



Andrew Payne
Eureka College
Peer Mentoring Program

Andrew Payne always went to small schools, and he wanted to continue in a small college. That is one of the reasons he chose to leave his home in Indianapolis to attend [Eureka College](#), Eureka, Illinois. Another reason, he says, is that he knew President Jamel SC Wright and Jessica Brown, dean of student services, engagement and leadership, and director of residence life. Plus, he plays football at Eureka. As a freshman, Payne played at lot of football. The Red Devils went 6-4.



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Payne is a sports management major, the first in his family to attend college. Now a sophomore, he says he feels the responsibility and pressure of being first, because his mother, who cares for Payne's younger brothers and sister, has sacrificed a lot to help

Payne get to college. "A lot of money is going into this. I'm just trying to figure it out. I have a job on campus. The financial aid people have helped me with a lot funds, grants and loans and stuff like that, so it's a lot of pressure on me," he says.

Dean Brown and President Wright encouraged Payne to join ACI's Peer Mentoring Program at Eureka College, designed to help first-generation students through the critical first year in college.

"It's not all about football. At the end of the day, I want to get set up for life, so OK, if it will help me in the long run, I'll do it. That's how I got into this program," he says. Through the program, Payne says he was able to attend an ACI Work and Life Skills Boot Camp earlier this year at Illinois Wesleyan University. "That opened my eyes a lot," he says. "Like, what you have to wear for a job, and all the different expenses come when you're living on your own."

Payne is now a mentor in the program, which has taught him many other lessons, such as time management, organization and how to talk to people, he says. Those skills may help him after college, where he hopes to be a coach, or work in sports management. He says he's grateful for the Peer Mentoring Program because of what he has learned, and emergency funds he can use for food or for a bus trip home. "It is good to have that money just to lean back on, so I would say thank you for that," he adds. On campus, Payne works for Eureka College's alumni and development office, helping with fundraisers, homecoming and visiting alumni. And, he stays in shape, practicing for the upcoming spring football season.