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Coeducation at Illinois Wesleyan University

Amy L. Peterson, '91
Illinois Wesleyan University

Paul Bushnell, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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COEDUCATION AT ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Amy L. Peterson, Dept. of History, IWU, Paul Bushnell*

The beginnings of the coeducation of institutions of higher learning brought dramatic changes to the American college in the latter half of the 19th century. The increasing number of women entering coeducational colleges affected both the academic as well as the social climate in the 50 years preceding the turn of the century. The role of women was evolving.

When Illinois Wesleyan University opened its doors to women in 1870, only 29% of the institutions of higher learning in the country were coeducational. During the period from 1870 to 1900, the number of women entering and graduating from Illinois Wesleyan steadily increased. The number of female faculty members at the University was also on the rise. The early educational opportunities for women at Illinois Wesleyan University fit well the pattern that was emerging across the nation.