



Chandler Claudé
Monmouth College
ACI Peer Mentoring Program



Chandler Claudé graduated this spring with a degree in accounting from [Monmouth College](#), Monmouth, Illinois. A first-generation college student who became an ACI peer mentor, Claudé grew up on Chicago's South Side.

"I didn't know many college graduates in my area," he says.

"Finding mentors was hard." His family was poor, and his mother worked three jobs to help him stay in a private high school. Although Claudé wasn't the strongest student in high school, he wanted to get a college degree to pay his mother back for her sacrifices.

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At Monmouth College, Claudé says he "faced many struggles not fully understanding simple things like emotional intelligence, how to write an email to a professor, or develop effective time management skills." A few months into freshman year, Claudé found a mentor, someone who truly understood the challenges he faced as a first-generation student. "We did homework together a lot," Claudé. "He would text me to tell me to come to the library and get a study session in. My first semester I was able to get a 3.3, and I remember I was on Cloud 9. The hard work and accountability my newfound mentor gave me really started this."

The experience prompted him to become an ACI peer mentor. "I have learned so much about life and school, and I felt that I needed to pass it on to another first-gen student," he says. "I wanted to be a cheerleader for someone because that's what I needed during my freshman year: having someone hold me accountable for study and goals was important."

Claude' appreciates the commitment of ACI donors who give to the organization and its student-focused programs. "This is a great investment because you are creating a family away from home and giving them meaningful resources to succeed through the tough college adjustment," he adds.