



---

# MAKING AN IMPACT

THE ENGINEERING VISIONARY  
SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

**2019 REPORT**



THE CAMPAIGN FOR  
**ILLINOIS**



# MAKING AN IMPACT

YOU HAVE HELPED RAISE OVER  
**\$88 MILLION** IN ENGINEERING  
VISIONARY SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

**N**ow in its sixth year, the Engineering Visionary Scholarship (EVS) Initiative continues to make an impact across our campus. The EVS Initiative provides a sustainable pool of funds to advance the future of The Grainger College of Engineering – our students. So far, this fiscal year, over 2,000 donors have given to the EVS Initiative and The Grainger Matching Challenge has helped us raise over \$88 million in scholarship support.

Since January 2017, more than \$15.5 million has been matched thanks to The Grainger Matching Challenge. Gifts to the EVS Initiative will continue to be matched through the end of 2019 or until the \$25 million cap is reached – allowing donors to double or even triple their contribution when combined with employer matching opportunities.

The students featured in this report are six of 845 bright and talented scholarship recipients. Your investment in student scholarships has had an immediate impact on these students. However, the effects of your gift will be seen far into the future because of this endowed support.

**\$5 million** in scholarship funds were awarded in the 2018-2019 academic year

OF THE 845 FUTURE ENGINEERS:

**32%** were first generation college students

**28%** were from under-represented populations

**34%** were women

The percentage of women attending The Grainger College of Engineering, increased **47%** since the EVS Initiative began in 2013

Nearly **40%** more students were from under-represented populations in the 2018 freshman class than in 2013





# VONGAI TIZORA

“BEING SURROUNDED BY SUCH  
EXTRAORDINARY RESOURCES  
AND STUDENTS IS A GREAT  
SOURCE OF MOTIVATION AND  
INSPIRATION FOR ME.”

As a freshman in bioengineering, Vongai Tizora chose to attend The Grainger College of Engineering, “because I am pre-med and traditional pre-med majors like biology, chemistry, and biochemistry didn’t appeal to me, but bioengineering certainly did. Bioengineering is exciting for me because I’ll be able to innovate and change the way in which we develop solutions to the biological problems of the world.”

Vongai plans to become a physician, focusing on providing third-world countries and low-income communities affordable, efficient, and effective healthcare. She shares, “Because I am the daughter of two Zimbabwean immigrants, I have witnessed firsthand how great the demand for these services are throughout the world. With my donors believing in me and what I have to offer, I will be able to give back to the larger world.”

Vongai is a part of the Cancer Scholars Program, which prepares the next generation of physician scientists. The program links education with real-world issues and gives undergraduate students the opportunity work on world-changing research. One of her favorite classes in the program is Frontiers of Cancer Research, which introduced her to research methods and precautions that are being taken to one day eradicate cancer. Vongai is also heavily involved in campus activities. She serves as the Vice President of the Junior Executive Board of the National Society of Black Engineers, and holds a chair in Recruitment and Marketing for the American Medical Student Association. In her spare time, Vongai loves to read, write, and produce videos.

Vongai is grateful to be a recipient of the Engineering Visionary Scholarship. With her scholarship, Vongai is able to maintain active participation in her community as she continues to conduct research, volunteer, and participate in student organizations.

**BIOENGINEERING  
2022**



A photograph of Oscar Zepeda, a young man with a goatee, wearing a black baseball cap with the Illinois 'I' logo and a patterned sweater. He is standing in a library with bookshelves in the background, smiling at the camera with his arms crossed.

# OSCAR ZEPEDA

“I AM INSPIRED TO PAY THINGS FORWARD BY BEING A ROLE MODEL TO THOSE WITHIN MY COMMUNITY AND WITHIN MY PROGRAM, AND TO DO MY BEST TO CONTRIBUTE IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE TO SOCIETY.”

Oscar Zepeda, a sophomore studying systems engineering choose to attend The Grainger College of Engineering because of its global reputation. Oscar shares, “People come from around the world to pursue a degree in their interests here. Illinois also has a very diverse student body, which keeps me open to different perspectives and ways to approach topics.”

Oscar is heavily involved on campus. He serves as a peer advisor for the International Programs in Engineering, where he advises students on study abroad opportunities and serves as a host for incoming exchange students. He also served as the External Vice President for the Society for Hispanic Professional Engineers. In his free time, Oscar enjoys watching movies, listening to music, reading, and talking to his family.

Oscar is grateful to be a recipient of an Engineering Visionary Scholarship as it enabled him to attend school here. He explains, “My desire to attend this amazing institution was limited to what we could afford. This scholarship made everything within arm’s reach for me.” With an Engineering Visionary Scholarship, Oscar is “able to spend less time worrying about school payments and can focus on academics.” Oscar would like to thank the donors supporting his education and shares, “I keep these donors in mind when thinking of things that inspire me to do well in my classes.”

**INDUSTRIAL AND ENTERPRISE  
SYSTEMS ENGINEERING  
2022**





# ABIGAIL IUORIO

“I CHOSE MY MAJOR BECAUSE OF MY DESIRE TO GIVE BACK, SPECIFICALLY TO THE ENVIRONMENT. MY MENTALITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO LEAVE THE WORLD BETTER THAN I FOUND IT. THIS DREAM IS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH MY SCHOLARSHIP.”

Abigail Iuorio, a junior in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, wanted to be challenged at a college she “would be proud to attend.” She selected The Grainger College of Engineering because it offered the “most affordable opportunity to get a competitive technical education.” After completing her degree Abigail plans to work in sustainability and environmental conservation.

Receiving an Engineering Visionary Scholarship has greatly impacted Abigail’s experience at the University of Illinois. With the financial support, Abigail can devote her time to organizations she is passionate about, such as Illinithon, which raises money for Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals, and Champaign County YoungLife, through which she mentors local high school students. She is also the Vice President of Chapter Development for her sorority, Alpha Omicron Pi, where she plans, budgets, and executes two team-building events per month, and created an overnight retreat that was attended by over 150 members of the chapter.

The generous aid of an Engineering Visionary Scholarship enables Abigail to study her passion—energy, water, and environment sustainability, and allowed her to travel to Ecuador over winter break for a water distribution project with Engineers Without Borders. Abigail wants to utilize the education she receives at Illinois to better the world, and shares, “I hope to use my major to increase infrastructure and sanitation and contribute to the availability of education in low income areas, especially for women. In this way, I can help use this gift to further the education of others.”

**CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL  
ENGINEERING  
2020**



A photograph of Sarah Osman, a young woman wearing a black hijab and a dark jacket with white stripes on the sleeves. She is smiling and standing in a workshop or garage. In the background, there are various tools, equipment, and a red step ladder. The text "SARAH OSMAN" is overlaid on the left side of the image in large, white, bold letters.

# SARAH OSMAN

“I WAS CONFIDENT THAT AN ENGINEERING DEGREE FROM THE GRAINGER COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING WOULD BE GREAT PREPARATION FOR MY FUTURE CAREER AS AN ENGINEER.”

Sarah Osman was a transfer student from her local community college and has recently graduated from The Grainger College of Engineering's Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering. She plans to continue her education by pursuing a master's degree in mechanical engineering with a research focus in biomechanics. Receiving an Engineering Visionary Scholarship allowed Sarah to increase the amount of time spent as a Research Assistant at Carle Foundation Hospital where she worked to develop “a solution that would change someone's life.” She has worked to create an oxygen encapsulating formula, with applications in cancer research and eye disease, and designed pharmaceutical equipment components for a potential patent.

Sarah competed in Illini Formula Electric for the past two years and was a member of the Pi Tau Sigma Mechanical Engineering Honor Society. In her free time, Sarah loves to sing and spend time outside in nature.

As a woman in engineering, Sarah is inspired to pay it forward “with a means of currency that every person has - time.” Sarah shares, “I always make it a goal to encourage women to consider a career in engineering, particularly those who are undecided or unhappy with their current majors. Too many girls and women, my former self included, hesitate from even learning about what this field entails and fail to see what they are missing out on. I hope that when I am financially independent, I will be able to provide my time, support and financial resources towards encouraging new generations of engineers—male and female.”

**MECHANICAL SCIENCE AND  
ENGINEERING  
2019**





# JACOB PERAKIS

“THIS SCHOLARSHIP MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MY FAMILY TO SEND ME, MY BROTHER, AND MY SISTER TO COLLEGE FOR AN AFFORDABLE PRICE. WE ARE ON TRACK TO BE THE FIRST IN OUR FAMILY TO COMPLETE A COLLEGE DEGREE.”

A sophomore in the Department of Computer Science, Jacob Perakis is attending the University of Illinois with his brother and sister. As a triplet, Jacob's brother is also a future Grainger Engineer, while his sister is pursuing a degree in biology. Receiving an Engineering Visionary Scholarship was instrumental in Jacob's decision to attend The Grainger College of Engineering. He shares that receiving scholarship support “made it more affordable to attend such a prestigious school along with my siblings. Receiving an Engineering Visionary Scholarship was actually the major factor that influenced my decision to enroll at Engineering—no other school was as generous.”

Jacob's favorite class so far has been CS 126, Software Design Studio, because it “was the first class where I finally felt confident in my coding abilities.” Jacob is heavily involved in student organizations. He is a member of 100 Strong with the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center, the National Society of Black Engineers, and Blacks and African Americans in Computing. In his free time Jacob loves playing soccer—and eating sushi!

Jacob is happy to be an Illini and shares, “the engineering program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is simply the best in the nation. I have never been more satisfied with my decision.

COMPUTER SCIENCE  
2021



A portrait of Samira Tungare, a young woman with long dark hair, smiling and standing in a laboratory. She is wearing a dark blue zip-up jacket with an orange 'I' logo on the left chest. Her arms are crossed, and she is wearing a smartwatch on her left wrist. The background shows laboratory equipment, including a computer monitor and various electronic components.

# SAMIRA TUNGARE

“I RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT THAT DONORS AND SCHOLARSHIPS HAVE ON CURRENT STUDENTS. I HOPE IN MY FUTURE I WILL HAVE THE ABILITY TO GIVE BACK.”

Samira Tungare is a junior studying electrical engineering. She plans to obtain a master's degree after graduating and then work in either the power and energy industry or in wireless communications. Samira decided to attend The Grainger College of Engineering after visiting campus during her senior year of high school. Samira shares, “the people I interacted with left an amazing impression. I was able to talk to a professor during one of my visits and I was so impressed by the undivided attention I was given as a student who had not even accepted my offer to Illinois yet.”

Samira has been very involved in undergraduate research. She is a committee member for Promoting Undergraduate Research in Engineering (PURE), and serves as an Illinois Student Admissions Representative for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Samira is also an Engineering Learning Assistant for the Engineering 100 course that is required for all first-year students. In her free time, Samira enjoys golfing, reading, and attending and watching sporting events. When she is visiting home, she loves spending time with her dog.

Samira is grateful to have received an Engineering Visionary Scholarship, “Receiving this scholarship made me feel that the University believed I would be a competitive student here who could do well in the program and it was a great boost of confidence to receive it from a school of such high caliber. The Grainger College of Engineering has an amazing program that is highly respected across the world, and it is a program I love being a part of.”

**ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER  
ENGINEERING  
2020**





---

**I ILLINOIS**

Grainger College of Engineering

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Office of Advancement  
310 Engineering Hall  
1308 W. Green Street  
Urbana, IL 61801

[evs.grainger.illinois.edu](https://evs.grainger.illinois.edu)