It is because of the generosity of our many donors that the Illinois Promise scholarship continues to be awarded to deserving Illinois undergraduates each year. We are sincerely grateful for your support. If you would like to make a contribution to Illinois Promise, please go to give.illinois.edu.

GIVING TO ILLINOIS PROMISE

A staple of Illinois Promise is its first-year mentoring program, designed to ease the transition to college for new freshmen and transfer students. During the 2015-2016 academic year, 83 students elected to participate in Illinois Promise and were matched with a mentor (who are academic professionals, faculty, retired faculty, graduate students, and community members). Mentors and mentees participate in skill building and community activities throughout the one-year commitment, and many choose to continue their connection year after year.

Students who work with an Illinois Promise mentor typically earn higher grade point averages (GPA) than their peers who choose not to participate in the mentorship program. In 2015-2016, the average GPA of 1-Promise scholars with a mentor was 3.06 whereas the average GPA of students not participating in the mentorship program was 2.64.

In addition to first-year mentoring, Illinois Promise also offers a variety of other opportunities to ensure the success of its scholars. In 2015-2016 and the years preceding, students participated in:

- Financial literacy workshops on topics like budgeting and identity theft
- Career workshops on topics like internships and interviewing
- Student Organization (RSO) recognition events such as the Illini Union Bookstore, TCF Bank,
- Counseling Center, The Career Center, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, the Illinois Leadership
- Community organizations to coordinate I-Promise enrichment opportunities. Special thanks to the Counseling Center, The Career Center, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, the Illinois Leadership Center, the Illini Union Bookstore, TCAP Bank, University Housing, and the cultural houses.

Even though I have been a teacher for more than 40 years, seeing a mentor in Illinois has been an unexpected pleasure and learning experience for me.

— Sam Reese, Illinois Promise Mentor and Associate Professor, Music, Education, University of Illinois

When I came to the university, I felt lost, alone and didn’t think I belonged here. Luckily I met an wonderful and brilliant mentor, Sari. Her support made me feel the potential I truly possessed.

— Sari Hopkins, Undergrad, Class of 2019

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In 2016, a total of 129 I-Promise students who entered Fall 2013 graduated with a BA, BS or BFA degree. Combined with other cohorts of I-Promise graduates, including transfer students, there are now 3,130 alumni.

The chart to the left shows the percentage of Promise Scholars in different cohorts (2005-2012) who graduated. On average 56% of I-Promise scholars graduate in 4 years (16% higher than the national 4-year average) and 80% graduate within 6 years (10% higher than the national 6-year average).

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

While I-Promise scholars qualify for and receive federal, state, institutional and/or private grants and scholarships, for many, that aid does not match their full need. The I-Promise award closes the gap between a student’s cost of attendance and the other financial aid they receive. In the 2015-2016 academic year I-Promise funding totaled $8,438,962. The financial support students receive through I-Promise enables them to engage in activities and experiences that will enhance their educational journey and pave the way to their successful futures.

Donor Impact on Cost of an Illinois Education 2015-2016

On average, over 25% of an I-Promise Scholar’s educational expenses are covered by donor funding.

I-PROMISE STUDENTS ARE...

Leaders

Anh Hung, "Diamond" Nguyen, Communication, Class of 2018

Anh Hung has grown as a leader in the Vietnamese Student Association, assisting with cultural events, fundraising, and connecting with a diverse community.

Volunteers

Sarah Hasan, Molecular and Cellular Biology, Class of 2018

Sarah spends several hours each week volunteering at community-based homeless shelters with Alpha Phi Omega, the service fraternity.

Researchers

David Salami, Integrative Biology, Class of 2019

After attending information sessions offered by Illinois Promise, David is a research assistant in a renal and cardiovascular research program, where he studies the impact of dietary sodium education on physical function and quality of life.

Global citizens

Tul Elbeddy, Global Studies, Class of 2017

Tul studied abroad in Paris, France, where he worked for the non-profit Hetromba on a wide range of issues, from environmental sustainability to aiding new refugees.

OUTCOMES

I-Promise Graduates

According to the Illinois Success Survey of Illinois graduates, recent I-Promise grade have pursued graduate education at universities such as Harvard, Columbia, Rochester and Illinois and have gained employment in a variety of industries at organizations such as:

- Aon Hewitt
- Autism Learning Partners
- Cerner
- The Hartford
- Metra PCS
- National Turkey Federation
- Navisail Financial
- Pearson
- Rosecrance
- Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville
- ThyssenKrupp Presta
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Extension

SOURCES

• Donor Impact on Cost of an Illinois Education 2015-2016

• Program Profile, Academic Year 2015-2016

• Diversity of I-Promise Students, Academic Year 2015-2016

• Student Cohorts

• Illinois Promise is an access scholarship program initiated in 2005 to provide high-achieving, low-income students an opportunity to attend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I-Promise helps cover educational expenses including tuition, fees, room and board, books and supplies. In addition, enrichment programs are offered to foster student success. Funding is provided by both institutional and private sources, including individual and corporate donors.

• There is no application to become an Illinois Promise Scholar. Students are admitted to the university and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Then, the Office of Student Financial Aid determines eligibility using several criteria:

  • Family income at or below the federal poverty level ($23,834 for a family of four)
  • Family assets of less than $50,000 at time of admission
  • Expected Family Contribution (EFC) equal to 0
  • Illinois residency under age 24 (does not include home)

• In return, students must maintain eligibility for the scholarship by earning a minimum 2.0 grade point average and enrolling full-time (12 hours and more), among other criteria. They are also offered a Federal Work Study position and have the opportunity to earn income bi-weekly through part-time employment (does not include home).

• Donor Impact on Cost of an Illinois Education 2015-2016

• On average, over 25% of an I-Promise Scholar’s educational expenses are covered by donor funding.

• $30,336-$35,340 Total Cost of an Illinois Education (including one year of tuition, fees, room & board, books and other expenses)

• $7,843 Average I-Promise Award Per Student

• Illinois Promise Program, by College, Academic Year 2015-2016

• Diversity of I-Promise Students, Academic Year 2015-2016

• Enrollment of I-Promise Scholars by College, Academic Year 2015-2016

• Outcomes

• 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

• 1,300+ Illinois Promise graduates of the last decade. For 150 years, Illinois has delivered on our land-grant obligation to be a place where transformative educational experiences are open to everyone with the will to learn. It was a promise our state made in 1867. It is the Illinois Promise that we’re celebrating in this current academic year.

Robert J. Jones, Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign