



Juan Rios-Narciso
Illinois Wesleyan University
ACI General Scholarship



Juan Rios-Narciso is an entrepreneur and business owner who also happens to be a college student majoring in philosophy at [Illinois Wesleyan University](#) (IWU). Rios-Narciso, one of three brothers in the family, says his mother, a housekeeper, and his father, a farmhand whom he worked with during summers, dreamed of owning a business.

Inspired by their dream, Rios-Narciso has opened related businesses in Colfax, Illinois: "Azteca Pan," a bakery he operates with this mother, and most recently, "Sabor de Mexico" or "Taste of Mexico," a restaurant that serves authentic Mexican food.

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At the bakery, Rios-Narciso and his mother bake Mexican sweetbread, a favorite of his growing up. Over the years, his mother perfected her recipe. "We'd get it from the stores every week. But now, I don't have to. I can go talk to my mom, and then we'll make

bread together. That's really what the bakery is," he says. The restaurant idea is Rios-Narciso's way of preserving traditional Mexican food, not the same as "Tex-Mex" food commonly served in the U.S. "I wanted to try to find a way to preserve Mexican tradition, and of course, preserve my mother's cooking as well. I always said she has the best food. Now I'm going to prove it," Rios-Narciso says.

All of this is happening while he concludes his junior year at IWU. Originally from Arrowsmith, Illinois, Rios-Narciso was introduced to IWU during a school trip to visit colleges. Soon after starting at IWU, Rios-Narciso focused his many interests on philosophy, political science and entrepreneurship. He had never taken a philosophy course until college, and it was ethics, in particular, that spurred his interest in the topic. He's also interested in immigration policy and reform, which is why he also takes political science courses. And after college? "I plan to go to law school with an MBA dual-degree program. Of course, I'll still be running the business," he says. And later, he wants to serve in public office.

Helping to make Rios-Narciso's dreams come true is an ACI General Scholarship. "All of the scholarships and all of the aid I received have been really helpful," he says. "It not only takes the weight off my parents, but also myself. It's definitely helped me in tremendous ways." Rios-Narciso is also grateful for scholarship donors. "I just want to say thank you from me and my family for letting me have this opportunity and letting me have this experience in college," he adds.

As part of his college experience, Rios-Narciso participates in IWU's Philosophy Club, the university's Ethics Bowl Team and is a philosophy tutor. He's also part of the university's Spanish and Latino Student Association and has worked at a grocery store and several restaurants.