

Students learn to 'package' themselves for the job market, prepare for life after college at ACI's Winter Work and Life Skills Boot Camp

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More than 30 students attended the ACI Boot Camp at Illinois Wesleyan University.

More than 30 students, all low-income, first-generation and/or students of color from six ACI member colleges and universities, jump-started their preparation for the job market and prepared for life after college at ACI's winter Work and Life Skills Boot Camp. The Feb. 8 boot camp, hosted by [Illinois Wesleyan University](#) (IWU), began with remarks from university president Dr. S. Georgia Nugent, who recalled her own experience as a first-generation college student and offered observations about talent recruitment and job seekers in today's market.

The day-long boot camp addressed branding oneself for a new job and conforming to the culture and customs of a new workplace; dressing to match workplace culture while considering one's own sense of style; and using the best software – Big Interview – to practice the video interviews now common in the talent recruitment process.

Citi's Vice President of Workforce Development and Diversity and Inclusion Leah Wallace, an ACI corporate trustee, brought a Citi Retail Services team of young professionals as boot camp speakers. Sydne Barard, a senior business analyst, Taylor Davis, senior business analyst and Shirae Thompson, senior financial planning analyst, led a branding and corporate culture session and closed the day with a session on smart budgeting for first-job professionals. As recent graduates, these young women offered direct experience with the challenges ACI students soon will confront.

Leah Wallace, left, Citi, and ACI board member, leads a discussion with Citi Retail Services' team members at the boot camp.

During a luncheon panel, Wallace, together with ACI Corporate Trustee Lyn Bulman and Celeste Quinn, talent acquisition coordinator at Illinois Farm Bureau and Country, revealed what talent acquisition managers look for when they seek young talent, what young people can expect from interactions with talent acquisition managers, and the do's and don'ts that should guide those interactions.

Funded by Council of Independent Colleges First Opportunity Fund, with support from the UPS Foundation, and ACI funds, the Work and Life Skills Boot Camps offers career development support to underserved students. The November Boot Camp at [Concordia University Chicago](#) explored how liberal arts degrees translate to career paths and helped students consider where they want to go professionally and how to achieve those goals. A spring boot camp, now in development, will focus on technology's role in the workplace and in career paths.

"By providing underserved students with quality training in pre-employment skills and financial literacy, ACI's Work and Life Skills Boot Camps support members' efforts to prepare these students

to launch careers and build financial stability for themselves and their families," says ACI Executive Director Mick Weltman.

For more information on ACI's Work and Life Skills Boot Camps, contact Weltman at 312-263-2391, ext. 1 or mweltman@acifund.org.