

## **Illinois College Joins ACI Peer Mentoring Program**

*ACI now operates the program on 12 member campuses*

Oct. 28, 2021



[Illinois College](#), Jacksonville, recently became the 12<sup>th</sup> ACI member to join the [ACI Peer Mentoring Program](#) (PMP).

The Illinois College program, managed by Olivia Raya, director of TRIO Student Support Services, will focus on retention efforts for first-generation and low-income students through peer-to-peer activities that promote self-reflection, and social and academic enrichment.

"Our goal is to train peer mentors from similar backgrounds to provide intentional and personalized connections to the campus community, creating a culture of engagement and belonging that will improve the four-year graduation rate for minority and first-generation students," Raya said.

The ACI Peer Mentoring Program's overall goal is to help underserved students attending ACI member institutions stay in school and earn degrees, said Constance Willoughby, ACI director, programs. This academic year, the program supports 26 mentors and 130 mentees, a total of 156 students statewide, she said.

Foundations supporting the Peer Mentoring Program include the BNSF Railway Foundation, ITW Foundation, Siragusa Family Foundation and an organization that wishes to remain anonymous, said Lauren Holhut, ACI director, foundation relations and grants.