Our connections

ACES undergraduate programs offer more than the standard educational experience—they provide students professional networking opportunities and friendships that can last a lifetime. Students connect one-on-one with alumni, sponsoring companies, mentors, and faculty.

Landon Terry (RAP and ACES alum)

Food Science alum Landon Terry credits ACES diversity programs for opening his eyes to what agriculture truly is—an industry that touches every corner of society, with endless opportunities for future professionals.

“I believe my involvement in the Research Apprentice Program [RAP], the Young Scholars Program [YSP], and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences [MANRRS] played an integral part in creating a base for the social network I have today,” Landon says. “I owe a great debt to Dean Jesse Thompson, Jr. for his leadership of ACES diversity programs and his personal commitment to my success.”

Landon, who was national student president of MANRRS from 2001 to 2003, credits the organization with equipping him with numerous academic, leadership, and career development experiences.

Landon is the senior research and development manager in product development for RMH Foods, LLC, in Morton, Ill.

Amanda Dominguez (RAP and ACES alum)

“Absolutely unforgettable” is how Amanda Dominguez of Chicago describes her RAP experience in ACES.

“I was able to develop career and professional skills that I was not able to experience in high school. Every day was a new challenge with high expectations, which made me work hard to show that I had the potential to be just like the undergraduate researchers,” she says.

Amanda spent part of four summers on campus in ACES diversity programs as a high school student before becoming an ACES undergraduate. She says the best part of RAP was presenting her research project. Public speaking used to make Amanda anxious, but her experience in RAP helped her conquer her fear.

RAP also helped Amanda decide where she wanted to go to college. “It relieved a lot of stress in terms of trying to find a university that was a perfect fit for me. As a RAP student, I spent most of my summer at the UI of campus, which made me realize how comfortable I was living here,” she says.

Besides helping her decide on a college and providing valuable research experiences, ACES diversity programs were the source of many ongoing friendships.

Our students’ success

⇒ 96.8 percent of RAP participants enroll in a 4-year university (ACES Office of Diversity Programs).

⇒ 96 percent of U of I students who participated in RAP and/or YSP earned bachelor’s degrees (ACES Office of Diversity Programs).

⇒ More than 85 percent of ACES graduates have secured employment or placement in a graduate or professional school within six months after graduation (ACES Office of Career Services).

Imagine

your future in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

For more information, contact:

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Our Commitment

As the needs of a growing population are expanding, the employment opportunities for individuals with expertise in the food, human, and environmental science sectors are increasing.

In the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) at the University of Illinois, we are dedicated to raising awareness of professional opportunities, increasing scholarship support, and enhancing leadership development among students from ethnic minority groups and underrepresented backgrounds. The Office of Academic Programs coordinates ACES diversity programs and focuses on the recruitment and retention of first-generation and traditionally underserved students.

“RAP II provided me with insight on what to expect as a food science and human nutrition major at the U of I before I started college. In addition to introducing me to formal laboratory techniques, writing a scientific paper, and constructing an academic poster, RAP II improved my teamwork and social skills.”

—Naomi Harper, ACES student

Our Programs

Weekend Research Apprentice Program Experience (wRAP)

High school students are invited for a 3-day or weekend campus visit to learn about the U of I campus and the STEM programs and career opportunities associated with food, human, and environmental system professions. While on campus, participants join science lectures, demonstrations and exercises, laboratory tours, and personalized discussions to help identify potential career interests.

Research Apprentice Program I (RAP I)

High school freshmen and sophomores are exposed to a variety of careers and fields of study offered by ACES through the four-week summer Research Apprentice Program I. In collaboration with peers, college students, faculty, and industry professionals, RAP I students participate in experiential learning activities that emphasize team problem-solving, math and science, and the use of technology. They are introduced to corporate sponsors, many of whom support RAP graduates with scholarships and internships.

Research Apprentice Program II (RAP II)

RAP II is a seven-week summer program that enables high school students who are interested in a field of study in the food, human, and environmental sciences to participate in a hands-on mentored laboratory experience. Students conduct small projects designed to build their interest in an area of study, applying math, science, and communication skills. ACES faculty serve as personal mentors. Professional staff provide college preparation services.

Young Scholars Program

Talented students who completed the RAP sequence and are admitted to ACES are invited to an eight-week summer experience before their U of I freshman year. The Young Scholars Program enhances college readiness in math, chemistry, and writing and prepares students for the rigor of a competitive university environment.

Leadership Experiences

Leadership and professional development opportunities are open to students through participation in clubs related to specific majors, university-wide groups, and college-wide student organizations, including Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences. ACES opens the door to international experiences, honors programs, and studying abroad and helps students connect with internships and find placement in careers and graduate and professional school.

Undergraduate Research

Further enrichment is provided to students through ACES honors programs. Many ACES undergraduates participate in research experiences, working with accomplished faculty members in their laboratories.

Our Scholarships

Through scholarship resources that provide more than $2 million a year, the College of ACES is committed to making higher education affordable for newly admitted and continuing students. Many scholarships are specifically designated for talented students from underrepresented groups and economically underresourced families.

“Our daughter’s participation in the RAP I program helped her become much more determined and prepared—not only educationally, but also emotionally and socially. She has made friends with people from RAP throughout the world and is in contact with them all the time.”

—Jim Neeson, RAP participant parent

“For more information on these and other programs available to high school and college students, visit academics.aces.illinois.edu/life.

Assistant Dean Jesse Thompson, Jr. • jthomps5@illinois.edu

“Being able to receive scholarships has taken a load off of my mind. I don’t have to worry as much about how I’m going to pay tuition. Scholarships allow me to focus on my classes and other activities. It’s such an honor to be an ACES scholarship recipient. It shows me that the college had enough faith in me to invest in my future. This encourages me not only to get more involved in ACES, but also to give back to the college whenever I can. I want to reach out to other students to let them know how wonderful the college is while making ACES proud.”

—Jasmine Washington, Jonathan Baldwin Turner Scholar