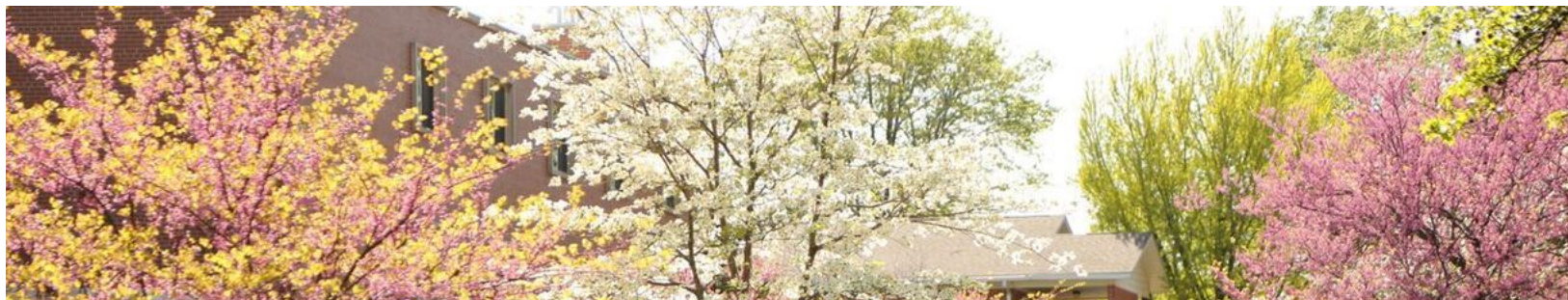
with a strong academic freedom statement." The college's historic strengths are in the sciences, music, business and athletics. About 80 percent of its students have Christian backgrounds, and it focuses on helping people "become salt and light" in a troubled world, the president says.

Greenville's strategic plan connects the college's past with its future. "There have been more changes in higher education probably in the past five or six years than there have been for the past 50 or 60, so it's a very different environment," Filby says.

Becoming Greenville University is one important aspect of the plan. More than a four-year institution, it has master's programs in disciplines such as business, management, education and English as a Second Language. The change in nomenclature also better communicates the institution's stature to international students. Some international students, particularly from China, say that "college" is not regarded the same way as "university" in their culture. Students who are Latino report that "college" translates in Spanish as "high school," which creates confusion, Filby explains.

"Part of the reason (to become a university) is to better describe who we now are," Filby said. "Also, it helps us as a launching pad as we move into the future."

The university's name change and strategic plan focus is also helping it expand internationally. Currently, Greenville enrolls about 50 international students who represent nine countries, and it maintains study abroad programs in Nicaragua and in Madrid, Spain. Students who take advantage of these learning programs are required to live on campus for a semester following their international experiences to share their learnings with students, faculty and staff.





Spring brings plenty of color to the campus landscape at Greenville College, located about 50 miles northeast of St. Louis.

The college is considering satellite campuses in other countries to take its Christ-centered education into new areas where it believes it can be of service. The focus on international expansion is part of a well-rounded education, Filby says.

"The USA is the third country I've lived in," he points out. "I was in Ireland for 16 years, and now the USA for 11, and I've benefitted immensely from international experiences. I want our students to benefit from that."

Other plans include using its strengths in math and physics to expand into new academic programs in engineering. A new center for Visual Culture and Media Studies brings together digital media, art, communications and journalism disciplines. The Briner School of Business opened, named for the late Robert (Bob) Briner, 1956 alumnus, author of "Roaring Lambs" and other books, and an Emmy-winning pioneer in sports and broadcasting.

Greenville College is one of 22 charter members of ACI, founded in 1952. This year's State of Illinois' budget stalemate and the loss of [MAP \(Monetary Award Program\) grant funding](#) for students in public and private institutions, has affected the schools and their students. Greenville alumni are helping the college deal with MAP grant funding losses by contributing to "Mind the Gap: MAP Grant Challenge," a campaign that asks each alumnus to give \$130 each to raise \$1.3 million to plug the gap if the MAP grants never materialize.

ACI is pitching in as well. [ACI scholarship funds](#) have been "a wonderful godsend for us," Filby says. "The money we got this semester has helped us keep two to three students in school." Most students at Greenville get some kind of financial aid, especially helpful to students who cannot borrow any more. "The grants from ACI really do make a difference," Filby says, adding that he is especially grateful to businesses and individuals whose gifts to ACI help fund those scholarships. In the past three years, ACI has provided \$57,734 in scholarships to about 30 Greenville students.

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ACI News

ACI's 2016 Spring Conferences Begin April 4

ACI will host four professional development conferences that support administrators, faculty and staff at ACI's [23 member Illinois colleges and universities](#). The conferences, aimed at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of private liberal arts higher education in Illinois, will be held throughout the state:

♦ **April 4, [Student Engagement Seminar](#), [Augustana College](#)**, Rock Island:

Subjects for this conference include co-curriculars, student-athlete engagement, connecting mission and programming, assessment, global learning and men of color in higher education.



♦ **April 11, [Advancement Conference](#), [North Park University](#)**, Chicago: Topics include metrics, donor relations/engagement, major gifts, alumni participation, campaign fundraising plus several discussion roundtables. Keynote speaker is Jon Heintzelman, a North Park University alumnus, and chair, Ter Molen Watkins & Brandt LLC.

♦ **April 15, [Financial Officers Meeting](#), [Millikin University](#)**, Decatur: Topics include IRS Form 990, hot topics affecting exempt organizations and risk strategies. Speakers from ACI Corporate Partners [Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP](#), and [Sikich, LLP](#), will present; Sikich, LLP, is also the meeting sponsor.

♦ **April 29, [ACI College and University Presidents Forum](#), [Aon Center](#)**, Chicago: Topics include successful campaigns, student costs for course materials, changes and challenges in higher education, plus roundtable discussions. Speakers from ACI Corporate Partner Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP, and ACI Executive Director Mick Weltman will present. Sponsor is [Rafter, Inc.](#)

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ACI Welcomes Sikich LLP as a New Corporate Partner



[Sikich LLP](#) is a dynamic professional services firm providing a variety of accounting, technology and advisory services to not-for-profit and higher education organizations. Whether your challenges lie in managing and tracking the generosity of your

supporters or implementing regulatory changes, our team of experts is here to help you accomplish your goals, realize your mission and strengthen your organization. For more information, please contact: Scott Wegner, Partner, swegner@sikich.com, phone: 630-566-8417, fax: 630-375-8817.

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Northwest Comprehensive Continues its Corporate Partnership



[Northwest Comprehensive](#) (NWC) is an employee benefits insurance brokerage and consulting firm specializing in working with higher education institutions. Representing more than 50 small-to-midsize colleges across the country, NWC brings significant value to ACI-affiliated institutions with its national higher education presence and its Illinois location. In addition, NWC clients enjoy the benefits of the Higher Education Benefit Alliance, which helps colleges and universities access competitive rates and plan features. In 2015, NWC became a part of Risk Strategies Company (RSC), ranked among the top 30 largest insurance brokerage firms in the nation. For more information, please contact John Cerasani, Higher Education Practice Leader, jcerasani@risk-strategies.com, 312-985-6729.

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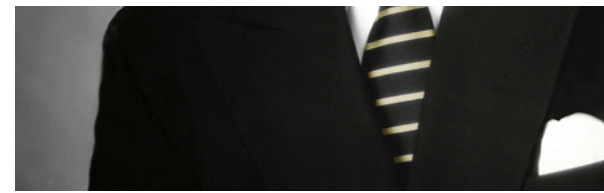
Welcome New Board of Trustees Members!

ACI welcomed two new corporate members to the Board of Trustees this year, following approvals by the Executive Committee:

♦ **Louis G. Apostol, Executive Director, General Counsel and Legislative Liaison, Illinois Property Tax Appeal Board, Springfield:** Apostol is responsible for the management and adjudication of all residential, commercial, industrial and farm property tax appeals in Illinois. He has been a practicing lawyer in Illinois for over 30 years and was a partner in several large law firms in Chicago specializing in civil and criminal litigation, tax, finance, administrative and



government law. He is a certified executive (CAE), having served as general counsel and chief operating officer to multiple corporations and associations. [more](#)



♦ **Deborah M. Sawyer, Founder and CEO, Environmental Design International (EDI) Inc., Chicago:** Sawyer founded EDI in 1991 and is the firm's CEO. She began her career as an Environmental Scientist for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. Later, she entered the private sector where she rose up the ranks to senior vice president of an engineering consulting firm, and found success by creating its profitable solid, toxic and hazardous waste management division. [more](#)

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Lewis University - McKendree University - Millikin University - Monmouth College - North Central College
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