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Group Thinker: Myla Green

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Group Thinker: Myla Green



Green, who helped rejuvenate the Pride Alliance, describes herself as a "humanist." (Marc Featherly)

her friends immediately decided to reestablish Pride Alliance, a student-run organization that works to ensure that all students have equal rights and privileges regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

“We’ve put so much work into Pride, since literally before classes started as freshmen,” says Green, who served two terms as the group’s president. “I really want it to exist after I’m gone.” She expects it to, noting increased interest in the group among underclassmen.

The organization, which meets weekly, sponsors letter-writing campaigns to politicians about gay rights and organizes events such as the annual Masquerade Ball that raise funds for the McLean County AIDS Task Force and other groups. Pride Alliance also brings speakers to campus like Kate Bornstein, a transgender author, playwright, performance artist, and gender theorist. Bornstein’s address attracted a standing-room-only crowd to the Hansen Student Center. “It was amazing that so many people were interested to hear her speak,” says Green, who recalls the experience as one of her most memorable at IWU.

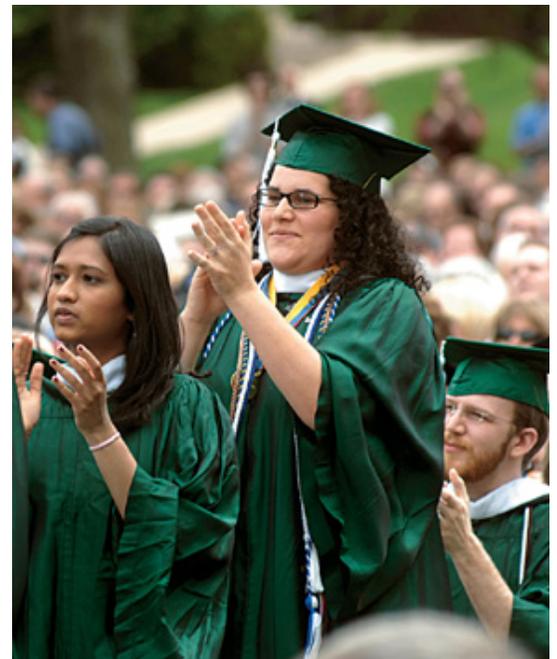
During her sophomore year, Green declared her major in Women’s Studies. “Everything just made sense” about the decision, she says, since it encompassed her interest in gender studies. While keenly interested in issues involving gay and women’s rights, Green is more generally concerned with human rights on all political, social, and economic fronts. “I consider myself a humanist,” she says.

Myla Green’s application to attend Illinois Wesleyan was notable for what it contained but also for what it was missing: grades.

A graduate of Sudbury Valley School in Framingham, Mass., a student-run school that calls itself a “democratic community,” Green had never even taken an exam before coming to Illinois Wesleyan. “The only tests I’d ever taken were the SAT and the driver’s test,” she says. With no high school transcript and only her SAT scores in hand, Green applied to universities all over the country but eventually chose Illinois Wesleyan.

“I liked the small class sizes and personalized attention from professors,” she says.

Green’s involvements on campus and beyond were heavily influenced by the friends she made during first-year orientation, she says. She and



Green applauds her classmates' achievements at this year's commencement in May. (Marc Featherly)

During her junior year, Green studied abroad at Oxford University's Pembroke College as part of a highly selective program that has admitted Illinois Wesleyan students since 1997. She confesses she was "really scared" before leaving, anticipating that Pembroke's rigorous academic atmosphere would be a challenge — one that she now feels grateful to have experienced. "We're so lucky that Minor Myers set up this program," she says, referring to Illinois Wesleyan's late president.

Upon her return to Bloomington this year, Green got involved again with Pride Alliance and took up an internship with the McLean County AIDS Task Force, in addition to her work-study job as a desk aide in Martin Hall, one of IWU's newer residence halls. Her work through Pride Alliance earned her a 2007 Acorn Equality Fund Scholarship for her advocacy and volunteerism in the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

After graduating, Green will travel to India on a fellowship grant to volunteer for a non-governmental organization.

Reflecting back on her years at Illinois Wesleyan, she feels satisfaction that she was able to make a difference. "I think, at a school like this, someone like me can find a group and do something with it," she says.