



# ACI Reporter

## October - November 2020

## In This Issue

- ACI Colleges and Universities Diverse, Offer Wide Range of Academic Programs
- Map Your Route from College Days to Career Path!
- Student Scholar: Michael Traversa, Benedictine University
- ACI Initiates Partnership with SAGE Scholars to Help Families with Tuition Costs
- ACI Launches Fall Term Career Mentoring Program for College Seniors
- ACI Awarded Matching Grant for 'Career Leaders Program' Launching in 2021
- Registration Open for Virtual ACI Fall Conference, Nov. 9-12
- New ACI Corporate Partners: Ardeo Education Solutions and Degree Insurance
- ACI Welcomes Rob Johnson to Board of Trustees
- Dominican University President Donna Carroll Announces Retirement After Nearly 30 Years
- Principia College Names John Williams as President
- Publicity Club of Chicago Presents Silver Award to ACI's Annual Report
- From Michael Best, an ACI corporate partner: Navigating Higher Education
- Please Save These Dates
- Support Students at ACI Member Colleges and Universities With Financial Gifts

## ACI Colleges and Universities Diverse, Offer Wide Range of Academic Programs

Students attending the [26 member colleges and universities](#) of Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) are learning in diverse environments and are afforded opportunities to learn that emphasize small classes, real-world project learning and a variety of internships, according to ACI research. ACI members are also producing teachers and health-care workers in larger numbers than the state's largest universities.

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These findings come from a recent compilation of [demographic statistics](#) from ACI member schools (see image, left). Among the nearly 50,000 total undergraduate students:

- + about 58 percent are women
- + about one third are students who are American Indian, Alaskan or Native Hawaiian, Asian, Black/African American, Latinx or multiracial
- + more than one third are eligible for Pell Grants, awarded to students with the greatest financial need
- + more than 800 students are attending ACI colleges and universities with GI Bill benefits

"These findings confirm what we already knew: Students who attend private, liberal arts colleges in Illinois are learning important skills and life lessons that lead to productive careers in the state's economy," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. "Also, ACI-affiliated schools have diverse student bodies, which contribute to a rich and wide-ranging learning environment. This is vital in today's global economy."

ACI members, all private, independent institutions, have student bodies with characteristics similar to Illinois' public colleges and universities. [2018 statistics](#) compiled by the Illinois Board of Higher Education for Illinois (IBHE) public colleges and universities show ACI schools have a slightly higher percentage of students who are women (58 percent to 51 percent). [The IBHE statistics](#) also show a slightly greater percentage of students of color or multiracial students attending Illinois public colleges and universities (37 percent to 33 percent).



## ACI members supply greater numbers of nurses and teachers

At most of ACI's colleges and universities, top academic programs are business, education, health professions and basic sciences. ACI-compiled statistics from 2017 show that ACI member institutions are graduating nurses and teachers at a nearly 2-to-1 rate when compared to Illinois' largest public and private colleges and universities.

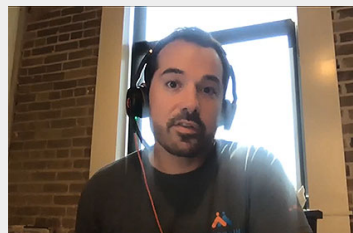
## ACI alumni working throughout the Illinois economy

[Illinois employment](#) for alumni of ACI colleges and universities is strong, with more than 23,000 employees working for 148 top Illinois employers with at least 25 ACI alumni, according to ACI research figures. The top five Illinois employers of alumni of ACI-affiliated institutions are Advocate Aurora Health, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, State Farm, JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Caterpillar.

## Map Your Route from College Days to Career Path!

## ACI's Virtual Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, Friday, Nov. 13

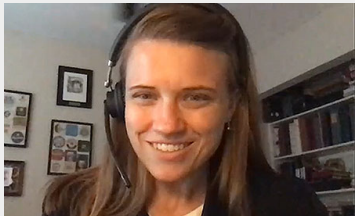
Registration is open for ACI's second virtual Work and Life Skills Boot Camp, Friday, Nov. 13 from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Built on the theme, "Map Your Route from College Days to Career Path!", the full day of seminars is designed to help students understand how their liberal arts studies can translate into the workplace, how campus activities can help build a marketable resume, and how to create the "toolbox" they'll need to launch an effective job search. [Click here to register](#). Registrations will be accepted through Nov. 11. Questions about registration should be directed to Cindy Morales at [cmorales@acifund.org](mailto:cmorales@acifund.org).



Nov. 13 boot camp presentations include:

- **Workplace Uses of Your Liberal Arts Education: Nancy E. Arnesen, Ph.D., professor of English, North Park University**, considers how liberal arts education interacts with a satisfying career, why employers value liberal arts graduates, and how to leverage the workplace competencies that a liberal arts education provides.
- **Your Career Path Tool Box -- College Experiences that Promote Job Search Success: Melissa Muth Martinez, student success coordinator, Maria Gutierrez, associate director of career development and student success, Dominican University**, explore the group activities, leadership positions, jobs, coursework and projects that can translate into a winning resume for entry-level jobs after graduation.
- **Your Career Path Tool Box -- Resumes, Elevator Speeches and Other Tools of the Career Development Process: Emmanuel Ndifor, head of growth at Upkey**, will walk participants through Upkey’s resume-building resource and other useful tools from Upkey’s web-based, interactive service, which is designed to support professional success and dramatically improve the chances of career placement after graduation.
- **Becoming -- Growing Beyond the Labels of "Low-Income, First-Generation or Student of Color" to Career Success: Jessica Brown, dean of student services, engagement and leadership, Eureka College**, will moderate a panel of early-career alumni who were low-income, first-generation and/or students of color at ACI member colleges and universities. The panel members will explain how they decided who they were, what they wanted, and how to get it – and reveal the outcome of their journey.
- **Financial Literacy Session -- Building Credit:** Representatives of a financial institution will guide students through the process of understanding their credit scores, how to build credit and how to manage credit.

Students, college and university faculty and staff, as well as ACI Board of Trustees members are encouraged to attend the boot camp’s full day of seminars, but they may choose to attend specific sessions. Attendees are encouraged to be prompt, as sessions will be locked 10 minutes after they begin. All boot camp sessions will be recorded and will be made available to ACI member institutions.



Colleges and universities with students on campus are encouraged to arrange for students to view the boot camp as a group, if they can safely convene a group. Upon request, ACI will provide a \$100 grant toward providing lunch or snacks for a group viewing. Contact Cindy Morales at [cmorales@acifund.org](mailto:cmorales@acifund.org) to arrange a group registration and grant.

Open to all students enrolled at ACI member institutions, ACI’s Boot Camps are designed specifically for low-income, first-generation and students of color. The 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.

[Read more about upcoming Work and Life Skills Boot Camps.](#)

# ACI Scholars

**Michael Traversa**  
**Benedictine University**  
**McGraw Foundation Emergency Financial Aid**

[Watch Michael tell his story!](#)



Michael Traversa is working in jobs he had hoped for after graduating from college. Now a strength and conditioning coach at Benedictine University and Morton College in the Chicago area, Traversa says he's grateful for opportunities to work in his chosen field so soon after college. "That was the goal," he says. "I just didn't think I'd be so lucky that fast."

Traversa explains that he and his four siblings were raised by their maternal grandparents. They made it possible for them to attend Catholic primary and secondary schools. After graduating from high school, Traversa started college at a Chicago-area university, but says he didn't do well academically. He left and took two years off from school before starting at [Benedictine University](#) in Lisle, Illinois, in 2015.

"The reason I wanted to go to Benedictine was growing up in Chicago, there were a lot of distractions," Traversa says. Benedictine was a good choice, he says, because it offered a new experience and it was close to Chicago and his family. He was also attracted by Benedictine's exercise science and football programs. Traversa played on Benedictine's football team for two years, most recently as a lineman and tight end. During his senior year in 2019, Traversa was presented the Tom Wirtz Award for Courage and Integrity, one of Benedictine's top awards for student athletes.

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

# ACI News

## ACI Initiates Partnership with SAGE Scholars to Help Families with Tuition Costs

ACI is now working with [SAGE Scholars](#), an organization that helps bridge the gap between students who want an affordable, private college education with colleges that will guarantee tuition discounts. To participate, there's no cost to the student, family or college, says Mick Weltman, ACI executive director.

"We think SAGE Scholars has the potential to help many students who want to attend [ACI's member colleges and universities](#)," Weltman says. "We are working directly with our members to encourage as many as possible to join SAGE Scholars, because this program can definitely help in their academic recruiting efforts."

Founded in 1995, Philadelphia-based SAGE Scholars is a unique, private college savings program. Member families earn "[Tuition Rewards Points](#)" by investing in preferred providers of dental, health and vision insurance, life insurance,





retirement plans, college funding plans, fraternal organization memberships and other financial incentives. One Tuition Rewards Point equals \$1 in guaranteed scholarship funds at a SAGE Scholars member college or university. Tuition Rewards can be used to pay for up to one year's tuition at a SAGE Scholars member institution, says A.J. Healy, director of corporate marketing, SAGE Scholars.

"SAGE Scholars, and our Tuition Rewards program, are integral in helping families prepare for higher education at all stages of a child's life," Healy says. A key incentive for member colleges and universities to join is that they earn access SAGE Scholars' database of students, he explained.

More than [400 private colleges and universities](#) across the country, including 16 ACI members, are in the SAGE Scholars College Consortium. Healy says. About 90 percent of member institutions have earned U.S. News and World Report's "America's Best" ranking, he added.

## ACI Launches Fall Term Career Mentoring Program for College Seniors

ACI's Career Mentoring Program launched this fall with 28 business mentors matched with at least 17 students from 10 member colleges and universities, according to Aaron Adams, partner, HR strategy and alignment, [Mentoring Complete](#). The new program matches business mentors with college seniors to help the students prepare for careers after their college experience.



ACI's Career Mentoring Program is a partnership with Mentoring Complete, a St. Louis-based firm with considerable experience in successful business and corporate mentoring programs. Among its clients are Enterprise Holdings, New York Power Authority, OhioHealth and Reach International.

The Career Mentoring Program is part of ACI's [College-to-Career](#) initiative. It also includes Work and Life Skills Boot Camps, ACI's Career Development Conference and Career Expo; micro-internships through Parker Dewey; and ACI's job-postings webpage.



The Career Mentoring Program is designed so that students and their mentors have consistent interactions to help students translate what they've learned in the classroom to the workplace. Mentors sometimes help the students find future careers.

Spring program dates in 2021 are from Jan. 15 to April 30. If interested in serving as a mentor, sign up at the [Career Mentoring Program webpage](#). ACI's Career Mentoring Program is funded in part through a National Venture Fund grant from the [Council of Independent Colleges](#), Washington, D.C.

## ACI Awarded Matching Grant for 'Career Leaders Program' Launching in 2021

*CIC funds to be awarded when ACI achieves 2:1 match*

[The Council of Independent Colleges](#) (CIC) Washington, D.C. has committed \$18,000 to help fund ACI's Career Leaders Program, expected to launch in fall 2021. The program is "a collaborative program designed to provide underserved, high-achieving college seniors with a year of comprehensive training and support in developing business, social, and leadership skills," according to ACI's grant application. Students will use those skills to secure entry-level positions leading to meaningful careers, the application said.



In addition to training and support, each participant in the ACI Career Leaders Program will be awarded a \$2,000 scholarship to help fill financial gaps on the way to graduation.

ACI's proposal was funded through a First Opportunity Partners grant from CIC, with support from the UPS Foundation. CIC's financial commitment is contingent upon ACI raising an additional \$36,000 by spring 2021.

"The Career Leaders Program is a logical next step that integrates ACI's [College-to-Career](#) initiatives into one program for the benefit of students enrolled at ACI's colleges and universities," said Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. These initiatives include ACI's Skills for Work, Skills for Life Boot Camps, ACI's Career Development Conference and Expo and the ACI Career Mentoring Program, which launched this fall. A fourth initiative, paid micro-internships through ACI's partner, Parker Dewey, completes the Career Leaders Program, he said.

Each of the career initiatives has achieved excellent attendance rates, Weltman said. More than 60 students have attended boot camps, nearly 300 participants attended career development conferences, 34 students have obtained paid work experiences through micro-internships, and about 20 senior executives and civic leaders are mentors to students this fall.

Each ACI member institution will select one underserved, high-achieving senior to participate in the Career Leaders Program. Chloe Overstreet, ACI student board member from [Eureka College](#), will serve as the program advisor and student liaison.

For more information about contributing to ACI's Career Leaders Program, contact Executive Director Weltman at [mweltman@acifund.org](mailto:mweltman@acifund.org) or 312-263-2391, ext. 1.

## Registration Open for Virtual ACI Fall Conference, Nov. 9-12



[Registration is open](#) for ACI's Fall Conference, a series of webinars this year over a four-day period, Nov. 9-12, 2020. Each of four professional development tracks are assigned a specific day of the week, says Constance Willoughby, ACI director of conferences and scholarships.

Conference sessions will be offered via Zoom webinars and are intended for college and university staff working in advancement, finance, public relations and marketing, and student engagement. Two professional development general sessions will be offered in each track. A third session in each track is to be an open forum for discussion of significant topics of interest to track participants.

The conference schedule Nov. 9-12, is:

- **Monday, Nov. 9, advancement:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.
- **Tuesday, Nov. 10, finance:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.

- **Wednesday, Nov. 11, public relations and marketing:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.
- **Thursday, Nov. 12: student engagement:** General sessions at 9 a.m., 10:30 a.m., forum at 2 p.m.

Questions about the ACI Fall Conference may be directed to [cwilloughby@acifund.org](mailto:cwilloughby@acifund.org)

## New ACI Corporate Partners: Ardeo Education Solutions and Degree Insurance

ACI welcomed two new [corporate partners](#) this fall, Ardeo Education Solutions and Degree Insurance. Corporate partners provide funding for ACI's professional development conferences, and they offer products and services relevant to higher education.



ACI now has nine corporate partners. In addition to Ardeo Education Solutions and Degree Insurance, ACI corporate partners include Baker Tilly, Bon Appetit, Expense Reduction Analysts, Michael Best, PNC, Paycor and Sikich.



[Ardeo Education Solutions](#) is a company that partners with higher education institutions to provide Loan Repayment Assistance Programs (LRAPs) for students and for colleges.

[Degree Insurance](#) is the first product in the U.S. that can guarantee a graduate's earnings in the five years after college.

Companies interested in becoming ACI corporate partners should contact Mick Weltman, ACI executive director at [mweltman@acifund.org](mailto:mweltman@acifund.org) or 312-263-2391, ext. 1.

## ACI Welcomes Rob Johnson to Board of Trustees

The newest member of the ACI Board of Trustees is [Rob Johnson](#), president of [Rob Johnson Communications](#), a Chicago strategic communications firm specializing in internal and external communications strategy, marketing and branding, message and media training, crisis management, business networking, and public and media relations, DEI training, and has produced virtual shareholder and company meetings for his valued clients.

Recently Johnson ran internal and external communications on a Covid Task Force for a firm as it dealt with these unique issues, even producing and hosting a number of webinars.

Johnson is also active on the boards of Special Olympics Illinois and Concussion Legacy Foundation. As a supporter of many not-for-profits, Rob has also helped several such organizations produce and host virtual fundraisers.

Prior to starting his own firm, Johnson was an Emmy Award-winning television news anchor and reporter at two Chicago TV stations for more than 20 years. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana.

With Johnson's addition, the [ACI Board of Trustees](#) includes 35 corporate members, plus the presidents of ACI's 26 member colleges and universities.



## Dominican University President Donna Carroll Announces Retirement After Nearly 30 Years



After almost three decades of visionary leadership, [Dominican University](#) President Donna M. Carroll has announced her retirement, effective June 2021, according to a university news release. The university is conducting a presidential search.

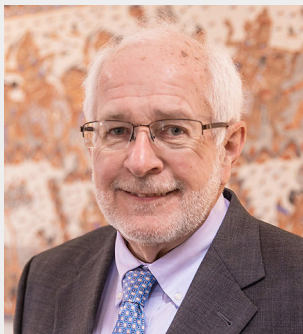
Appointed as Dominican's first lay president in 1994, Carroll was one of the youngest -- and one of few women -- college presidents in the country. She currently is one of the longest-serving university presidents in the state of Illinois.

Three years after her appointment, she guided the university through a successful name change -- from Rosary College to Dominican University, recognizing the institution's growth while honoring its founding Dominican Order.

Carroll has led the university during a period of extraordinary and sustained growth. During her tenure, the number of full-time faculty has doubled, new schools and programs have been established and the university's operating budget has increased four-fold. She has managed three campaigns that raised more than \$165 million in support for student aid, programs and facilities, including five endowed chairs, three new buildings, and countless scholarships in addition to significant federal grant support. It was during Carroll's tenure that the university purchased a second campus and, most recently, dedicated a new Learning Commons, an area encompassing integrated student services, study space and the WeatherTech Innovation Lab.

[Read more](#) about President Carroll.

## Principia College Names John Williams as President



After serving as interim president for eight months, Professor John W. Williams, J.D., was appointed as president of [Principia College](#) in July, according to a [college news release](#).

A longtime member of the Political Science Department, Williams was the inaugural recipient of the Principia College Horace Edwin Harper Jr. and Evelyn Wright Harper Award for Teaching Excellence in 2013. During his 37 years at the Principia, Williams has taught American government, law, and comparative politics courses, coached intercollegiate mock trial, moot court, and Model Illinois Government teams, served as pre-law advisor, and held additional teaching assignments in mass communication, global perspectives and history.

He has directed more than a dozen Principia study abroad programs to mainland East Asia and has served as a popular lecturer for the Principia Lifelong Learning and Summer Session programs. Williams was elected as president of the Faculty Senate for two separate terms and has also served two terms as president of the Illinois Political Science Association.



Before joining Principia, Williams worked in the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice and as an attorney in private practice. He earned a juris doctor degree from The George Washington University and is a 1976 graduate of Principia College.

## Publicity Club of Chicago Presents Silver Award to ACI's Annual Report

The [Publicity Club of Chicago](#) (PCC) presented a Silver Award Sept. 10 to ACI for the organization's [2018-2019 Annual Report](#).

The award to ACI was part of the PCC's annual [Golden Trumpet Awards](#) program. Because of the pandemic, this year's awards program was an online event.

Established in 1941, the PCC is Chicago's largest independent public relations organization.


ACI's 2018-2019 Annual Report was also recognized by the Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA) Chicago chapter. The chapter presented ACI's annual report an [Award of Excellence](#).



# Did You Know?

From ACI corporate partner Michael Best

## Navigating Higher Education

 Higher education institutions require experienced legal counsel to assist them in navigating their ever-increasing challenges and extraordinary opportunities.

As outside counsel to many colleges and universities, [Michael Best's Higher Education Group](#) provides a full range of legal services, from the everyday to the extraordinary, which assist higher education institutions in growing and thriving without compromising their missions. Many institutions, and all that they encompass, are at risk due to the pandemic.

Whether it be privacy and cybersecurity issues with transferring to online learning, the wave of class action lawsuits, financial uncertainties, employment challenges, Title IX policies and procedures, and/or the health and safety of students, faculty and staff, we have the legal and technical services available to assess and overcome these challenges. Read more about Michael Best's Higher Education experience and expertise [here](#).

## Please Save These Dates

- **Thursday, Oct. 29, 6 p.m.:** Reception for Patrick Steppan and Odessa Sagli, Knox College, winners of the [150 Media Stream Scholarship for Digital Art](#), cosponsored with ACI, 150 N. Riverside, Chicago. ([Read more](#))
- **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 webinars.
- **Friday, Nov. 13:** [Work and Life Skills Boot Camp](#), "Who am I, and Where am I Going?"
- **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



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. 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](mailto:mweltman@acifund.org).



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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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