Message from the Director
Elizabeth Mason

Message from Academic Skills Specialists
Joe Cross and Ron Threadgill

Awards

**Emerging Leader Award**
Savannah Guo

**Excellence in Transition Award**
Nicole Roddan

**Mannie L. Jackson Award**
Delaney Rummell

**Outstanding Senior Award**
Anastasia Adjei

**Peer Mentor of the Year Award**
Eghonghon Eromesele

**Research Scholar Award**
Rahil Sadrudinn

**Edmund J. James Scholars**

**Graduating Seniors**

**Additional Recognition**
Message from the Director

Elizabeth Mason

I am so proud of all of you! You have adapted to meet every challenge, and utilized the resources available to give yourselves the best opportunities for success. This year I have seen so many of you exemplify the pillars of I-LEAP. Upperclassmen stepped up to be mentors to another large incoming class. I-LEAP Scholars are part of significant research being done throughout the College of AHS and the university. And our Student Advisory Board created events and opportunities that were creative and relatable for their peers. Our scholars have provided service to the Urbana-Champaign area and their home communities through volunteering. You have adapted to various learning methods and overcome the most unexpected situations to get here. To graduates, you’ve done it! You’ve completed your journey at Illinois. We are excited to celebrate your accomplishments. Watching you grow and develop over the years has been an honor, and I look forward to seeing the greatness that you pursue on the next leg of your life journey. For continuing students, take advantage of this coming break. Whether that means resting, taking classes, researching, volunteering, working or some combination of these, use this time. Take advantage of opportunities that you weren’t able to before because of restrictions. I look forward to seeing your faces and hearing your stories once we are back on campus. No matter what your next step is, remember that we are here for you. I’m always excited to hear from students about what is going on in their lives, so keep in touch. In the meantime, let’s continue to keep living out the pillars of I-LEAP. As always, keep doing great things!
Messages from the Academic Skills Specialists

Joe Cross, Ph.D.

To this Senior class, the wait is over, YOU DID IT! You journeyed through life’s collegiate challenges and now you alone stand on this grand graduation stage. No doubt your life was disrupted. No doubt there was added stress. No doubt there was uncertainty. Despite these challenges, or more accurately because of them, you are stronger. Through it all you’ve stayed the course, you hung in there, you didn’t quit and you have succeeded mostly because you and you alone chose to do so.

When you look back on your time at the University of Illinois, I hope you reflect on the things you did and not the things you didn’t do. I hope you remember the risks you took and the goals you accomplished. You’ve held on tight to your academic dreams that you’ve been pursuing for years and you didn’t let it get away. In the midst of a global crisis, you continued to live out the dream you’ve had on the inside. You know quite well by now: struggle and criticism are prerequisites for greatness. Truth be told, that is the law of the universe and no one escapes them.

But for now, just this one day, in this very moment, in the presence of absolutely no one…. DANCE like no one’s watching. LAUGH like everything’s funny. SING the alma mater like no one’s listening. CELEBRATE like there’s no tomorrow. YOU DID IT!!! Here’s to your new beginning.
Messages from the Academic Skills Specialists

Ron Threadgill

To this Senior class: congratulations on completing your final semester and becoming an Illinois graduate! You should take pride in your four-year academic journey. You have encountered various challenges and have met them with exceptional effort.

When you look back at your time at the University of Illinois, I hope you reflect on your personal growth throughout the four-year journey. I hope you acknowledge that you thrived at a world-class institution and that you made your family proud with this accomplishment of graduating. Ultimately, I hope you remind yourself of your complete journey and reflect on how you can continue to get better and become the best version of yourself as you accomplish your goals as well.

The sky’s the limit to your personal growth and future accomplishments! Lastly, I will leave you with this awesome quote from Maya Angelou: “The horizon leans forward, offering you space to place new steps of change.”
I-LEAP AWARDS
Emerging Leader Award

This award is presented to a freshman student who exemplifies the attributes of a distinguished leader. The recipient of this award has exhibited excellence in community service or in a leadership role within I-LEAP or the campus community and demonstrated a potential for continued leadership.

Savannah Guo

Savannah, a Community Health major, plans to graduate with a B.S. in Health Planning & Administration in 2026. She plans to become a physician. She did her undergraduate research with SHS Department Head Dr. Pamela Hadley in transcribing naturalistic parent-child interactions through audio/video files in order to study early language acquisition. Volunteer with the Library of Congress: By the People. About I-LEAP, she said, “As a first-generation student, I think that I-LEAP has served as a great resource in helping me acclimate to the college environment and the various challenges that come with this new transition. This award is, essentially, an accumulation of the support that’s been provided to me as a result of this program.”
Excellence in Transition Award

This award is presented to a new transfer student who has successfully transitioned as a student at Illinois. This student has integrated into the Illinois campus community, excelled academically and is actively involved in campus life. The recipient of this award participates in student organizations, research opportunities and/or community service at the campus or Champaign-Urbana level.

Nicole Roddan

Nicole, an Interdisciplinary Health Sciences major, plans to graduate with a B.S. in December 2023. She plans to become a physician’s assistant and work in women’s health. Last summer, she worked at Raging Waves Waterpark in Yorkville, Ill., as a first aid worker, which involved treating guests’ minor and major injuries and illnesses. She is currently a student worker for Special Populations Health Program at McKinley Health Center where she helps facilitate health promotion events. Nicole, who attended the University of Pittsburgh before coming to Illinois said, “Transferring to such a large institution was not easy and I am very appreciative to be recognized for this award. I-LEAP has given me the opportunity to adjust to this campus, network with peers, and further my leadership skills.”
Mannie L. Jackson Award

This award is presented to a student athlete who is a leader on campus. The recipient of this award is a student athlete that has demonstrated the characteristics of Mannie L. Jackson including academic excellence, self-discipline in balancing academic and athletic responsibilities and serving others within the campus and Urbana-Champaign community.

Delaney Rummell

Delaney wants to be an athletic director. She wants to ensure that student-athletes are provided and led to an overall holistic experience. Next year, she is planning to earn her master’s degree in Business Management. She is currently interning within the Illinois Athletic Department in the Student-Athlete Development department. She’s grateful for the award, saying, “I-LEAP fuels students with empowerment, a sense of belonging and numerous engagement opportunities and I am so grateful for this community!”
Outstanding Senior Award

This award is presented to a student who is a model of excellence. The award is based on the ideals of I-LEAP. The recipient of this award best exemplifies outstanding commitment to academics, community service, and leadership.

Anastasia Adjei

Anastasia is graduating in May with a B.S. in Community Health with a concentration in Health Education and Promotion. Her goal is to become a physician—specifically an OB/GYN. She said, “I-LEAP has helped me achieve so many goals and opportunities never thought I could accomplish. As a first-generation college student, I-LEAP has helped me combat my imposter syndrome and has provided me with the skills necessary to succeed in the real world.”
Peer Mentor of the Year Award

This award is presented to a student who has shown an outstanding commitment to mentoring first year I-LEAP students. The individual has had a significant impact on his/her mentee by helping them transition to college, encouraging I-LEAP and campus involvement and promoting academic success.

Eghonghon Eromesele

A Community Health major, Eghonghon plans to graduate in May 2025 and plans to become a doctor and public health program coordinator. Eghonghon had the opportunity to work in the Renal and Cardiovascular Disease Lab under the DISARM-HD study. The lab’s main purpose was to focus on non-pharmacological methods such as dietary intervention for improving the lives of patients with chronic kidney disease. Of the award, Enghonghon said, “This award is a testament to my firm belief in always spreading knowledge to those who can benefit. I-LEAP jump started my college career and I will continue the work it has put in all of us in any way possible.”
Research Scholar Award

This award is presented to a student who has participated in individual or faculty-led research. Research activities include conference or poster presentations, publications, etc. Rahil’s goal is to attend medical school and become a physician.

Rahil Sadruddin

Rahil has been president of the I-LEAP advisory board, a volunteer at Carle Foundation Hospital and an undergraduate research assistant in the Exercise Psychology Laboratory. Of the award, Rahil said, “Receiving the Research Scholar award has conveyed that my contribution to the field of academia is not being overlooked, and continues to fuel my drive to delve deeper into what research can provide for all.”
Edmund J. James Scholar

The Edmund J. James Scholar Program is among the most prestigious honors that an undergraduate can earn at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The program is named after the fourth president of the University, who believed that scholarship and research were fundamental to human progress. The James Scholar program in the College of Applied Health Sciences seeks to recognize the highest academically achieving undergraduate students and to challenge them to engage in advanced scholarly activity. The following students in the I-LEAP program were 2021-2022 James Scholars:

- Aamina Adebayo
- Sam Adeoye
- Anastasia Adjei
- Angela Anum
- Beatrice Benavent
- Emily Butryn
- Aubrey Cervantes
- Valerie Chen
- Jaquelin Conchas Lopez
- Linda Corral
- James Cuevas
- Cassidy Das
- Kalia Davis
- Brenda de Souza Soares da Rosa
- Alejandra Diaz Ortiz
- Karly Dolin
- Martine Duplessy
- Stella Emezue
- Eghonghon Eromosele
- Zamantha Figueroa
- Danielle Fuller
- Brenda Galan
- Alanis Garcia
- Savanna Guo
- Samaria Harris
- Elena Hawkins
- Jules Heberer
- Daniela Hernandez
- Mia Jayes
- Claire Kakac
- Rijha Kamran
- Jacob Katsifarakis
- Abigail Keasler
- Grace Kim
- Katherine Kondelis
- Josep File Le Papapa
- Elvia Malacara
- Naima Mays
- Jillian Moffat
- Kirsten Osborn
- Allison Page
- Anjali Patel
- Ramiro Ramirez
- Fernanda Romero
- Brielle Ross
- Rahil Sadruddin
- Ariana Sanchez
- Jorie Schirmacher
- Camryn Shirley
- Haley Smith
- Nia Smith
- Sofia Vasquez
- Taski Velasquez
- Lauren Vicencio
- Pedro Young
Graduating Seniors

Congratulations and good luck, Class of 2023!

Anastasia Adjei
Guillermo Beltran
Eddie Burras
Ivette Camacho Perez
Kennedy Campbell
Masiya Chhen
Andrea Cowper
Tianna Davis
Aaron Dille
Zamantha Figuero
Danielle Fuller
Summer Garrison
Deztinee Geiger
Nikayla Gordon
Ricky Guerrero
Elena Hawkins
Jules Heberer
Brianna Hernandez
Daniela Hernandez
Grace Hessler
Kathryn Huang
Mia Jayes
Francisca Kabu
Ricardo Lopez
Nixie Lopez Leon
Elvia Malacara
Mia Martinez
Ryan Meed
Alondra Munoz
Taylor Murray
Akintoyosi Omokaiye
Kirsten Osborn
Delaney Rummell
Jorie Schirmacher
John Slubowski
Skyy Sumlin
Maria Tenuta
David Threat
Mia Townes
Jonathan Tran
Samantha Trevino
Jonathan Trotter
ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION
Dean’s List (spring and fall 2022)

To be eligible for Dean’s List recognition, students must successfully complete at least 12 graded semester hours and have a grade point average in the top 20 percent of their college class. The following I-LEAP Scholars were in the top 20 percent of their degree programs (Community Health, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences, Kinesiology, Speech and Hearing Science and Recreation, Sport, and Tourism).

Samuel Adeoye
Anastasia Adjei
Albert Bang
Andrea Barajas
Tania Barragan
Beatrice Benavent
Daniel Boachie
Emily Butryn
Isabella Castro
Andrea Cowper
Kalia Davis
Cindy Deng
Stella Emezue
Eghonghon Eromosele
Otniel Fernandez
Danielle Fuller
Brenda Galan
Christian Grays
Savannah Guo
Jules Heberer
Nadia Hernandez
Melinda Jara
Sara Jass
Mia Jayes
Serena Jimdar
Ethan Juarez
Francisca Kabu
Rijha Kamran
Jacob Katsifarakis
Abigail Keasler
Grace Kim
Katherine Kondelis
Josephine Lapapa
Nixie Lopez Leon
Iman Love
Jocelyn Miranda
Kasey Nguyen
Patrick Niec
Kirsten Osborn
Allison Page
Diana Quirino
Ramiro Ramirez
Samantha Ramos
Nicole Roddan
Angel Rodriguez
Madelyn Roseman
Jorie Schirmacher
Haley Smith
Skyy Sumlin
George Tawfic
Maria Tenuta
Sofia Vasquez
Lauren Vicencio
Vinh Vo
Violet Wendling
Nolan Woodring
Julia Wronska
Pedro Young
Anne Yuen
Student Advisory Board

The I-LEAP Student Advisory Board is an important part of the I-LEAP leadership team. Working alongside the faculty and staff, these elected board members assist in planning and delivering events and workshops designed to help I-LEAP students meet their academic and professional goals.

Jules Heberer, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Rahil Saddrudin, Kinesiology
Alegandra Diaz, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Emily Butryn, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Beatrice Benavent, Kinesiology
Jae’da Thompson, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Monserrat Ponse, Community Health
Tera Sparks, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Ethan Juarez, Community Health
Aubrey Cervantes, Kinesiology
Alyssa Fisher, Kinesiology
Julia Wronska, Community Health
Emily Tracy, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Talitha Akoto, Community Health
Tasdique Khan, Community Health
Nicole Roddan, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Ishan Patel, Kinesiology
Samyla Williams, Interdisciplinary Health Sciences
Denise Diaz, Community Health