



Associated Colleges of Illinois

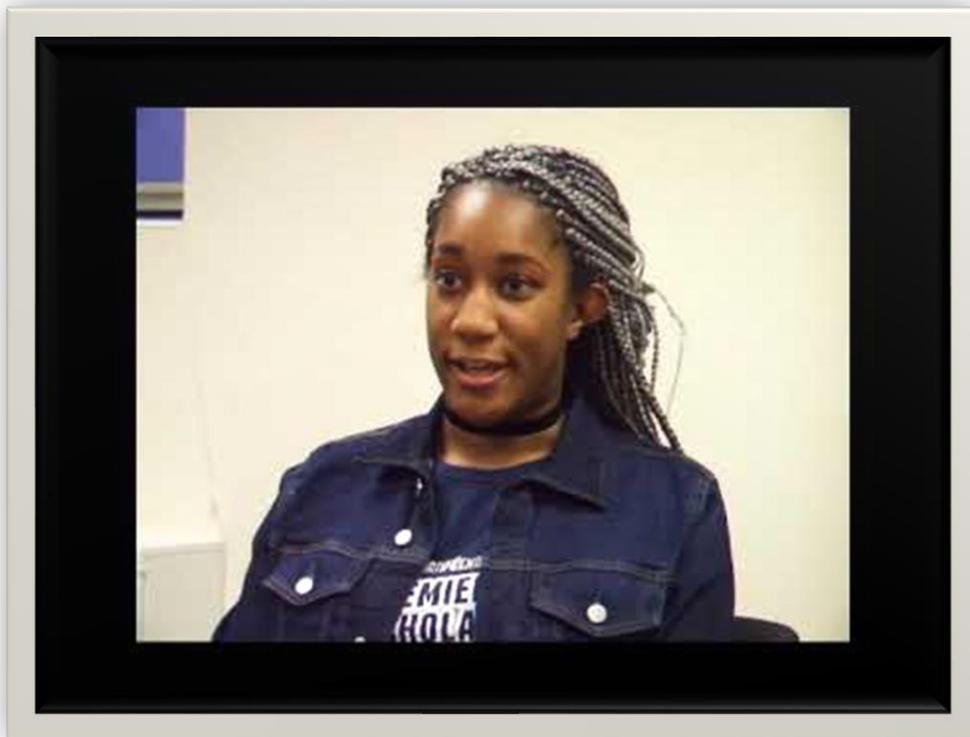
Tia Dukes
North Central College
ACI Peer Mentoring Program



When Tia Dukes first came to [North Central College](#) in Naperville, Illinois, she knew that there was a lot to learn about being a college student. A first-generation student from West Chicago, Illinois, Dukes was home-schooled and says she was unaware of some things when she first entered college.

"There were so many things I didn't know," she says. "For example, I didn't realize how important an internship is because no one had ever talked to me about an internship before." Much has happened since. Now a senior, Dukes, an organizational communication major, would like to work in a higher education career, possibly in a multicultural affairs or study-abroad program.

[Watch the video!](#)



Dukes describes herself as a dreamer and adventurer. One reason why she went to North Central College is so she could study abroad, which she did in South Korea for a year. That experience was a confidence booster for Dukes which she shares as a mentor to freshmen in ACI's Peer Mentoring Program at North Central College. "I think a skill of mine is to encourage people and empower them to be the best version of themselves, and that's what I'm able to bring to the Peer Mentoring Program," she says.

As a college student, Dukes says she learned about how to interact with people and how to understand people, helpful experience as she enters the workforce. "At a small school like North Central you kind of know everyone," she says. "I've gained a more compassion and understanding of people who are different from me. That's something that is very important for especially for a first-generation student to understand. At North Central College, you're going to learn how to interact with people, and you should take advantage of that."

Dukes encourages donors to give to the Peer Mentoring Program, because she says one person's gift can make a big difference for students who are first-generation and from low-income families. "It's one scholarship that allowed me to commute from home and continue to go to this school," she says. "It's donors who give for scholarships like this that makes all the difference in the world."