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Humanities Students Receive Grant to Attend Annual Chicago Festival

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Four Illinois Wesleyan University students, along with a faculty representative, received the Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) Humanities Fellowship Award this October. The grant provided them with free access to all events of the 17th annual Chicago Humanities Festival from Friday, Nov. 3 through Sunday, Nov. 5 as well as accommodations in the city for the weekend. The two-week festival continues through Sunday, Nov. 12.

Based on their academic interests and involvement, senior English majors Rachel Shulman, Rebecca Welzenbach and Anne Wilkinson and senior religion major Drew Snodgrass were nominated by their respective academic departments for the fellowship, which annually supports the attendance of four students from each of the ACI's member schools. Dan Terkla, associate professor of English at IWU, accompanied the group.

This year's festival, themed "Peace and War: Facing Human Conflict," features more than 150 programs, ranging from a contemporary musical interpretation of Homer's *Illiad* to debates on the current war in Iraq. The theme coincided with the major international news event of the weekend: just before attending a lecture on national recovery from war and human rights violations, the students learned that Saddam Hussein had been sentenced to death by hanging.

The festival was also a chance to interact with successful professionals in the humanities. Sunday morning over breakfast, the IWU festival attendees chatted with prolific author Joyce Carol Oates, the winner of the *Chicago Tribune's* 2006 literary prize, before hearing her speak about her writing to a crowd of approximately 1,000 at the Chicago Symphony Center.

The ACI is comprised of 24 private liberal arts colleges and universities who work with business, government and community leaders to enhance the strength of member institutions, address society's pressing educational problems and increase public understanding of the value and role of ACI colleges and universities.

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