

During my time at the University of Illinois, the Illinois Promise program delivered much more than it promised. As a future educator, I also plan to make and keep important promises to my students, just as I-Promise did for me.

U promised me financial support, and you delivered. Without the assistance offered by I-Promise, I would not have been able to attend college. Throughout my four years, I was constantly reassured by a financial safety net that applied even when I moved out of the dorms, studied abroad, or incurred other educational expenses. I-Promise gave me a chance to get my feet wet at the beginning of freshman year when I couldn't afford to purchase all of my textbooks right away. I-Promise helped me to have multiple steady jobs throughout college in places that were willing to work with my challenging class schedule.

U promised guidance, and you delivered. You delivered not only guidance, but a community in which I grew and thrived in as well. Not only was I able to get a degree, but I also grew into multiple leadership roles. I-Promise gave me a community in which I met wonderful people: students, faculty members, mentors, and donors. Each group of people offered a different type of tremendous inspirational support. Many donors have shared how they too started small right out of college and in time grew into generous and giving people that gave back to the communities that affected them. Mentorship was provided to me both formally and informally, whether it was through the I-Promise mentoring program, conversations with Susan, or as a mentor myself. I was matched with mentors and mentees in my field of study, and I learned a great amount from each person I interacted with. An I-Promise mentor who had been matched with another student graciously lent me a pair of hiking shoes for my study abroad trip to New Zealand to prepare for the rainy winter weather. Individual kindness is a consistent theme that has been prevalent in everyone I encountered through the I-Promise program, and this reinforces the I-Promise community that grows larger every year.

In the spirit of the I-Promise community, I will become a contributing member by pledging the following:

I promise to become an effective teacher, and I will deliver. I will take the education I received at the University of Illinois and use it to be a strong and positive influence on younger generations. My students will learn to work together as a vibrant community instead of individual contributors. I will spread the message of I-Promise and educate my students about the importance of kindness and support.

I promise to be sensitive to my students' needs and to raise my students' awareness to the needs of the rest of the world; I will deliver. I will never assume anything about a child because all of my students will come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, just as all of us in I-Promise came together. My students will express themselves, and I will listen. In turn, my students will learn to listen to others.

My bold dream is to have students that will grow to help others and strive to make a community that supports people in need. I want to see the message of I-Promise passed along from generation to generation as students work towards building a long-lasting community that benefits others in need and allows them to reach their full potential. I want my students to ask themselves, "What can I do to make the world a better place instead of asking what can the world give me?"

I want to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart.