



Associated Colleges of Illinois

Cristan Newton
Rockford University
CIC/UPS Scholarship



Cristan Newton knew in high school that he wanted to be an IT specialist, the person who helps solve computer problems. His longtime interest in computers and technology led to a major in computer science at [Rockford University](#), with a concentration in cybersecurity and a minor in business administration. Newton, from Shreveport, Louisiana, is a senior.

Newton came to Rockford at the suggestion of a friend who enrolled in the university's theater program. While at Rockford, Newton has been a member of the university's track and cross-country teams and helped start an archery club. He is a resident assistant and has served in roles such as president of the Student Government Association and Black Student Union.

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He's also a reservist in the U.S. Marine Corps. This summer, Newton will finish the second increment of Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia, and when he graduates later this year, he will accept a commission as an officer and go on active duty working in cyberwarfare. "I have a great interest in cybersecurity and hacking, and cyberwarfare is something I've wanted to do. It's a very demanding field, and it's very selective, Newton says. "I also knew I would eventually want to serve my country. I didn't know which branch, but I knew I wanted a challenge, and the Marine Corps presented the greatest challenge to me. I've been extremely blessed to be on the path that I'm on." After the Marines, Newton hopes to continue in the cybersecurity field, working as private sector consultant or in civilian government service.

Newton is the recipient of an CIC/UPS Scholarship from Rockford University through ACI. While the Marines pay for some college costs, Newton, one of five children, pays the rest himself

and the scholarship is a significant help. "I'm an independent student," he says. "If I didn't find the funding, then I'd have to find another place to live and place to work somewhere. When I was selected for the UPS scholarship, my first thought was, 'Wow. That takes the weight off my shoulders.' It is the difference between borrowing a book for the semester or just not having a book. It's been extremely helpful and beneficial receiving that scholarship."

Newton adds that he is grateful for donors who provide scholarships. "Their continued support allows students to do great things," Newton adds.