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ACI Among Three Organizations Awarded Grant Aimed at Improving Four-Year Degree Completion Rates for Community College Transfer Students

ACI to collaborate with Illinois Community College Board and Illinois Board of Higher Education



ACI, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) were awarded a \$25,000 planning grant to conduct research and develop an implementation plan to help more community college transfer students earn bachelor's degrees at ACI-affiliated colleges and universities.

[The Teagle Foundation](#), New York City, and the [Arthur Vining Davis Foundations](#), Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, awarded the planning grant, called "Transfer Pathways to the Liberal Arts." Collaborative research and planning work is expected to begin July 1 and be completed at the end of the 2021 calendar year.

"We're excited about the grant award and this initial phase to build enrollment and financial support for community college transfer students," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. "We're also pleased to collaborate with statewide partners such as ICCB and IBHE in this planning effort."

The grant proposal quotes research that states that 65 percent of jobs in today's economy require at least some postsecondary education, and yet, significant numbers of Illinois residents have no post-secondary degrees or credentials. Illinois established a goal of increasing the proportion of residents who hold high-quality degrees or credentials to 60 percent by 2025. In addition, more than 7 of 10 students who earned associate's degrees, then transferred to four-year institutions, earned four-year degrees in two years, according to the National Student Clearinghouse.



To meet the terms of the planning grant, ACI, the ICCB and the IBHE will form the Illinois Project Leadership Team. Team members will conduct academic and financial research, aimed at improving academic transferability and development of a campaign and fundraising plan to assist community college transfer students and Illinois higher-education institutions, according to the grant proposal.

The academic component, led by a project investigator, will involve collaborative research to help the project leadership team determine "effective strategies that can streamline and strengthen existing pathways," the grant proposal said. The team will also study a statewide community college transfer agreement among ACI-affiliated colleges and universities.

The financial component will include resource development opportunities to fund community college students transferring to ACI-member institutions, and how best to obtain financial support.

A project investigator and ACI will use the research results to develop a case for supporting more scholarships for community college transfer students and the expected effect on transfer degree-completion rates. The team will also develop a fundraising plan.

The project team will include ACI Executive Director [Mick Weltman](#), ACI staff, faculty and provost from ACI-member [Judson University](#), provost from Lincoln Land Community College, IBHE, ICCB leaders and an independent financial consultant.

ACI Scholars

Connor Goering  
Principia College  
ACI General Scholarship

[Principia College](#) was a familiar school to Connor Goering. His sister had attended the college in Elsah, Illinois, and still lives nearby in the St. Louis area with her family. Plus, Goering’s family once lived in the Midwest. A soccer player, Goering chose to attend Principia to play the game at the collegiate level. Plus, he enjoys the small classes and likes knowing his professors, which has helped him earn good grades.



Goering, whose hometown is Odessa, Florida, majored in business administration, with minors in economics and education, and a concentration in entrepreneurship. Goering is also interested in fitness, something he took up a couple of years ago. "It’s become something I’m really passionate about — not just to do, but to help others, and also to just do the research and learn more about it," he says. "So, that is something I’m hoping to do with my future." Goering’s interest in business is something he learned from his father. "My Dad has done a variety of work through business. I just like the idea of owning something," he says.

Goering says his parents pay the majority of college tuition costs, supplemented by what he can earn through other scholarships and summer jobs. He learned about the ACI General Scholarship through Principia College’s financial aid director. "It definitely made a difference because with my family, really, anything helps," Goering says. "I probably would have still attended Principia, but it definitely helps so much, in terms of financial stability and everything."

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

# ACI News



## ACI Executive Director, Presidents, Attend Midwest Roundtable on Talent

ACI Executive Director Mick Weltman, second from right, joined presidents of seven [ACI-affiliated colleges and universities](#) at the [Midwest Roundtable on Talent](#) June 13-15. Held at the Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan, the annual event brings together business leaders and college presidents from five Midwest states to discuss collaboration to advance student outcomes. About 150 people attended this year's meeting.

Presidents attending with Weltman were, from left, S. Georgia Nugent, [Illinois Wesleyan University](#); Mary K. Surridge, [North Park University](#); Steven C. Bahls, [Augustana College](#); Brian McGee, [Quincy University](#); Glena G. Temple, who will become [Dominican University](#) president Aug. 2; and Eric W. Fulcomer, [Rockford University](#). Troy D. VanAken, [Elmhurst University](#), also attended.

## ACI's Virtual Career Fair is Thursday, Sept. 30



ACI staff is preparing for a Virtual Career Fair Thursday, Sept. 30. The event, to be focused on careers in financial and professional services, is being planned with partners from ACI-member [Knox College](#).

ACI's Virtual Career Fair connects employers and students. For employers, the fair offers a chance to meet promising students who are ready to work. For students, the fair gives them an opportunity to learn about potential employers and explore career choices.

Details about the career fair, as well as registration information, will be announced later this summer. For more information about how to participate in the Virtual Career Fair, please contact Mick Weltman, ACI executive director at 312-263-2391, ext. 1 or [mweltman@acifund.org](mailto:mweltman@acifund.org).

For 69 years, ACI has supported Illinois' independent colleges and universities, and promoted liberal arts and sciences education. Currently, ACI has [26 member institutions](#), serving more than 70,000 students. ACI serves member institutions by providing scholarships and career-oriented services to help first-generation, low-income and minority students. ACI member colleges and universities teach the skills most employers want, such as the ability to work in teams, collaborate with colleagues, communicate well and solve problems.

## Dominican University Appoints Glena G. Temple as President

[Dominican University's](#) Board of Trustees appointed Glena G. Temple, Ph.D., right, as its 11th president, according to a May 18 university news release. Temple, whose term begins Aug. 2, is currently president of Viterbo University, a Catholic Franciscan university in La Crosse, Wisconsin.



During her presidency, Temple led Viterbo’s successful efforts to increase student retention, graduation and job placement rates, and oversaw a \$2 million U.S. Department of Education grant focused on student success. She also oversaw growth in the endowment fund, from approximately \$43 million to more than \$60 million. Under her leadership, the university expanded graduate enrollment and added programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Appointed as president in 2017, Temple has served Viterbo in a number of capacities for almost 20 years. She will succeed Donna M. Carroll, who has served as Dominican’s president since 1994 and led the institution through a period of extraordinary growth and academic achievement, including its ranking this year in the top 10 of Midwest regional universities by U.S. News & World Report. Carroll will retire June 30.



"I am truly humbled and grateful for the trust placed in me by the Dominican Board of Trustees," Temple said. "It is an honor to follow President Donna Carroll, whose leadership inspired so many over the past 27 years. I embrace this opportunity to help build on her legacy with so many dedicated students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and benefactors. Dominican’s justice-driven mission and values deeply rooted in the charism of the Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters spoke to my heart and strengthened my desire to be a part of this amazing university."

Temple earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Allegheny College and a Ph.D. in botany and plant sciences from the University of California-Riverside. She also holds a master’s degree in educational policy and administration from the University of Minnesota.

[Read more about Dr. Temple and her new role at Dominican University.](#)

### Executive Committee Approves Business Plan, Budget



The [ACI Executive Committee](#), meeting via Zoom May 20, approved a business plan for the organization's fiscal year beginning June 1 and ending May 31, 2022. It also approved a \$1.42 million expense budget for the same period.

The business plan includes goals and objectives for fundraising through corporate, foundation and individual [giving](#). ACI raises funds through foundation and corporate grants, sponsorships and individual gifts, plus events such as the annual [Benefit Reception](#) and career fair. In addition, ACI's 26 member colleges and universities fund operational expenses for the organization.

Funds raised are shared with the organization's member colleges and universities in the form of [scholarships](#), [emergency financial aid](#) and funding for programs such as [career mentoring](#) and a longstanding program, [peer mentoring](#), available on 11 ACI-affiliated campuses. For the 2022 fiscal year, ACI intends to return at least 115 percent of each member school's investment in ACI, according to the approved business plan, along with other value such as student and staff program participation, media exposure and more.

The budget anticipates \$1.425 million in total revenue, with expenses of \$1.42 million. The organization's budget funds programs, office expenses and staff salaries and other related costs. The new budget is slightly less than the year before, during which the pandemic affected the organization's fundraising and programs.

### ACI Spring Conference Draws 100 Percent Member Participation

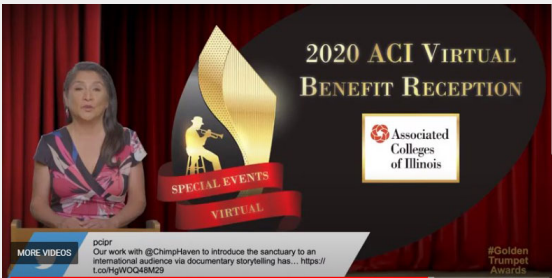
ACI's Spring Professional Development Conference, held virtually via Zoom, drew staff from all 26 ACI member colleges and universities for the second virtual conference in a row, said Constance Willoughby, ACI director, programs.

Records show 171 people attended at least one online learning session, she said. [Concordia University Chicago](#) and [University of St. Francis](#) each had 13 staff members attending, the most of any ACI members. In addition, four members of the [ACI Board of Trustees](#) attended.



The spring conference, June 7-10, included professional development sessions for ACI college and university staff working in advancement, finance, public relations and marketing, and student engagement. Recorded presentations were sent to all attendees.

### Publicity Club of Chicago Presents Two Awards to ACI



The ACI team earned two awards from the [Publicity Club of Chicago](#) (PCC) for work done in 2020, including a "Golden Trumpet Award," for the organization's [2020 Virtual Benefit Reception](#). The Golden Trumpet Award is given to the judges' top choice in each awards category. The ACI Benefit Reception was honored in a category for special events done virtually.

In addition, the organization presented a Silver Trumpet Award to [ACI's 2019-2020 Annual Report](#). In 2020, the PCC also presented a silver award to ACI's annual report.

ACI's annual report has been honored in four of the past five years by Chicago-area public relations organizations.

Established in 1941, the Publicity Club of Chicago is a network of Chicago-area public relations professionals and counselors. They compose the nation's largest independent public relations membership organization.



Did You Know?

From ACI corporate partner Siemens

Re-opening Education: How K-12 Schools and Higher Education Can Continue With Confidence

Learn how to reduce the risk of COVID-19 with technology solutions and services available for educational environments. This insightful webinar provides best practices and guidance for schools, colleges and universities ready to re-open safely.



Watch now.

For more information, contact:  
Danielle Melone  
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[Danielle.melone@siemens.com](mailto:Danielle.melone@siemens.com)

Upcoming Events

- **Monday, July 5:** Independence Day (observed), ACI office closed
- **Thursday, July 8:** ACI Trusteeship Committee, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., via Zoom
- **Thursday, July 8:** ACI Advancement Committee, 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., via Zoom
- **Friday, July 9:** ACI Program Committee, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., via Zoom
- **Friday, July 9:** ACI Communications Committee, 11 a.m. to noon, via Zoom
- **Thursday, July 15:** ACI Board of Trustees, 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., via Zoom
- **Wednesday, July 21:** ACI Finance Committee, 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., via Zoom
- **Monday, Sept. 6:** Labor Day, ACI office closed
- **Friday, Sept. 24:** ACI Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, via Zoom
- **Thursday, Sept. 30:** ACI Virtual Career Fair
- **Thursday, Oct. 14:** Wealth Advisors Breakfast, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m., University Club of Chicago
- **Friday, Nov. 5:** ACI Fall Professional Development Conference, Chicago location TBA

Help provide scholarship support for low-income and first-generation students



The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way many students experience college, but one thing remains true: the value of a liberal arts education is priceless. Upon earning a liberal arts degree, students are leaving college and joining the workforce equipped with strong critical thinking skills and the ability to adapt to the fast-paced and ever-changing demands of the professional world.

Join ACI in helping provide scholarship support for low-income and first-generation students. Your gift makes a difference for many underserved college students attending ACI-affiliated institutions across Illinois. To see the impact your gift can have on these students, [watch them tell their stories](#) and see how ACI scholarships make a difference in their lives. Visit our website to [make a gift today](#). Thank you for your support of ACI and students at member colleges and universities!



Associated Colleges of Illinois  
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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  
Saint Xavier University - Trinity Christian College - University of St. Francis - Wheaton College

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