



Spring 3-3-1999

Matthews Appointed Dean of Students

Bob Aaron
Illinois Wesleyan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news>

Recommended Citation

Aaron, Bob, "Matthews Appointed Dean of Students" (1999). *News and Events*. 697.
<https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/news/697>

This Article is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Commons @ IWU with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this material in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/ or on the work itself. This material has been accepted for inclusion by faculty at Illinois Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@iwu.edu.

©Copyright is owned by the author of this document.

March 3, 1999

Contact: Bob Aaron, 309/556-3181

Matthews Appointed Dean of Students

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—James D. Matthews has been appointed dean of students at Illinois Wesleyan University.

Matthews, an associate professor of French and former chair of IWU's foreign languages department, was appointed acting dean of students in February 1998.

Matthews, who joined the IWU faculty in 1986, assumed the post of acting dean after Debra Carlson Wood's resignation.

IWU President Minor Myers, jr., made the Matthews' appointment, effective Feb. 25.

"With a refreshing vision of student well-being, the first-year experience, and campus life and vitality," Myers said, "Dean Matthews has had a remarkable impact on Illinois Wesleyan in just this single year. Let us all work with him to further this vision and the mission of the university."

Commenting on his appointment, Matthews said: "I've always considered myself to be a student focused faculty member. My challenge now is to define my work in student affairs as teaching on a bigger stage—I now have a classroom with 2,008 students."

Among Matthews' key goals as dean of students is to build closer ties with faculty and academic affairs.

"At many institutions," Matthews explained, "student affairs and academics are seen as existing in separate worlds. I feel more comfortable with a holistic approach to university life."

Matthews concedes that moving from the faculty and teaching French to the dean of students' post is not a common career path. However, he believes that his faculty roots will be a strength as he shapes the office and program.

"The future of student affairs at liberal arts colleges," Matthews said, "is becoming more closely allied with the goals of faculty and academic affairs."

As dean of students, Matthews has four broad initial goals:

- o He wants to improve the first-year experience for freshman students to better assist them in making the transition from high school to college to reinforce their commitment to academic success.

- o He wants to study and perhaps restructure and streamline judicial procedures employed to discipline students for rule violations. "We've moved a long way toward this goal this year," Matthews said. He also is considering the need for a judicial officer to oversee various judicial processes lodged in different administrative areas.

- o He wants to explore the possible establishment of a university ombudsman so students with questions and concerns would only have to deal with a single individual. "What I'm thinking about," Matthews said, "is something like what we have in our information technology area. A person on campus with a computer problem calls a phone number to report the situation. Then information technology staff determine how best to meet the need and provide support."

- o He wants to study resource and space allocations around campus to determine if certain services—such as the health service and security—are in the best locations.

While serving as acting dean over the last year, Matthews says he has gained tremendous respect for the student affairs staff, which he describes as "incredibly good" and "student focused." Matthews' staff has a wide range of responsibilities: counseling, Greek social organizations, health service, Memorial Student Center, multi-cultural affairs, new student orientation, residential life, alcohol education, co-curricular programming, security, and summer conferences.

As acting dean, Matthews won the 1999 Professor of the Year award in a Feb. 10 student vote in a five-way contest. Matthews is the only IWU faculty member to win this honor twice. He first won it in the award's inaugural year, 1990. Matthews also is the only faculty member acting in an administrative position to win the award.

Prior to his appointment as acting dean of students, Matthews chaired IWU's Greek Affairs Task Force, established in 1997 as part of several new and on-going institutional reviews of programs affecting IWU's quality of life.

In May 1995, Matthews received the DuPont Award for Teaching Excellence at IWU's annual Honors Day Convocation. The teacher-scholar award is sponsored by DuPont Agricultural Products, Inc., of El Paso, Ill., a subsidiary of the Delaware-based chemical industry leader, E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. The DuPont Award is IWU's top teaching honor.

Matthews earned a bachelor's degree from Albion College in 1974 and masters and doctoral degrees in French language and literature from the University of Michigan in 1977 and 1985, respectively.

Prior to joining the IWU faculty, Matthews was an assistant professor at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.

--30--

| [Top of Page](#) |
