

GIVING TO ILLINOIS PROMISE

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 visit [give.illinois.edu](http://give.illinois.edu).



“It is only because of a downstate county scholarship to the University of Illinois in 1939 that our family’s three-generation tradition of college education could have begun. Illinois Promise provides a new generation of talented young people and their families the same opportunity. We give to the program confident in their abilities, spirit, and perseverance.”

—Mary Vieregg (BS ’72, MS ’73 – Liberal Arts & Sciences)  
& James Vieregg (BS ’72, MAS ’73 – Business)

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- Mary and Jim Vieregg Endowed Scholarship Fund in Support of Illinois Promise
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ENRICHMENT



“Even though I have been a teacher for more than 40 years, serving as a mentor to Xuan has been an unexpected pleasure and learning experience for me.”

—Sam Reese, Illinois Promise Mentor and Associate Professor Emeritus, 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 my wonderful and brilliant mentor Sam. His support made me see the potential in myself again.”

—Xuan Huynh, Undeclared, Class of 2019

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 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 connect 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 I-Promise scholars with a mentor was 3.06 whereas the average GPA of students not participating in the mentorship program was 2.88.

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 identify theft
- Career workshops on topics like internships and interviewing
- Alumni mentoring
- Business etiquette dinners
- Research and study abroad information sessions
- The Illinois Promise Registered Student Organization (RSO)
- Social gatherings such as the Spring BBQ
- Recognition events such as the Chancellor’s Welcome Reception and a senior congratulatory event

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, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, the Illinois Leadership Center, the Illini Union Bookstore, TCF Bank, University Housing, and the cultural houses.

Office of Student Financial Aid  
620 E. John St. | Champaign, IL 61820  
[finaid@illinois.edu](mailto:finaid@illinois.edu) | 217-333-0100

Sarah Watson, Director  
Campus Scholar Mentoring Programs  
Campus Center for Advising and Academic Services  
807 S. Wright St., Floor 5 | Champaign, IL 61820  
[sdwatson@illinois.edu](mailto:sdwatson@illinois.edu) | 217-333-4710



Annual Report  
2015–2016

I

ILLINOIS  
PROMISE

ACCESS TO THE ILLINOIS EXPERIENCE

CHANCELLOR’S MESSAGE



This fall marks the eleventh year of the Illinois Promise program here at Illinois. More than 260 new Illinois Promise scholars joined our largest freshman class on record. We’re proud to welcome this new class to the campus, and we are excited to watch them follow in the footsteps of the 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 annual report.

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

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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 (does not include home)
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC) equal to \$0
  - Illinois residency, under age 24 at time of admission

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 on campus. To learn more about Illinois Promise, visit [osfa.illinois.edu/types-of-aid/illinois-promise](https://osfa.illinois.edu/types-of-aid/illinois-promise).

Program Profile, Academic Year 2015-2016

1,076

Total I-Promise Scholars

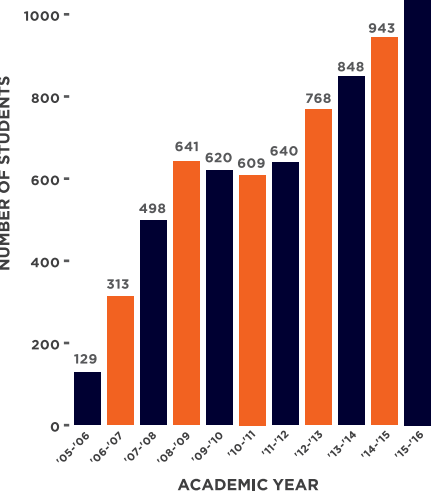
333

I-Promise Scholars in the FA15 incoming class (14.4% transfer students)

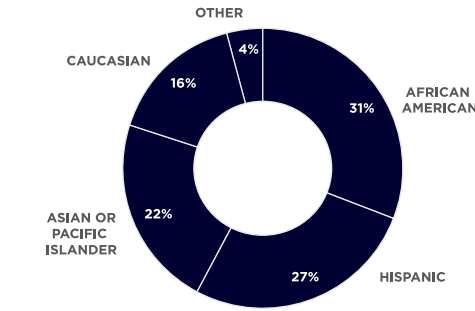
65%

First generation

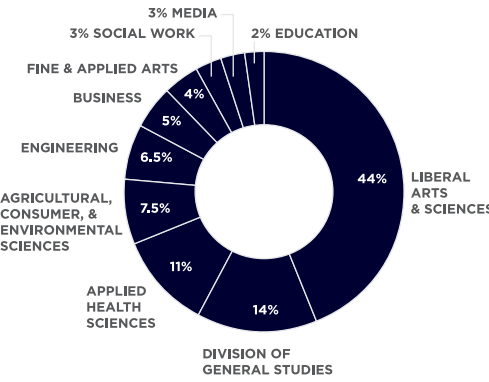
Students Served in the I-Promise Program



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



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

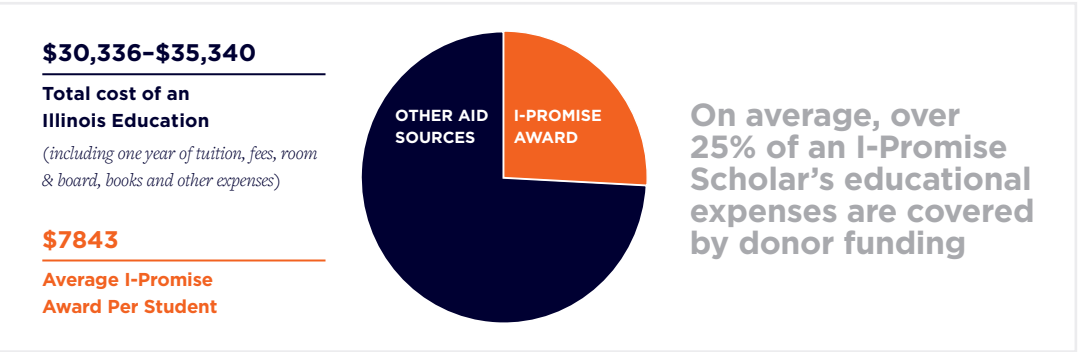


YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

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



I-PROMISE STUDENTS ARE...



**Leaders**  
Anhsang ‘Diamond’ Nguyen, Communication, Class of 2018

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



**Volunteers**  
Sarah Hassan, 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.

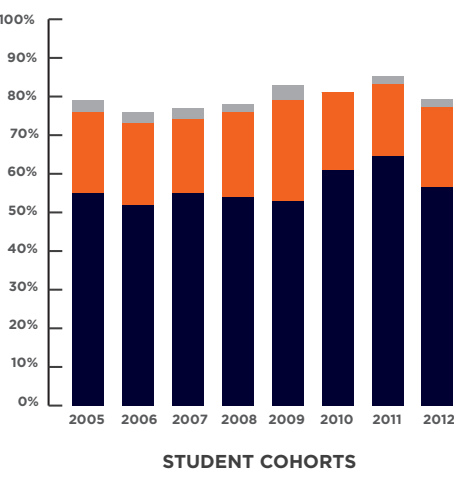


**Global citizens**  
Tul Elsiddig, Global Studies, Class of 2017

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

OUTCOMES

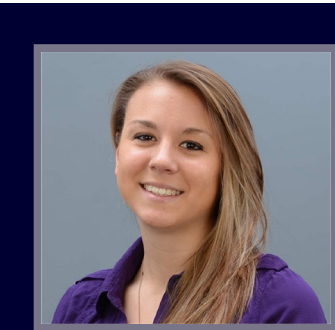
I-Promise Graduates



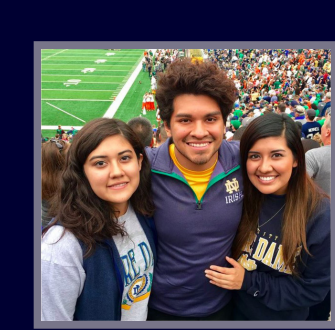
In 2016, a total of 129 I-Promise students who entered Fall 2012 graduated with a BA, BS or BFA degree. Combined with other cohorts of I-Promise graduates, including transfer students, there are now 1,310 alumni.

The chart to the left shows the percentage of I-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 I-Promise graduation rates increase to 77% in 5 years and 79% in 6 years (almost \*20% higher than the national 6-year average).

\* Source: National Center for Education Statistics  
■ 4 years ■ 5 years ■ 6 years



“Simply put, the Illinois Promise grant is responsible for all of the success I have had throughout my college career and after, because without it I wouldn’t have been able to attend this university. Throughout my college years, I worked on two research projects, took part in two study abroad trips, worked at the Campus Recreation Center and received an honorary award from the Geology Department. My degree, travel, research, internship, achievements, and current job as an Environmental Assessment Specialist with the Illinois State Geological Survey, would not have happened if it weren’t for this one scholarship that made it all possible.”  
—Tiffany Vlahopoulos, Geology, 2016 Graduate



“I dreamed of being able to attend the University of Illinois and the Illinois Promise program made that dream possible, not only for me, but for my little brother and sister as well. I will never be able to thank Illinois Promise enough, for believing in us, and giving us the opportunity to pursue our dreams. Being a part of the Illinois Promise program taught me that our stories and experiences matter. I have come to believe that the adversities in our lives are not burdens, rather blessings, because through them we are able to find extraordinary strength within ourselves. Now, as a PhD student in Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, this is the message I hope will prevail through my work as an academic.”  
—Romelia Solano, Political Science & Latina/Latino Studies, 2016 Graduate

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

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