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by Joseph Bakke

IWU alumnus Juan Salgado has recently been named one of the 2015 MacArthur fellows. The MacArthur Fellowship is a five-year grant to individuals who show exceptional creativity and a promising future in their work. Salgado has led the Instituto del Progreso in Chicago as president and CEO since 2001. This organization is dedicated to the advancement of education, training, and employment within Latino immigrant communities. Specifically, Salgado works with communities on Chicago's southwest side, where lack of education, language skills, and vocational training impose resistance on upward labor mobility. These educational programs emphasize skills that provide work opportunities in manufacturing and health care sectors. The Carreras in Salud program, established by the Instituto del Progreso, is a preparation course for entrance into collegiate nursing programs. Additionally, the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program equips job applicants with specialized skills that are fundamental in obtaining employment in the manufacturing industry.

Salgado graduated from Illinois Wesleyan as an economics major in 1991. Following this, he was granted a graduate fellowship at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he completed a master's program in urban planning and development. This educational background led him to become the programs director of The Resurrection Project, a Chicago-based community investment program that furthers financial wellness, housing access, education, and health services. Salgado's work with both The Resurrection Project and the Instituto del Progreso Latino is widely recognized across the country as an example of successful urban development. He now offers assistance to other organizations replicating these programs in other states.

Salgado is the second Illinois Wesleyan graduate to be granted a MacArthur fellowship. Five-time Grammy award winning soprano, Dawn Upshaw, was a 2007 recipient of the MacArthur fellowship.