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Finding Their Wings

A new scholarship program gives students the time and guidance to realize their potential.

Stories by KATE ARTHUR
Photos by MARC FEATHERLY

What triggers the hatching of a bird's egg? How do molecules in the universe form? What do fairy tales written in Soviet Russia and 1930s America have in common? These were some of the questions investigated by students in the University's first group of Eckley Summer Scholars and Artists.



Eckley scholar Justyna Koscielniak and her mentor, Manori Perera, assistant professor of chemistry.

The program was established by the late President Emeritus Robert S. Eckley, his wife Nell and the Eckley Family Foundation. The Eckley Summer Scholars and Artists endowment supports summer research and creative activity for several students each year, enabling them to stay on campus over the summer to work under the direction of faculty mentors.

"I commend all of the students and faculty who developed proposals for this new program," said Provost and Dean of the Faculty Jonathan Green. "The quality of applications is a testament to the fine work being done between students and faculty across the campus and a confirmation of the need to develop these new opportunities."

The scholarship program is one of the Endowments for Excellence, a component of the *Transforming Lives* campaign that targets key priorities to increase opportunities for student-faculty collaboration and enrich the academic experience in areas critical to student success, such as writing, leadership and research.

At a luncheon this summer, Sarah Takushi was among the Eckley scholars who had the opportunity to share their research with Nell Eckley.

"She has such a vested interest in our lives and what we're doing," Takushi says. "Saying thank you to her just seemed so insufficient. It's very cool to see someone of a previous Wesleyan generation still active in the college."

"Bob and Nell touched the lives of thousands of students during his 18 years as president," said President Richard F. Wilson. "The Eckley scholarships are a fitting way to honor that legacy and help provide the

next generation of Illinois Wesleyan students with opportunities to develop experience and confidence as scholars and artists."

Rachel Branson summed up the positive impact the Eckley scholarship had on her and this summer's other four participants. "I'm doing what I love to do," she said. "I love doing research. I've found my place."

Below are links to stories about each of the first crop of Eckley scholars.

[SARAH TAKUSHI '13: CRACKING OPEN A MYSTERY](#)

[DUSTIN SPRINGER '13: A VISION OF HARMONY](#)

[RACHEL BRANSON '14: THE TRUE INTENT OF FAIRY TALES](#)

[JUSTYNA KOSCIELNIAK '14: SIMULATING OUTER SPACE](#)

[DANIEL MAURER '12: CRIME AND CLEANLINESS](#)