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Alison Sainsbury, 2013 James D. Dougan Award Presentation

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2013 Presentation of the James Dougan Award for outstanding contributions to defending academic freedom and furthering faculty governance.

This year we are pleased to award the Dougan award to a faculty member who has spoken truth to power for many years at Illinois Wesleyan University. I can still remember some of the questions that have marked important moments in the history of the faculty over at least 20 years. Questions asked with courage and respect and with a specific point. Questions that evidenced great thought about particular issues. One question that this faculty member asked completely changed my life. Yes, it is fair to suggest that because of this one question, I moved to Mahomet and spent 7 ½ years as Dean of Students. The question: How is it that this particular fraternity has been allowed to recruit new members using what is essentially pornography? On another occasion, our intrepid awardee asked the then Provost what plan had she devised for beginning to hire again after the hiring freeze was over. A question met with silence and to which the faculty ultimately provided the answer. Asking direct questions and holding administrators accountable may be the most important way faculty can participate in university governance. Our awardee has performed prodigious committee service and I'm sure our paths have crossed on several of them. However, my most memorable professional experience with this individual was to team teach a course together; one of the most rewarding opportunities I have had at Illinois Wesleyan. Our awardee has been department chair, CUPP representative, and probably visitor to the Board of Trustees. On more than one occasion I remember President Myers' Cabinet Officers sitting around the table in Holmes and wondering what she thought about something. By now I'm sure you have all guessed that this year's Dougan Award winner is one of my favorite faculty members, the inimitable Alison Sainsbury.