



# 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 new semesterly newsletter, will allow you to stay connected to the OMSA and discover the outstanding successes of our students!

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## WELCOME



Welcome to the Office of Minority Student Affairs' newsletter, **The Advocate**. As an alum of the University of Illinois and Office of Minority Student Affairs. I am elated

with this new, electronic forum to reconnect OMSA with its extended family.

Like our past publications, "The EOP News" (circa early 70s - early 80s) and "The Spectrum" (circa 1985- 2008), this circular will keep the OMSA's students, alumni, colleagues, and friends informed about our endeavors and inspire them to invest in our mission to help first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students succeed at the University of Illinois and beyond.

After the unprecedented events of this spring, one thing is clear; **we can overcome anything together**. This newsletter offers a sustainable path to reunite the OMSA's worldwide family of stakeholders. I am thrilled to welcome each of you home!

Yours in Orange and Blue,  
**Domonic Cobb, Director**  
 FAA '96 and EDU'01

## 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!**

## IClicker LOAN PROGRAM

The OMSA, Illinois Student Government and Illinois Promise, are excited to share the overwhelming success of this year's iClicker Loan Program! The iClicker Loan Program was able to **provide an iClicker to a total of 327 students**, of which 170 were Illinois Promise Scholars. After the success and overwhelming positive feedback from students, Illinois Student Government has **committed an additional \$5,000 to the purchase of new iClickers**. Thanks to this donation, the iClicker Loan Program will be able to ease the financial burdens of an **additional 100 students**. In addition the the newly purchased iClickers, the OMSA will be launching an iClicker Donation Drive to allow graduating Seniors to pass their iClicker on to the next generation of Illini. With the continued growth of the program, we hope to one day be able to provide iClickers to 500 students each academic year!

## UPWARD BOUND: COLLEGE BOUND!

The Upward Bound Class of 2020 has received over **20 acceptances** into Colleges/Universities across the US! In addition to these acceptances, our students have been offered **over \$25,000 in scholarship and grants**. Look out world, #BetterMakeRoom for the class of 2024!

## MOM'S DAY SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT CEREMONY

One of the highlights of every academic year for the OMSA is the Mom's Day Scholastic Achievement Ceremony. This event, held for the past 52 years, is a way for our office to recognize the outstanding academic achievements of our students, showcase the our students talents as speakers, musicians, and performers, and demonstrate to the campus community just how much of an impact OMSA students have at the University of Illinois.

This year, **3,936 students were eligible to participate in the ceremony--1,079 students achieved high honors, earning a 4.00 in the Spring 2019 or Fall 2020 semester**. Although, we could not honor them in person, we still want to recognize their incredible achievements and wish them continued success.

MAY 2020

## THE OMSA'S IMPACT

Early findings from a longitudinal analysis of the effectiveness of the OMSA's Tutoring services were shared with campus partners earlier this semester. An analysis of over 85,000 students from 2007-2019 show that for many students in our population, participating in OMSA Tutoring is associated with **large increases in persistence from first to second year**, when controlling for a wide variety of variables. In some cases, **persistence rates increased from 80% to over 91%**. This study is one of multiple ongoing assessment projects to demonstrate the effects of the OMSA's services on student success. Stay tuned!

## GIVE TO THE OMSA

Last year, your donations helped fund 10 direct scholarships to outstanding OMSA students. This year, the transition to digital instruction and services and uncertainty in what is to come have left students even more in need of our services and financial support.

Your donations can help the OMSA continue to provide needed services and directly support deserving students in need. Visit our website to find more information on different giving options or to donate today!



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



# THE OMSA IS FULLY STAFFED!

It has been a busy year of hiring! With the OMSA fully staffed, we would like to introduce you to the new faces around the office!



Brian Becker  
Academic Outreach Advisor  
Advising & Mentoring



Clare Pratt  
Student Success Advisor  
TRIO SSS



Danette Griffith  
Student Success Advisor  
Advising & Mentoring



Denise Davis  
Office Manager



Hannah Mattingly  
Office Support Specialist  
SSS/Upward Bound



Haro Wade  
Student Success Advisor  
Advising & Mentoring

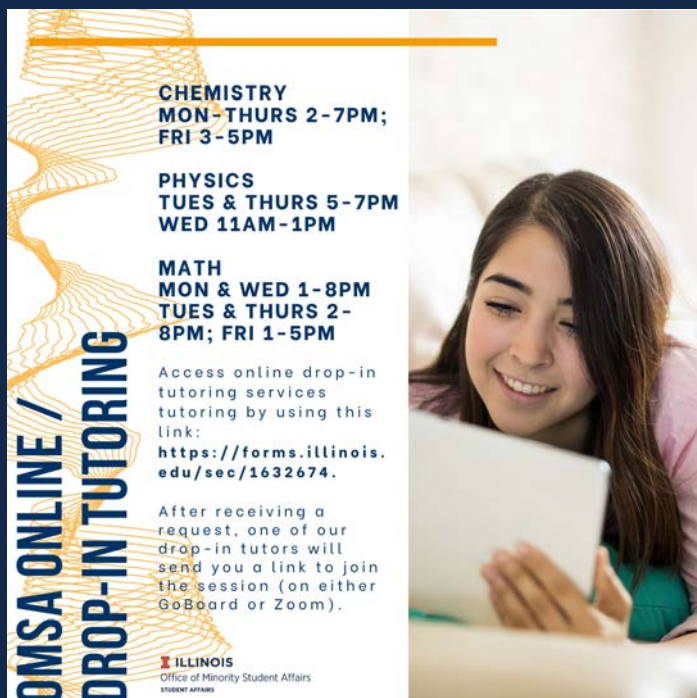


Jennifer Jenkins  
Office Support Associate  
Academic Services Center



Kathryn Pyer  
Office Support Specialist  
McNair/Talent Search

Now more than ever, the OMSA has been increasing efforts to connect with students. Thanks to our amazing Marketing Intern Csammer Love Jularbal for these amazing graphics explaining our new online services!



**OMSA ONLINE /  
DROP-IN TUTORING**

**CHEMISTRY**  
MON-THURS 2-7PM;  
FRI 3-5PM

**PHYSICS**  
TUES & THURS 5-7PM  
WED 11AM-1PM

**MATH**  
MON & WED 1-8PM  
TUES & THURS 2-8PM; FRI 1-5PM

Access online drop-in tutoring services tutoring by using this link:  
<https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/1632674>.

After receiving a request, one of our drop-in tutors will send you a link to join the session (on either GoBoard or Zoom).

**ILLINOIS**  
Office of Minority Student Affairs  
STUDENT AFFAIRS



**OMSA ONLINE /  
ADVISING &  
MENTORING**

Monday - Friday: 9 AM - 5PM

1. Visit [go.illinois.edu/OMSAAppts](http://go.illinois.edu/OMSAAppts).
2. Select OMSA ASC Drop-In Hours.
3. Select OMSA Advising and Mentoring.

If you have any questions please contact us at 217.333.0054 for OMSA Main ([omsa@illinois.edu](mailto:omsa@illinois.edu)) or 217.333.7547 for OMSA's Academic Services Center ([omsa-asc@illinois.edu](mailto:omsa-asc@illinois.edu)).

**ILLINOIS**  
Office of Minority Student Affairs  
STUDENT AFFAIRS

## GOING DIGITAL

The Spring 2020 semester is not one that will be quickly forgotten. Especially in these uncertain times, the services offered by the OMSA are vital to support the success and accomplishments of our students.

The OMSA quickly mobilized to convert 100% of our services to a digital format. For some programs this was relatively easy--SSS, McNair, and Advising & Mentoring were able to quickly adapt to online 1-on-1 sessions. Other programs, such as Matched and Drop-in Tutoring deployed new technology and were seeing tutees within a week of the switch-over.

Unfortunately, some of our events and trips were simply unable to move forward. Upward Bound and Talent Search spring trips were canceled, but we are still focused on helping our pre-college students prepare for their next academic steps, college, and beyond. Additionally, all of our summer programs have been migrated online. The Upward Bound Summer Program and the McNair Summer Research Institute will go on--but digitally. While we wish we could all be together for these programs, we are excited about the new innovations these circumstances may bring about.

No matter the challenge, we at the OMSA are committed to making sure our students succeed!

## 30 YEARS OF MCNAIR

In 1990, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign welcomed the TRIO Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program to campus. Under the direction of Dean Michael Jeffries, the Office of Minority Student Affairs would be the home for McNair at Illinois. Housed alongside other TRIO programs already grounded in the

community, Upward Bound and Student Support Services lead the way for McNair and Talent Search to complete a strong student success program pipeline from middle school to graduate school at Illinois.

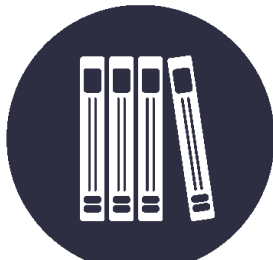
The life blood of the UIUC McNair Scholars program has always been its leadership. Led by Dean Michael Jeffries for over 20 years, McNair at Illinois was nationally known for success in bridging the gap between graduate education and access for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students. As the Associate Director of McNair for over 15 years, Dr. Pricilla Fortier was equally influential in giving our target students the tools they needed to achieve acceptance into graduate school. Most importantly, for over 20 years, the UIUC was the host of the National McNair Research Conference and Graduate School Fair in Lake Delevan, Wisconsin. Working from the Illinois campus, Rose Julius served as the institutional support staff for the entire duration of UIUC hosting.

30 | 1 9 9 0  
McNair  
Scholars  
2 0 2 0



**100%**

of McNair Scholars completed a research project in the 2018-2019 academic year.



**27**

faculty mentors from 7 academic colleges work with McNair Scholars to conduct undergraduate research.

On every level, the UIUC McNair Scholars Program has exemplified what leadership in higher education can produce when you have a program that is institutionally supported and celebrated. The reason UIUC McNair has achieved 100% successful grant renewal, earning Illinois one of the oldest McNair Scholars programs in the country, is due to the level of support provided by the UIUC Graduate College, faculty mentors across 7 colleges, and unlimited access to the #2 largest research library in US and Canada.



## 30 YEARS OF MCNAIR CONT.

On May 6th, McNair was scheduled to kick off our 30th Anniversary celebration. Due to COVID-19, all campus events have been cancelled or postponed. While we are saddened, the McNair staff is excited to have this focused time to use technology as we stay connected with our schools who are engaged in complete online learning, and social media to continue sharing the good news of the program. It is our goal to conduct a virtual McNair scholars graduation celebration, so stay connected to all OMSA social media pages for the announcement and link information. We are looking forward to continuing the 30th celebration in the Fall semester.

## RE-ENVISIONING THE ACADEMIC SERVICES CENTER

After a year of planning and remodeling, we were able to successfully re-envision our OMSA Academic Services Center (ASC) by not only bringing under one roof our Tutoring and Academic Services (T&AS) along with our Advising and Mentoring (A&M) Program but also realigning these components to further enhance cohesion. In doing so, we were able to expand our personnel to meet some of the growing demand for our services. This year, our OMSA family welcomed three Student Success Advisors (SSA), Jazmine Thompson, Haro Wade and Danette Griffith and one (1) Program Assistant (PA), Pamela Greer. Also joining our family, was Brian Becker, our new Academic Outreach Advisor (AOA). Last but not least, our unit was awarded full-time administrative support and welcomed Jennifer Jenkins, Office Support Associate (OSA) to our team!

### Advising & Mentoring

With our A&M team with close to fifty years of student services experience in place, we have been able to redesign our service delivery model by integrating technology, by overhauling our onboarding, supervision and development training of our graduate staff, by growing our content and mounting a vigorous communication plan, by increasing the additional ways by which we outreach to students and by developing closer collaborative bonds with our divisional and campus partners. This team's efforts wholeheartedly shows that they embody the OMSA's mission and strategic goal of providing exceptional academic mentoring, advocacy, and support services and is devoted to the vision of sustaining our position as a campus leader in transforming the lives of first generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students.

## RE-ENVISIONING THE ACADEMIC SERVICES CENTER CONT.

***"...I feel as though [my SSA] is one of the best mentors at OMSA. He has helped me grow tremendously during my short time here at the University. We need more people like [my SSA] helping make this campus a better place for us all."***

### Academic Outreach

Our Academic Outreach (AO) services were also restructured to serve as a standalone position. This year, one of the AO's chief foci was to work to revitalize and revamp our OMSA Ambassadors' Program. The OMSA Ambassadors Program exemplifies the four tenets of student excellence: Achievement, Leadership, Professionalism, Service. In mid Fall 2019, the OMSA welcomed seventeen (17) new Ambassadors. Since then, these student leaders were undergoing a battery of trainings along with several personal and professional development exercises. Although due to COVID-19, their opportunity to participate in on-campus recruitment yield events such as campus tours, tabling at resources fair and serving as host at OMSA events was cut short, these OMSA Ambassadors continue to participate in community building activities, extended onboarding and professional development trainings. After all, these scholars are established and burgeoning campus leaders that adhere to the adage, "Stay ready, so you don't have to get ready." Onward to next year!

***"My experience with OMSA Ambassadors has been a great one. Everyone is so welcoming and friendly, and all of the members try to work together and figure out the best way that we can help the UIUC community."***

### Tutoring & Academic Support

T&AS remains a steadfast jewel in the OMSA crown. Routinely, we hear from former students who share the notable impact that tutoring and academic services has had on their understanding of the learning cycle. This year is no exception! Under the leadership of our Assistant Director Grace Casillas, our tutor coordinator, tutor program assistants and undergraduate office assistants understand the incredible value added towards student success when we can match a student to a tutor that suits their way of learning and their schedule. Of equal import, are our tutors! According to their peers, these phenomenal scholars set the standard for motivation, have wide curriculum knowledge, are versatile, and accessible as well demonstrate empathy and humility.



## RE-ENVISIONING THE ACADEMIC SERVICES CENTER CONT.

***“...As of this morning, I have accepted my offer to attend UIC's medical school this fall. I wanted to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for all of your support during this process. Not only have you taught me a lot about learning/studying (something I'll be sure to put to use these next few years) and helped me grow as an individual, but you have played a vital role in my being able to go to medical school this year...”***

T&AS could easily rest on these laurels. Nevertheless, T&AS also continues to look for ways to hone the student educational experience. This past year T&AS partnered with Innovative Educators (IE) to make online study skills and student success workshops available through StudentLingo. These interactive workshops are available 24/7. Through IE, we are also able to offer additional tutor training and development opportunities. Like A&M, T&AS is also developing closer collaborative bonds with our divisional and campus partners. This year T&AS developed a T&AS syllabi statement for instructional faculty to share with their students.

What a year! As this year closes, we were elated to learn that our team's efforts were recognized. The OMSA was awarded the I-Promise's inaugural I-Promise Campus Partner Award. Each OMSA ASC component contributed to this honor, whether through tutoring or providing final exam prep sessions, to participating in their New Scholar Orientation and Mentor/Mentee Signing Day, to offering access to opportunities like the iClicker Loan Program, or to providing mentoring and support. However, we won't rest here! Our OMSA ASC team, in tandem with our OMSA Research and Assessment Analyst, is already looking ahead to next year as we work to identify where we should target our resources to further bolster student success and engagement. Way to go team!

***Stay tuned for our 2019-2020 Annual Report to see even more information about our services, plans for next year, and more assessment findings about our impact for our students!***



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