



# Associated Colleges of Illinois

**Leila Marie Bantolina**  
**Greenville University**  
**ACI General Scholarship**



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."

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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."