



November 2019

No question about it. The UIS students who volunteer, intern and work for the Illinois Innocence Project are fantastic! Their dedication to fixing miscarriages of justice is unparalleled. Of course, we are the first to praise their work with us — but we also want to show you the many other ways our students excel.

Sophia Ortega - Case Evaluator and Spanish Translator

Winner of the Lawrence E. Williams/Dr. Larry Golden Innocence Project and the Fred J. Patton scholarships

"These scholarships mean so much to my family and me because they have provided me with the opportunity to keep studying. I will forever be grateful for Joye Williams and Fred Patton."

Over the past two years Sophia has applied critical Spanish-language translation, communication and case research skills to furthering our Latino Innocence Initiative. She will graduate in the spring with a major in legal studies and minor in criminology/criminal justice, after which she plans to take the LSAT and begin law school in fall 2021.

Tyler Brown - Case Evaluator

Winner of the Lee Ensel Scholarship in Pre-Law and the Frank and Linda Kopecky Scholarship

"These scholarships help significantly with my tuition at a university that offers major opportunities, like doing innocence work and interacting with the state legislature. At UIS I can participate directly in the injustices within our society by analyzing cases at IIP and tracking legislation that may impact wrongful convictions. These awards push me even more toward a positive future in law and I am utterly grateful for the generosity of the Ensel and Kopecky families!"

Tyler will graduate in the spring with a major in legal studies and a minor in political science, after which he plans to take the LSAT and begin law school in fall 2021.

Rosie Dawoud - Case Intake Assistant

Winner of the Lee Humphrey Dodd Memorial Scholarship and the Lee Ensel Scholarship in Pre-Law

"Receiving these scholarships means that my family and I will be able to save the money we would have spent on this year's tuition and use it for my first year of law school. They also mean I do not have to take out another student loan to pay for school. I am extremely appreciative of the donors who are helping me

continue my education and of UIS for connecting me with the donors. It is nice to know there are people out there supporting me and my effort to continue through higher education."

Rosie will graduate in the spring with a major in legal studies and minors in political science and philosophy. She plans to attend law school in fall 2020.

Taryn Christy - Case Evaluator

[First UIS Cross Country Runner to Qualify for NCAA Division II Nationals](#)

Sophomore Taryn Christy hasn't had much free time lately to evaluate cases or review data from our last Wrongful Conviction Avoidance class for police cadets. She's been training for the NCAA Division II National Cross Country Championships, to be held in Sacramento, California, this Saturday, Nov. 23.

Taryn is the first UIS cross country running to qualify for the competition, earning that distinction by passing 10 runners in the last 600m to finish fifth overall at the Midwest Region Cross Country Championship, landing an automatic spot in the national championships. Taryn's time of 21:09.9 set a new UIS record.

Go, Taryn!

Joseph Partain - Case Evaluator

[Named Outstanding Attorney at 18th Annual Illinois State University Mock Trial](#)

[Invitational](#)

Joseph Partain received an Outstanding Attorney Award after consistently performing as a top defense attorney in his rounds at this year's ISU Mock Trial tournament, held at the McLean County Courthouse earlier this month and involving teams from Illinois and neighboring states. He ranked 11th in a field of 100 attorneys who alternated between arguing for the defense and prosecution in an aggravated murder/involuntary manslaughter case.

Joseph interned with IIP last year and now is employed as a student worker. In addition to reviewing and evaluating cases, he has joined IIP's policy team to track legislation emerging in the 2020 General Assembly that may threaten the prevention of wrongful convictions. Joseph is a UIS junior double majoring in legal studies and political science.