



10-22-2009

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Recommended Citation

Hatch, Rachel, "University to Integrate Asian Studies Across Campus with Department of Education Grant" (2009). *News and Events*. 401.
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October 22, 2009

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University to Integrate Asian Studies Across Campus with Department of Education Grant

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University has been awarded a nearly \$162,000 grant by the U.S. Department of Education’s Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Programs for expanding Asian studies on campus.

“The 21st century has been called the Pacific Century, which is why it is so important that we increase students understanding of the area,” said Professor of Sociology Teodora Amoloza, who was the co-coordinator for the grant application. She is directing the grant along with Associate Professor of History Tom Lutze and Associate Professor of German and Eastern European Studies Sonja Fritzsche. Others who worked on the grant application were International Studies Director and Professor of Political Science William Munro, Associate Dean Irv Epstein and Asian Studies Team Coordinator, McFee Professor of Religion Brian Hatcher and Director of Sponsored Programs and Foundation Relations Jo Porter.

The grant, which will be paid over two years, will expand courses across the curriculum to include units on Asia, develop new courses, and support Chinese language classes – which started last fall at Illinois Wesleyan and are offered through the Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures Department.

Professors in diverse areas such as the humanities, theater, art and business are proposing new Asian segments to their classes. New courses in religion, history, and Asian culture will also be developed. “It is interesting to note that many of the courses being revised do not fall within Asian studies,” said Munro. “This grant is not just about building Asian studies on campus. It is about building a global curriculum campus wide.” Funds for library materials relating to classes are also available through the grant.

According to Amoloza, avenues for new international ties will also be pursued with the grant. Efforts are underway to establish potential relations with institutions in Asia and

individuals who might come to campus as visiting scholars. “We want to find someone who can contribute to classes across the board, across disciplines,” she said.

Students will also benefit from the grant. Funds are being set aside to offer scholarship to students who plan to study in Asia to further enhance their language competency. Details of the scholarship are not final as yet, said Amoloza, adding that student interest in the Chinese language helped efforts to secure the grant.

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