



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nora Mena Joins University Center Staff

Grayslake, IL (October 25, 2016) When University Center's new pre-admission advisor Nora Mena meets with prospective students, it won't be difficult for her to anticipate their questions. She once asked them herself.

Mena began her undergraduate studies at the College of Lake County, where she received an Associate of Arts degree in December of 2011. She then transferred into the Bachelor of Arts program with a major in psychology that Northeastern Illinois University offers at the University Center.

After receiving that degree *summa cum laude* in May of 2014, Mena was hired by Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) to serve as the Program/Student Advisor at the University Center in Grayslake for the teaching preparation programs they offered there. That position provided the opportunity for her to work with traditional transfer students as well as with adult career-changers returning to school for teaching licensure via a second bachelor's degree.

Mena continued her education by enrolling in SIUC's Master of Science in Workforce Education & Development program. She anticipates receiving that degree in December of 2016. While an undergraduate, she began serving on the University Center's Governing Board as the student representative, a role she retained when she began her graduate work. While her new job requires that she surrender her Board position, that's a small downside.

"The University Center has been a huge factor in my 'success story,'" Mena said. "I would not be where I am today without it. Based on the experience and education that I received at the University Center, I've been able to reach my educational and career goals, as well as help others prepare to enter the workforce in Lake County as elementary school teachers. Trying to understand and weigh options for career, financial, and educational goals is a difficult task and I relish the opportunity to help students with the advisement process and to answer any questions that they have."

Executive Director & Dean G. Gary Grace expressed delight at working with Mena in this new role. "Nora is an excellent example of the type of student the Center was designed to serve—those who want to pursue higher education while they continue to live and work in this local



community. We've benefitted from her student perspective for some years and we will be glad to use even more of her time and talent as the initial contact for prospective students."

The University Center of Lake County is a nonprofit consortium of twenty-one colleges and universities—both public and private—from across Illinois that enable adults to complete bachelor's degrees, earn graduate degrees, or pursue professional development programs without leaving Lake County. Programs are offered via evening, weekend, or online study across a wide range of disciplines. The Center's Grayslake facility also doubles as a Conference Center, providing space and presentation tools designed for collaborative learning as well as offering on-site catering. For more information, visit www.ucenter.org or www.uclconference.org or call 847/665-4000. To schedule a pre-admission advising appointment with Nora Mena, email nmena@ucenter.org or call 847/665-4014.

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