

**Council of Independent Colleges awards \$32,000 conditional grant to ACI Peer Mentoring Program**  
**Nov. 1, 2017**



[The Council of Independent Colleges](#) (CIC), Washington, conditionally approved a \$32,000 grant this month to ACI to support the [ACI Expanded and Enhanced Peer Mentoring Program](#). Funded through CIC's [First Opportunity Partners Grant Program](#), with support from the UPS Foundation, ACI must raise at least \$64,000 in matching funds by April 15, 2018, to secure the grant.

"This is great news," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. "Our peer mentoring program is vital for many low-income, first-generation and minority students attending ACI-affiliated colleges and universities. We are grateful to CIC for its continuing support of this important program, which improves student success and helps keep students in school as they pursue their degrees." This academic year, the ACI Peer Mentoring Program is available at nine ACI-affiliated colleges and universities, he added.

CIC is pleased to support ACI and its [24 member colleges and universities](#) through the First Opportunity Partners Grant Program, said Richard Ekman, CIC president. "Designed to support multi-college, collaborative projects, this grant will enhance access to and success in college by low-income, first-generation, minority and new American students at independent colleges and universities," he said.



The ACI Peer Mentoring Program matches low-income college freshmen, many of whom are first-generation and/or minority, with trained peer mentors – usually upper-class students -- from similar backgrounds. Studies show that peer mentoring, together with other retention-focused interventions, helps students remain in school and increases graduation rates among underserved students.

The ACI program currently serves 132 students, including 22 mentors and 110 mentees. This academic year, the ACI Peer Mentoring Program is available Augustana College, Rock Island; Blackburn College, Carlinville; Concordia University Chicago, River Forest; Dominican University, River Forest; Millikin University, Decatur; Monmouth College, Monmouth; North Park University, Chicago; Quincy University, Quincy; and Rockford University, Rockford.