Research
In 2012, research continued in two areas. First, a study was conducted on how well the mentoring component of the program works, based on mid-year and end-of-year surveys over the past two and a half years. In addition, first-semester GPA and freshmen retention rates were included as measures. The majority of mentees (90%) reported that their mentor helped in easing the transition to college. Also, students with mentors earned a higher first-semester GPA than did students without mentors. Students with mentors also exhibited a higher freshmen retention rate. However, because the data are correlational, it is not possible to draw firm conclusions. Mentoring could enhance academic performance or, alternatively, better performing students may be more inclined to seek mentors. Further analysis is needed.

The second research project examined graduation rates of underrepresented and/or low-income students admitted to Illinois in 2005 and 2006. Preliminary results suggest that the first-semester GPA is crucial in predicting graduation rates. At present, interventions occur when students are on academic probation (generally at or below a 2.0 GPA). This study revealed that students with a first-semester GPA in the range of 2.0 to 2.3 are at risk of not graduating. Future work will explore GPA throughout the first two years to better understand when academic support is most needed.

The purpose of the mentoring program is to help ease the transition to college for freshmen and transfer students. Since its inception in 2009, the mentoring aspect of the program has grown from 29% to 43% voluntary participation by students. Orientation training for mentor and mentees, ongoing support, opportunities to develop skills, and community-building events are features of the I-Promise mentoring program. Mentors make a one-year commitment to serve in this role, but several mentors and students (like Pat Justice with mentee Lorial Latimer in the photo below) continue their connections year after year.

I absolutely adore my mentor. The remarkable thing about our connection is that when we met we were the complete opposite, but three years later we have so many similarities and an inexplicable connection that will last a lifetime. As a senior, I know I would not have made it this far without her. I will be eternally grateful for Illinois Promise for giving me a mentor, a family member, and a best friend.”

- Lorial Latimer, ‘13 Communication

Mentoring is not a one-way street. The first time I met with Lorial, I knew that I wanted to be with her for her entire journey through her undergraduate days. She has enriched my life in so many ways not the least of which is to make me more aware of what it is like to be a student on campus. I will miss seeing her on a regular basis when she graduates but I know that we will be friends for life.”

- Pat Justice, Mentor

Special Thanks
Partnerships exist with a number of campus units and community organizations to coordinate I-Promise enrichment opportunities. Special thanks to: the Counseling Center; the Career Center; Office of Minority and Student Affairs; the Leadership Center; the Illini Union Bookstore; TCF Bank; University Housing; and the cultural houses.

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Visit Us Online:
illinois.edu/illinoispromise
illinois.edu/giving/illinoispromise.html
In 2012, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Morrill Act—the law that led directly to the 1867 founding of the University of Illinois. That legislative act created a door to educational opportunity that this campus has been pushing further open every single year. We have built this university on the idea that access to learning and to the Illinois experience isn’t based on where you come from, what your parents did, or the size of your bank account.

The Illinois Promise program is among the proudest examples of that commitment on this campus. These students come to us with great expectations and high aspirations. We have an obligation to make sure they depart as lifelong members of the Illinois family.

In this report, I think you’ll see that here and now, with these students and with members of the Illinois family.

Phyllis M. Wise
Vice President, University of Illinois
Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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. Educational expenses, including tuition, fees, room and board, and books and supplies are covered. In addition, enrichment programs are offered to foster student success.

Students do not apply to become an Illinois Promise scholar. Rather, students gain admittance to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), and then the Office of Student Financial Aid determines eligibility based on the following criteria:

- Illinois residency
- Under the age of 24 as of fall of incoming academic year
- Family income at or below the federal poverty level ($22,350 for a family of four)
- Family assets of less than $50,000 (does not include the home)

The Illinois Promise program, its supporters, and the student/alumni mentors are truly making a difference on campus. The program encourages students to form lifetime relationships with mentors and students and empowers students to excel academically. I am grateful that I had i-Promise as a resource, and I am excited about the continued success and impact the program will have on students.”

- Jimmy Danzy, ‘12 Accounting

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PROFILE

Illinois Promise Student Profile - Academic Year 11/12

- Incoming class: 192 students (98% are transfer students)
- Total students: 640
- 58% are female
- 79% of students applied to and were accepted at other colleges in addition to the University of Illinois*
- 77% are first-generation college students*

* Based on spring, 2012 Illinois Promise Student Survey

Students Served in the Illinois Promise Program

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<th>Academic Year</th>
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