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Three IWU Students to Study at Oxford University

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—Three Illinois Wesleyan University students will have an adventure in education when they travel to England next year to attend Oxford University, which is comprised of 39 self-contained and self-governing colleges, all of which make up the University of Oxford.

Sophomore Ericka Wills, an English literature major from Colfax, Ill. and John Van Fleet Jr., a junior physics major from Sterling, Ill., will study at Pembroke, the 375-year-old unit of Oxford and Lindsay Fitzharris, a political science major from Mount Prospect, Ill., will study at Worcester College. The successful program, which links IWU to the English campus began in the fall of 1997.

"I am really excited about my year abroad at Oxford University. It will be a refreshing change from the grade-based evaluation system used in America and study history in-depth at Worcester, said Fitzharris. "I am really excited about conducting my own research at levels not possible in most undergraduate programs in the United States."

According to Van Fleet, "Being accepted to study at Pembroke next year is an honor and privilege. I am excited about the opportunity to represent Illinois Wesleyan and myself. It will be an incredible challenge academically, but I look forward to that challenge."

Wills, who has been studying at Biosphere 2, the world's largest glass-enclosed ecological laboratory since January of this year, also is very excited about her study at Pembroke.

The program began after IWU President Minor Myers jr., happened to sit next to Ken Mayhew, a Fellow of the College, tutor of economics and former tutor of admissions, on a bus in Japan en route to a wedding.

IWU President Minor Myers jr, calls the program "Illinois Wesleyan's version of the Rhodes Scholarship, which refers to the British statesman and industrialist Cecil Rhodes (1853-1902), who bequeathed scholarships at Oxford for American, Germans and others.

"Studying at Oxford," said Myers, "gives our students an excitement they'll remember for the rest of their lives. They will bring back a new vision, a new connection to education on our campus."

Pembroke, founded in 1624 has a total enrollment of 420 students and only admits under 100 undergraduates each year. The college is named for William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke (1580-1630). He succeeded his father to the earldom in 1601 and became a privy councilor in 1611, lord chamberlain of the royal household from 1615-25 and lord steward from 1624.

The current Worcester, said to be a "happy blend of ancient and modern," was founded in

the 18th century, but has been an institution of learning on the college site since the late 13th century.