



# THE ADVOCATE

THE OFFICE OF MINORITY STUDENT AFFAIRS' NEWSLETTER

## YOUR CONNECTION TO THE OMSA

The Office of Minority Student Affairs provides exceptional support services that enhance the academic achievement, personal development, and graduation rates of first generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students at Illinois.

**The Advocate**, our semesterly newsletter, allows you to stay connected to the OMSA and discover the outstanding successes of our students!

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# WELCOME



Impact, inroads, and success...oh my! Do you ever wonder when or how you will know when we are making an impact, providing a transformative learning experience, creating what one of our former Illinois Provost coined a “great and grateful alumnus” and are we doing everything we can to encourage and develop and leverage the talents of our enduring staff? Since beginning my term as Interim Director of the Office of Minority Student Affairs, I find myself asking these and comparable questions more frequently. So, as we head into the middle of our 54th year of academic mentoring, advocacy, and support open for first generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented pre-college, and undergraduate students, I have determined I could not be prouder of our resolve and progress.

Using our strategic plan and annual report as guideposts, our team is well on its way to:

- Awarding sixteen (16) scholarships to students, totaling \$14,000.00.
- Providing spaces and opportunities whereby students realize their whole selves, allowing for unique lived experiences, discovering academic pathways, becoming change agents, and meeting their first destinations. Whether it is TRIO Student Support Services launching its second mentoring cohort, or Upward Bound, our longest running TRIO program receiving funding support from the Department of Education for another five years, we are working to expand support of students from sixth grade through college degree completion.
- Encouraging and supporting staff professional development and well-being through participation on unit, campus, and community committees, as well as trainings and conference attendance.
- Offering highly effective services using flexible modalities such as the iSucceed initiative through Advising and Mentoring, the one-time use funding awarded to Tutoring and Academic Services to pilot complimentary online tutoring services and the flexible learning strategies and philosophies that have allowed Talent Search to consistency achieve high participant persistence, graduation, and college enrollment.
- Advocating for and securing additional funds and staff through the campus and state budgetary processes, federal and local grant programs, and advancement activities. McNair has successfully completed another award competition, thus continuing its 32-year legacy of preparing the next generation of graduate scholars. We have also reimagined Advising and Mentoring, allowing for the transition to full-time academic professionals, as well as reallocating staff to provide additional full-time support for Tutoring and Academic Services.

Although we have so much to be grateful for and to take pride in, we also understand we still have work remaining, as access and opportunities depend on our sustained and collective efforts. In the meantime, in this issue of **The Advocate**, as we celebrate our OMSA scholarship beneficiaries, our team will also give you a birds-eye view into our and our students’ additional strides and successes. We hope this issue affirms your commitment to our partnership or inspires a connection.

Continued Success,  
Kimberly J. Alexander-Brown  
Interim Director

## NEWS BITES

In this section, catch up on quick highlights and updates from all across the OMSA! Have an update to share? Reach out to us at: [omsasocial@illinois.edu](mailto:omsasocial@illinois.edu)!



*Photos from a recent TRIO Upward Bound College visit.*

## TRIO UPWARD BOUND AWARDED NEW GRANT

TRIO Upward Bound was awarded a new five-year grant that begins June 1, 2022, and will run through May 31, 2027. The new grant kicked off with a six-week summer residential program on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. 32 high school students from Central, Centennial, and Urbana high schools flocked to the campus and participated in a variety of activities including academic courses, internships, and electives. At the conclusion of the program, TRIO Upward Bound assisted 12 high school with their transition into 9 post-secondary institutions across the mid-west.

## TUTORING AND ACADEMIC SERVICES JOINS THE DIGITAL AGE!

The Office of Minority Student Affairs' tutoring program has used a web-based tutor matching program for over 15 years but, up until this year, our study skills sessions had always been face-to-face meetings using paper handouts. Study skills sessions are typically hour-long meetings in which we dive into topics like time-management, lecture note-taking, test-taking strategies, and text-book reading techniques. These have always been very hands-on, interactive sessions that help freshman students develop the basic study skills they will need in college. However, in the past couple of years, students have been showing more and more of an interest in watching instructional videos – so, before the end of this semester, we will be introducing a digital library on our webpage that will include videos of some of our study skills workshops. We will also be including informational/instructional graphics to take the place of some of our most frequently used handouts. Putting this together has been educational but fun and we look forward to receiving feedback from students about the usefulness of this new service!

## NEW WEBSITE-- SAME OMSA

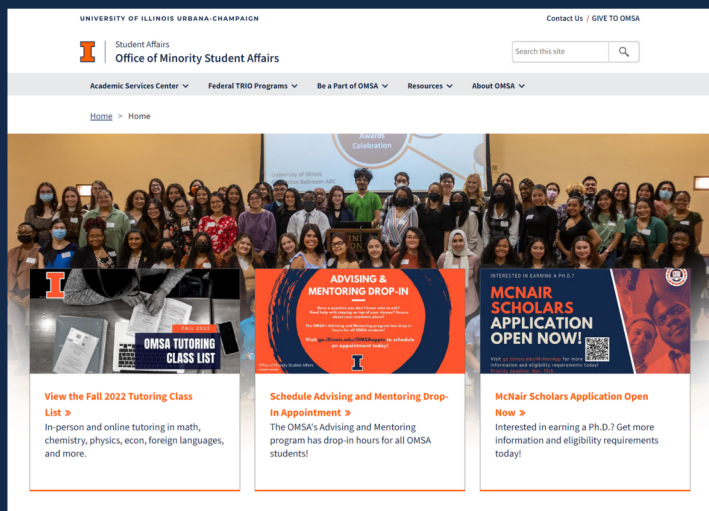
This semester, the OMSA debuted a new website. This redesign will allow us to show off more pictures of our students and events, highlight key statistics and facts about our programs, and share both the achievements of and challenges faced by our students.

Visit [omsa.illinois.edu](https://omsa.illinois.edu) today to see our new website!

## UPDATED INTERACTIVE ANNUAL REPORT AND PERSISTENCE AND GRAD RATE DASHBOARD

The OMSA is also proud to announce the most recent updates to our award-winning Interactive Annual Report and our Persistence and Graduation Rate Comparison Dashboard. Both of these publications are designed to give unparalleled looks into who our students are, how the OMSA provides services, how OMSA students succeed at Illinois, and where gaps exist that we must continue to address.

Explore both of these publications at [omsa.illinois.edu/resources/assessment](https://omsa.illinois.edu/resources/assessment)



## 2022-2023 OMSA SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS

This year, the OMSA is proud to announce 16 recipients across 6 scholarship funds, with awards totaling over \$14,000. This includes the long awaited return of the OMSA Study Abroad Scholarship fund, Congratulations to all our recipients!

### The Clarence Shelley Scholarship



**Lonye Allen | Senior, AHS**

This brings me one step closer to my future career goals of becoming an occupational therapist, and even one day establishing my own practice. I am currently working with a nonverbal autistic child, which is allowing me to practice what I will be doing in the future. I mentioned this because I am passionate and determined about my future plans. I just couldn't be anymore grateful to have received this scholarship because it will allow me to do the things, I intend to within the next 2 years of getting my master's degree.

### Juan David Campolargo Hoyos | Junior, BUS

Juan David Campolargo is a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where he studies computer science, engineering, and philosophy to achieve his goal of augmenting the human intellect by creating new tools. During his time at college, he's been a biophysics researcher, host of the UIUC Talkshow, creator of the UIUC Free Food Twitter Bot, and currently writing a book on flying, working to create a personal flying vehicle and a platform to help raise the ambition of Venezuelan Migrants.



### Monserrat Gonzalez-Gutierrez | Junior, LAS

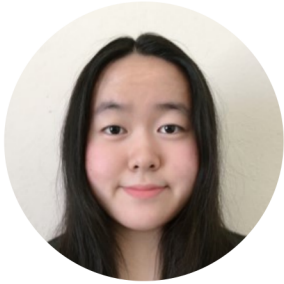


I am a Junior double majoring in Mathematics and Spanish, and I plan on pursuing graduate school for Spanish Literature. My current research focuses on feminism within Spanish literature, but I am in the midst of changing my research topic to the literary representation of Mathematics! I am incredibly grateful for this scholarship. In specific, thank you for acknowledging my current efforts. College is difficult but college is also a door to endless opportunities. Thank you for being one of them!

### Maha Syed | Senior, LAS & SSW

I am research assistant through the McNair Scholars for the Gracia lab in educational psychology and a teaching assistant for Chemistry 101. Apart from academics, I am passionate about raising awareness about mental health, so I am the secretary for Stress Management Peers (SMP) which is associated with McKinley. My future plans include attending medical school, specifically a MD/PhD program. I plan on taking a gap year after I graduate. During this year, I hope to teach and get my paper published. This scholarship will help me fund the preparation materials needed to apply to medical school.



**Emily Yan | Senior, BUS**

As an out-of-state student from California, I am grateful that I found my second home at OMSA during the first semester of freshman year. Through my involvement at OMSA as an ambassador and a tutor, I have grown a strong passion for providing mentoring and academic support services to minority student groups. In my final year of studies, I am proud to continue my commitment to serving as a role model of the minority student community at the University of Illinois.

**Greta Hogan Student Persistence Scholarship****Danya Le | Senior, FAA**

I have been involved with the Trio SSS program for all my years here and am in my third year as an OMSA Ambassador. After undergrad, I plan on either working in the fashion industry or pursuing a master's degree in Urban Planning. I am very grateful for being a recipient for the Hogan Scholarship since it encourages me to continue working towards my degree and goals.

**Helping Others Prosper through Education (H.O.P.E.) Scholarship****Jessica Montero | Junior, BUS**

As a recipient of the H.O.P.E. Scholarship, I am beyond grateful that I have the support of the University and its donors to continue pursuing a degree in Accountancy and working towards becoming a CPA upon graduation.

I speak on behalf of the student body when I say that your generosity does not go unnoticed.

**Tyrese Packer | Senior, BUS**

On campus, I am fortunate enough to be both a resident advisor as well as a mentor in the National Association of Black Accountants. Upon graduation, I will start my career as a Private Banker for JP Morgan in San Francisco. This scholarship means the world to me as it will not only assist me in alleviating some of the costs associated with college, but it will also bring me one step closer to my goal of breaking into the corporate world and using what I learn to help underrepresented students both at UIUC and outside.



## Officer Diane and Ann Moore Scholarship



**Jae'da Thompson | Sophomore, AHS**

I am currently looking to pursue a career as a nurse practitioner in the near future. I plan to apply to graduate-entry Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs in order to take the next steps towards making my dream a reality. It is an honor to be a recipient of the Officer Diane and Ann Moore Scholarship, and I am looking forward to expanding on my skill sets as I prepare for the next stages of my academic and professional career.

## Michael L Jeffries & Mrs. Gayle Jeffries and Friends-OMSA High Achievement Scholarship

**Keyana Diaz | Senior, LAS**

My major is Clinical Psychology, and I am currently conducting research on how Black Americans' use religious coping when experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression. My short-term goal is to attending graduate school, and my long-term goals are to receive my PhD and become a Principal Investigator and professor. Here at UIUC, I am a First-Year Campus Acquaintance Rape Education (FYCARE) Facilitator, member of the National Honors Society Phi Eta Sigma, a LAS 101 Intern, McNair Scholar, and research assistant in the Project on Life Experiences Lab under the guidance of Dr. Kwapil and graduate student Mahogany Monette.

This scholarship will impact my collegiate studies by helping me pay my student loans so that I can enter graduate school debt free. This financial freedom would allow me to pursue higher education with no distractions or worries. I plan to pay this scholarship forward by attending graduate school to receive my PhD and conduct research on trauma as a risk factor for anxiety and depression. Through this research, I would be able to help break the stigma towards mental health and help identify risk and resilience factors for mental illnesses. Additionally, I would educate others on mental illnesses and health by mentoring graduate and undergraduate students within my lab and by teaching courses.



## Wanda Young Wilson Leadership Scholarship

**Kyra Robinson | Senior, LAS**



The Wanda Young Wilson scholarship is an honor to receive as my leadership experience throughout my collegiate career is being recognized and awarded. My passion for success is matched with those around me as I've connected with others and developed meaningful relationships over the years. Now a rising alumni, my senior year is dedicated to leaving behind a beautiful legacy as an Illini as I pursue my career goals within the community industry. The support that I have received from you all continues to motivate me as I represent for the underrepresented.

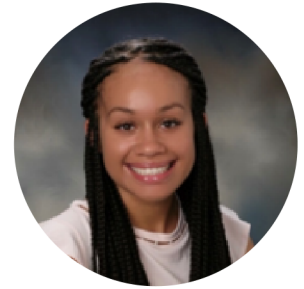
## OMSA Study Abroad Scholarship



**Kendall Arellano | Sophomore, FAA**

I am a junior studying graphic design with a minor in critical film production. My hobbies include cooking, reading, and art making. I am eager at the opportunity to study abroad because I love exploring and learning about different cultures.

**Kaiya Bernard | Senior, AHS**



I am studying Kinesiology and pursuing an MPH degree. On campus, I've worked with McKinley Health Center and University Housing. I'm also involved with student organizations like In Living Color, Applied Health Sciences Student Council, I-heal, and the McKinley Special Populations RSO. I was able to volunteer at Carle Hospital, the Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club, and The Food Assistance and Wellbeing program. I am really looking forward to studying abroad this winter in Cape Town South Africa where I will be doing community service work and learning about the post-apartheid society.

**Zachary Kocinski | Sophomore, ENG**



I have never traveled internationally before, so I feel behind on the exposure that I am longing for. With this opportunity, I will develop my ability to empathize with people who have been raised in an environment that I myself haven't experienced up to this point. Also, each unique culture brings new experiences that can't be witnessed without traveling, and Paris is known to be home to some of the most magnificent of these experiences. I will spend months learning what it is like to be a resident of Paris. This is key to becoming a successful engineer so that I can help develop fitting solutions not for myself, but rather for my audience. What might be most important to my experience studying abroad is that I will be able to share the experiences with my peers, including other minorities at UIUC.

**Antonio Pelayo | Senior, LAS**



I plan to pursue a possible career path in Biotechnology and research upon graduating from the University of Illinois. I am also interested in vision science with the possibility of becoming an Optometrist after my undergraduate degree as well. I am currently a Junior and plan to graduate in May of 2024. No matter what I end up deciding to pursue in the future, thanks to you, I am one step closer to figuring out that goal and given the opportunity to decide what I really want to do as a career in the future without having to worry about the financial burden in any type of future graduate school.

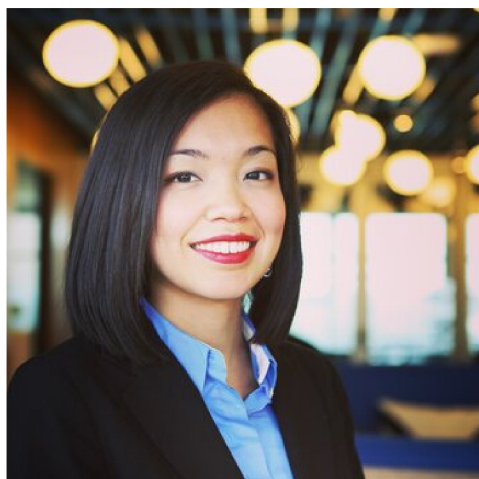
**Michelle Villalobos | Junior, LAS**



My name is Michelle Villalobos and I am a junior majoring in Integrative Biology with a certificate in Forensic Science. After graduating from college, I plan to attend medical school to earn a doctorate degree and pursue a concentration in forensic pathology. This scholarship will contribute to my study abroad opportunity in Panama over winter break!



## THE ADVISING & MENTORING TEAM WELCOMES JENNIFER MENDEZ AND MAURICE HANEY AS OUR NEW STUDENT SUCCESS ADVISORS!



Jennifer Mendez has been working in the field of higher education since 2015, with her most recent position as the Associate Director for the Asian American Cultural Center within the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations. Jennifer has experience in advising, admission outreach, operational management, communication plans, career services, alumni relations, and programming, as well as serving as a Level 1 Faculty and Staff Mental Health Ambassador and a iPromise mentor. Please welcome, Jennifer to our team!



Maurice Haney has experience as a graduate and undergraduate advisor working with undeclared students as well as non-Traditional students, international students, students with disabilities and Adult Programs. He has served as a conduct hearing officer, Residential Director on the Urbana campus, staff advisor for several undergraduate registered student organizations, career services, communication plans as well experience with diversity, equity and inclusion training and programming. Please welcome, Maurice to our team!

## A STUDENT-FIRST APPROACH TO ACADEMIC SUPPORT: THE ISUCCEED LAUNCH

OMSA Advising & Mentoring launched our first continuing student experience program this fall, iSucceed. The iSucceed program consists of a select group of scholars working together to build and support one another's academic and personal development. Through successfully piloting iSucceed, the OMSA is continuing to nurture success and create a positive learning environment to ensure students gain the confidence, independence, and active learning skills necessary to meet their individual educational goals.



iSucceed is an accountability group for OMSA eligible freshmen not assigned and Advising & Mentoring Student Success Advisor, probation, African American males, and Latinx male students. Students that participate in the program can look forward to weekly time dedicated towards study, access to a variety of interactive online self-pace and in-person seminars centered around building community, career and academic goal setting as well as personal development. At the end of each self-paced seminar, students will earn a certificate and at the completion of the year, students will be eligible to earn a digital badge to add to their LinkedIn profiles. The program meets weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays and is facilitated by our extraordinary Student Success Advisors, Haro Wade and Shawn Hampton.

## THE OMSA'S LAST GRADUATE MENTOR



*"Working as a Graduate Mentor at OMSA gives me the ability to help students critically engage with their own definitions of success and to empower them to make informed decisions about how to navigate their university experience in ways that feel salient and meaningful to them."*

Our final Graduate Mentor, Benjamin (Ben) Goldman, will be graduating this December 2022! Ben Goldman began working with the OMSA Graduate Mentor program in the Fall 2020 semester at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. During this pivotal time, Ben acclimated well to a new institution and in his role as a Graduate Mentor. Ben came onboard promoting a great philosophy of student empowerment in his sessions and fostering meaningful mentor-mentee relationships with our student population. Ben will be graduating with a Master's of Education in the Education Policy, Organization & Leadership program with a concentration on Global Studies. Ben is planning to continue this great work with us in the Spring 2023 semester as an Academic Hourly Advisor. Please help us in congratulating Ben on his own academic achievement of earning his second Master's degree, while providing exceptional mentorship to our students.

Thank you, Ben and Congratulations!

## OMSA AMBASSADORS APPLICATION OPEN!

OMSA Ambassadors are established and burgeoning campus leaders that uphold OMSA's mission to provide exceptional support services to first generation, low income, and historically underrepresented students at Illinois. In doing so, the OMSA Ambassadors learn to exemplify the four tenets of student excellence: Achievement, Leadership, Professionalism, Service”

Interested in joining? Visit <https://go.illinois.edu/OMSAamb> today!

## TRIO TALENT SEARCH FALL COLLEGE TOUR

As an introduction to the University of Illinois at Springfield, TRIO Talent Search middle school students from Champaign, Decatur and Urbana traveled to Springfield for an on-campus admission presentation. Students received information during a session with an admission representative that covered academic programs, scholarships and financial aid, student support services, and a step-by-step overview of the application and admission processes.

This presentation was combined with a tour, where students heard from current students about their favorite places on the UIS campus and enjoyed the cafeteria experience.

One of the best times to visit UIS is during the fall semester. It was a great representation of what life on campus will look like if you become a Prairie Star.



*Photos from the 2022 TRIO Talent Search trip to the University of Illinois Springfield.*

## TRIO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (SSS) CONTINUES A BUSY 2022



*Photos from the 2022 TRIO SSS Welcome Breakfast.*

This fall has been a busy one for TRIO Student Support Services (SSS). We officially launched the 2022-2023 academic year with a breakfast orientation at the Illini Union to welcome our SSS students to campus. This first event was an occasion to greet each other and to establish connections between our incoming freshman, transfer, returning students, and the SSS/OMSA staff.

The orientation provided an opportunity to reiterate SSS's advising, mentoring, career and personal development, academic support, and other services. We also highlighted OMSA's Academic Services Center and many of the campus-wide resources and programs that support students. We finished the breakfast with a friendly Jeopardy-like challenge for students to demonstrate their knowledge.

SSS has also hosted a movie night and two workshops designed to enhance students' financial literacy. These workshops were Financial Aid Essentials: What Students Need to Know, which addressed issues such as understanding award letters, grants and scholarships, SAP, refunds, loans, and basic budgeting. The second workshop, The Nuts and Bolts of Leasing, helped develop students' consumer competency and discretion by addressing the legal aspects, rights and responsibilities, benefits, risks, and financial obligations of renting.

These workshops were held in collaboration with the Office of Student Financial Aid (OSFA) and Student Legal Services (SLS).

## TRIO MCNAIR

The TRIO McNair Scholars Program is hard at work supporting our graduating students with their graduate school applications and helping our new and returning participants identify internships, scholarships, and opportunities to present their research. McNair scholars excel academically and professionally at Illinois and beyond. Several of our scholars have earned academic scholarships this semester.



### **BAN Scholarship Recipient**

Keyana Diaz

### **OMSA Scholarship Recipients**

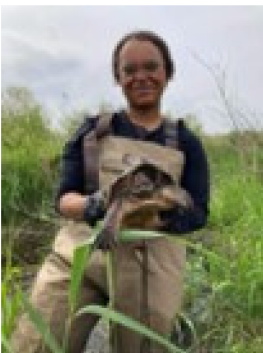
Juan David Campolargo Hoyos

Keyana Diaz

Monse Gonzalez-Gutierrez

Maha Syed

*Keyana Diaz receiving her OMSA Jeffries Scholarship with AVC Domonic Cobb.*



Students are sharing what they've learned through their research. Izabelle Jaquet, a senior Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences major, traveled to Spokane, Washington

to present her work on the migration characteristics of Central Illinois saw-whet owls at the Wildlife Society 29th Annual Conference in Spokane.



Our scholars are also actively engaged in the campus community. Senior Media and Communications major Robert Walker Jr. was

one of several OMSA students who served on the university's 2022 Homecoming Court. Congrats to our scholars!



## TRIO IS RECRUITING!

Three of the OMSA's TRIO programs are currently recruiting students! Both our pre-college programs, TRIO Talent Search and TRIO Upward Bound, and our TRIO McNair Scholars Program are seeking new students to participate beginning immediately.

### TRIO McNair Scholars

The McNair Scholars Program is actively recruiting our 2022-2023 cohort. McNair supports income-eligible, first-generation undergraduate students planning to pursue a Ph.D. If you or a student you work with is interested in the program, visit <https://omsa.illinois.edu/trio/mcnair> or contact [triomcnair@illinois.edu](mailto:triomcnair@illinois.edu) for more information. Applications will be accepted until the cohort is filled.

### TRIO Talent Search

Serving 500 middle and high school students in Champaign, Urbana, and Decatur, TRIO Talent Search relies on community and family partnerships to create and sustain academic culture leading to graduation and collegiate success. View the application at [go.illinois.edu/TSapp](http://go.illinois.edu/TSapp). Email [triotalentsearch@illinois.edu](mailto:triotalentsearch@illinois.edu) for more info!

### TRIO Upward Bound

Upward Bound is committed to providing our Centennial, Central, and Urbana High School students with high quality academic, cultural, and career related activities designed to prepare and equip them to successfully complete high school, enroll in an accredited post-secondary institution and obtain a baccalaureate degree. Apply at [go.illinois.edu/UBapp](http://go.illinois.edu/UBapp) and email [trioupwardbound@illinois.edu](mailto:trioupwardbound@illinois.edu) for more info!





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# Giving Tuesday

Always thankful.  
Forever grateful.



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[omsa.illinois.edu/give](https://omsa.illinois.edu/give)