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From the President's Desk, Richard F.  
Wilson

Richard F. Wilson

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Winter 2007

## Winter 2007 Letter

Richard Wilson  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

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### Recommended Citation

Wilson, Richard, "Winter 2007 Letter" (2007). *From the President's Desk, Richard F. Wilson*. 10.

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From the President's Desk

*This letter appeared in the Winter 2007 issue of the Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine*

Accountability has become a hot topic in higher education. Institutions such as Illinois Wesleyan devote much time and energy examining how the education they provide impacts their students' lives. This question is of interest to government leaders, prospective students, and parents, of course, but also to alumni. Graduates want their alma mater to sustain and even enhance the value of their degrees over time.

So, how do we demonstrate the value of an Illinois Wesleyan degree? There are some external measures that provide insight. For example:

- Our accounting students had the highest pass rate on the CPA exam of any accounting program in the state last year.
- More than 80 percent of our pre-med biology graduates are admitted to medical school on their first try, compared to just 50 percent nationally for all majors.
- The National Survey of Student Engagement reports that our students (first-year and seniors) rate their Illinois Wesleyan educational experience as significantly more challenging and enriching than students at other institutions surveyed.

Another, more personal, way to measure our graduates' success is to look at what they do after they leave us. Over the past few months a number of our graduates and students have been recognized for their accomplishments:

- Grammy Award-winning soprano Dawn Upshaw '82 received a MacArthur "Genius" grant, one of only 24 people in the country so honored this year.
- Erwin Davis '80, a manager with State Farm Insurance Companies in Bloomington, received the 2007 Community Service Award from the Bloomington-Normal Chapter of the NAACP.
- Broadcaster Denny Matthews '66 was inducted into professional baseball's Hall of Fame.
- Rachel Slough '07 received a Fulbright Fellowship to study in Chile.
- Jamie Rogers, a senior chemistry major, has been chosen as one of 11 national finalists for the Frank and Sara McKnight Prize in Undergraduate Chemistry.

We are currently devoting considerable attention to assessing what students are learning and how well prepared they are for their lives and careers following graduation. These assessment efforts range from external-review teams that come to campus to help evaluate academic departments (Theatre and Business evaluations were conducted in 2007) to a peer study that examines student growth and development in terms of critical thinking, analytical writing, and civic engagement.

These are all important ways to monitor our effectiveness as an institution and to aid our enhancement of the teaching and learning processes at Illinois Wesleyan University. We have no greater responsibility.

Best wishes,

*Richard B. Wilson*