

## **North Central College Receives \$100,000 Wal-Mart Grant to Prepare First-Generation Students as Teachers**

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July 17, 2008—North Central College is one of only 20 colleges across the country selected by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) to receive the Wal-Mart College Success Award—a \$100,000 grant that will help North Central launch a new program preparing first-generation college students for post-graduate success as teachers.

The highly selective award, intended to help institutions with a proven commitment to educating first-generation college students, will fund recruitment activities and scholarships for students who enroll in North Central College's new Teach First initiative. The program will provide academic and financial support and career counseling for first-generation college students who pursue careers in education.

“Teach First will build on North Central's existing Premier Scholars and Pipeline to Urban Teaching programs with first-generation students, but with a focus on mentoring,” says Jan Fitzsimmons, North Central's director of Associated Colleges of Illinois Center for Success in High-Need Schools. “New students will be mentored by North Central alumni who are first-generation college graduates and successful teachers themselves, who can help these new students navigate their college and professional career paths.”

Among those alumni mentors will be area teachers Brian Lee and Amber West. Lee, a 2001 North Central graduate, teaches physical education and coaches football and softball at Elk Grove High School in Elk Grove Village, Ill. West is a 2006 North Central graduate and bilingual fifth grade teacher at John R. Tibbott Elementary School in Bolingbrook, Ill., where she also works with students with special education needs.

Beginning in fall 2009, incoming North Central freshmen who take part in Teach First will be offered a four-week summer program to help with their transition into college. The program director will help each student create an individualized plan each year focused on content knowledge, hands-on learning and support networks. Students will also work with their North Central alumni mentors and faculty for intensive career guidance and summer plans that provide work experience related to their future teaching careers.

Nationally, only 24 percent of first-generation college students succeed in earning a bachelor's degree, compared with 68 percent of students whose parents received a bachelor's degree.<sup>1</sup>

North Central College and the other 19 colleges selected for the Wal-Mart College Success Awards have developed programs that result in higher percentages of graduates among their first-generation college students than the national average. Many graduate first-generation students at the same rate as all other students.

In announcing the awards, CIC President Richard Ekman said, "CIC was delighted that 217 institutions—more than a third of its membership—applied for the grants. More importantly, we were amazed at the outstanding quality of their programs—truly a testament to the efforts of private colleges to ensure the success of first-generation students. These awards will help strengthen those programs and also provide recognition that their work is important."

Wal-Mart is proud to support programs that enable first generation students to succeed in college, said Margaret McKenna, president of the Wal-Mart Foundation. "Wal-Mart's partnership with CIC identifies institutions committed to the success of first generation students and will help identify and share effective programs," she said.

The Wal-Mart College Success Awards program is administered by the Council of Independent Colleges and made possible by a generous grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation.

For more information about the Wal-Mart College Success Awards and the programs of the 20 winners, visit the CIC website at [www.cic.edu/projects\\_services/walmart\\_college\\_success.asp](http://www.cic.edu/projects_services/walmart_college_success.asp).

### **About North Central College**

Founded in 1861, North Central College is an independent, comprehensive college of the liberal arts and sciences that offers more than 50 undergraduate majors and graduate programming in six areas. Located in the historic district of Naperville, Illinois, which was rated by Money magazine as the nation's second "best place to live," North Central College is just 30 minutes from Chicago's Loop. With more than 2,000 full-time undergraduates and nearly 550 part-time undergraduate and graduate students, North Central College is committed to academic excellence, a climate that emphasizes leadership, ethics, values and service, a curriculum that balances job-related knowledge with a liberal arts foundation and a caring environment with small classes.

North Central College is affiliated with the United Methodist Church. It is recognized as one of "America's Best Colleges" by U.S. News & World Report; ranked as "a college for high-

achieving students” by Peterson’s Competitive Colleges; and among a select number of schools profiled in Kaplan’s Unofficial Insider’s Guide to the 320 Most Interesting Colleges.

### **About The Council of Independent Colleges**

The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is an association of more than 580 independent, liberal arts colleges and universities and higher education affiliates and organizations that work together to strengthen college and university leadership, sustain high-quality education, and enhance private higher education’s contributions to society. To fulfill this mission, CIC provides its members with skills, tools and knowledge that address aspects of leadership, financial management and performance, academic quality and institutional visibility. For more information visit [www.cic.edu](http://www.cic.edu).

### **About the Wal-Mart Foundation**

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. and the Wal-Mart Foundation are proud to support the charitable causes that are important to customers and associates in their own neighborhoods. Through its philanthropic programs and partnerships, the Wal-Mart Foundation supports initiatives focused on enhancing opportunities in education, job skills training, sustainability and health. In 2007, Wal-Mart, Sam’s Club and the Wal-Mart Foundation gave \$296 million to communities across the United States. To learn more visit [www.walmartfoundation.org](http://www.walmartfoundation.org).

*<sup>1</sup>Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, Fourth Follow-up, Postsecondary Education Transcript Study, 2000.*