

ACI to Host Online 'Virtual Benefit Reception' Launching May 1

April 3, 2020



Because of the COVID-19 emergency, Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) has reconfigured its annual fundraiser into an online "[Virtual Benefit Reception](#)," which will launch Friday May 1.

The original ACI Benefit Reception was to be in Chicago on Friday, April 17. With the cancellation of most live events in Illinois this

spring to limit the spread of the coronavirus, ACI's leadership determined the best course was to move the live event online.

"The benefit is critical to our fundraising efforts which support member schools and the important work we do," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director, in letter to ACI board members. "Given the financial impact the coronavirus is taking on our economy and our member institutions, it is imperative we all join together and raise funds to support ACI initiatives." Because of the economic downturn caused by the virus, ACI expects a greater demand for scholarship and program support when students return to school this fall, Weltman emphasized.

Five prominent firms are already Partner sponsors of the virtual benefit: Aon, Fidelity Charitable, Gallagher, Husch Blackwell and Robbins Schwartz.

The virtual benefit will include video presentations by ACI student scholarship recipients, plus video comments from college, corporate and organizational leaders. Featured speaker is [Melissa B. Donaldson](#), vice president and chief diversity officer, Wintrust Financial Corporation.

The virtual benefit site will also include information about giving opportunities. To give to ACI, please send checks payable to "Associated Colleges of Illinois" to ACI's office at 70 East Lake St., Suite 1418, Chicago, IL 60601. Gifts may also be made through the [website's donation-page link](#).

ACI's membership includes [27 Illinois colleges and universities](#), serving more than 70,000 students. Since 1952, the organization has provided more than \$70 million [in scholarships and emergency aid](#) to Illinois college students. It also provides programs for underserved students in [career preparation](#) and student success initiatives, such as [peer mentoring](#).