

A photograph of a college campus. In the foreground, three students are walking away from the camera on a paved path. The student on the left is wearing a dark jacket and a backpack. The student in the middle is wearing a grey hoodie and a black bag. The student on the right is wearing a green t-shirt with a shamrock design and the text 'AMERICAN 2017'. In the background, other students are walking on the path, and there are trees with pink and yellow blossoms. A brick building is visible in the distance.

# Annual Report 2015-2016



Associated Colleges of Illinois



## Mission

Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) helps first-generation, minority and low-income students succeed in college, career and life, and supports member schools advancing liberal arts education.

# Thank You

Dear Friends:

What is a successful life? There are many different answers to that question. Success may happen through relationships. It may happen through hard work. It may happen through experience. Success is never guaranteed. It is earned.

Employers expect students joining today's workforce to be able to think critically, communicate clearly, collaborate effectively and solve complex problems. We help students gain this through a liberal arts education, grounded in humanities, sciences and social sciences, so they have an excellent chance at professional success and a well-rounded life.

At Associated Colleges of Illinois, we represent 23 colleges and universities in Illinois that teach these important professional and life skills. Member institutions serve 55,000 students, preparing them for the state's workforce and a chance to compete nationally and globally.

In its 64-year history, ACI has awarded more than \$70 million in scholarships, benefiting first-generation, minority and low-income students. Our mission is to help students succeed in college, career and life, while supporting members advancing liberal arts education. Much of this is made possible by generous donors such as you.

In fiscal year 2015-2016, we provided financial support to more than 400 students, giving them a chance to realize their dreams for successful lives. Some of their stories are contained in the pages of this annual report.

Thank you for your generous and ongoing gifts to ACI, which support these outstanding students.



James S. Wylie  
Managing director, Marsh  
Chair, Board of Trustees  
Associated Colleges of Illinois



Barbara A. Farley, Ph.D.  
President, Illinois College  
President  
Associated Colleges of Illinois



Mick Weltman  
Executive Director  
Associated Colleges of Illinois

## Member Colleges and Universities

ACI is a collaboration of 23 independent, private, nonprofit, residential colleges and universities throughout Illinois:

1. Augustana College, Rock Island
2. Benedictine University, Lisle  
*(joined June 1, 2016)*
3. Blackburn College, Carlinville
4. Concordia University, River Forest
5. Dominican University, River Forest
6. Elmhurst College, Elmhurst
7. Eureka College, Eureka
8. Greenville College, Greenville
9. Illinois College, Jacksonville
10. Judson University, Elgin  
*(joined January 1, 2017)*
11. Knox College, Galesburg
12. Lewis University, Romeoville
13. McKendree University, Lebanon
14. Millikin University, Decatur
15. Monmouth College, Monmouth
16. North Central College, Naperville
17. North Park University, Chicago
18. Olivet Nazarene University, Bourbonnais
19. Principia College, Elsau
20. Quincy University, Quincy
21. Rockford University, Rockford
22. Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights
23. University of St. Francis, Joliet

Aurora University, Aurora  
*(member through May 31, 2016)*

Lake Forest College, Lake Forest  
*(member through May 31, 2016)*



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“If I didn’t get that scholarship, I wouldn’t have been able to continue going to Augustana. The funds helped me continue my education, and my education is very valuable to me.”

## Shirquanna Freeman

### **Augustana College**

McGraw Foundation

Student Emergency Assistance Fund

Shirquanna Freeman is the oldest of four sisters and a brother. She always liked working with children, particularly during one summer as a camp counselor for Rockford First Church in her hometown of Rockford, Illinois. “I loved their personalities, and watching them grow and learn,” she said.

Her experiences led her to ACI member Augustana College, where she has her sights set on becoming a psychologist for children. The sophomore communication and psychology major also carries a Spanish minor. Communication is also part of her career aspirations, because she understands that effective communication leads to better interactions with cultures and people whose experiences are different from her own.

Freeman is the first person to attend college in her family. Her college funds were affected by an unforeseen family emergency. To help, Freeman was awarded a McGraw Foundation Student Emergency Assistance Fund grant from ACI through Augustana. The funds, distributed over trimesters, were critical for her to remain in school. “If I didn’t get that scholarship, I wouldn’t have been able to continue going to Augustana,” she said. “The funds helped me continue my education, and my education is very valuable to me.”

Thanks to the ACI scholarship, Freeman has helped lead a late-summer program for multicultural students just beginning their college years at Augustana. Like Freeman, many are the first in their families to attend college. “We didn’t have that program when I came here. It helps other people, and give us a chance to inform them of things that we didn’t know,” she said. Freeman is also a member and social chair of the college’s Black Student Union. Freeman tells newer students about small class sizes at Augustana, and that professors know most students by name, two reasons why she chose Augustana. The college’s liberal arts curriculum is also an advantage, she said. Taking classes in different fields is “really great,” Freeman said. “Even if you’re not in that major, you learn so much more. You’re more well-rounded.”

“I took general psychology as a general education course and loved it. I decided to add a psychology major.”

## Timothy McMullen

### **Concordia University Chicago**

Grover Hermann Scholarship

Timothy McMullen has a variety of interests and is in a school where he can explore nearly all of them. McMullen will soon enter his senior year at Concordia University Chicago. He carries a double major in psychology and pre-occupational therapy, and includes a sociology minor. McMullen also works for the Department of Public Safety at Concordia, has multiple internships, participates in extracurricular activities – and all the while, he’s made grades that have landed him on the Dean’s List every semester McMullen has been a Concordia student.

McMullen, Oak Lawn, Illinois, is the recipient of a Grover Hermann Foundation Scholarship from ACI through the university. His parents help him as much as they can to pay tuition, but coupled with tuition payments for McMullen’s younger brother, there’s only so much, he said. Concordia was McMullen’s college choice because he liked its academic departments, and it’s affordable.

McMullen isn’t entirely sure about the specific career he will choose, so he’s keeping his options open. One thing is certain: he wants to attend graduate school. “It’s either going to be a doctoral program for psychology, possibly neuropsychology, or getting a master’s degree in occupational therapy and becoming an occupational therapist,” he said.

As a neuropsychologist, McMullen would be able to conduct research in psychology, and likely work as a university faculty member, an option he considers “the ultimate career goal.” As an occupational therapist, he’d like to work in an outpatient center or clinic.

McMullen’s interest in psychology had its origins in a high school psychology class. “It was really interesting to me,” he said. “I took general psychology as a general education course in college and loved it. I decided to add a psychology major.” His interest in occupational therapy came from an aunt who works in the field, and time he spent observing occupational therapists at Advocate South Suburban Hospital in Hazel Crest.









“I just didn’t want to put that much pressure on me or my parents. The scholarship allows me to be in school, and it takes away all the pressure, all the financial issues and allows me to pursue the dreams that I have.”

## Janet Vasquez

### **Concordia University Chicago**

Peter and Michelle Wilmott

Minority Leadership Scholarship Fund

Janet Vasquez is a student with a clear purpose and dreams to fulfill. The Concordia University Chicago sophomore is from an immigrant family and the oldest of three daughters in the Vasquez household. She is the first in her family to attend college and is making the most of her opportunity.

“I want to become an immigration lawyer,” she said. “That’s my goal. I am going to law school. I just need to figure that out.” To get there, Vasquez is majoring in political science, with minors in art and Spanish. She chose political science because she wants to work in an international organization. Art is for fun, she says, a chance to express herself artistically. She is fluent in Spanish as well as English, and sees the advantages of being able to read and write Spanish, as well as understanding the cultures of Spanish speakers.

A key piece of her college experience is the Peter and Michelle Wilmott Minority Leadership Fund Scholarship through Concordia from ACI. She explained her family has limited financial resources, and the scholarship is vital. Without it, she’d have to find money from somewhere else. “My parents don’t want me to get any more loans, because we have heard the terrible stories of students having to pay those after they graduate,” Vasquez said. “I just didn’t want to put that much pressure on me or my parents. It allows me to be in school, and it takes away all the pressure, all the financial issues and allows me to pursue the dreams that I have.”

Vasquez, from Chicago, chose Concordia because she knew about the school from living in the area. She likes the personal touch that is part of a small university community and the interconnectedness of the Concordia community.



“The funds from ACI give me peace of mind. I don’t have to worry about school fees, and I’m extremely grateful.”

### Lyela Mutisya

#### **Lewis University**

#### FIHE/UPS Scholarship

Since she was very young, Lyela Mutisya has been interested in aviation. One of her early memories is of her father taking her to an airport to meet a friend who took her up for an airplane ride. That early flight led Mutisya on a path that brought her to Lewis University and big plans for how to use her aviation studies for good in her native Kenya.

Supporting Mutisya’s passion is a FIHE/UPS scholarship from ACI toward her studies at Lewis. A first-generation college student, Mutisya works part-time to support herself. “The funds from ACI give me peace of mind. I don’t have to worry about school fees, and I’m extremely grateful,” she says.

Mutisya is a citizen of Kenya and the United States, and has been living here with her mother, working and attending school since 2001. Mutisya’s father operates a coffee farm in Kenya. After attending a community college, Mutisya transferred to Lewis University because of its extensive aviation offerings. A Lewis class in unmanned aircraft systems – drones – got her to thinking about how she could use that technology and its capabilities in the family coffee business.

“Basically, I want to use drones for precision agriculture to foster sustainability and increase transparency,” Mutisya says. Using drones can help manage the coffee farm through precision agriculture techniques such as mapping to help manage early-stage plant diseases, ensure proper distribution of nutrients and limit expenditures on resources such as fertilizer. Mutisya also wants to help coffee farmers earn a fair return on the sales of the coffee they grow.

She recently attended the Drone World Expo in San Jose, California, where she heard a presentation by John L. Petersen of the Charles A. and Ann Morrow Lindbergh Foundation. There she learned about the foundation’s life-saving work through the Air Shepherd Initiative to use drones to protect elephants and rhinoceros living in the wild from poachers. She may have found a sponsor for her research, too. Mutisya hopes that she can raise funds and use her knowledge of drones to help the foundation preserve these valuable species.









The McGraw Emergency Fund award  
“basically kept me at Trinity.  
My family was low on money.  
The award made it possible for me  
to have a Christian education this year.”

## Christopher Paepke

### **Trinity Christian College**

McGraw Foundation

Student Emergency Assistance Fund

Christopher Paepke has his sights set on working for a professional sports franchise. From Brookfield, Wisconsin, Paepke, a junior at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, Illinois, is a double major in business, and sports and exercise studies.

He has played many sports in his lifetime, but it was soccer at which Paepke excelled. He plays on Trinity's varsity soccer team. He arrived at Trinity with a junior varsity soccer scholarship and competed in track for a couple of years amid his academic studies.

Due to an unforeseen family emergency, Paepke was provided a scholarship from ACI's McGraw Emergency Fund. “Basically, it kept me at Trinity,” he said. “My family was low on money. The award made it possible for me to have a Christian education this year.” He also has an academic scholarship and an athletic scholarship.

Paepke is a member of the Christian Reformed Church, the same denomination with which Trinity is affiliated. It was important to study and play soccer at a Christian school. “I like that the focus isn't all on winning. It's more about playing for a greater purpose.

Like many students, some courses are challenging, such as accounting. Others, such as an adapted physical education class, give Paepke a chance to work directly with students living with mental health disorders. Paepke's favorite part of being a student at Trinity is small classes and being able to develop learning relationships with professors.

## ACI Programs

### Scholarships

Providing scholarships for deserving low-income, first-generation and minority students is ACI's top priority.

ACI works with foundations, corporate partners, corporate sponsors, corporate donors, and individuals to raise scholarship funds to underwrite tuition and related expenses for students attending member colleges and universities. Funds are provided annually in the form of grants to ACI members, who disburse the funds to students who meet the criteria. In fiscal year 2015-2016, 327 scholarships were awarded.

### Emergency Financial Aid Program

ACI provides funds to meet the financial needs of students who face unanticipated hardship which can disrupt their academic studies during the school year. Emergency financial aid enables students from low-to-moderate income families the opportunity to continue their studies without interruption, even if they suffer reversals of fortune once enrolled at an ACI institution.

Since 1990, ACI's Scholarship Program has provided more than \$3.9 million in financial aid and emergency assistance to more than 2,280 students at ACI member colleges and universities across Illinois.

### Peer Mentoring Program

Peer mentoring seeks to increase the number of low-income, first-generation and minority college students who remain in school, succeed and graduate from ACI member colleges and universities. The program matches at-risk college freshmen with trained peer mentors from similar backgrounds.

In 2016, four members established new, peer mentoring cohorts at their institutions: These campuses -- Blackburn College, Concordia University Chicago, Monmouth College and Quincy University -- joined Augustana College, Dominican University and North Park University which have hosted ACI's Peer Mentoring Program since 2014.

In academic year 2016-17, ACI's Peer Mentoring Program will serve 160 students, including 130 mentees and 30 mentors on the seven college campuses, encompassing urban, suburban and rural settings across Illinois. By building a "relationship bridge" between mentees, mentors and the campus community and its support services, ACI's program provides an early warning system that can anticipate and address the particular challenges these students face, before those challenges derail a student's college career.

## Quick Facts about ACI

**37**

ACI was formed in 1952 by presidents of 37 private, liberal arts colleges in Illinois in an effort to ensure a source of funding for students attending independent private colleges

**Higher Rate**

Graduation and retention rates among ACI members are higher than Illinois public universities

**10**

There were 22 charter members of ACI when the organization was formed in 1952; 10 charter members are still affiliated with ACI

**\$70 million**

In its 64-year history, more than \$70 million in scholarships have been awarded by ACI to Illinois college students

**55,000**

Today, 23 member Illinois colleges and universities serve more than 55,000 students, including undergraduate and graduate students

**30+**

More than 30 similar state councils, including ACI, serve students attending private liberal arts colleges and universities across the United States. These councils are members of the Council of Independent Colleges, Washington, D.C.

**\$1.3 billion**

ACI member colleges and universities have a combined purchasing power of more than \$1.3 billion



## Financial Information for June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2016

Financial information is presented for ACI's fiscal year ending May 31, 2016. Desmond & Ahern, Ltd., Certified Public Accountants, provided ACI an unmodified opinion on the financial statements.

As of May 31, total assets were \$1,815,140, while liabilities were \$464,002. Net assets were \$1,351,138.

Member colleges and universities are assessed dues to underwrite all administrative and operating costs of the association. Donors are assured that 100 percent of their contributions are distributed to member colleges and universities without reductions for fundraising costs. Gifts, awards and other services totaling \$821,247 were distributed to members during the year.

During FY16, ACI undertook new fundraising strategies and program initiatives to maximize value to ACI members. When combined with spending controls and budgetary restraint, ACI ended the fiscal year better positioned to support its members in the future.

## Abbreviated Statement of Financial Position

### Assets

Cash . . . . .	\$685,538
Investments . . . . .	1,103,534
Property and equipment (net) . . . . .	8,633
Other assets . . . . .	<u>174,35</u>
Total assets . . . . .	\$1,815,140

### Liabilities

Scholarships and other distributions . . . . .	\$451,125
Other liabilities . . . . .	<u>12,877</u>
	464,002

**Net assets** . . . . . 1,351,138

**Total liabilities and net assets** . . . . . \$1,815,140

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## Abbreviated Statement of Activities

### Support and revenue

Member assessments . . . . .	\$561,100
Contributions . . . . .	540,720
Corporate partnerships . . . . .	47,558
Investment income (net) . . . . .	-31,055
Other income . . . . .	<u>22,300</u>
Total support and revenue . . . . .	\$1,140,623

### Expenses

Gifts, awards and other services to members . . . . .	\$821,247
Other programs . . . . .	201,631
Management and general . . . . .	172,632
Fundraising . . . . .	<u>261,012</u>

### Change in net assets

(\$315,899) . . . . .	\$1,456,522
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## Honor Roll of Donors

Associated Colleges of Illinois gratefully recognizes the commitment of individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations who made contributions between June 1, 2015 and May 31, 2016. Thank you!

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