

Our Mission

The mission of *The Mentoring Academics Scholarship and Achievement Initiative (MASAI)* complements the aims of diversity and pursuit of education in the *Educating Illinois Plan*. Our primary objective is to assist in the retention of students who identify as first generation, low income or historically underrepresented at ISU. The program performs this function by helping incoming first-year students successfully transition into the university culture by learning to manage the rigorous academic and social demands of the institution.

The transition from high school senior to college freshman is never easy. Some students adjust quickly to the college environment and expectations. Others may experience confusion, loneliness, academic anxiety, and stress. Many have to deal with the financial pressures of paying for college. A large number of our students are first-generation collegians. Therefore, there may not be anyone within the immediate family to advise them on what to expect when starting college. Being a minority or underrepresented student on a predominately white campus complicates matter further. Many of these students experience culture shock when they first arrive on campus.

Research has shown that many students fail to graduate because:

- They don't adjust well initially to the institution.
- They lack a knowledgeable expectation of college.
- They lack adequate academic preparation.
- They have insufficient financial resources.
- They are more interested in having fun than getting an education.

Studies have also shown that the first six weeks of a new students' college career will determine if he or she will bond successfully to an institution and potentially graduate. This is the one of the beliefs on which MASAI was created. We seek to provide a welcoming and supportive environment on our campus by linking our new, incoming students to a peer mentor who has proven themselves to be academically and socially successful on our campus.

Program Goals

- To improve the retention and graduation rates of first generation, low income and/or underrepresented students on our campus.
- To provide new students with an immediate support system.
- To make students aware of all the resources and services available on campus and encourage their use.
- To motivate students to take advantage of the various events and organizations offered on campus that will enhance their college experience.
- To provide students with skills that will promote academic and social competence.