Dear Alumni, Faculty, Students, Staff and Friends:

Visiting with students is one of the great pleasures of my job as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. I love to hear them talk about their families, their dreams, and the challenges they’ve overcome to get where they are today. Most of all, I enjoy hearing how their experiences at the University of Illinois have changed the way they view themselves and the world.

Student Affairs’ people and programs touch the lives of virtually every student, virtually every day. Our goal is to develop the whole student: socially, intellectually and physically. Sometimes our people and programs inspire an “aha!” moment that leads a student to pursue a new career path or re-examine a long-held belief. Other times, the change is more gradual and cumulative—the result of multiple experiences over a longer period of time. Either way, these transformational experiences rarely happen by chance!

Diversity on our campus takes many forms, and U of I students—like the rest of us—are much more than “just” black or white, straight or gay, Buddhist or Christian. The needs of a 30-year-old female military veteran who’s married with young children will be very different from the needs of a single 18-year-old male who came to the University right out of high school—even if they’re of the same ethnicity, come from the same hometown, and are enrolled in the same academic program.

In Student Affairs, our goal is to support all of our students and to provide the kinds of transformational experiences that will change their lives for the better. I thank you for your continued support of the Student Affairs programs and collaborations that are changing our students’ lives every day.

C. Renée Romano

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Kari Wozniak had two main goals when she enrolled in Global Studies at the U of I: to get involved, and to be a leader. She remembers her first Quad Day, when nearly every student club and organization “seemed to want me and better yet, for me to be a leader in their group.”

After two weeks of one informational meeting after another, she started feeling a little overwhelmed and wondering what leadership really meant.

The LeaderShape and Leadership Certificate programs at the Illinois Leadership Center (ILC) helped Kari define her leadership style and articulate her vision.

They made her “think, question, criticize and analyze nearly everything”, and prompted her to focus her skills in the areas where she could do the most good.

A paraprofessional internship at The Career Center helped Kari build on what she had learned through ILC. She credits her Career Center mentors with teaching her how to juggle multiple priorities and network more effectively. “I learned so much at The Career Center,” she said. “I made mistakes, but the staff were so willing to teach me what I should know from my mistake and just move on from it.”

Her Leadership Center and Career Center experiences gave her added confidence as she went into her junior year abroad and helped her get more out of her fall semester in Ecuador and spring semester in India.

“My interests in poverty and hunger and things like that haven’t changed, but I’ve been a lot more focused on what I actually think needs to be done. I’ve refined my passion and grown up a lot,” Kari said.

She says she’s loved working with The Career Center and the Illinois Leadership Center because, “there’s so much to them. It’s almost like a free gift. I can’t believe how much students are missing when they don’t access these resources.”

“After I participated in LeaderShape, I shifted from wanting to have a leadership position just to be more involved, to finding those positions and opportunities that fit what I cared about and felt I could be most effective at.”

Kari Wozniak, Senior, Global Studies & Spanish

The Illinois Leadership Center celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2012.
First-generation college students at the U of I are bright, motivated and determined to succeed. But their road to success can be a little bumpy if they’re of limited means and their families aren’t sure how to help them from many miles away.

RISE (Readying Illinois Students for Excellence) brings first-year/first-generation minority students and their families to campus a few days before the start of the fall semester. Students meet others who may have the same questions and concerns, learn more about the resources available to them, and create a network of friends, faculty and staff they can rely on when they need a little extra help. RISE also helps parents feel more comfortable and confident about sending their children to a large campus that may be far from home.

Now in its third year, RISE is showing some promising results. Retention rates and grade-point averages among RISE participants are higher than for minority students in general. And best of all, the students say it works!

“I’d never really thought of myself as a first-generation college student, and I didn’t realize how much help I would need as a first-generation student. Coming to campus early was really helpful, because it gave me time to wander around and find my classes. And of course, meeting the other RISE students. These were students that had things in common with me, so a lot of us still go out even as juniors now.”

Naomi Hill, Junior, Sociology & Political Science, member of the first RISE cohort
Retention programs such as 100 Strong and the Black and Latino Male Summit build on each other to create a supportive environment that makes it possible for students of color to stay in school, complete their degrees and fulfill their potential. The ongoing support of staff and peers at the cultural centers, and recognition events such as the Mom’s Day Scholastic Awards, also help keep students focused on the future.

While the U of I recruits only top-performing students, success in high school doesn’t guarantee that a student will complete his or her degree. Male students of color are particularly likely to leave school early.

Illinois’ retention efforts seem to be working. In recent years, between 70 and 75 percent of African American students at the U of I have graduated; the number for Latino students has hovered right around 70 percent. Nationally, the African-American graduation rate at four-year schools is about 42 percent; for Latino students, it’s around 48 percent.

The U of I’s second annual Black & Latino Male Summit brought nearly 200 male college students together to discuss common issues, share their experiences and strategies for success, and rededicate themselves to achievement. It was sponsored by La Casa Cultural Latina and the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center (BNAACC).

100 Strong aims to retain 100 percent of African American students who enroll at the U of I. Community-building, peer mentoring, leadership development and networking are key parts of the program, which is coordinated by the BNAACC.

On the Black and Latino Male Summit:

“As an African American, as a Black, it was good because I got to see that I’m not the only person going through certain issues, and that you can collaborate and you can come together to work on and address these issues. So that was my ‘aha’ moment: that inclusiveness and intercultural relations are important for society to grow. Not just for students on campus – but to continue this education post-graduation and to spread the word about how important these missions are.

“One thing that 100 Strong and the African American Cultural Center do is that they create a home away from home. The atmosphere they produced for me was one that was conducive for success here at this university. So without that, I wouldn’t have succeeded. Without BNAACC, I probably wouldn’t still be here today.”

*Bradley Harrison, Junior, Kinesiology & Chemistry, and 100 Strong Student Intern*
Shikhank Sharma and Ali Freter didn’t seem to have much in common when they met as student interns with the Illini Union’s Office of Volunteer Programs (OVP). But they soon found that they shared a passion for service learning – and a desire to get others involved.

So Ali and Shikhank teamed up with OVP director Vaneetta Williams to develop OVP’s new Service Ambassador Program. It’s a six-week, non-credit program that helps students channel their interest into volunteerism that makes a difference.

Using real-life issues and service-learning projects in the Champaign-Urbana community, the program begins with a look at local issues, including poverty, hunger and food insecurity. Through hands-on projects and activities, Service Ambassadors learn about needs-assessment, project-planning, leadership for nonprofits, team-building, careers in nonprofit organizations and more.

“If you get a group of students together who are interested and involved in the same thing, and they’re willing to put in their time, it’s pretty incredible what can get done,” said Ali, now a graduate student at George Washington University.

Shikhank, who served as the Barbara Seaquist Williams intern in OVP, says his internship built on other experiences he had as a U of I student. He’s originally from India, and in his first two years at the U of I he “was surrounded by all these cool people” in the Global Crossroads Living-Learning Community (LLC).

While Shikhank came to the U of I with interest in environmental issues, his coursework and other experiences led to “this sort of revelation … that environmental issues and social issues are connected, not separate.

“I love working with people, and I also love working on projects that actually make change ‘on the ground’ and make a difference,” he said.

The OVP’s student-run Thanksgiving Basket Drive benefited more than 700 people in need throughout Champaign County.
It may not surprise you to learn that there’s a place called the Innovation Garage at the University of Illinois. You might not guess that it’s part of the Illinois Street Residence Hall.

The Innovation Living-Learning Community (LLC) offers student-entrepreneurs much more than just a home on campus. It provides a supportive group of like-minded peers who can help them turn their dreams into small-business successes.

Innovation’s 130 residents come from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, and they thrive on collaboration and competition. The “How I Failed” lecture series introduces them to entrepreneurs whose initial setbacks led to later success. The Garage provides a well-equipped space where they can study, socialize and brainstorm together.

Building a sense of community—and long-lasting relationships—is a goal of all nine LLCs at the U of I. Alumni may remember Allen Hall’s Unit One, established in 1971, as the campus’ original LLC. Today, Unit One has 650 residents and thousands of alumni across the country and around the world.

“For me, the Innovation LLC is primarily a home, because not only do I live there, but I also have this network of people who understand what I’m going to do and how I think. So that’s really kind of a rare experience, and very special for me.”

Janna Eaves, Sophomore, Materials Science and Engineering, and Innovation LLC Resident

About 2,000 students live in the nine LLCs located throughout University Housing’s residence halls. LLCs offer programs, resource people and facilities to support the interests of the community members:

- Global Crossroads – Saunders Hall
- Health Professions – Oglesby Hall
- Innovation – Illinois Street Residence Halls
- Intersections (cultural diversity) – Babcock Hall
- Leadership Education through Academic Development and Service (LEADS) – Hopkins Hall
- Sustainability – Lincoln Avenue Residence Halls
- Unit One – Allen Hall
- Exploration (careers) – Weston Hall
- Women in Math, Science and Engineering (WIMSE) – Trelease Hall
For the past two years, *GI Jobs* magazine has cited the U of I as an especially military-friendly university, thanks largely to the efforts of staff at The Career Center and Veterans Student Support Services.

As one of about 400 U.S. military veterans enrolled at the U of I, Geri Young may not be the “typical” graduate student in social work. Yet her chosen field reflects a deep commitment to her fellow veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

“One of the defining features of my generation of veterans is peer support,” Geri said. And a new space to call their own—a veterans’ lounge within the Illini Union—is evidence of the University’s renewed commitment to those who have served in the military.

Geri is Vice-President of the Illini Veterans student organization, which began advocating for the new gathering space about three years ago. Illini Veterans worked with the Veterans Student Support Services (VSSS) office and the Union to find an ideal spot in the heart of campus.

The median age of veterans on campus is 26. Veterans may need many of the same kinds of assistance as their civilian classmates: financial aid, childcare, career counseling or healthcare. At the same time, “We’re non-traditional students with unique needs, diverse personal histories, and risk factors associated with our population that many other students on campus don’t have.”

For example, veterans may go from earning a full-time salary to drawing a much smaller monthly stipend—with frequent delays in payments from the Veterans Benefits Administration—and University procedures that were created to accommodate more traditional types of financial aid. Financial strains can be a serious problem, especially for veterans who have families to support.

VSSS staff have “really helped out a lot with making sure that any issues we’re having are at least getting looked at,” said Army veteran and engineering student Johnny Watts.

“We rely heavily on the experiences of our fellow veterans not only in terms of benefits information, but for life in general,” Geri said. “The social support we provide one another is paramount. We hold each other accountable, and we are there for one another.”

For the past two years, *GI Jobs* magazine has cited the U of I as an especially military-friendly university, thanks largely to the efforts of staff at The Career Center and Veterans Student Support Services.
Maintaining a balanced, healthy lifestyle isn’t always easy for college students, especially for students who belong to groups that typically are under-served.

McKinley Health Center’s Special Populations Program has provided services and programs to meet the unique health-related needs of thousands of minority students, international students, women, LGBT students and students with disabilities.

The “Special Pops” peer educators maintain an online clearinghouse that provides 24/7 access to information on multicultural health concerns. They also work with academic departments, housing units, student organizations and other groups to provide timely information to students who can benefit from it.

McKinley isn’t the only Student Affairs unit that provides programs to meet the health-related needs of specific groups.

Beckwith Residential Support Services is a cooperative venture between the Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) and University Housing. This community, on the first floor of Nugent Hall, allows students with and without disabilities to live together and learn from each other in a brand-new residence hall designed to accommodate most disabilities.

Campus Recreation also offers programs for students with disabilities, those with special dietary concerns, and others with specific needs. Campus Rec’s new instructional kitchen has hosted hands-on workshops and demonstrations for groups including the Genetic Student Leadership Committee, Campus Vegan Society, Native American Student Organization and Nugent Hall residents.

Since 1991, more than 70 other universities have used McKinley’s Special Pops program as a model.
Spend a few minutes talking with students who are involved at one of the campus’ six cultural centers and the phrase “home away from home” is likely to come up early and often.

The cultural centers offer a safe space in which students who sometimes feel like outsiders can socialize and be themselves. Staff and student interns provide support and mentoring. Weekly “Lunch on Us” lecture-discussions and other events help extend learning outside the classroom, as do other programs throughout the academic year.

The cultural centers also encourage students to reach beyond their comfort zone. Like other young adults, U of I students may find themselves struggling with intersecting personal and social identities—the idea that they (and others) are more than “just” Latina or Jewish or gay. Staff at the cultural centers are trained to help students with the process of reconciling multiple social identities that seem to be in conflict with each other.

The cultural centers also collaborate with other Student Affairs units including the Illinois Leadership Center, The Career Center and the Counseling Center to offer workshops and other programs aimed at helping culturally diverse students succeed – and thrive.

“If you’re going through struggles, if you don’t know who to talk to, if you’ve experienced something traumatizing, the staff are there for you. They definitely have your back.”

Amber Charles, Senior, Sociology/Pre-Law, and Student Intern, Women’s Resources Center

“A lot of people – not just me – either choose (to emphasize) our sexual orientation, identity or our race/ethnicity. Before I started working at the LGBT Center I was like, ‘OK, I’m gay, whatever.’ But I wasn’t comfortable being Asian American too. It’s kind of sad, when I think back on it now. Working with Kenny Importante at the Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) really got me thinking about my Asian identity along with my sexual orientation, my gender, and really connecting them all together.”

Kevin Ng, Senior, Community Health, and Student Intern, LGBT Resource Center

Student Affairs’ Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Realtions (OIIR) is the administrative home of Diversity and Social Justice Education Programs as well as the campus’ six cultural centers:

• Asian American Cultural Center
• Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center
• La Casa Cultural Latina
• Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource Center
• Native American House
• Women’s Resources Center
David Olsen is passionate about the University of Illinois. So passionate, in fact, that he joined the Chancellor’s Circle of donors—those who give a minimum of $2,500 annually—within a year after his 2011 graduation.

Even though he’s just begun his career in regulatory affairs with BP in Chicago, he’s chosen to donate generously because he believes the Illinois experience he enjoyed is at risk.

“As graduates, we should want and hope that the same quality of education and experience – or even better—is there” for current and future students, he said. “We don’t want students in the future to be negatively impacted by the fact that the State of Illinois is no longer able to pick up its share of support for public higher education. That makes it imperative that young donors support the University of Illinois and continue to support it for a long time to come.”

David earned bachelor’s degrees in Finance and Management, and he gained a better understanding of the university’s funding issues when he served as student body president (2010-2011). Within Student Affairs, he donates to the Illinois Experience and the Emergency Dean Funds.

His engagement with the campus goes well beyond providing financial support. He mentors students in the College of Business and he stays connected with the current student government leaders who were underclassmen when he served as president. In the fall of 2012, he began serving on the Student Affairs Advisory Council.

Younger alumni sometimes think they need to wait to “give back” until they have more career experience or are able to donate larger sums. David says the need for young alumni assistance has never been more urgent.

“This is not something we’ll be worrying about 20 years down the line; it’s happening right now. And if we aren’t there to help support the university—even in the immediate future—it’s not going to provide the same level and richness of experiences and opportunities.”
ILLINOIS LEADERSHIP CENTER
www.illinois.leadership.illinois.edu
- Eight students graduated with a minor in Leadership Studies in May; more than 120 students have already enrolled in this interdisciplinary minor in the first year it was available.
- Last year saw a 42 percent increase in StrengthsQuest and DiSC personal assessment workshops, with more than 1,842 students served.
- The first annual Illinois Leadership Research Conference was held in April 2012; it featured sessions on leadership research by faculty and graduate students.

THE CAREER CENTER (TCC)
careercenter.illinois.edu
- Served 24,602 students in programs, workshops and individual appointments. The second annual All-Campus Career Fair drew more than 900 students and 111 employers.
- Just over 50 percent of one-to-one clients with known race/ethnicity were students of color: 9 percent Black/African-American (5 percent of total student population); 32 percent Asian (11 percent of total student population) and 7 percent Latino/a (6 percent of total student population).
- Based on analysis by the Communications Team, TCC significantly reduced its print advertising and increased its social media efforts. A TCC blog reaches an average of 250 readers per week, and Facebook posts reach more than 17,300 people per month.

COUNSELING CENTER
www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu
- More than 10,350 individual appointments were scheduled last year in the Therapeutic Services Area. Same-day scheduling kept the no-show rate below 2 percent.
- Nearly 95 percent of freshmen took part in ACE-IT (Alcohol Culture Explored–Interactive Theatre) workshop. A new ACE-IT program was offered for international students.
- Client surveys indicated that more than 90 percent of clients strongly agreed or agreed that counseling had helped improve their well-being, increased their understanding of their situation and helped them make positive changes in their lives.
OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS
odos.illinois.edu
- Fraternity and sorority membership numbers surpassed 7,000 for the first time ever—and the All-Greek GPA reached an all-time high of 3.26 in the Spring semester 2012.
- The Emergency Dean handled 1,574 incidents last year—up from 1,130 the previous year.

OFFICE FOR STUDENT CONFLICT RESOLUTION
www.conflictresolution.illinois.edu
- Heard a total of 2,283 cases last year, up 12 percent from the previous year.
- The Tolerance Program responded to 81 distinct reports of acts of intolerance.

OFFICE OF INCLUSION AND INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS (OIIR)
studentaffairs.illinois.edu/diversity
- Hosted the Illinois Conference on Interfaith Collaboration (ICIC 12), which drew 150 college students and higher-ed professionals from across the nation.
- About 9,000 students took part in at least one of the 150+ “Lunch on Us” programs on current issues. Lunch on Us audiences are highly diverse; data collected by the Asian American Cultural Center showed that more than half of AACC’s noontime program participants were not of Asian descent.
- Welcomed Dr. Gigi Secuban as Associate Vice Chancellor and Director of OIIR. Dr. Secuban came to Illinois from the University of Arkansas. She replaces Dr. Anna Gonzalez.

OFFICE OF MINORITY STUDENT AFFAIRS (OMSA)
www.omsa.illinois.edu
- Hosted the 44th Annual Mom’s Day Scholastic Awards Ceremony, honoring students with a GPA of 3.45 or above; 1,173 students were eligible and invited in 2012, up from 1,146 the previous year.
- Fifty former Trio McNair scholars have earned their Ph.D. degrees, and another 200-plus have earned their master’s degrees and other earned doctorates as of the 2011-2012 school year.
ILLINI UNION
union.illinois.edu

- Served 2,207,568 visitors, including more than 20,000 hotel guests.
- Connected 30,833 families through Illini Union Parent Programs.
- Invested $2.9 million in infrastructure improvements, with $1.29 million in additional upgrades under way.
- Supported 1,166 Registered Student Organizations (RSOs).

UNIVERSITY HOUSING
housing.illinois.edu

- Garner Hall was demolished over the summer, and the site will be converted into additional green space.
- The addition to Nugent Hall opened in 2012 and houses about 330 students. Construction continues on Bousfield Hall, a new suite-style residence hall at Peabody Drive and First Street. It will house 480 students and will be open for fall 2013.
- Kitchenettes for resident use were built in Weston, Hopkins, Snyder, Scott, Van Doren and Clark Halls.

MCKINLEY HEALTH CENTER
mckinley.illinois.edu

- Received survey feedback that 89 percent of students would recommend McKinley Health Center.
- Recorded 109,469 patient visits, including 7,494 mental health visits and 9,873 women’s health visits.
- Served 33,301 students on the same day they requested an appointment.

CAMPUS RECREATION
campusrec.illinois.edu

- Worked with student employees, volunteers and professional staff to start programs for students registered for services with Disability Resources & Educational Services (DRES). The first few programs included swimming events, a games night and a floor-hockey event.
- Upgraded Ice Arena facilities with a new front entryway and new roof over the lobby.
- Hosted the Malaysian Midwest Games for about 1,200 participants and families.
- Served 51,140 members of the campus community (distinct card swipes) a total of 1,778,809 times.

ASSEMBLY HALL
uofiassemblyhall.com

- More than 21,330 students attended national touring events, accounting for 30 percent of the paid attendance. With discounted tickets, students saved more than $600,000 on these shows.
- Combined forces with the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics to host a single box-office operation and ticketing system for greater efficiencies and cost savings.
THANK YOU TO OUR 2011-2012 DONORS

We thank the following alumni and friends who have made gifts to Student Affairs units and programs between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012.

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LeaderShape helped Charlie to better understand students from other majors and backgrounds—an experience that changed his perspective.

“While I was at LeaderShape, I realized, ‘Wow, there is such a breadth of passion on this campus. It’s not all about creating the newest device or sending things into space.’ That’s great, but there’s so much more that’s great that’s out there.

“Learning about other people’s passions has made me more optimistic about the future of the world.”

Haichuan “Charlie” Yu, Junior, Electrical Engineering

Your donations help transform students’ lives

Engineers are famous for their problem-solving abilities. But sometimes, people issues get in the way of finding technical solutions.

Electrical Engineering student Charlie Yu had a “eureka!” moment during an Illinois Leadership Center workshop on difficult conversations. “As I was sitting there, I was like ‘Wow! OK, yeah. That’s happening on my team. Ah! This is how I fix it.’”

After using some of his new knowledge in a conversation with a teammate, Charlie says the group worked much more effectively on its next class project. “It wasn’t like a brute-force conversation; I did my best to be respectful and not to hurt feelings while pushing our team to achieve a common goal. There are a lot of ways that it could have gone wrong, but it went right. And I owe that experience to the Illinois Leadership Center.”

Charlie says he has also benefited from the ILC’s I-Programs, its week-long Illinois LeaderShape Institute, and a credit course on leadership.
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18 | Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Who made a difference for you when you were a student at the U of I?

Was it a professor who challenged you to do everything you thought you were capable of—and then pushed you to do more? A supervisor who helped you see how a student job could become a fulfilling career? Or maybe a staff member at one of the cultural houses who stood by you when you needed a little extra support?

You can pay them back by being there for today's students. Of course, your financial donations are important. But there are other ways in which you can support current U of I students:

- Serve on an advisory board or committee.
- Assist with leadership workshops or panel discussions at programs such as RISE.
- Encourage students to network with you at special events, on LinkedIn, and other opportunities.
- Volunteer your time as a mentor for a single student or a whole group.

Contact the Student Affairs Advancement Office to find out more about how you can help transform a U of I student's life. Whether you're able to help out for an hour each semester—or a few hours a week—students need your expertise and experience today!

The Student Affairs Advisory Council is an alumni group that provides invaluable support and enthusiasm for Student Affairs endeavors. This council is appointed by the Vice Chancellor, and is coordinated by the Office of Student Affairs Advancement. We truly appreciate their dedication and support.

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[From L-R] Monica Young Carney ('92), Tim Wayne ('90), Ann Davenport McBrien ('82), Leslie Geissler Munger ('78), Vice Chancellor Renée Romano, David Olsen ('11), Kristen Janicki ('98), Larry Wilson, PhD ('79, '85, '99]
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Sophomore, Sociology

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Jordan Hanford
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Senior, Media Studies
Brian Chin
Senior, Chemistry and Sociology

The Chicago Illini Club Excellence in Leadership Award
Kenneth Thompson
Senior, Psychology

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Akash Shah
Junior, Aerospace Engineering and Computer Science
James Maskeri
Junior, Political Science
Timothy Lewis
Junior, Economics and Psychology

The Joshua L. Grafton Awards
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Sophomore, Mechanical Engineering
Joshua Ericks
Sophomore, Kinesiology
Nishant Makhijani
Sophomore, Civil and Environmental Engineering

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Macy Brusich
Senior, Integrative Biology

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Sophomore, Agricultural and Consumer Economics – Public Policy

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Junior, Mechanical Engineering

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Kimberly Mok
Senior, International Business
STUDENT EMPLOYMENT HELPS LAUNCH CAREERS

For some U of I students, a part-time job is more than just a way to help pay the bills. It changes their career path – and eventually helps them transform other people’s lives.

**Kalee Ludeks** came to the U of I as a pre-law/political science major in 2006. But a funny thing happened on the way to law school: Her summer job as program leader for New Student Orientation and a graduate assistantship in the Office of the Dean of Students led her to pursue an entirely different career path.

Today, Kalee serves as the manager for strategic programming and assessment in Graduate Student Affairs at the University of Chicago.

While the U of C and Illinois have very different traditions and organizational cultures, Kalee said her experiences at Illinois “shaped me into the professional I am today, both as an adviser and a colleague.

“I really believe in establishing inclusive environments where students have the opportunity to learn and grow and feel comfortable—to really own the university and become a part of that ‘family.’ I definitely will always feel that I’m part of the Illinois family. ”

An immigrant who was the first in his family to attend college, **Luis Narvaez** was determined to get the most from his Illinois Experience, and to make the path a little easier for those who followed him to the U of I.

One of his projects as a Turner Fellow in 2002-03 was to help develop the first-ever Latino/a Family Visit Day. His own family experiences, and what he’d learned in a part-time job at La Casa Cultural Latina, helped him understand the dynamics that led many first-generation students to return home without finishing their degrees.

Latino/a Family Visit Day continues today as a very successful part of the University’s retention efforts.

Luis says his Turner Fellowship helped him to develop leadership and organizational skills and “opened up a world to me that I had not experienced before.” Observing how decision-makers think and work was “something I had not been exposed to prior to that.”

They are skills he uses every day in his current job as a College and Career Specialist for the Chicago Public Schools.
When he was a U of I student, Doug Boyer had never really thought about pursuing a career in student recreation until his supervisor at the former Intramural Physical Education Building (IMPE) suggested it.

Doug had found his “comfort zone” at IMPE even before he began a part-time job helping with intramural sports in his junior year. A few years and a couple of graduate assistantships later, he applied for a full-time position in Campus Recreation at the U of I and was chosen as the best-qualified candidate.

“When you get your dream job right out of school, then what? For me personally, it’s appreciating that opportunity every single day when I come to work. I am at the place that I want to be. And if I was anywhere else, I’d want to try to get back here,” Doug said.

Today, he’s an Assistant Director for Campus Rec, specializing in adventure recreation. And now it’s his turn to offer advice and encouragement to students.

Campus Rec Celebrates a Half-Century of Transforming Students’ Lives

Campus Recreation served more than 50,000 students, faculty/staff and community members in 2012, its 50th year as a stand-alone unit on the Illinois campus.