



August - September 2020

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ACI’s Sept. 25 Boot Camp Explores Life in the Time of Pandemic

ACI will offer four [Work and Life Skills Boot Camps](#) during the 2020-21 academic year. The first, via Zoom on Friday, Sept. 25, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m., will explore "Life Study and Work in the Time of Pandemic."

Open to all students enrolled at [ACI member institutions](#), the boot camps specifically target low-income, first-generation and students of color. Sessions seek to deliver skills, information and networking resources that advance career development for students who may not have family members who have earned college degrees or pursued careers that require degrees. The program was launched in 2019-20, with support from a [Council of Independent Colleges](#) First Opportunity Partners Grant.



The Sept. 25 boot camp will feature Gabriel Ruiz, M.A., LCPC, a faculty member at Chicago Institute for psychoanalysis and a first-generation college graduate who earned his master’s degree at ACI member institution [Concordia University Chicago](#). Ruiz will give students strategies for identifying and managing the stress associated with the pandemic. Lynn Hazan, president of her award-winning executive search firm, will help students map their path in the current job market. Jeffrey Moss, CEO of [Parker Dewey](#), will introduce students to the opportunities offered by virtual micro-internships, and Aaron Adams, partner at [Mentoring Complete](#), will explain ACI’s virtual Career Mentoring Program and its benefits to career development. Finally, Brian Walsh, senior manager, financial planning for SoFi, will help students navigate student loans and personal finance in uncertain times.

ACI Boot Camps scheduled for the remainder of the academic year include:

- **Friday, Nov. 13: *Who am I, and Where am I Going?*** -- How liberal arts education translates to careers and how students can develop a portfolio of skills and experiences while still in college. Financial literacy session on building credit.
- **Friday, Jan. 29, 2021: *The Right Image, The Right Information*** -- Interviewing skills, dressing for success, email etiquette, conforming to corporate culture and related matters. Financial literacy session on personal budgeting.
- **Friday, March 26, 2021: *Technology in the Workplace, Across Careers and Industries*** -- Technology skills for today’s jobs and how technology shapes all industries and workplaces, how liberal arts majors can transition to technology careers and entrepreneurial opportunities. Financial literacy session on financial products and how career-launchers can begin building a nest egg.

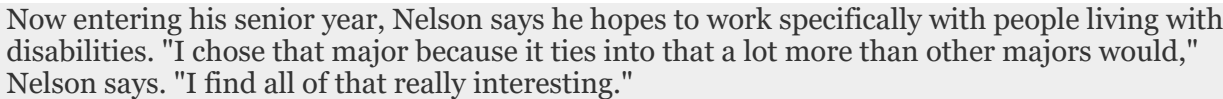
Registration for ACI’s Sept. 25 boot camp, "Life Study and Work in the Time of Pandemic," will open online the week of Sept. 7. A registration link will be sent to all career services, multicultural directors, first-generation program directors and peer mentoring campus coordinators. For additional information, contact Leslie Millenson at lmillenson@acifund.org.

ACI Scholars

Taijhan Nelson
Millikin University
ACI General Scholarship

[Watch Taijhan tell his story!](#)

Taijhan Nelson came to [Millikin University](#) from Murphysboro, Illinois, to study health fitness and recreation, intending to use his education for a career in recreational therapy. What drew him to Millikin were his conversations with the cross country coach, Andrew Craycraft, and the possibility of attending a school with small classes.



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

Virtual ACI Fall Conference Set for Nov. 9-12

A person is seen from behind, sitting at a wooden desk and using a laptop. The laptop screen displays a video conference with approximately 15 participants in a grid layout. The participants are diverse in age and appearance, and they are in various settings, some appearing to be in a library or office. The person's hands are visible on the laptop keyboard.

The tentative schedule for the Fall Conference is:

- **Monday, Nov. 9, advancement:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:15 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.
- **Tuesday, Nov. 10, finance:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:15 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Nov. 11, public relations and marketing:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:15 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.
- **Thursday, Nov. 12, student engagement:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:15 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.

Online registration is expected to begin on or about Monday, Oct. 19, Willoughby says.

ACI has compiled detailed data on its 27 member colleges and universities, expanding the data it has compiled for the past few years. The new information is found on ACI's "Member School Demographics," page, left, at <https://acifund.org/member-school-demographics/> on the ACI website.

The newly compiled information includes the number of men and women enrolled at each institution, ethnicity and Pell Grant recipients.

"The Member School Demographics helps us identify potential donors who support ACI scholarships, emergency aid and programs," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive

director. "Potential donors often ask us for specific demographic information about ACI member colleges and universities."

ACI also has [employment data](#) on alumni of member schools, plus [information](#) about the financial impact of member colleges and universities, academic programs, including the most popular programs at each school, and financial aid available to students.

Grants were awarded this summer to ACI from three foundations, including CME Group Foundation, ITW Foundation and McGraw Foundation.

"Foundations are a significant source of support for ACI programs," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. "We are grateful for the generous support provided by these longstanding partners, as well as some new partners. These funds are especially helpful as we work to support member schools and their students through the COVID-19 pandemic."

CME Group Foundation, Chicago, awarded a \$25,000 general operating grant to ACI, part of \$1 million in grants it awarded to organizations throughout Chicago to support education initiatives. ACI's grant is intended to support college and career success efforts.



[ITW Foundation](#), Glenview, Illinois, awarded \$10,000 to ACI's Peer Mentoring Program. The program operates on 11 ACI-affiliated campuses. It works to help first-generation, low-income students through the critical first year in college, and helps them remain in college and earn degrees.

[McGraw Foundation](#), Dundee, Illinois, is a longtime partner with ACI. It awarded \$95,000 to ACI, which provides the funds to member colleges and universities. The schools distribute the funds to students who have urgent and unexpected financial needs to continue their educations.



For information about ACI and its programs, please visit <https://acifund.org> or contact Executive Director Weltman at mweltman@acifund.org or 312-263-2391, ext. 1.

<https://sna.etapestry.com/prod/viewEmailAsPage.do?databaseId=AssociatedCollegesofIllinoisI&jobRef=1638.0.416290871&>



The [ACI Board of Trustees](#) added two corporate members this summer from Chicago-area firms – [Robert DiMeo](#), left, chief executive officer, DiMeo Schneider & Associates, L.L.C., and [Adam Lieb](#), right, vice president, business development for Fidelity Family Office Services, a business unit of Fidelity Investments.

In addition to leading the firm’s strategy as CEO, DiMeo authored and been the subject of numerous articles appearing in publications such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *Crain’s Chicago Business* and *Pensions & Investments*. He has also taught courses on fiduciary responsibility and related subjects. DiMeo is a board member for Special Olympics Illinois Foundation, and advisory board member for Year Up Chicago and Catholic Charities of Chicago. He earned a bachelor's degree from Bradley University, Peoria, Illinois.

Lieb is responsible for selling Fidelity’s full-service solutions to the family office marketplace. During more than 20 years' experience in the financial services and software industries, he acquired a comprehensive understanding of technology, wealth management products and services, and the requirements of family offices. Lieb is an advisory board member for Invest for Kids. He earned a bachelor's degree from Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio.

The ACI Board of Trustees includes 38 corporate members, plus the presidents of the organization's 27 member colleges and universities.

Mark Biermann Begins Role as President at Blackburn College

ACI member [Blackburn College](#), Carlinville, Illinois, welcomed Dr. Mark Biermann, right, to his new role as college president earlier this month. The Blackburn College Board of Trustees appointed Biermann earlier this summer, according to a college news release. He succeeded Dr. John McClusky, provost, who served as interim president since December 2019 after Dr. Julie Murray-Jensen resigned as president.



Biermann most recently was provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Valparaiso University in Indiana, responsible for all academic programs, student affairs, retention and student success, diversity and inclusion, innovation and institutional effectiveness. Biermann also worked closely with Valparaiso’s leadership to develop and implement a financial model that strengthens the university, including a \$250 million comprehensive campaign.

"I believe that Blackburn is a national leader in what is probably the single most important area for a college or university: social mobility," Biermann said. "Blackburn not only aspires to but is clearly succeeding in providing a distinctive and innovative model for higher education in America."

Mike Smiley, chair of the Blackburn College board, cited Biermann’s exceptional administrative and academic background as well as his enthusiasm for Blackburn’s unique student-managed Work Program among the reasons he emerged as the best possible candidate.

Prior to Valparaiso, Biermann worked in faculty positions at Whitworth College, Spokane, Washington, Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, Houghton College in New York, and the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. Biermann was chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, and the inaugural dean of the School of Natural and Applied Sciences at Taylor University, Upland, Indiana. He was dean of the faculty and vice president for academic affairs at Wartburg College in Iowa.

Biermann earned a bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in optics from the University of Rochester in New York. He and his wife, Lois, are parents to two daughters.

Congratulations to ACI Board Members!

We're proud of our [Board of Trustees](#) members and their achievements. ACI's board consists of 38 corporate members plus the presidents of ACI's [27 member colleges and universities](#).



Here's a sampling of board-member achievements during this summer:

- [Justin Lee Allen](#) was named vice president, senior legal counsel at BDJ Trucking Co., Schaumburg, Illinois.
- [Demetrio Garcia](#), partner and global business development lead, Golden Hill Foods, Chicago, was [featured](#) in *Hispanic Executive's* July issue.
- [Anthony LoBello](#) was named director of business development at Sheehan Nagle Hartray Architects, Chicago. Lobello is also chair of the board's Advancement Committee.
- [Brad Mease](#) was named partner in manufacturing and distribution by [Baker Tilly](#), Chicago.
- [Jerry Murphy](#) is featured in the Fall 2020 [cover story](#) of [Quincy University's](#) alumni magazine, *QUniverse*. Murphy, who also chairs the board's Trusteeship Committee, is a 1970 graduate of Quincy.
- [Mark A. Vargas](#) president of Licentiam, Chester, New Jersey, was presented the "Remy Martin Award" July 17, as part of the [Latinos 40 Under 40 Special Awards](#) presented by *Negocios Now*. The award is given for exceptional leadership and dedication to the community and world. In addition, Vargas was named president of the [World Leaders Forum](#) Board of Directors at [Judson University](#), where he earned a bachelor's degree in history. Vargas will moderate the spring 2021 WLF event featuring Gen. David H. Petraeus.
- [J. Vincent Williams](#) was named president and chief executive officer at Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council.

PRSA Chicago Recognizes Two ACI Projects in Annual Awards Program

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Chicago presented awards July 16 to two ACI projects completed in 2019.

The chapter presented its [Award of Excellence](#) to ACI's [2018-2019 Annual Report](#) and to ACI's [Member Employment Data](#) project.



Previous editions of ACI's Annual Report have been recognized by the chapter. For the 2016 edition, the chapter presented an Award of Excellence, and for 2018, the report was the winner of the Skyline Award, the chapter's top award.

The Member Employment Data project was recognized for best use of data/analytics. The months-long research project showed 23,875 alumni from ACI's 27 member colleges and universities working in at least 148 top companies in Illinois.

Please Save These Dates

- **Friday, Sept. 25:** Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, "Who am I, and Where am I Going?" Via Zoom.
- **Monday, Nov. 9 to Thursday, Nov. 12:** ACI Fall Conference, for college professionals working in advancement, finance, public relations and marketing, and student advancement. Via Zoom.
- **Friday, Jan. 29, 2021:** Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, "The Right Image, the Right Information"
- **Friday, March 26, 2021:** Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, "Technology in the Workplace, Across Careers and Industries"
- **Friday, April 16, 2021:** Presidents Forum
- **Friday, April 16, 2021:** Board of Trustees Annual Meeting
- **Friday, April 16, 2021:** ACI Benefit Reception, University Club of Chicago

Support Students at ACI Member Colleges and Universities With Financial Gifts

Students in need are seeking immediate help for fall 2020



The COVID-19 pandemic has put many families under extreme financial stress, and countless students and parents have lost their jobs. As a result, there are students who urgently need financial help to enroll in college this fall. Your gifts can make it possible for these students to launch or continue their college careers.

ACI is a charitable organization as described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to ACI are tax-deductible, as described in the Code. ACI welcomes cash gifts, online giving by credit card and gifts of stock. Be sure to consult your tax advisor/preparer for definitive guidance before engaging in any transaction.

To make an online gift, visit [ACI's Giving webpage](#) and choose how you prefer to designate your donation. Or, contact Mick Weltman, ACI executive director, at 312-263-2391, ext. 1, or write to mweltman@acifund.org.



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ACI Member Colleges and Universities

Augustana College - Aurora University - Benedictine University - Blackburn College
Concordia University Chicago - Dominican University - Elmhurst College - 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
St. Augustine College - Saint Xavier University - Trinity Christian College - University of St. Francis - Wheaton College

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