

For Iowa. Forever More. Impact Stories
DaVida Anderson, College of Education

DaVida Anderson strives to help underserved learners succeed.

As a doctoral student in higher education and student affairs in the University of Iowa College of Education, her research focuses on educational disparities that create challenges, such as economic inequality. She's also worked to create a nonprofit—Strong Sister, Silly Sister, Inc.—to motivate female students to achieve academic success. Anderson's efforts help empower individuals to overcome obstacles and create better outcomes.

“With my research, I hope to be an advocate for those who do not have a voice and to provide better insight into the challenges they encounter,” says Anderson, whose work and journey would not be possible without private support.

When Anderson was deciding where to complete her doctoral degree, scholarship assistance was a driving influence. She had already amassed considerable student loan debt from her undergraduate and graduate institutions. While at Iowa, Anderson receives financial support from the ACT Scholars Program, which promotes multiculturalism and inclusion and was created during the *For Iowa. Forever More.* campaign.

“The ACT Scholars Program provides an opportunity for underserved learners, like myself, to be a full-time scholar,” says Anderson. “For a long time, socioeconomic status has been a barrier for a lot of students. Without the ACT scholarship, I would not be able to afford to be a student and focus on my education.”

While ACT's support has helped Anderson financially, its support has also helped her research interests. She worked in ACT's Center for Equity in Learning, which supports research that focuses on closing gaps in equity, opportunity, and achievement. “This rare opportunity has made me an ambassador for ACT because their mission and my personal passions strongly correlate,” she says.