



February - March 2020

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Tickets, sponsorships available now for ACI's April 17 Benefit Reception

Act now to make 2020 a record-setting year for ACI



Help make Associated Colleges of Illinois history by purchasing tickets to ACI's Annual Benefit Reception on Friday, April 17, 2020, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., in the University Club of Chicago's Cathedral Hall. [Registration for the event](#) is open.

"Our attendance record for ACI's Annual Benefit is 197, and our revenue record is \$110,000," said Executive Director Mick Weltman. "This year, we're challenging our sponsors, leaders and friends to help us achieve even more."

Benefit revenue is critical to ACI's key programs: scholarships for students in need at ACI's [27 member colleges and universities](#); the Peer Mentoring Program to improve retention and graduation rates for low-income, first-generation and students of color; ACI's Career Development Initiative, including an annual

Career Development Conference and Work and Life Skills Boot Camps that boost job readiness skills and career opportunities for students at member institutions. The reception will include compelling stories of students who have benefited from these programs. "ACI programs help build the workforce of the future," Weltman explains, "so when you purchase tickets or sponsor ACI's benefit, you're investing in Illinois' economic future."

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W WOODWARD^{LLC}**

Six prominent firms are already benefit sponsors: Husch Blackwell and Rathje Woodward LLC are Patrons and Aon, Fidelity Charitable, Gallagher and Robbins Schwartz are Partners. "We're making real progress toward our revenue goal," Weltman says. [Sponsorships are still available](#) at every level, with great benefits for participants."

Tickets for ACI's Benefit Reception are \$200. They went on sale on Feb. 10, and are available [here](#). Guests enjoy an open beer and wine bar, plus hors d'oeuvres, a buffet of delicious snacks and live music.

ACI's 2020 Benefit Reception will feature keynote speaker [Melissa B. Donaldson](#), Wintrust Financial Corporation's first-ever vice president and chief diversity officer. A strategic change agent at Wintrust, Ms. Donaldson's mission is to establish diversity and inclusion priorities that drive business success. "Melissa Donaldson brings to life ACI's vision of an increasingly diverse workforce," Weltman says. "We are looking forward to hosting her at our Benefit Reception."

For additional information about sponsoring ACI's April 17 Benefit Reception or to buy tickets, visit ACI's website or call Mick Weltman at 312-263-2391, ext. 1.

ACI Scholars

Ayana Blair
Illinois Wesleyan University
ACI General Scholarship

[Watch Ayana tell her story!](#)

Ayana Blair hopes one day to be a physician. With that in mind, she chose to attend [Illinois Wesleyan University](#) in Bloomington, in part, because the financial aid package was attractive, and also because of the university's pre-med



program. Plus, she became a member of Illinois Wesleyan's track team, competing as a "thrower," in discus, shotput, hammer and weights. A friend in middle school encouraged her to join the track team. Now a college junior, she says the track team is an important part of her life.

Blair, from Wheeling, Illinois, came to the university first as a biology major, but soon realized that she liked chemistry, too. "I wanted to take both of what I love and mix them together. So, I chose biochemistry," she says. Plus, she has a minor in environmental studies.

Making her university experience possible is an ACI General Scholarship. At the time, she says she really needed financial help. "I went in to talk about my financial aid," Blair says. "Everything was rough. We didn't have enough money to pay for my school for next year." Scott Seibring, Illinois Wesleyan's financial aid director, agreed to help, she says.

"It made a huge difference," Blair says. "It's a huge stress reliever on my family especially since my mother is a single mother, and she's helping pay for school." In addition to the ACI scholarship, Blair has two scholarships from Chicago organizations and she volunteers at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center in nearby Normal, Illinois.

Greta Qano Elmhurst College ACI General Scholarship

[Watch Greta tell her story!](#)

What drew Greta Qano to [Elmhurst College](#) was the quality of the college's political science and business programs, and that after learning more about the school, she said she could see herself as a successful student at Elmhurst. From nearby Addison, Illinois, Qano is majoring in political science, urban studies and business administration.

With all she is studying, Qano says she's thinking about a career in law. Qano is part of Elmhurst College's mock trial team, a great learning opportunity, she says. "You work with your partners," Qano says. "You have this case where you have either witness roles or attorney roles. And, you learn about the law in the format of this case and how it relates to the case. Every year, the case is different." Qano is also part of Elmhurst College's pre-law program, participates in a business club and works in the student financial services office.



Qano finances most of her own college education through grants and scholarships, including an ACI General Scholarship. Her financial need was magnified when her father lost his job about the time she was awarded ACI's scholarship, she says. "So, it was a really big help financially, obviously, because I wasn't able to receive the help from my parents."

She also appreciates the donors who made her scholarship possible. "In the future I plan on donating to students that do have need for scholarships because it's a pay-it-forward kind of thing. In a way, this scholarship inspired me to keep moving in my studies," she adds.

Meet ACI Members

'A College in the Community,' St. Augustine College Seeks to Improve Lives and Opportunities for Latino Students

Celebrating 40 years of service in the Chicago area in 2020



Narrow streets, single-family homes, apartments, condos and small buildings are typical of Chicago's many north side neighborhoods. On Argyle Street, you'll also find the main campus of [St. Augustine College](#). This ACI-member college is unique in many ways. It mostly serves students who speak Spanish as their primary language, plus English. It offers graduate-style classes in Spanish, English or both. Most students live in the neighborhood and have other responsibilities, such as caring for children, their parents or their jobs. The college has no dormitories or athletic teams, and the campus was once home to a well-known silent film studio and star. This year, the college, which serves nontraditional students, will celebrate the 40th anniversary of its founding.

"We are a college in the community," says [Dr. Reyes González](#), president of St. Augustine College. "We strive to be where people live and work. We enjoy living with each other in our own neighborhoods."

[Read the full story.](#)

ACI News



Four New Corporate Members Join ACI Board of Trustees

ACI welcomed four new board members to the organization this year, bringing the total number of corporate board members to 40.

New members are, from left, Kimberly J. Marshall, CPA, director for BKD CPAs & Advisors, Chicago; Chris Surdenik, CEO, Call One, Chicago; Mark A. Vargas, president, Licentiam, Inc.; and Leah Wallace, vice president, workforce development, and diversity and inclusion, Citi, Chicago.

[Kimberly Marshall](#) has more than 16 years of audit and accounting experience, focusing on governmental and not-for-profit industries. She has worked with universities, community colleges, municipalities, villages, school districts, tollway authorities, water commission districts, foundations, food banks and social services organizations. Marshall is a member of the America Institute of CPAs, Illinois CPA Society and Illinois Government Finance Officers Association. She is a 2003 graduate of [Benedictine University](#), Lisle, with a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting.

[Chris Surdenik](#) joined Call One in 1998 and was named CEO in 2014. Under his leadership, Call One has seen tremendous growth year after year and continues to be an innovative leader in the telecommunications industry. Surdenik is an auto and motorcycling racing enthusiast. He earned a bachelor's degree in pre-law and political science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master's degree in communication science from Northwestern University, Evanston.

[Mark Vargas](#) is a trusted adviser and close confidante to some of the most high-profile political and business leaders in America. His work as a tech entrepreneur in health care with Licentiam, and political opinion writer and advisor have been featured in the significant Chicago and national publications as well as national news programs. From 2007 to 2010, Vargas served as a civilian within the Office of the Secretary of Defense on a special task force handpicked by senior Defense officials. A former student body president and graduate of ACI member [Judson University](#), Vargas is host of the university's World Leaders Forum program, "Conversations with Mark Vargas," a speakers series where he invites well-known leaders in business and politics for informal, one-on-one conversations. The next is Oct. 20, with retired U.S. Army General and former CIA Director David Petraeus.

[Leah Wallace](#) joined Citi in 2004 and is responsible for developing, implementing and assessing strategic initiatives that drive a diverse and inclusive workforce. Her duties at Citi include employee engagement, oversight of employee diversity networks and best practices for talent development and mobility. Wallace previously was employed in senior-level leadership positions with ExxonMobil, BP Oil, LDW Management Consultants, British Telecom and iNet Company of America. Wallace has held several volunteer leadership positions and was awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award. She earned a bachelor's degree in business-economics from UCLA and a master's degree in business and public administration in information management from John F. Kennedy University. She served as an adjunct instructor at Westwood College for seven years.

Students learn to 'package' themselves for the job market, prepare for life after college at ACI's Winter Work and Life Skills Boot Camp



More than 30 students, all low-income, first-generation and/or students of color from six ACI member colleges and universities, jump-started their preparation for the job market and prepared for life after college at ACI's winter Work and Life Skills Boot Camp. The Feb. 8 boot camp, hosted by [Illinois Wesleyan University](#) (IWU), began with remarks from university president Dr. S. Georgia Nugent, who recalled her own experience as a first-generation college student and offered observations about talent recruitment and job seekers in today's market.

The day-long boot camp addressed branding oneself for a new job and conforming to the culture and customs of a new workplace; dressing to match workplace culture while considering one's own sense of style; and using the best software – Big Interview – to practice the video interviews now common in the talent recruitment process.

Citi's Vice President of Workforce Development and Diversity and Inclusion Leah Wallace, an ACI corporate trustee, brought a Citi Retail Services team of young professionals as boot camp speakers. Sydne Barard, a senior business analyst, Taylor Davis, senior business analyst and Shirae Thompson, senior financial planning analyst, led a branding and corporate culture session and closed the day with a session on smart budgeting for first-job professionals. As recent graduates, these young women offered direct experience with the challenges ACI students soon will confront.

During a luncheon panel, Wallace, together with ACI Corporate Trustee Lyn Bulman and Celeste Quinn, talent acquisition coordinator at Illinois Farm Bureau and Country, revealed what talent acquisition managers look for when they seek young talent, what young people can expect from interactions with talent acquisition managers, and the do's and don'ts that should guide those interactions.

Funded by Council of Independent Colleges First Opportunity Fund, with support from the UPS Foundation, and ACI funds, the Work and Life Skills Boot Camps offers career development support to underserved students. The November Boot Camp at [Concordia University Chicago](#) explored how liberal arts degrees translate to career paths and helped students consider where they want to go professionally and how to achieve those goals. A spring boot camp, now in development, will focus on technology's role in the workplace and in career paths.

"By providing underserved students with quality training in pre-employment skills and financial literacy, ACI's Work and Life Skills Boot Camps support members' efforts to prepare these students to launch careers and build financial stability for themselves and their families," says ACI Executive Director Mick Weltman.

For more information on ACI's Work and Life Skills Boot Camps, contact Weltman at 312-263-2391, ext. 1 or mweltman@acifund.org.



ACI's Wealth Advisors Breakfast Rescheduled for May 14, Features Discussion of Building Client Relationships

ACI's third annual Wealth Advisors Breakfast, rescheduled for Thursday, May 14, will feature Rick Harig, right, certified financial planner and founder of [Legacy Resources, LLC](#). The theme for Harig's remarks is "The Power of Questions for Securing Right-Fit Clients," focusing on enhancing financial relationships and engaging new clients.

Registration for this event will open soon.

The complimentary breakfast is from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the University Club of Chicago, 76 E. Monroe St. Wealth advisors, financial analysts, business and community leaders should plan to attend. Introducing ACI and the program is Dr. Troy D. VanAken, president of ACI member [Elmhurst College](#).



Harig served 12 years as a trusted resource for TIGER 21, a peer membership organization for high-net-worth entrepreneurs and investors. He has lived in Europe three times in his adult life. Today, he assists his clients in defining the destination and/or purpose for their wealth.

Millikin University names Dr. James M. Reynolds as 16th President



The [Millikin University](#) Board of Trustees unanimously confirmed the election of Dr. James M. Reynolds, left, to become the 16th president of Millikin University, effective July 1, 2020, according to a Millikin University news release. Reynolds will succeed Dr. Patrick E. White, who is retiring June 30 after seven years as the university's president.

Reynolds currently serves as president of Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio, a position he's held since 2012 after serving as interim president from August 2011 to February 2012. During his time at Wilmington, Reynolds oversaw creation of a new campus-wide strategic planning process and oversaw the successful reaccreditation of Wilmington College by the Higher Learning Commission in 2017. Under his leadership, Wilmington launched partnerships with three medical health care providers that resulted in the construction of the Center for Sports Sciences (completed in August 2015).

The college also increased its Annual Fund support and overall giving over the past three years. During his time at Wilmington, the college concluded its largest fundraising campaign in institutional history in December 2017, exceeding the \$21 million goal. Reynolds came to Wilmington College in 2007 to serve as vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty.

"I am deeply humbled and excited to become the 16th president of Millikin University," said Reynolds. "I am committed to the mission of Performance Learning at Millikin, and as I begin this new chapter, I look forward to working with the directors, faculty and staff as we fulfill our mission to prepare students for personal lives of meaning and value. I am grateful for the strong leadership of Dr. Patrick White, who has left a lasting legacy on which we will have the opportunity to build."

[Read more](#) about Dr. Reynolds' appointment at Millikin University.

Did You Know?

From ACI Corporate Partner Baker Tilly

Aligning Student and Institution Success: Does Your Institution Pass the Test?



Institutional leaders face the ultimate challenge of providing costly services and programs with less financial resources, as pressure to reduce the cost of attendance increases. Baker Tilly's Student and Institution Success e-book highlights effective approaches institutional leaders should consider to meet the challenges and risks that often impact an institution's ability to positively support their students' success. To

learn more and download a free copy of the e-book [click here](#).

Please Save These Dates for Upcoming ACI Events!

- **Friday, April 17:** ACI Presidents Forum, University Club of Chicago
- **Friday, April 17:** ACI Board of Trustees Annual Meeting, University Club of Chicago
- **Friday, April 17:** ACI Benefit Reception, University Club of Chicago
- **Thursday, May 14:** Wealth Advisors Breakfast, University Club of Chicago
- **Monday, June 8:** ACI Spring Conference for member staff working in advancement, finance and student engagement, Eureka College, Eureka, Illinois
- **Thursday, June 11:** Summer Get-Together, professional development conference for communications, marketing and public relations professionals, Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois
- **Sunday, June 14 to Tuesday, June 16:** Midwest Roundtable on Talent, Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan

ACI Welcomes Gifts to Support Students at Member Colleges and Universities

ACI accepts gifts of cash, credit card donations and stock



We welcome financial gifts to support our mission and to make a difference for many underserved college students attending ACI-affiliated institutions across Illinois. To learn more, [watch these students tell their stories](#), including how ACI scholarships make a difference in their lives.

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. Stock gifts can be particularly beneficial because if the stock has increased in value from the time it was purchased, the owner can avoid paying capital gains tax by donating the stock – and the fair market value at the time of the contribution is deductible, subject to certain limits described in the Internal Revenue Code. Be sure to consult your tax advisor/preparer for definitive guidance before engaging in any transaction.

You may designate your gift for [scholarships](#) for first-generation, low-income college students, or for support of the [ACI Peer Mentoring Program](#), which helps first-generation students through the critical first year in college on the way to earning a degree. You can also provide [ACI Named Scholarships](#) to deserving students in honor of individuals, businesses or organizations, or designate gifts for other ACI programs.

For more information about giving to ACI, contact Mick Weltman, ACI executive director, at 312-263-2391, ext. 1, or write to mweltman@acifund.org.



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Millikin University - Monmouth College - North Central College - North Park University
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St. Augustine College - Saint Xavier University - Trinity Christian College - University of St. Francis - Wheaton College

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