

April - May 2022

In This Issue:

- Leadership Message: Lyn Bulman, chair, ACI Board of Trustees
- ACI Scholar: Chloe Hanegraaf, Olivet Nazarene University
- ACI Raises Nearly \$85,000 at its 70th Anniversary Celebration
- ACI Board of Trustees Approve Budget, Business Plan, Reappointments
- ACI Board of Trustees Honor ACI Executive Director Mick Weltman
- Virtual ACI Spring Conference Set for June 1-2
- 130 Register for ACI Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, Next Session is Fall 2022
- ACI Awarded \$5,500 Grant to Build Capacity for Significant Individual Gifts
- From ACI Corporate Partner Graystone Consulting -- Mission Align 360°: Maximizing an Organization's Connection Between Mission and Capital
- Upcoming Events
- From Dan Reynolds, ACI Director, Individual Giving
- Let's Continue Progress to Help Underserved Students Earn College Degrees

Leadership Message



As reported in last month's newsletter, the search for a successor to Mick Weltman as ACI's executive director began in February. Thirty potential candidates responded to the posting of the position by a third-party consultant from Evolve, helping us with initial sourcing.

The Evolve consultant interviewed 15 people from this group and selected five candidates to present as a shortlist. One of the five dropped out, leaving the remaining four to be interviewed by Corporate Trustee Tony LoBello and me. We selected two candidates to move to the next round and have asked Evolve to find us one more candidate to complete our shortlist.

The next stage will involve Illinois Wesleyan University President and ACI President S. Georgia Nugent and at least one other ACI president, who will interview these three candidates. The final stage will be for the top candidate or two to meet with the ACI staff. We are currently ahead of our planned timeline and are feeling optimistic that we will be able identify our next executive director before Mick retires this summer.

Lyn Bulman
Chair, ACI Board of Trustees

ACI Scholars

Chloe Hanegraaf Olivet Nazarene University PACCAR Foundation Scholarship

When Chloe Hanegraaf went to college, she set her sights on earning an associate's degree and a possible teaching career. But her life changed significantly after completing the degree at Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Heights, Illinois. Her Christian background and friends led her to think about attending [Olivet Nazarene University](#) in Bourbonnais, Illinois, not far from her home. She applied, but declined to attend, only to reconsider a few months later when a university recruiter contacted her, asking if she wanted to remain under consideration for admission. This time, Hanegraaf said yes. She began a three-year journey in a very different field – nursing.



[Read more of Chloe's story.](#)

ACI News



ACI Raises Nearly \$85,000 at its 70th Anniversary Celebration *Funds raised go to for scholarships and programs to benefit Illinois college students*

ACI raised nearly \$85,000 in estimated net revenue at its [70th Anniversary Celebration](#) April 22, a strong fundraising result for ACI since it initiated its April fundraiser in 2016. The funds included an estimated \$20,900 in pledges for second-mile gifts made at the event. About 130 people attended the event at the University Club of Chicago, with live music provided by the North Park University Jazz Ambassadors, below right.



The organization also established a new high for event sponsors with 11, plus an additional sponsor for the ACI Presidents Forum, held earlier in the day.

This year, ACI celebrated its 70th year of service to Illinois college and universities, and their students. The purpose of the event was to recognize ACI's [26 member colleges and universities](#), recall the organization's roots and history, and to raise scholarship and program funds.

[ACI Board of Trustees](#) member Rob Johnson, president of [Rob Johnson Communications](#), was master of ceremonies. Twelve of 22 founding members are still with ACI today, he noted, adding that ACI has raised \$70 million dollars in its history. The 12 schools are Augustana College, Aurora University, Blackburn College, Eureka College, George Williams College (now part of Aurora University), Illinois College, Illinois Wesleyan University, Millikin University, McKendree University, North Park University, Quincy University and Shimer College, now part of North Central College.



"In 1952, it was time when privately funded education was at a crossroads," said Lyn Bulman, ACI Board of Trustees chair. "Small private school were struggling to keep pace with the large state universities because they were receiving public funding as well as private donations." To help ensure private college funding, community and business leaders joined private college presidents to establish ACI, she said.



Today, ACI focuses much of its work on helping first-generation and low-to-moderate income students earn college degrees. "These students need financial support and often, they need guidance to graduate and get their first job," Bulman said. ACI offers [scholarships and emergency aid](#) to some 350 students each year, she said. In addition, ACI offers [college-to-career programs](#). ACI research shows member colleges are worth \$3.75 billion to the state's economy, and more than 24,000 alumni are employed by largest Illinois companies. "It seems pretty clear that investing in these students makes a really valuable contribution to our state," Bulman added.

Speakers make the case for ACI's focus on liberal arts and sciences education

Tracie Morris, left, featured speaker, U.S. chief human resources officer and chief inclusion officer, [BMO Harris Financial Group](#), earned degrees from two ACI-affiliated institutions, [Benedictine University](#) and [North Central College](#). She said BMO Harris' mission is to "Boldly grow the good in our community and in life." Through its Empower Program, it has given \$5 billion to the City of Chicago and throughout the United States, for women entrepreneurs and for people of color in business.

"When I was at an ACI school, I never envisioned I would have this power to do such great things," she said. "But I do remember the educators, the teachers and the students who are with me and gave me my voice while I was getting my education. That education was very important to me because I would not be here today."



Morris focused her remarks on five Ps her grandmother taught her to remember and put into action: purpose, passion, people, priorities and perseverance. "ACI is a perfect environment to be clear about your vision and your passion," she said. "I stand here today because ACI gave me that leadership, that passion and commitment. I ask all of you to contribute and to give to ACI, so more people can stand on this podium and tell their stories about education, servitude and giving back." Morris said she was honored to be part of the ACI's 70th Anniversary Celebration because she benefitted from attending member schools.



Carlos Robles, far left, a recent finance graduate from [Saint Xavier University](#), an ACI member, was a recipient of the ACI General Scholarship. He and his family came to the United States from Ecuador when he was very young. He will join NFA, a financial company, in a few weeks, he said. His ACI scholarship helped him pay off his college debt and graduate earlier, he said. "This scholarship provided so much help in getting where I am. Thank you so much to the donors. I am eternally grateful for the scholarship. I want to thank ACI for allowing me to this opportunity to share my story and allow me to better my life in general."

Mia Pitts-Hope, above right, who graduates this spring with a communication degree from [Wheaton College](#), an ACI member, told the audience her grandmother inspired and supported her for much of her life. After her passing and other challenges, Pitts-Hope was awarded a McGraw Emergency Financial Aid Fund grant from ACI. She plans to use her degree "to improve the world around me through film, visual storytelling, journalism and design. I plan to cultivate works of arts and carry on my grandmother's legacy." She added she was "grateful for the McGraw Foundation and its generous contribution and thankful for ACI. What seems to us as bitter trials are blessings in disguise."

Honors for retiring executive director

President S. Georgia Nugent of [Illinois Wesleyan University](#), who also serves as ACI president, helped honor Mick Weltman, ACI's executive director, who will retire this summer. "We know tonight is about our member institutions. It's certainly about our students, but we also want to recognize Mick," she said. At an earlier meeting, board members praised Weltman's leadership of ACI, she said. "I thought that the sense of what Mick has brought to the organization was particularly well captured by one speaker who said he has an incredible combination of kindness and effectiveness." Nugent presented an engraved memento to Weltman on behalf of friends of ACI.

"It's a real honor to be recognized. I will miss the work," Weltman said in response, crediting the work of ACI staff, board members and others for ACI's success.

Patron Sponsor

Partner Sponsors



Presidents Forum Sponsor



ACI Board of Trustees Approve Budget, Business Plan, Reappointments

The [ACI Board of Trustees](#) approved a \$1.4 million expense budget for the organization's new fiscal year to begin June 1. The trustees also approved a business plan for the upcoming fiscal year and reappointed several board members.



The board reappointed 12 corporate members to two-year terms, and reappointed President Gene C. Crume, Jr., [Judson University](#), for a two-year term on the ACI Executive Committee. In addition, board member Barry C. Mastin Jr., Liberty Mutual Insurance Co., will assume the role of chair of the ACI Trusteeship Committee, succeeding longtime chair Jerry Murphy, retired, who will remain on the board and committee, said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. Pawel Szeliski, Kutchins, Robbins & Diamond, Ltd., will become vice chair, he said. Also, Debora L. Osgood, Hogan Marren Babbo & Rose, Ltd., will step away from her role as Program Committee chair. A successor will be named soon, Weltman said.

The business plan addresses ACI's efforts in advancement, including its annual fundraising event, plus grants, corporate and individual giving. It also addresses college-to-career programs, peer mentoring, scholarships and emergency funds, professional development conferences and ACI's communications.

The business plan includes a slight increase to 115 percent of return-on-investment to member schools, in response to assessments they invest to fund ACI's operations, Weltman said. He also reported an anticipated budget surplus of about \$26,000 in the current fiscal year.

Board members comment on anticipated financial returns, ACI initiatives

"It is encouraging to have 115 percent," said President Philip G. Ryken of [Wheaton College](#), an ACI member. He also thanked corporate board members for their service to ACI. "Hopefully this work is satisfying for you, and you have an opportunity to give to our state, to give to our community and to higher education. We don't take it for granted. We really appreciate it. Thank you," he added.

During an open discussion, James L. Applegate, Illinois State University, and chair of the ACI Communications Committee, suggested board members study [ACI's Member Employment Data](#). "It is an eye-opener. It is really quite stunning. Go look at the numbers in that study. Every employer in Illinois should value these colleges," he said.

Rob Johnson, Rob Johnson Communications and ACI board member, asked his colleagues to think of themselves and the organization as "thought leaders." "It's more than just sharing a link to something that we did," he said. "It's for you all to feel like that you're invested in this, too. If we're going to go to the next level, we need to be thought leaders." Among other things, the organization should produce a live event once a quarter for the business community, to highlight ACI's contributions and relevance to higher education and workforce development, Johnson added.

ACI Board of Trustees Honor ACI Executive Director Mick Weltman



The ACI Board of Trustees honored [Mick Weltman](#), ACI executive director, at the board's annual meeting April 22 in Chicago. Weltman, who began his role as executive director in late 2014, plans to retire this summer. A search for his successor is expected to be completed soon.

Prior to joining ACI, Weltman was a consultant to associations and nonprofit organizations, and served as an adjunct instructor at multiple colleges. His tenure at ACI has included an increase of six [member colleges and universities](#), including two that returned to the organization. He led development of [research projects](#) that showed member institutions' value to the state of \$3.75 billion, and that more than 24,000 alumni of member schools work at 148 top Illinois companies.

Weltman and staff secured at least eight grants from the Council of Independent Colleges, Washington, D.C., which established or funded ACI these programs: Career Fair, Career Leaders Program, Career Mentoring Program, Leadership Council, a major gifts program, Micro-Internships Program promotion, Peer Mentoring Program and Work and Life Skills Boot Camps. The organization recently won a planning grant to conduct research and develop an implementation plan for community college students to complete bachelor's degrees at ACI member schools.

In addition, ACI increased its [Peer Mentoring Program](#) member campuses from three to 12; established Named Scholarships; established partnerships with Parker Dewey for [micro-internships](#) and Sage Scholars for tuition discounts for students; became a regular participant in the annual Midwest Roundtable on Talent at Mackinac island, Michigan; established an ACI Board of Trustees student position; initiated regular discussion groups for board members, presidents and provosts; and introduced a new [website](#), organizational logo and design.

Tributes focus on hospitality, compassion, effectiveness

Board members said they appreciated Weltman's focus on hospitality, compassion and effectiveness in building the organization. For example, President Brian McGee of [Quincy University](#), commented that one of his early contacts when he became president three years ago was Weltman. "He helped wonderfully to orient me as he had with many presidents before," he said. "On behalf of all of the presidents who have had that experience, I express my gratitude. (Mick) is a kind and generous spirit."

Leslie J. Sawyer, board member, president and CEO, Environmental Design International, Inc., thanked Weltman for helping independent, private colleges in Illinois, and their students. "You really have shown sincerity about caring about students and caring about all of us. You're a friend of the board, and I've enjoyed working with you," she said. Raymond E. Krouse, Jr., board member, Sikich, said he enjoyed the opportunity to meet with member presidents. "You really get to learn about the schools and their challenges. I really appreciated that," he said. Anthony Lobello, board member and Advancement Committee chair, Sheehan Nagle Hartray Architects, said Weltman has been "a great brand ambassador" for ACI. Chloe Overstreet, student board member, [Eureka College](#), thanked Weltman on behalf of students ACI serves, and commented, "Your generous heart and your desire to make higher education more accessible to people is truly incredible."



Lyn Bulman, chair, ACI Board of Trustees, said she appreciated her many discussions with Weltman about ACI. On behalf of the board, she presented Weltman several gifts, including an acrylic memento in recognition of his service, above left.

President Gene Crume, ACI executive committee member and president, [Judson University](#), presented Weltman the university's Presidential Award for Outstanding Achievement, above right. Weltman is the ninth person awarded this distinction, Crume said.

In thanking the board, Weltman recalled that when he applied for the ACI job in 2014, he spoke to board members and leaders on short notice and was offered the opportunity in four days' time. "Thank you so much for this great opportunity. It's been a real treat. It's been a real pleasure serve in this role," he said.

Virtual ACI Spring Conference Set for June 1-2

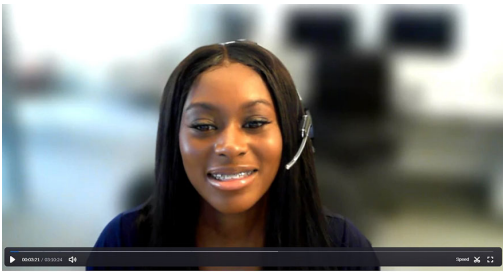
Planning continues for the ACI Spring Professional Development Conference. The event is scheduled for June 1-2 via Zoom.

This virtual event is designed exclusively for staff of member colleges and universities, as well as other ACI affiliates. The conference will offer sessions in Advancement, Finance, Public Relations and Marketing, and Student Engagement on corresponding dates shown in the graphic. Online registration will open in early May.

To be a presenter or for more information about the ACI Spring Professional Development Conference, contact Daisy Gomez, ACI director, events and conferences, at dgomez@acifund.org or 312-263-2391, ext. 0.



130 Register for ACI Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, Next Session is Fall 2022



The spring edition of the ACI Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, April 14, featured a series of webinars intended to assist with the college-to-career trajectory for ACI students.

ACI members were afforded the opportunity to host a viewing room for students who may have limited access to virtual events or prefer to watch the webinar in a collective capacity. Thanks to a charitable contribution from Citi, ACI campuses that hosted a viewing room also received free lunch for attendees.

The event boasted surprises nearly every hour, such as the four gift card winners who were randomly selected for engaging with ACI online, and YouTubers from Ireland and Canada who offered style tips that may give an edge to ACI graduates over other potential job candidates, said Constance Willoughby, ACI director of programs.

With more than 130 registrants and 16 ACI schools represented, the spring boot camp, themed "Adulting 101," resulted in record registration numbers. Data suggests that the majority of registrants for this virtual event identified as either first-generation, low-income, minority or a combination of the three demographics, Willoughby reported. According to the feedback surveys after each session, most respondents found the webinars helpful and learned something new that can be applied on their college-to-career journey, she said.

[A recording of "Adulting 101"](#) is available for on-demand viewing and can be accessed for a limited time. ACI's goal is to continue to enhance the boot camp experience for ACI students each year.

The next boot camp is tentatively scheduled for fall 2022. To participate in a future Work and Life Skills Boot Camp as a speaker or sponsor, please contact Constance Willoughby, director of programs, at cwilloughby@acifund.org.

ACI Awarded \$5,500 Grant to Build Capacity for Significant Individual Gifts

[The Council of Independent Colleges](#) (CIC) awarded ACI a \$5,500 grant in March to help build ACI's individual giving program. The funds will be used to help find individual prospects who will provide significant financial gifts to support scholarships, emergency financial aid and other programs for students at ACI-member colleges and universities.



"We are grateful for our partners at CIC who provide us grant funding to advance our work," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. "We plan to use these funds to help enhance individual giving to ACI. Our donors appreciate our work to help first-generation students earn college degrees, and we want to find more people to join our efforts."

Specifically, ACI will use the grant funds to purchase well-qualified donor acquisition lists of 4,000 high-income individuals in Illinois who have supported higher education. ACI staff will update materials to be used in mailings to 250 individuals, with an objective of meeting directly with 25 prospects by Sept. 30, according to the grant application.

This project is funded through a Capacity-Building Grant from the CIC. Its Capacity-Building Grant Program was created to provide seed money to state councils, such as ACI, to launch or expand projects that directly enhance the organization's capacity for raising gifts and grants from foundations, corporations and individuals.

Leading ACI's effort is Dan Reynolds, president of Holmes, Radford & Reynolds, Inc., St. Louis. He is also ACI's director of individual giving. Reynolds can be reached at 314-308-8038 or by email at dreynolds@acifund.org.

Did You Know?

From ACI Corporate Partner Graystone Consulting

Mission Align 360°: Maximizing an Organization’s Connection Between Mission and Capital

Graystone Consulting

Foundations and endowments have been engaging in mission-related investing for decades, before the term "impact investing" was coined in 2007. Today higher education is increasingly following the path of large private foundations, given their influence as board members, donors and next- generation involvement.

A business of Morgan Stanley Contrary to old perceptions, college and university board of trustees and investment committee members can actually align their fiduciary responsibility regarding their school’s asset oversight (i.e. endowment, charitable trusts, student accounts, donor- advised funds) with their school’s values, mission and community views on sustainability and societal concerns -- commonly referred to as impact investing. In fact, as you will see in the link that there is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates sustainable and impact investments have generated at least market-rate returns (data shown goes back to 1990). This is a critical point given that trustees have historically perceived sustainable and impact investing simply incompatible with their fiduciary duties.

Given Illinois’ particular historic farmland landscape, a school’s ability to incorporate fiduciary and impact investing can be helpful for both long-term asset growth and donor development. It can be custom for each school, as it may include different aspects of sustainability and societal concerns (poverty alleviation, access to education, health care and climate change migration).

Our experience at [Morgan Stanley’s Graystone Consulting](#) has been positive by taking a proactive approach, using positive tilts towards companies who are doing the right things versus the old standard of negative screening. Our clients' successful approach has also included "shareholder engagement,"where the school’s assets are encouraging positive decision making by corporate leadership.

While the attached publication by our firm’s Impact Investing Group is 14 pages, our higher education clients have appreciated the content, in particular the first eight pages. It includes impact investment performance results since 1990. Please let me know if you are interested in further understanding how to align your school’s assets with your mission and donor’s intent.

[Read the publication](#)

Robert J. Dow
Executive Director
Graystone Consulting
Robert.Dow@msgraystone.com
630-573-9697

Upcoming Events

- **Monday, May 30:** Memorial Day, ACI office closed
- **Wednesday, June 1 and Thursday, June 2:** ACI Professional Development Conference, via Zoom
- **Wednesday, June 8:** ACI Finance Committee, 10 a.m., via Zoom
- **Wednesday, June 8:** Presidents quarterly meeting, 3:30 p.m., via Zoom
- **Thursday, June 9:** ACI Trusteeship Committee, 1:30 p.m., via Zoom
- **Thursday, June 9:** ACI Advancement Committee, 3 p.m., via Zoom
- **Friday, June 10:** ACI Program Committee, 9 a.m., via Zoom
- **Friday, June 10:** ACI Communication Committee, 11 a.m., via Zoom
- **Friday, June 10:** Provosts quarterly meeting, 3:30 p.m., via Zoom
- **Thursday, July 14:** ACI Board of Trustees, 4 p.m., via Zoom

From Dan Reynolds, ACI Director, Individual Giving

I believe that a college education holds the promise for a future of expanded possibilities, and that ACI provides real hope and opportunity for its scholarship recipients. Education remains the great equalizer, and ACI scholarships can

mean the difference between a student completing their college degree ... or not. ACI has a wonderfully compelling mission that is having compounding and generational impact.

My name is [Dan Reynolds](#), an alum of a solid liberal arts education who has been involved in nonprofit service, fundraising and resource development work for over 30 years. I am excited to join the ACI team as the director of individual giving and look forward to working with you, ACI's board, and others to increase the number and level of scholarships provided to students attending ACI member schools.

On the heels of a successful 70th Anniversary Celebration event, I am encouraged by the outpouring of support and the passion that donors have in helping to increase access to college education. ACI has a long and accomplished history upon which we can build, and I am grateful to be part of this great mission. I am also proud to be a donor to ACI, and I hope that you will join me in continuing to support ACI moving forward. Please feel free to contact me directly at dreynolds@acifund.org if you are interested in becoming involved and making a difference in the lives of ACI students.



Let's Continue Progress to Help Underserved Students Earn College Degrees

THANK YOU for supporting ACI's 70th Anniversary Celebration to raise funds for scholarship, emergency financial aid and programs to support Illinois college students. Help us continue our mission to provide financial support and guidance to low-income and first-generation students attending [member schools](#). Through peer mentoring, scholarship and emergency financial aid support, college-to-career programs and more, ACI has bridged the gap to help students succeed in college and beyond. How can you help? Please donate online via [ACI's website](#) or simply text ACI to 44321 to contribute. Your support is truly appreciated! To see the impact of your generosity, watch some of the [student scholarship recipients tell their stories](#).



Associated Colleges of Illinois
70 East Lake Street
Suite 1418
Chicago, IL 60601
<https://acifund.org>

Quick Links

[ACI website](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Instagram](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[Twitter](#)
[YouTube](#)
[Giving](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Email Us](#)

ACI Member Colleges and Universities

Augustana College - Aurora University - Benedictine University - Blackburn College
Concordia University Chicago - Dominican University - Elmhurst University - Eureka College - Illinois College
Illinois Wesleyan University - Judson University - Knox College - Lewis University - McKendree University
Millikin University - Monmouth College - North Central College - North Park University
Olivet Nazarene University - Principia College - Quincy University - Rockford University
Saint Xavier University - Trinity Christian College - University of St. Francis - Wheaton College

Would you like to forward this email to a friend? [Click here](#).