

# Celebrating ACT Scholars: A Decade of Student Impact



**ACT**<sup>®</sup>



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## Join Our Celebration

A decade ago, ACT established the ACT Scholarship Endowment to nurture the academic talent of graduate and community college students at two institutions that share our passion for helping all students achieve their ambitions in college and their careers. We emphasized scholarships for students from populations for which the cost of higher education could have presented a significant barrier to college access and accomplishments.

To commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the ACT Scholarship Endowment, we contacted many ACT Scholars to learn how the full-tuition scholarships and perquisites affected their lives. From their inspiring stories, it's clear that ACT's \$7 million investment has enriched the college experience for the vast majority of the nearly 150 ACT Scholars to date. Key themes emerge from their reports:

**Increased Motivation.** ACT Scholars view the scholarships as a sign that someone believes in their potential. Throughout the life of the scholarship, scholars hear their peers and professors, as well as ACT staff, express confidence in their abilities and encourage them to aim high and continue their education. ACT Scholars feel driven, even responsible, for pushing themselves to do more than they thought they could do.

**Less Stress.** Most ACT Scholars planned to work part-time or full-time to pay for college before they were awarded the scholarship, while others were on the verge of forgoing college altogether before this aid was provided. Research from ACT's Center for Equity in Learning indicates that working more than 15 hours a week is particularly

detrimental to underserved students' academic progress, as well as to their earnings, debt, and early career outcomes.<sup>1</sup> ACT Scholars express gratitude and relief that, because of the scholarship, they didn't have to worry as much about college costs and student debt.

**High Engagement.** Without the distractions of financial concerns or the need to juggle college coursework and a job, ACT Scholars say they had more time to focus on learning. They took advantage of this by working hard and getting good grades. Some shared that they felt free to explore courses beyond their majors, expand their horizons, and investigate a variety of career interests. Scholars had time to get involved in campus organizations and activities, some in leadership roles, and many volunteered in the community.

The impact of the ACT Scholarship Endowment goes beyond individual students. ACT Scholars are beacons of hope for parents and siblings and, for students with children, each scholar becomes an exemplar for the next generation. When scholars move on to successful careers, they model for the world what can be accomplished when people invest in other people. Please join me in celebrating their success—and consider how your own organizations might build on the lessons ACT has learned.



**Janet Godwin**  
CEO  
ACT

<sup>1</sup> Kyte, S. B. (July 2017). *Who Does Work Work For? Understanding Equity in Working Learner College and Career Success*. ACT's Center for Equity in Learning.

## Building on a Legacy: The ACT Scholarship Endowment

For more than 60 years, ACT has been working to fulfill its mission of helping people achieve education and workplace success. To further our dedication to this mission, ACT established an endowment to support students from underserved populations at two higher education institutions in our home state: the University of Iowa in Iowa City and Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids.

The initial endowment gifts, \$5 million to the University of Iowa and \$2 million to Kirkwood Community College, will continue to support and empower students in perpetuity. Each institution uses the interest earned to fund the scholarships, leaving the initial gift intact to continue to grow for decades to come.

The ACT Scholarship Endowment advances ACT's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is one of many programs and initiatives that ACT has advanced over the years to level the playing field for everyone, regardless of needs, backgrounds, or resources. The ACT Scholarship program provides full-tuition scholarships to students with strong and demonstrated records of academic achievement—many of whom might have had their higher education dreams cut short without this support.



**“I did not truly understand how this opportunity would change my life.”**

ACT Scholar Charles R. Martin-Stanley II, award-winning researcher and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Iowa

The ACT Scholarship program is significant in that it provides scholars not only with monetary assistance, but also critical wraparound supports, including:

- stipends for University of Iowa scholars;
- healthcare benefits for University of Iowa scholars (and, if needed, for their spouses and children);
- paid internships and funding for educational advancement opportunities, such as national conferences, for University of Iowa scholars;
- networking and learning opportunities for University of Iowa scholars, including a Distinguished Lecture Series with renowned experts;
- emergency funding for University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College scholars; annual or semi-annual events to build community for University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College scholars; and
- personal connections with ACT staff for guidance and support for University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College scholars

The ACT Scholarship program responds to evidence and research on the challenges students from underserved populations face in higher education and strives to mitigate the adverse effects of each challenge. The program provides comprehensive financial, academic, career, health and well-being, and social and emotional support, which helps to relieve burdens that can derail these students. In short, this program encourages each student to focus on academic success.

## **Launching the Scholarship Endowment: A Fitting Tribute to ACT's 50th Anniversary**

The first scholarships for graduate students at the University of Iowa and associate degree students at Kirkwood Community College were awarded in 2010, after the ACT Scholarship Endowment was established in 2009. At the time, ACT was celebrating its 50th anniversary. Creating the endowment seemed a fitting way to commemorate this milestone and reinforce ACT's lived value of helping people with difficult life transitions to achieve education and workplace success.

"By then, ACT had a trove of data documenting that many talented, college-ready students weren't attending college, often due to a lack of resources and support," said Dick Ferguson, then-CEO of ACT, who envisioned and created the endowment with strong support from the ACT Board of Directors. "Disproportionate numbers of these students were minority students underrepresented in higher education. We wanted to make a difference for students who would benefit significantly from financial support. But it's even more than financial support. This is a recognition that there's talent here—talent to be nurtured."



The endowment also honors ACT's deep and longstanding partnership with the University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College. ACT's co-founders, E. F. Lindquist and Ted McCarrel, began their collaboration on ACT's signature standardized college admissions test at the University of Iowa. ACT's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion began with this test, which Lindquist and McCarrel believed would broaden access to college for underserved student populations and help diversify college campuses.

For decades, ACT also has maintained strong relationships with the University of Iowa College of Education, including adjunct appointments at the university for ACT staff and university talent contributing to ACT research. Many ACT staff members have also strengthened their skills in university courses.

"The ACT Scholarship Endowment is a natural extension of our deep relationships with both of these institutions," said Janet Godwin, CEO of ACT and a member of the Kirkwood Foundation Board of Directors. "Establishing the endowment served our mission and renewed our persistent focus on helping students be successful, which is manifested in these two institutions. As an endowment, this legacy will live on."



“ACT’s vision and generosity have created life-changing opportunities for our students, who are now using the skills they acquired at Iowa to make a difference in our world,” said J. Bruce Harreld, president of the University of Iowa. “This program brings together our shared focus on diversity and inclusion in education, helping to enhance educational experiences all across campus. ACT’s strong commitment to graduate education and philanthropic spirit will continue to provide innovation in the field of education.”

Kirkwood Community College has been instrumental to ACT as a “learning laboratory” for strengthening ACT testing and preparation programs for college and career readiness. “ACT had a shared interest with Kirkwood’s then-President Norm Nielsen in helping ensure student success upon arrival on campus,” said Ferguson, who is now vice president of the Kirkwood Foundation Board of Directors. “Norm was also very, very community minded. The ACT management team also was very focused on building community. ACT is a member of a larger national and even international community, but first and foremost ACT is local. We focused on growing ACT in the community college, which is a major contributor of students to the university.”



**“ACT’s vision and generosity have created life-changing opportunities for our students, who are now using the skills they acquired at Iowa to make a difference in our world.”**

J. Bruce Harreld, president of  
the University of Iowa



**“We have students living in poverty, students impacted by food shortages and housing scarcity. Life challenges happen to them. The ACT scholarship helps buffer them.”**

Dr. Lori Sundberg, president of  
Kirkwood Community College

“The value of the ACT Scholarship Endowment is twofold for us,” said Dr. Lori Sundberg, president of Kirkwood Community College. “Primarily, it’s a huge value for our students to have full scholarships. We have students living in poverty, students impacted by food shortages and housing scarcity. Life challenges happen to them. The ACT scholarship helps buffer them. This scholarship is different from some of our other scholarships that only provide \$500 or \$250 a year. It provides an avenue for us to reach out to different populations, which has been very beneficial for us. Equally important, the endowment signals that ACT has faith in the education we’re providing, which we appreciate.”

## Strengthening the Scholarship Program to Expand Access

ACT is a learning organization, and we have listened to and learned from ACT Scholars and our partner institutions. As a result, the scholarship program has evolved over time to broaden its reach and deepen its impact. For example, at Kirkwood Community College:

- The program initially awarded full-tuition scholarships only. But life events that more advantaged students can take in stride can upend academic studies for ACT Scholars. Cars break down. Laptops die. Family emergencies occur. Now, ACT Scholars can tap into an emergency fund to stay on track.
- The program initially focused on students who were pursuing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees. While the emphasis on STEM degrees responded to a national need for STEM expertise in the workforce, ACT recognized the value of expanding scholarship opportunities for talented students interested in fields beyond STEM.

When the program began, only students in two-year associate degree programs were eligible

- for an ACT Scholarship. Now, students in any program at the college are eligible. This change recognizes that other programs, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) and certificates, can be important stepping stones to degrees and careers.

“ACT Scholarships are much more than a financial transaction,” said Lew Montgomery, program director at ACT’s Center for Equity in Learning. “We try to stay close to students and really look at the whole student and the whole student experience. We spend dedicated time listening to students, really hearing their stories. Their voices have helped us build a premier scholarship program.”



University of Iowa ACT Scholars joined our annual Distinguished Lecture Series, honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. event on the ACT campus January 18, 2017, with keynote speaker, Geoffrey Canada, founder of the Harlem Children's Zone. Pictured left to right are: Dr. DaVida L. Anderson, Mark Valencia, Charles Martin- Stanley II, Omolola Anaman, Geoffrey Canada, Bri'an Davis, Krista Walker, and Jonathan Munoz

## A Community of ACT Scholars Brings Multicultural Perspectives to Campus



ACT's \$5 million endowment to the University of Iowa assists students in master's or doctorate degree programs for up to four years or, in some cases, longer. ACT Scholars pursue degrees in a wide variety of fields, ranging from educational measurement and statistics to law and higher education. They leave campus ready to make a difference in the world.

"I have had the privilege to interact with our ACT Scholars over the last 10 years," said John Keller, associate provost for graduate and professional education and dean of the University of Iowa Graduate College. "From day one, the Graduate College has been thrilled to help promote multiculturalism and inclusion in graduate education and we've been continually impressed with the caliber of scholars the program has embraced. We greatly value this ongoing partnership with ACT and look forward to seeing the outstanding things these students and alumni will continue to do moving forward."



**“As an ACT Scholar, I was part of a group of intelligent and passionate individuals at the University of Iowa. Through many of the ACT-sponsored events, such as the Distinguished Lecture Series, I created relationships beyond ACT and expanded my network.”**

Dr. Roseina Britton, assistant professor and doctoral program coordinator at Governors State University, University Park, IL

**ACT Scholars increase diversity and contribute multicultural perspectives across the university, including cutting-edge research on underexplored societal issues, such as:**

- the effect of civic engagement and academic service learning on at-risk youth from urban communities;
- Black masculinity and mental health;
- the effect of blending community activism with schools to improve educational outcomes and break the school-to-prison pipeline;
- the effect that prescriber-initiated opioid dose reductions or discontinuations have on drug diversion and transition; and
- the effect of advisor-advisee relationships on graduate student outcomes, including the role of multicultural orientation.



Unlike students in many advanced degree programs, ACT Scholars are not required to work as teaching assistants during the school year. This allows them to dedicate their full attention to their studies and research—and forge lasting bonds with their fellow scholars, professors, and the larger university community. The scholars also enjoy paid summer internship opportunities at ACT and other organizations, if they choose.

“The ACT Scholars program provides outstanding support to some of the best and brightest graduate students in the College of Education, allowing them to pursue their research and academic dreams,” said Daniel L. Clay, dean and professor at the University of Iowa College of Education. “We are proud to partner with ACT on such an important program that supports our core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that creates a more equitable and just world for everyone.”

“ACT Scholars are known for being leaders—whether here on campus or in their future careers—and the impact of ACT’s generosity will continue to be seen for many years to come,” said Lynette Marshall, president and CEO of the University of Iowa Center for Advancement.

## University of Iowa By the Numbers

7

**ACT Scholars  
have earned  
advanced degrees**

15

**are still enrolled  
and on track  
to graduate**

## Profiles of Scholarship

When she was 10 years old, Dr. DaVida Anderson memorialized her ambition to earn a doctorate or law degree in writing on a paper her parents still treasure. Her parents both have master’s degrees and set a very high educational standard for their children.

Anderson excelled in higher education, earning a bachelor’s degree in political science with a minor in African American studies at Purdue University. Based on her own interactions with classmates as an undergraduate, she founded a nonprofit organization—Strong Sister, Silly Sister—that’s still motivating African American undergraduate women to make ethical choices and achieve academic success. After graduating, she worked in corporate America and earned a master’s degree in higher education at Loyola University Chicago and a certification in mediation from Northwestern University. She aspired to earn a Ph.D. to continue helping students excel as a college administrator. Three institutions recognized her promise and accepted her into their doctorate programs. By then, though, she was burdened with student debt.

“That would have been a stumbling block without financial support,” Anderson said. “With the ACT Scholarship, my dream became a reality. Without it, it could have been a dream deferred.” At the University of Iowa, Anderson focused her research on deconstructing educational spaces that shatter college students’ self-efficacy and on creating inclusive learning environments.

Anderson received a number of merit awards during her four years at the University of Iowa, which acknowledged her commitment to scholarship, diversity, equity, and inclusion. She was awarded the Margaret P. Benson Memorial Scholarship. She placed multiple times in the University of Iowa Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Research Symposium. Anderson was also recognized by her peers as an Unsung Hero Nominee for the Higher Education Student Association and by The Society of Black Graduate Professional Students as a positive change agent with its Black Brilliance Award. Anderson also received the University of Iowa Albert Hood Promising Scholar Award from the College of Education and the University of Iowa Dean's Achievement Award.

Anderson completed two summer internships at ACT in two very different areas of the business—ACT's Center for Equity and Learning and in Supply Chain Operations. She contributed to multiple projects, such as conducting internal research on equity in educational pathways and developing product training materials for state and district clients. She also forged lasting relationships with ACT professionals, finding critical allies among women in leadership positions and practitioners who supported her career ambitions. "ACT also has a Toastmasters chapter and invited interns to participate. And guess what? In January 2020 I competed in a speaking contest and ended up winning awards."

Today, Anderson is the director of student care and integrity at Carroll Community College in Maryland, where she oversees the Behavioral Intervention Team and is responsible for the student conduct system, policy, program assessment, data collection, campus outreach, and student crisis response and management.



**“Have the lived experience as a student of having the talents, having the gifts, to succeed. But students need to be connected with the opportunity.”**

ACT Scholar Dr. DaVida L. Anderson,  
director of student care and integrity  
at Carroll Community College in  
Westminster, MD



Krista Walker, Lance Bennett, Thapelo Whitfield, DaVida Anderson, Dellyssa Edinboro, Jonathan Munoz, Lori Swartzendruber, Lew Montgomery, Omolola Anaman, Charles Martin-Stanley II, Bri'an Davis, and Rosina Britton

Charles R. Martin-Stanley II began his academic journey as an undergraduate at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. “I have always been passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education and how these important values impact the campus experience for students of color,” said Martin-Stanley, who majored in sociology and minored in Africana studies. During his senior year, he engaged in collaborative research with a faculty member on why students of color persist at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), documenting the many challenges they face, why they persist, and contributing to the literature on how to improve their retention and graduation rates.

Martin-Stanley went on to earn a master’s degree in student affairs administration at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. He continued his research exploring explicit and implicit messages of systemic racism that Black college men face both before and during their college careers. “This research allowed students to share their perspectives on academic issues, including academic success, cultural competence, and strategies for improving the campus climate for Black men,” he said.

At the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, he was a leader of Kings of Nia, an empowerment group for Black men who were students at the university and Black men in the La Crosse community. “This group was instrumental in creating community among Black men on campus and in the broader community,” Martin-Stanley said. “This was the first time I realized that with the right resources I could work toward my educational degree and engage in service in the community at the same time.”

The right resources came from the ACT Scholarship. At the University of Iowa, Martin-Stanley’s dissertation examines racial socialization—a combination of racial identity, racial climate, and racial interaction—of Black men on PWI campuses. He has presented his research at national education conferences all over the country and earned first-place awards at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Research Symposium on campus in 2017 and 2018, and the 2020 Philip G. Hubbard Human Rights Award, which is part of the university’s prestigious Hancher-Finkbine Medallions.

Martin-Stanley is also a leader on campus. He has worked closely with the chief diversity officer at the University of Iowa and has served on executive boards for both the Graduate Organization for Higher Education and Student Affairs and the Society for Black Graduate and Professional Students. He is also a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Lastly, he serves as the president of Hubbard Scholars, an empowerment group for Black men on campus.



**“These past four years I have been able to solely focus on my education, which has allowed me to not only excel in the classroom, but also pursue research and leadership opportunities. Although I am very proud of my accomplishments, I am confident that none of this would be possible without the support of ACT.”**

ACT Scholar Charles R. Martin-Stanley II,  
Ph.D. Candidate



## Opening Doors and Expanding Opportunities

# Kirkwood

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ACT's \$2 million endowment to Kirkwood Community College assists students with full-tuition scholarships and fees for up to six semesters. Scholarships are awarded during the fall, spring, and summer terms, allowing students to begin their programs on a rolling basis.

Most ACT Scholars at Kirkwood complete a two-year associate degree. Most are enrolled in a liberal arts degree program with an emphasis on transferring into a four-year program. Many go on to do exactly that. "The ACT Scholarship recipients all have a common character trait to want to be engaged and successful in their educational pathway," said Jody Donaldson, Kirkwood scholarship and alumni officer. "They are driven and focused."

Rose Rennekamp, a member of the Kirkwood Foundation Board of Directors and the Kirkwood Community College Board of Trustees, has seen the effect of the scholarship program on students and the community college. "An ACT Scholar spoke at a Kirkwood Foundation meeting," she said. "She was a single parent who talked about how important the scholarship was for her—and for her children to see her as a college student on a college campus. By the time she was done talking, we knew the scholarship had made an intergenerational impact and had touched a whole family, rather than just one individual.

"The best students can do well at a community college," Rennekamp added, "but there's also a real focus on students who don't start as far along the continuum." To acknowledge the ACT Endowment, Kirkwood named its student support center The ACT Science and Math Pavilion. "I see it as the student success center. It's a student-friendly, very collegial place where students can go and have access to computers, whiteboards, tutors, and faculty. Faculty spend a lot of time there—and you don't see that very often at a college."



**“Receiving the ACT Scholarship gave me the opportunity to have less of an economic burden that is so common for my generation. I was able to devote myself to my studies. The opportunity allowed me to excel at Kirkwood and consequently get a large scholarship at the university I transferred to as well.”**

James Shissler, ACT Scholar at Kirkwood, accounting major at Mount Mercy University in Cedar Rapids, now a financial analyst at Merritt Research Services



The ACT scholarship program also helps students negotiate postsecondary environments. “When I showed up to college as a first-generation college student, I was academically prepared for the experience, but I had no idea how to navigate the system,” said Jim Larimore, former chief officer of ACT’s Center for Equity in Learning. “I had never heard the word ‘bursar’ before. I didn’t know what a provost was. There was nothing in my experience that prepared me to know that the admissions office wasn’t the place to go to get advice about what I might study. ACT works in tandem with our partners to provide support, advice, and mentoring to connect ACT Scholars with the expertise and resources that are available to them.”



## Bright Idea

Most community colleges open enrollment to any high school graduate. “**So why do we make students apply?**” Larimore asks. “**Why not send students who are on track to graduate from high school a letter saying, ‘Congratulations! You’ve met our admissions requirements and we’ll hold a space for you if you tell us you’re coming—and you have a shot at a scholarship.’** For students who didn’t think they were college material, this would be a powerful message for both students and parents. It would remove mindset and structural barriers to college.”



## Kirkwood By the Numbers

**112**

ACT Scholars have  
earned advanced degrees

**5**

are still enrolled and  
on track to graduate

The ACT Scholarship made a huge impact on Eduardo Munoz's life—and his family's as well. "Receiving the award letter was such a great accomplishment for me and took a lot of stress off my shoulders," he said. "Before knowing I had received this scholarship, my parents and my brother had been stressed trying to come up with a plan to be able to afford my college tuition and life expenses. The ACT Scholarship was a lifesaver. It allowed me to be the first person ever to attend college from my family and pursue my lifetime goals."

Munoz is a DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipient, which limits his access to financial aid and denies him the opportunity for federal loans. "This is why I depend on generous scholarships like these to be able to afford my college tuition. This scholarship had such a positive effect on my educational experience at Kirkwood. It allowed me to focus on my academics a lot more without the stress of college debt."

Having earned an associate degree in science at Kirkwood, Munoz will pursue a degree in electrical engineering at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.



**“Coming from a low-income family, college is something that for generations our family couldn't afford.”**

**ACT Scholar Eduardo Munoz,  
ACT Scholar at Kirkwood  
Community College, attending  
Southern Illinois University**



**“Personally, I was so touched by receiving this award. It was a huge honor and it made me feel like my hard work was paying off. I was beyond ecstatic!”**

**ACT Scholar Marita Perez, ACT Scholar  
at Kirkwood Community College**

Marita Perez decided to spend her first two years of college at Kirkwood Community College. "It was closer to home, offered all the classes I wanted to take and was definitely a better financial decision," she said. "Educationally, this award made me work hard during my first two years at Kirkwood and I actually graduated a semester earlier than I planned and earned my AS degree which felt amazing!"

She believes that college would have been more stressful without the award. "Trying to balance a full work and school load was already hard enough but trying to think about how I would pay it all off in the end would add more stress to the situation," she said.

Perez initially had planned to move on to the University of Iowa to study physical therapy but switched her focus. "I have changed my mind and my heart is now set on nursing," she said. She's now in the nursing program at Kirkwood and plans to graduate in 2021. "After that I would love to work in an operating room!"

Jose Cardenas felt “relieved and honored” to receive an ACT Scholarship. “I know how costly postsecondary school can be,” he said. “It brings me great pride to have my hard work and dedication to school be appreciated—and to be able to tell my hard-working parents that they will not be experiencing any financial stress. I know that my parents want the best and have always worked hard to offer everything they could. Accepting this scholarship makes me proud of myself because I can finally return the favor to my family.

“Knowing that I was given such great aid,” Cardenas added, “I felt as though I was being counted on to contribute my skills to the world and better myself. This scholarship motivated me because I felt as though there were more people than just my family wanting me to succeed.”

Cardenas is studying for a liberal arts degree in science at Kirkwood, where he can take most of his tough math and science courses in smaller classes. “Attending Kirkwood Community College allows me to ask more questions than I would in a university class and allows me to build a strong foundation of knowledge that will be used in my more complex classes in my junior and senior years of college at the University of Iowa.”



**“If it were not for this scholarship, I would be working 12-hour shifts on the weekend at a food processing plant. I would have had greater hardships to overcome, taking my attention away from the one reason I am attending Kirkwood—to learn.”**

Jose Cardenas ACT Scholar at  
Kirkwood Community College







# Celebrating ACT Scholars: A Decade of Student Impact

In commemoration of its 50th Anniversary, and to continue delivering on its mission of helping people achieve education and workplace success, ACT gifted two endowments in 2010: one to Kirkwood Community College and the other to the University of Iowa. Now, after a decade of student empowerment and support, we are proud to highlight the impact of those gifts.

## KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**\$2 million**  
endowment\*

The \$2 million gift is still intact.  
Interest earned is reinvested in student scholarships

**126**  
students

**\$669,000**  
invested in students  
(through summer 2020)

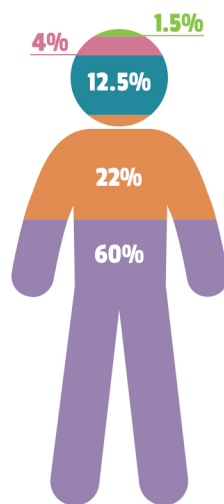
**112**  
students graduated

**5**  
currently studying

**9**  
students did not complete a degree

✦ **68** of the **126 scholars** have graduated with or are pursuing a Liberal Arts degree, qualifying them to transfer to a four-year institution to pursue a bachelor's degree.

✦ When the scholarship program launched in 2010, it focused on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers. **22%** of the **126 students** have majored in STEM subjects. In 2019, the scholarship was broadened to include other majors and certificate programs, including business and healthcare.



Demographics of Kirkwood  
ACT Scholars (126 Total)

Native American  
or Alaska Native  
Asian  
Hispanic  
or Latino  
Black or  
African American  
White



Demographics of all  
Kirkwood Students (480,948)

## ACT Scholars shared **three** common experiences



### Increased Motivation

The scholarship award and additional supports motivate them to achieve because it signals that their higher education institution and ACT believe in them.



### Less Stress

Recipients feel a reduced level of stress because their tuition and educational expenses are covered, reducing their student debt and necessity to work while pursuing their education.



### High Engagement

Without the pressure of working many hours to earn funds to cover expenses, ACT Scholars are able to get involved on their campuses through clubs, organizations, and volunteer activities.



**\$5 million**  
endowment\*

The \$5 million gift is still intact.  
Interest earned is reinvested in student scholarships

**23**

students  
(through summer 2020)

**\$2.34 million**  
invested in students

**7**

graduated

**15**

currently studying

**1**

did not complete a degree

**15 of the 23 scholars**

attended the University of Iowa to pursue advanced degrees in these areas of study:



✧ **Educational Measurement  
and Statistics**



✧ **Educational Policy and  
Leadership Studies**



✧ **Higher Education and  
Student Affairs**

✧ **Other areas of study included:**

Counseling Education and Supervision, Counseling Psychology, Schools  
Culture and Society, Communications, English, Law, and Business.



The ACT scholarship was a lifesaver. It allowed me to be the first person ever to attend college from my family and pursue my lifetime goals.

**Eduardo Munoz, AS**  
**Kirkwood Community College, ACT Scholar**



We have students living in poverty, students impacted by food shortages and housing scarcity. Life challenges happen to them. The ACT scholarship helps buffer them.

**Dr. Lori Sundberg**  
**President, Kirkwood Community College**



With the ACT Scholarship, my dream became a reality. Without it, it could have been a dream deferred.

**Dr. DaVida Anderson**  
**University of Iowa, ACT Scholar**



ACT's vision and generosity have created life-changing opportunities for our students, who are now using the skills they acquired at Iowa to make a difference in our world.

**J. Bruce Harreld**  
**President, University of Iowa**

After 10 years, we've learned that academically promising students have a deep yearning to learn, grow, and succeed in a college community. We know that with comprehensive financial aid and critical wraparound supports, the vast majority will meet and even exceed expectations.

## Final Thoughts

Experts on reflection and mindfulness often assert that significant learning comes not from doing, but from thinking about what we do, why we do it, and what we have gained or lost in the process. However, many people and organizations spend so much time engaged in the day-to-day activities of life that they overlook opportunities to reflect. This results in repeated mistakes, failure to say “thank you” amidst successes, and missed opportunities for greater impact.

After 10 years, what have we learned, what do we know, and what does the future hold as a result of this work? We’ve learned that academically promising students have a deep yearning to learn, grow, and succeed in a college community. We know that with comprehensive financial aid and critical wraparound supports, the vast majority of scholars from underserved populations will meet and even exceed our expectations—and their own. We know that our investment contributes not just to individual students, but to their families and communities, and then our workplaces and our world.

We also have witnessed ACT Scholars build strong and supportive relationships as they engage in their academic pursuits. In the future, we plan to create a community of ACT Scholars whose voices and lived experiences can amplify the national dialogue about equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education. We believe that ACT Scholars are the best ambassadors for expanding robust scholarship programs, increasing access to college education for underserved student populations, and closing opportunity gaps.

The scholarship program is one of many ways that ACT has demonstrated our commitment to equity, our local Iowa community, and student success more broadly. This 10-year milestone is a wonderful moment to celebrate ACT’s past even while we build toward a vibrant future. As we listen to the voices of students served by the ACT Scholarship program, we can celebrate ACT’s vision and reflect on the accomplishments of each student. The program is one more example of how ACT lives out our mission and invests our resources with a sense of purpose.

Thank you to the ACT Scholars who have come with us on this journey, shared your experiences, and inspired us all.



**“To better understand the value, impact, and potential of the ACT Scholarship program, we felt a 10-year retrospective was in order. Ten years is a significant period of time and offers us a rich opportunity for true learning.”**

Tina Gridiron, vice president, ACT's Center for Equity in Learning



ACT is a mission-driven, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people achieve education and workplace success. Grounded in 60 years of research, ACT is a trusted leader in college and career readiness solutions. Each year, ACT serves millions of students, job seekers, schools, government agencies, and employers in the U.S. and around the world with learning resources, assessments, research, and credentials designed to help them succeed from elementary school through career.

[act.org](https://act.org)

## **Center for Equity in Learning**

ACT's Center for Equity in Learning focuses on closing gaps in equity, opportunity, and achievement for underserved populations and working learners. Through purposeful investments, employee engagement, and thoughtful advocacy efforts, the Center supports innovative partnerships, actionable research, initiatives, campaigns, and programs to further ACT's mission of helping people achieve education and workplace success.

[equityinlearning.act.org](https://equityinlearning.act.org)

## **Kirkwood** COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Serving a seven-county community in Eastern Iowa, Kirkwood Community College has been a recognized leader in higher education for more than 50 years. Our mission is to identify community needs; provide accessible, quality education and training; and promote opportunities for lifelong learning. With more than 10 locations spread throughout the region, everyone in our service area is near a campus and has access to an education.

[kirkwood.edu](https://kirkwood.edu)



Founded in 1847, The University of Iowa is the state's oldest institution of higher education and is located alongside the picturesque Iowa River in Iowa City. As one of the nation's premier public research universities, Iowa is known for excellence in both the arts and sciences, offering a world-class education in a variety of undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. With diversity, equity, and inclusion among the university's top priorities, Iowa is home to 32,535 students from 114 countries and all 50 states.

[uiowa.edu](https://uiowa.edu)

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[www.equityinlearning.act.org](https://www.equityinlearning.act.org)

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