



Associated Colleges of Illinois

Annual Report



2017
2018

Associated Colleges of Illinois supports member colleges and universities by advancing independent liberal arts and sciences education and helping underserved students succeed in college, career and life.

Thank You

Dear Friends:

The education provided by Associated Colleges of Illinois' 26 member schools, serving more than 70,000 students, is needed more than ever.

A liberal arts and sciences education is often cited as the backbone of what is needed in the workforce, as well as for creating a strong quality life for graduates.

Now in its 66th year, ACI continues to innovate and provide programs needed by students, its members and the community, including peer mentoring, professional development conferences, career and internship fairs, job and internship announcements and new initiatives, such as skills training boot camps, are being planned.

In fiscal year 2018, we provided financial support in scholarships and emergency funds to more than 330 students, giving them resources they need to realize their dreams. Some of their stories are contained in the pages of this annual report.

ACI and its members have had nearly a \$4 billion economic impact on Illinois, while at the same time, helping to fill the workplace talent pipeline necessary for continued economic growth.

Thank you for your generous gifts to ACI, which support these outstanding member schools and students as they build knowledge and develop skills that will enable them to contribute to innovation in the workplace, build careers and enjoy successful lives.



Frank D. Cella
Chair, Board of Trustees
Associated Colleges of Illinois



Jamel SC Wright, Ph.D.
President
Associated Colleges of Illinois



Mick Weltman
Executive Director
Associated Colleges of Illinois

ACI Highlights 2017-2018

Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities Offer Broad Training, Challenge and Encouragement, Say College Presidents

A liberal arts education challenges and encourages students to be creative and confident people and prepares them for future careers that may not yet exist. These qualities are what makes liberal arts graduates desirable employees, presidents of two ACI-affiliated colleges told a Chicago audience.



President Teresa L. Amott, left, and President Patrick E. White, right, addressed the City Club of Chicago in February.

Dr. Teresa L. Amott, president of Knox College, Galesburg, and Dr. Patrick E. White, president of Millikin University, Decatur, spoke Feb. 21, 2018, at the City Club of Chicago. More than 225 business and political leaders, educators and alumni of the colleges attended.

Amott said that liberal arts institutions teach skills that help students fit into future careers which may not be known today. "Faculty nurture and mentor young people and help them find a future we cannot chart," she said.

Liberal arts education builds students into lifelong learners and valuable employees by challenging and encouraging them, White said. "At ACI institutions, we want our students to leave our colleges with the self-knowledge that they can be successful, to have the ambition to take on more and the habits of exercising these various virtues," he said.

Liberal Arts Grads: 'Master Learners,' Workplace Leaders and Ready for Change

An ACI event designed to highlight liberal arts education and workforce development in Illinois drew more than 60 corporate and higher education leaders in human resources and career services, as well as diversity and inclusion officers.

Speakers at the Nov. 2, 2017, event discussed how to recruit and retain a diverse range of talent from ACI's member colleges and universities, said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director.

President David J. Livingston of Lewis University, Romeoville, is a graduate of Augustana College, Rock Island. Both schools are ACI members. He told the audience his liberal arts education helped him adapt to a variety of educational experiences in chemistry and theology, plus different employment experiences leading to his current role.

"We believe that what people need to do is become 'master learners,'" he said, "Master learners are people who can adjust to the economy of the future. Master learners learn how to learn. They can deal with anything your companies will deal with in the future - because they're flexible."



Doug Harris, left, Robyn Clark, center, and President David J. Livingston were guest speakers at ACI's HR, Diversity and Inclusion Leaders breakfast.

Robyn Clark, managing partner and founder, WinningWise, Chicago, showed attendees a list of liberal arts graduates serving as corporate and organizational CEOs. "Liberal arts students can be successful and achieve, and liberal arts students can make money," she said.

Doug Harris, CEO of The Kaleidoscope Group, Chicago, cited his experience at Tufts University, and highlighted liberal arts graduates' ability to embrace change, be open to new ideas and grow as employees and people.

"Change leads to growth, and it leads to opportunity. Liberal arts students love change," Harris added. "We're flexible around what we do and how we do it."

Liberal Arts Colleges and Universities Produce Quality Employees, Says Morningstar CEO



President Clarence R. Wyatt, left, Monmouth College, and Kunal Kapoor, CEO of Morningstar, center, spoke to Chicago-area wealth advisers. With them is William J. Goldsborough, right, Monmouth College board of trustees' member.

The chief executive officer of Morningstar, an investment research firm, said his firm wants to hire candidates who are "emotionally aware, self-aware, empathetic and gritty" – qualities graduates of liberal arts colleges and universities often bring to the workplace. Kunal Kapoor addressed a Dec. 6, 2017, meeting of 35 Chicago-area wealth advisers and guests, sponsored by ACI.

Kapoor, who became Morningstar's CEO in 2017, earned a bachelor's degree in economics and environmental policy from ACI member Monmouth College, a private liberal arts college in Monmouth. He later earned an MBA from the University of Chicago Booth

School of Business. "We've found the best hires at Morningstar are the folks who've done really well at smaller liberal arts colleges versus folks coming out of big universities," said Kapoor.

"If you want diversity, and if you want a balance of men and women in the workplace, liberal arts colleges are usually a very good place to be looking," he said. "I would encourage you to always think about the fact that the people that you aspire to work with and have as clients are often the ones who have a diversity of ideas and diversity of knowledge."

Dr. Clarence R. Wyatt, president of Monmouth College, introduced Kapoor. "Every day, the independent liberal arts colleges and universities of Illinois make miracles happen. They enable young people to see and seize opportunities they would never have dreamed of, much less realized, without this experience," he said.

ACI Annual Benefit Reception Raises More Than \$90,000 for Peer Mentoring Program

Associated Colleges of Illinois' 2018 Annual Benefit Reception raised important resources for its Peer Mentoring Program at its April 20 Benefit Reception at the University Club of Chicago's Cathedral Hall. More than 160 ACI supporters and friends attended the event, which encouraged attendees to support underserved students at ACI's colleges and universities.

ACI's Peer Mentoring Program is designed to help keep students in college and improve graduation rates among low-income, first-generation and students of color at ACI institutions. The reception raised more than \$90,000 for peer mentoring, and a matching grant from the Council of Independent Colleges' First Opportunity Partners Grant Program added another \$32,000.



More than 160 ACI supporters attended the 2018 Benefit Reception, which raised more than \$90,000 for the Peer Mentoring Program.

The next ACI Benefit Reception is Friday, April 12, 2019, at the University Club of Chicago.

ACI Distributes \$75,000 in CIC/UPS Scholarship Funds to Members



Thanks to a grant from the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), Washington, through its CIC/UPS Educational Endowment, ACI distributed \$75,000 in scholarship funds this year to member colleges and universities.

Each of ACI's member colleges and universities was sent \$3,000 for use during the 2018-2019 academic year as a scholarship to one full-time undergraduate student who is a first-generation, low-income, minority or new American student.

Since 1985, approximately \$56 million has been awarded in scholarship grants to CIC State Councils, such as ACI, to assist more than 20,000 first-generation, low-income, minority, or new American students at independent colleges across the country.

ACI's First Career and Internship Fair: A Total Career Development Experience Meeting Employers. Building Skills

ACI's March 23, 2018 Career and Internship Fair, open to all members, attracted 170 attendees, a rare opportunity for students from 13 ACI colleges and universities to meet 23 employers face-to-face and connect with experts in career development, diversity and networking through a series of skill-building sessions.

At the fair's two "Employer Expo" sessions, students met with employers ready to hire. Ashley Maurer, a math and economics major from Monmouth College, Monmouth, traveled three hours to attend the fair. "I found companies that I honestly didn't know existed before today," said Maurer. "I definitely found options that I may not have even considered before this, which is kind of eye-opening. I liked that a lot."



Students attending ACI's Career and Internship Fair met with potential employers.



Students attended seminars and heard luncheon speakers on career development topics.

Frustrated by applying for jobs online and by seldom getting a chance to speak to employers directly, Joseph Schomer, an accounting major at the University of St. Francis, Joliet, said the Employer Expo was refreshing. "I love coming to these events, even if nothing happens," he said. "There's still a connection and a chance to talk to somebody."

Augustana College accounting and finance major Brandon Schattner traveled from Rock Island. Employer Expo companies were very receptive and open to a variety of majors, he said. Plus, Schattner liked the interactions with the employers. "They're thinking about us as students, our career paths and what would be best for us, as well as thinking about what's best for them," he said.

ACI presented the day-long event at North Central College, Naperville, in partnership with Citi. Major funding was provided by a Council of Independent Colleges National Venture Fund Challenge grant of \$21,750, matched by a gift from the Shure Family Charitable Trust. Plans are already underway for ACI's annual Career and Internship Fair, Friday, Oct. 4, 2019, at North Central College.

Eureka College and North Central College Join ACI Peer Mentoring Program

ACI's Peer Mentoring Program welcomed two additional campuses to its growing statewide network: Eureka College, Eureka, and North Central College, Naperville. These schools launched peer mentoring teams in fall 2018. The colleges secured their places in the program through a grant competition in May 2018.

ACI's Peer Mentoring Program seeks to increase college graduation rates among low-income, first-generation college students and students of color. For the 2018-19 academic year, ACI's Peer Mentoring Program is serving serving 156 students, including 130 mentees and 26 mentors at 11 ACI member institutions. The 11 ACI Peer Mentoring Program campuses are:

- Augustana College, Rock Island
- Blackburn College, Carlinville
- Concordia University Chicago, River Forest
- Dominican University, River Forest
- Eureka College, Eureka
- Millikin University, Decatur
- Monmouth College, Monmouth
- North Central College, Naperville
- North Park University, Chicago
- Quincy University, Quincy
- Rockford University, Rockford

ACI's Peer Mentoring Program is funded by grants from the Council of Independent Colleges, the Siragusa Family Foundation, ITW Foundation, BNSF Foundation, as well as sponsorships and individual contributions secured through ACI's Annual Benefit Reception.

Jobs and Internship Listings. Micro-Internships Available Through ACI Website

In 2018, ACI began posting jobs and internships on the ACI website that will be seen by many of the 70,000 students ACI serves at 26 member colleges and universities. In addition, ACI has partnered with Parker Dewey to provide paid micro-internships for college students and recent grads. These micro-internships are a great way to gain professional experience through short-term, paid assignments.

Job and internship listings are at <https://acifund.org/jobs-and-internships/>



Michael Sonnenfeldt spoke about his recent book when he visited Chicago in May 2018. He met with several students of ACI colleges and universities at Chicago's 1871.

ACI Sponsors Entrepreneur, Author, TIGER 21 Leader Michael W. Sonnenfeldt

A serial entrepreneur, author, chairman and founder of a members-only group of successful entrepreneurs who collectively manage more than \$60 billion in personal assets, met with about 30 students representing nine ACI colleges and universities May 8, 2018. Michael W. Sonnenfeldt discussed key findings from his recent book, *Think Bigger: A Look at What It Takes to be a Successful Entrepreneur* with the students who met Sonnenfeldt at 1871, Chicago's technology and innovation center.

Sonnenfeldt also addressed about 70 people who attended an Executives' Club of Chicago luncheon, sponsored by ACI, and he attended an evening reception at the University Club of Chicago with ACI board members, plus members and prospective members of TIGER 21.

Frost Chicago Establishes Named Scholarship



Frost Chicago, a premiere event production company which specializes in lighting, staging, audio, video and fabric, established a named scholarship through ACI to help up to two students attending member colleges and universities.

"Frost Chicago was looking for an impactful way to give back," said Amy Current, Frost Chicago strategic communications. "ACI provided the perfect vehicle through scholarships, helping two young adults realize their higher education goals." One recipient visited the company's Bridgeport office and learned about several behind-the-scenes elements involved with high-caliber event production. "This was beneficial for both the student and Frost staff," Current says.

Frost Chicago offers custom lighting, AV, decking, drape and fabrication solutions. The company boasts a diverse portfolio, including collegiate, corporate and nonprofit work.

26 Members and Growing: Saint Xavier University and Illinois Wesleyan University Rejoin ACI



Saint Xavier University, Chicago.

The ACI network of colleges and universities grew to 26 members when two former members rejoined – Saint Xavier University, Chicago, and Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington. Saint Xavier is the oldest Catholic university in Chicago, serving 3,900 undergraduate and graduate students. Nursing and speech pathology are signature programs, and it is a Hispanic-serving institution. Its original purpose was to educate immigrants, and today, it continues to serve a significant first-generation student population.

Illinois Wesleyan University (IWU) provides a combination of liberal arts and sciences with four nationally known professional schools of art, music, theatre and nursing, a respected business program and eight pre-professional programs. IWU's enrollment is 1,693 students, with 80 majors/minors and a 10-1 student/faculty ratio.



Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, Illinois.

ACI Board Elects New Leaders



President Jamel SC Wright, left, Eureka College, was elected ACI president through 2020. Joining her on the ACI Executive Committee were President Gene C. Crume, Jr., center, Judson University, and President Eric W. Fulcomer, Rockford University.

The ACI Board of Trustees elected Dr. Jamel SC Wright to serve a two-year term as president of ACI at its annual meeting April 20, 2018. Wright, who is president of Eureka College, Eureka, succeeded Dr. Barbara A. Farley, who served two terms as ACI president. Farley is president of Illinois College, Jacksonville.

The board made two additional appointments to the ACI Executive Committee. Succeeding Dr. John L. Comerford as member at large was Dr. Gene C. Crume, Jr, president of Judson University, Elgin. Succeeding Wright as a member at large was Dr. Eric W. Fulcomer, president of Rockford University, Rockford.



Wheaton College

Thomas "T.J." Whitfield

ACI General Scholarship

Major: Communication/Media Studies

Thomas "T.J." Whitfield visited his sister at Wheaton College and realized he, too, could see himself as a student at the Wheaton, Illinois college. Whitfield is now communication/media studies major at Wheaton, with a minor in graphic design and photography. The Tinley Park, Illinois, junior was originally a computer science major, but soon realized that his real interest was in communication. "I really felt like I fit in well into the major, into the department and the career fields," he says, adding he's specifically interested in marketing and advertising.

Through an internship with the Community School of the Arts at Wheaton, Whitfield helped promote the school's music events through poster design and other advertising and marketing responsibilities. "I love the business side of communication and learning about these different elements, but I really love the artistic side that graphic design can offer to me," he says.

An ACI General Scholarship has helped Whitfield with tuition expenses at Wheaton College. "Having the scholarship and learning about it has been such a blessing," Whitfield says. "There are so many times in the past when I haven't been able to register for classes because tuition hasn't been paid yet or tuition hasn't been paid in full yet. For me as a student trying to be here to learn, that's on my mind. I will have the opportunity to continue on and graduate, something my parents didn't have the opportunity to do." Whitfield is also grateful for donors who make the scholarships possible. "Now it's my turn. Now I have to give to the next generation because the last generation gave to me," he says.

At Wheaton College, Whitfield is part the taekwon-do club and works in the Office of Multicultural Development. He is also a student ambassador for the Wheaton Fund, responsible for being a "bridge" between students and college donors.

"Being at Wheaton has shaped me in so many ways," he says. "It's shaped my mentally, it's shaped me physically. It's shaped me emotionally. Being a Christian school, it has shaped me in my faith. Just being here has really been a benefit to me and so many other students, that I'm just so grateful for the time that I've had here."



University of St. Francis

Monique Clayborne

McGraw Foundation Emergency Financial Aid

Major: Social Work

Monique Clayborne will soon graduate with a degree in social work from the University of St. Francis (USF) in Joliet. Describing herself as a person "with a heart for people," Clayborne says her social work major has led to a specific interest in child welfare. "I'm very interested in behavioral health. Upon graduation, I could see myself working and advocating for children in social services," she says.

From Waukegan, Illinois, Clayborne chose USF because of its small classes and opportunities to learn from experts. "It's kind of intimate, which was actually the thing I needed," she says.

"I know many people that have graduated from USF, and they just spoke so highly of it." Plus, the university's social work program was well regarded, Clayborne says.

Clayborne resides on campus among students who are mostly younger than she. "I have a son that's some of these kids' ages," she says. "The great thing is that I see them as my equal. We're in class together. They're my classmates. They're my friends. We learn together. We hang out together. We talk outside of class. I've developed genuine relationships with people younger than me, different ethnicities, so it's actually been really great."

Through ACI, Clayborne was awarded a scholarship from McGraw Foundation Emergency Financial Aid, one of a few sources of financial aid on which she depends. "It was just a little bit that I needed, and that's what ACI provided. So, I'm very grateful for that. This is a tremendous blessing and another opportunity for me."

Clayborne is active in the Social Work Club where she is the National Association of Social Workers' liaison. She is also active in Phi Alpha, the social work honor society and the Augustus Tolton Honor Society, for high achieving African American students. She is also an intern at the Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Will County, which helps abused and neglected children find safe and secure homes.



Trinity Christian College

Constance McCullah

ACI General Scholarship

Major: Nursing

When Constance McCullah was looking for a college to attend, a friend from high school suggested she visit Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois. She stayed with students on campus and learned the school had a solid academic program in nursing, her major, and it also incorporated a spiritual element for a more holistic education. These qualities, plus Trinity's close proximity to her home in Country Club Hills, Illinois, led McCullah to Trinity, where she is now a senior.

"My family has a lot of health care professionals," she says. "My grandma is a retired nurse, and my aunt is currently a nurse practitioner." Her mother's illnesses when she was younger help drive her toward nursing, because she recalls meeting nurses who were kind and compassionate. "I want to do the same thing," she says. "If these people can care for my mom, I want to be the person who can care for other people's moms." Later in her career, McCullah sees herself possibly becoming a nurse practitioner, and perhaps, opening her own practice.

The ACI General Scholarship McCullah has had for three years has helped make her dreams possible. Her mother is disabled and cannot work, leaving McCullah dependent on ACI and other financial aid for school. "It's definitely been a blessing with helping to cover last-minute costs and books," she says. "Thanks for always blessing me with the opportunity of receiving a scholarship, and I pray that this scholarship program keeps continuing to build." Among her other scholarships is an academic scholarship named for former Trinity President Gerard Van Groningen, and she has been on the dean's list more than once.

McCullah is making the most of Trinity's academic offerings, with minors in science, psychology and Black Studies. In addition to her studies, McCullah participates in Trinity's Gospel Choir, Black Student Union, Multicultural Leadership Team, Nursing Student Association and student government.



Rockford University

Christopher Honnou

Minority Male Mentoring Program | ACI Peer Mentoring Program

Major: Biology

Christopher Honnou studies biology at Rockford University, about an hour from his home in Freeport, Illinois. He chose Rockford because it was close to home, and he likes that professors and tutors are always ready to help. His dream is to become a physician. "I came to the realization in high school that I really wanted to do this," Honnou says. "It became my passion."

Honnou, a sophomore this year, participates in Rockford's Minority Male Mentoring Program, a part of ACI's Peer Mentoring Program. The program brings together mentees and mentors from similar backgrounds to encourage and help each other through college, especially in the early years.

Honnou describes the minority mentor program as a family. "It's something that really motivates you to become a better version of yourself because there are people like you that are surrounding you," Honnou says. "We all bring something different to the table. Seeing that, we sharpen our minds, we sharpen our skills, and we are motivated to do better."

Mentors encourage mentees to keep up with activities and schoolwork, and avoid difficulties with classes. "Mentors are always there to guide you. You can come to them with any questions," he says. "I see it as someone that's looking out for you. And you don't see that a lot, once you become an adult."



Principia College

Camille Pruvost

ACI General Scholarship

Major: Theology and Music

Camille Pruvost chose to attend Principia College in Elsah, Illinois, to explore questions of theology and religion as part of a double major with music. She also chose Principia because she knew she could study in an environment where she could express her faith and be safe. Pruvost, a fifth-year senior from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, says small classes and the liberal arts experience at Principia have helped her grow, too. "At Principia, I get to explore not only questions of religion and theology, but sciences that I have loved in middle school, like earth science. I'm taking a geology course right now," she says. "I get to explore politics, writing courses and different literature from around the world." Pruvost has also studied abroad in Paris, Prague and Vienna, and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

To Pruvost, music is a way to express ideas about religion and theology. After Principia, she hopes to attend a seminary, and earn a master's degree and doctorate, studying topics such as religious epistemology and apologetics, with a concentration in theodicy of the problem of evil. "With all of that, my ministry would then be a music ministry – recording and healing through music," she says.

Pruvost is a soloist at her church, religion tutor and writing tutor. She helps in the music department and has been treasurer and secretary of Phi Alpha Eta, a scholastic honor society at Principia. She says her ACI General Scholarship has made it possible for her to continue singing. "It has meant that I'm able to continue taking voice lessons this semester," she says. "Because my major is music, it means I'm keeping up on vocal lessons. Having to cover that as well for a fifth year would have been a lot for me personally. So ACI meant that I could continue." It also means she can plan for another study experience abroad to Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Palestine. "I'm deeply grateful for the scholarship that I received," she says. "It's an investment in future thinkers, people that are really working to make the world a better place."



McKendree University

Kelsey Schultz

A. Montgomery Ward Scholarship

Major: Elementary Education

Now in her senior year at McKendree University, Lebanon, Illinois, Kelsey Schultz is working toward a classroom career as an elementary school teacher. "When I was 12, I started tutoring and volunteering with kids in the second-grade level," she says. "I fell in love with spending time with them. I related with them well, especially when I was 12, but I now at 22, I still feel the same connection to them that I had then."

Schultz commutes to McKendree from Bellville and is an elementary education major. "When I decided I wanted to go into teaching, I looked at the different teaching universities in the area, within a 5-hour distance. McKendree ranked very high," Schultz says. In addition,

Schultz is seeking a special education endorsement, which she says will help her serve students better because students with special needs are often in general education classrooms.

Schultz's ACI scholarship through the A. Montgomery Ward Foundation is helpful, she says. "With tuition at McKendree being \$40,000 a year, it's impossible to go without any sort of aid," she says. "So, the scholarship from Montgomery Ward has helped in lowering the total of my tuition over the course of my four years. It's one more thing not to worry about. In the future, I hope to be able to give back to college students as well, because it's absolutely helped me to be here," she says.

Schultz also has a scholarship from the Lyn Huxford Center for Community Service and performs 30 hours of community service, including tutoring and recreation with children every semester. "I led a program at the Christian Activity Center for the past two years where we brought kids from East Saint Louis to Lebanon to provide them with a college experience to make them want to come back and further their education," she says. And Schultz volunteers to spend time with adults with special needs at Trinity Services in nearby Mascoutah and works at the university library.



Millikin University

Jonathan Williams

ACI Peer Mentoring Program

Major: Commercial Music

Jonathan Williams chose to attend Millikin University, thanks to high school music teachers who inspired him. He learned his teachers were graduates of Millikin, and so, he too, chose to attend the Decatur, Illinois university. Now a sophomore, Williams is a commercial music major, learning about studio work and the music industry, as well as attending classes in music theory and ear training. He says he frequently practices piano at the university's Perkinson Music Center.

Williams, from Alton, Illinois, is part of ACI's Peer Mentoring Program at Millikin where he worked with a peer mentor who helped him through his first year in college. "It's a big transition from high school," Williams says. "We have to learn to be more independent. My peer mentor always counsels me. I go to his dorm sometimes, and I ask him for help." Williams says his peer mentor offers advice on topics such as music theory, piano plus guidance on college life in general.

With peer mentoring help and college success programs such as Millikin's EDGE, Williams says he has developed confidence to advance his own success, such as participating in a talent show. "I was able to perform a song that I had written myself, from the composition to the lyrics. Everything was mine. I wasn't as nervous as I would have been a long time ago. I got up and did everything myself. It was humbling not being afraid to step out on your own," he says.

Williams is an advocate for college success programs such as the Peer Mentoring Program and encourages donors support. "I'm here by grace. I'm glad that I was able to come here. I was one of those kids who needed a chance, and I got a chance. I want other kids to have a chance like I did," he says.



Judson University

Tiniya "Tini" Wright-Bell

ACI General Scholarship

Major: Psychology

Tini Wright-Bell thought that after high school she would go far away to college, perhaps to a school in California. But her grandmother heard an ad for Judson University in Elgin, Illinois, while listening to Pandora, the online music service, and suggested she check it out. "We came to a preview day, and the rest is history," says Wright-Bell, a junior psychology major. "I came here, and I love it."

Wright-Bell, from Glendale Heights, Illinois, says for the past 13 years, her mother has been missing, a reason why she studies psychology "I kind of wanted to help other children who might feel alone like in my situation, not having a parent. I wanted to be sure to let them know there is someone there that cares about them," she says, adding she has a specific interest in child advocacy.

To supplement her education, Wright-Bell has interned at the Elgin Boys and Girls Club, which she describes as a safe place for students after school, providing meals and homework help. She is also a member of the university's Spirit Squad.

Wright-Bell's ACI General Scholarship has made it possible for her to reside on campus, a big help, she says. "Last year, I was a commuter. That commute was very hectic in the mornings when I had to drive all the way back to Judson every single morning. It helped me get back on campus and be part of the culture again," Wright-Bell says. She is also grateful for donors that provided funds for the scholarship. "You may be able to help a student get out of a bad situation," she says of donors. "You're also helping that student be able to be part of the community and be part of college life."



Greenville University

Leila Marie Bantolina

ACI General Scholarship

Major: Biology

It's a long way to Greenville, Illinois, from Makawao, Hawaii. Yet, Leila Marie Bantolina enrolled at Greenville University, where she is majoring in biology and is a guard on the women's basketball team. "I was recruited through basketball," she says. "I wanted something different from what most people from Hawaii do – to get out of the islands. I found Greenville, and when I came here it was even more perfect."

A first-generation sophomore student and the first of five children in the family to attend college, Bantolina plans to attend medical school to become a pediatrician or a physician's assistant in pediatrics. "I've always had the interest of being a doctor ever since I was young," she says, adding she hopes to return to Hawaii after completing her education.

Her biology major and playing basketball occupy much of her time, however, Bantolina and her basketball teammates find time for volunteer work in the Greenville community, often in local churches.

Though her family has little experience with higher education, college has been a great experience, Bantolina says, and the ACI scholarship makes it possible for her to pursue her dreams. "It definitely has changed my life. My mom is a single parent, and she does pay for my college tuition. It definitely helps her, helps me stay in school and be motivated to stay in school," she says.

In addition to the ACI scholarship, she finances her education with another academic scholarship and loans. Bantolina is appreciative of the scholarships and the donors who make them possible. "There are many people that aren't as fortunate as other people," she says. "Being a donor to someone that really needs it and wants it makes an impact."



Eureka College

Seth Powers

ACI General Scholarship

Major: Political Science and Communications

Seth Powers came to Eureka College from Normal, Illinois, to study political science and communications. "I started out with just a political science degree, actually pre-law and a communication minor. Then, as I started taking more communication classes, I realized I was really interested in that, and it was something I wanted to pursue further, especially in my career," he says. Now a senior, Powers is focused on a career in public relations, and with his political science background, could possibly end up working on campaigns.

While at Eureka, Powers participates in student government, something he has done most of the time he's been in college. He has served as a student representative, joined the student government executive board, and in his junior year, was the student body president at Eureka. This year, he is student body vice president. "For fun, I do music," says Powers, who also works in the music department. "I participate in the chorale, the chamber singers, a smaller group of singers, and I helped start a men's *a capella* group."

Powers finances his college education with the help of his family, federal and state aid, work study, and an ACI General Scholarship. He's grateful he was awarded the ACI scholarship, which helped him pay for tuition this year, and he's appreciative of the donors who made it possible. "I think the most important thing is that these funds make a real difference in students' lives," Powers says. "For me, it's the difference between 20 hours per week and working 10 hours a week. Those 10 hours a week where I would be working go towards extracurriculars, doing better in my academics and applying for jobs once I graduate. It's time relief. This money gives us more time to do the things that are going to benefit us in the long run."



Blackburn College

Taylor Williams

ACI Peer Mentoring Program

Major: Elementary Education

Taylor Williams chose to attend Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois, because she wanted a small atmosphere and to be close to her home in Alton, Illinois. The oldest of three siblings, Williams says that her mother didn't finish college, but is now in school. "Coming to college, getting a degree and being successful has always been expected of me," Williams says. "I want to be successful. I grew up knowing that I was going to go to college."

Williams, a sophomore at Blackburn, is majoring in elementary education. "My plan is to become a teacher and to make a difference in some way," she says, adding she'd like to teach young children. To help her college experience, Williams joined ACI's Peer Mentoring Program at the college, which she credits for success in her first year in college. "I owe it to this program," she says.

As a first-year mentee, Williams says her experienced peer mentor answered questions, gave her feedback and advice, which guided her through her freshman year. "The program itself has helped me figure out study habits for tests, and it's given me social skills I didn't have before," she says. "What I've gained most from being in the Peer Mentoring Program is having people that I can rely on like friends. I've made connections with multiple people through this program."

"This program has helped shape me from the beginning. It has helped keep me on track. That has been very important and helpful," Williams says.



Benedictine University

Ronnie Davis

CIC/UPS Scholarship

Major: Accounting

Ronnie Davis is a long way from his home in Orlando, Florida. A freshman at Benedictine University, Lisle, Illinois, Davis has his sights set on a career in accounting, his major. "I'm pretty good with numbers," he says. "I like numbers, and I like a challenge. So, I felt like that was a nice challenge to go for." After college, Davis hopes to return to the Orlando area, get valuable experience working for an accounting firm and eventually, open his own accounting firm.

One reason he chose Benedictine was the opportunity to play football as an outside linebacker for the Eagles. "I devote at least six days out of seven to football, studying, watching film, being around the guys, weightlifting, everything," he says. "It's a way of life for me."

Another reason he chose Benedictine was the CIC/UPS Scholarship through ACI. That meant leaving his family – not an easy choice, he says – so he could pursue his dreams. "I come from a single-parent home. I have five other siblings. It was like, 'I need everything I can get in a scholarship.' I related to the scholarship so that's what made it easier for me to put my heart and soul into everything to make sure I got that scholarship," says Davis, who says his family is a strong support for him. The CIC/UPS Scholarship made a big difference, making it possible for Davis to pay tuition bills so that he could register for new classes. "The scholarship lifted the hold, so I could register for my classes, and fulfill the rest of my classes here at Benedictine," he says. Without it, Davis says he would have had to take out another loan.

Davis is grateful for the donors who made the scholarship possible. "College is a burden. But with the donor's help, it makes it easier for us. They're helping us to do what we want to do, that we dream of doing. So, I would like to thank them," he says.

ACI Facts - Did you know?

- ACI's 26 member colleges and universities provide a **\$3.4 billion** impact to the Illinois economy
- **90 percent** of graduates of ACI-affiliated colleges and universities are employed within two years of graduation
- ACI's member colleges and universities award up to **\$803 million** in financial aid to students
- Through its 66-year history, ACI has awarded more than **\$70 million** in scholarships to Illinois college students
- ACI-member schools serve more than **70,000 students**
- Graduation and retention rates among ACI members **are higher** than those at Illinois public universities

Member Colleges and Universities

ACI is a collaboration of 26 private, nonprofit, residential colleges and universities throughout Illinois:

1. Augustana College, Rock Island
2. Benedictine University, Lisle
3. Blackburn College, Carlinville
4. Concordia University Chicago, River Forest
5. Dominican University, River Forest
6. Elmhurst College, Elmhurst
7. Eureka College, Eureka
8. Greenville University, Greenville
9. Illinois College, Jacksonville
10. Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington (effective Dec. 1, 2018)
11. Judson University, Elgin
12. Knox College, Galesburg
13. Lewis University, Romeoville
14. McKendree University, Lebanon
15. Millikin University, Decatur
16. Monmouth College, Monmouth
17. North Central College, Naperville
18. North Park University, Chicago
19. Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais
20. Principia College, Elsau
21. Quincy University, Quincy
22. Rockford University, Rockford
23. Saint Xavier University, Chicago
24. Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights
25. University of St. Francis, Joliet
26. Wheaton College, Wheaton

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Associated Colleges of Illinois supports member colleges and universities by advancing independent liberal arts and sciences education and helping underserved students succeed in college, career and life.

ACI Programs

College-to-Career Initiative

ACI's new College-to-Career Initiative reflects a growing emphasis on supporting students preparing to transition to careers and matching employers with talent emerging from ACI member colleges and universities. This initiative, which addresses preparing students for future employment, building critical life skills, identifying and researching career opportunities, networking with employers, and securing rewarding positions, includes four integrated efforts:

• Career Development Conference and Employer Expo

ACI holds an annual Career Development Conference in fall to help match students and employers for permanent positions and internships. This event combines the features of a traditional career fair with a professional development conference to provide promising prospects from ACI's member colleges and universities with diverse opportunities to meet, observe, network and interview with future employers.

• Work and Life Skills Boot Camps

ACI's new program will provide Saturday workshops in personal branding and career development, networking and successfully interviewing for jobs, technology skills for the workplace and financial literacy. Focused on practical needs and targeting the growing population of low-income, first-generation and students of color, these workshops are designed to help match students to the right career and the right position, while effectively managing the transition from college to the world of work. ACI's Boot Camps will be delivered on a rotating basis at member campuses. Funding for this new program will be provided through a conditional matching grant between the Council of Independent Colleges and ACI.

• Micro-Internships

Through a partnership with Parker Dewey, ACI deepens relationships between its member institutions, their students and the business world. Participating companies provide ACI students with micro-internships – opportunities to work on short-term, professional assignments. These micro-internships give companies the immediate support they need and help them build diverse talent pipelines, while providing ACI schools with actionable insights that advance career readiness among their graduates.

• Job and Internship Announcements

ACI provides students access to job and internship listing that employers may post at no-cost on ACI's website. These announcements are actively promoted to students at all 26 member colleges and universities.

Emergency Financial Aid Program

ACI meets the financial needs of students facing unanticipated hardships that can disrupt their academic studies. This aid enables students from low-to-moderate-income families the opportunity to continue their studies without interruption.

Peer Mentoring Program

ACI increases the number of underserved college students to remain in school, succeed and graduate from ACI member colleges and universities. The program matches underserved college freshmen with trained peer mentors from similar backgrounds who guide them through the critical first year at college. The retention rate for students participating in the Peer Mentoring Program is as high as 97 percent. Beginning in fall 2018, ACI's Peer Mentoring Program will operate on 11 member campuses, including Augustana College, Blackburn College, Concordia University Chicago, Dominican University, Eureka College, Millikin University, Monmouth College, North Central College, North Park University, Quincy University and Rockford University. The program will serve a total of 156 students at the 11 campuses, including 130 mentees and 26 mentors.

Professional Development Program

ACI provides professional development opportunities to member college and university staff through twice-yearly conferences serving four special interest groups: advancement, finance, public relations and marketing, and student engagement. Combined, more than 325 people attended ACI professional-development conferences in November 2017 and June 2018.

Scholarship Program

ACI supports underserved students attending member colleges and universities. In 2017-2018, ACI awarded more than 260 scholarships funded by corporations, foundations and individuals.

For more information about programs and funding opportunities, please contact Mick Weltman at mweltman@acifund.org or 312-263-2391, ext. 0523.

Financial Information for June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018

Financial information is presented for ACI's fiscal year ending May 31, 2018. Desmond & Ahern, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants, issued ACI an unmodified opinion on the financial statements. As of May 31, total assets were \$1,523,499, while liabilities were \$447,031. Net assets were \$1,076,468.

Gifts, awards and other services totaling \$831,887 were distributed to members during the year.

Abbreviated Statement of Financial Position

Assets

Cash	\$244,823
Accounts Receivable	1,725
Investments	1,264,921
Property and equipment (net)	975
Other assets	<u>11,055</u>
Total assets	\$1,523,499

Liabilities

Scholarships and other distributions	\$412,651
Other liabilities	<u>34,380</u>
	447,031
Net assets	<u>1,076,468</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$1,523,499

Abbreviated Statement of Activities

Support and revenue

Member assessments	\$586,100
Contributions	489,002
Corporate partnerships	49,000
Investment income (net)	71,000
Other income	<u>85,297</u>
Total support and revenue	\$1,280,399

Expenses

Gifts, awards and other services to members	\$831,887
Other programs	146,621
Management and general	177,415
Fundraising	<u>253,034</u>
Total expenses	\$1,408,957

Change in net assets \$(128,558)

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"Faculty nurture and mentor young people and help them find a future we cannot chart. Sometimes those students graduate and go on and create a new world. Our graduates are sought after by employers because they bring the skills of the future into the workforce."

—**Teresa Amott**, President, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois

"Liberal arts students can be successful and achieve, and liberal arts students can make money."

—**Robyn Clark**, Managing Partner and Founder, WinningWise, Chicago

"Change leads to growth, and it leads to opportunity. Liberal arts students love change."

—**Doug Harris**, CEO, The Kaleidoscope Group, Chicago

"If you want diversity, and if you want a balance of men and women in the workplace, liberal arts colleges are usually a very good place to be looking. I would encourage you to always think about the fact that the people that you aspire to work with and have as clients are often the ones who have a diversity of ideas and diversity of knowledge."

—**Kunal Kapoor**, CEO, Morningstar, Chicago

"We believe that what people need to do is become 'master learners.' That for me is the key to what ACI institutions do. Master learners are people who can adjust to the economy of the future. Master learners learn how to learn. They can deal with anything your companies will deal with in the future -- because they're flexible."

—**David Livingston**, President, Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois

"At ACI institutions, we want our students to leave our colleges with the self-knowledge that they can be successful, to have the ambition to take on more and the habits of exercising these various virtues."

—**Patrick White**, President, Millikin University, Decatur, Illinois

"Every day, the independent liberal arts colleges and universities of Illinois make miracles happen. They enable young people to see and seize opportunities they would never have dreamed of, much less realized, without this experience."

—**Clarence Wyatt**, President, Monmouth College, Monmouth, Illinois



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