



Associated Colleges of Illinois

Ayana Blair
Illinois Wesleyan University
ACI General Scholarship



Ayana Blair hopes one day to be a physician. With that in mind, she chose to attend [Illinois Wesleyan University](#) in Bloomington, in part, because the financial aid package was attractive, and also because of the university's pre-med program.

Plus, she became a member of Illinois Wesleyan's track team, competing as a "thrower," in discus, shotput, hammer and weights. A friend in middle school encouraged her to join the track team. Now a college junior, she says the track team is an important part of her life.

[Click to see video!](#)



Blair, from Wheeling, Illinois, came to the university first as a biology major, but soon realized that she liked chemistry, too. "I wanted to take both of what I love and mix them together. So, I chose biochemistry," she says. Plus, she has a minor in environmental studies.

Making her university experience possible is an ACI General Scholarship. At the time, her parents were involved in divorce proceedings. "I went in to talk about my financial aid," Blair says. "Everything was rough. We didn't have enough money to pay for my school for next year." Scott Seibring, Illinois Wesleyan's financial aid director, agreed to help, she says.

"It made a huge difference," Blair says. "It's a huge stress reliever on my family especially since my mother is a single mother, and she's helping pay for school." In addition to the ACI scholarship, Blair has two scholarships from Chicago organizations.

When she's not on campus or in class, Blair volunteers in guest services at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center in nearby Normal, Illinois. "It's fun. I have met a lot of patients. I've had patient-to-patient interaction, and I've learned their stories," she says. Blair is also active as treasurer of the campus chapter of Black Student Union, participates in the Spanish and Latino Students Association (SALSA) and Alpha Psi Omega, a co-ed service fraternity.