

Natasha Lewis' greatest challenge at Illinois State University was how to manage her time and how to avoid burnout from all the opportunities she pursued.

With two part time jobs, three internships, and co-presidency of "Students Today, Leaders Forever," a group that arranged and led spring break volunteer work around the U.S., the psychology major worked hard to maintain her physical and emotional health.

"I don't think I could have done this without EB 211 and my mentor, Irene Johnson Mason. In the beginning, I wasn't very confident, had a lot of issues with finances and all the paper work that it entailed," recalled Natasha. "If I hadn't had that support, I would have dropped out because of all my loans. That always seemed to be an issue with them every year."

But even those ongoing money issues never stopped Natasha. Even though all the AP classes she took at Palatine High School could have resulted in completing college in three years, she opted for an internship in Costa Rica focusing on human trafficking.

"Natasha is a natural leader and takes initiative," said Irene. "She got accepted to every grad school she applied to. I can't wait to see what she does with all that drive and motivation."

Two months ago, Natasha co-founded a third-market Amazon business that has brought in enough income to hire two additional employees. Always passionate about the juvenile justice system in low-income communities, Natasha has set her sights on starting a non-profit organization in five years that addresses those issues.