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Triplets Turn Titan: DeSalvos Begin College Journey Together

August 18, 2011

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – When Meagan DeSalvo '15 fell in love with Illinois Wesleyan University on a campus tour during high school, she had no idea her brothers Matt and Don, '15, would follow suit.

Call it serendipity: On August 22, all three DeSalvo siblings will begin their college careers at Illinois Wesleyan—an outcome they attribute almost entirely to coincidence.

"It took my brothers a long time to even consider IWU," said Meagan, who applied to two other universities but had "no intention" of attending any school other than Illinois Wesleyan. "I made my decision by myself, without anyone else's influence. We never really thought we would end up at the same school; it just kind of happened."

Don, who during his college search focused on schools that could provide him with a quality education and place him well in the job market, shares the sentiment. Although he admits Meagan originally introduced him to Illinois Wesleyan, Don's "final decision came down to the fact that I could envision myself at IWU," he said. "I felt like it was where I belonged as well as where I could get the best education. I am still surprised we all ended up going to the same school, because we definitely didn't choose to go to college together."

Matt also applied to a few other liberal arts colleges besides Illinois Wesleyan, but was ultimately attracted to the family-like campus community as well as the warm welcome he received from members of the IWU cross country team. "At first I looked at bigger schools, but later in my search I became more interested in smaller schools that offered individual attention from professors," he said.

Although the DeSalvos, who attended Hinsdale South High School in Darien, Ill., all plan to run track and cross country at Illinois Wesleyan, each will follow a different academic path: Meagan plans to major in biology with a pre-medicine concentration, Don will study economics with a secondary education concentration and Matt will major in psychology with a pre-physical therapy concentration. And while they share interests, teammates and now the same college, the siblings do not view themselves as a single unit.

"We are very different from one another in terms of our personalities, so we have no problem going our separate ways," said Don, who will join Matt living in Ferguson Hall this year. Meagan, who will live in Dolan Hall, attributes this attitude to family background. "Our parents have always raised us as individuals," she said, noting that she and her brothers tend to get along very well. "It was never expected that we should each do the same thing or act the same way."

According to Matt, going to the same college as his siblings will not threaten that sense of individuality. "Being together is nothing new," he said. "People always ask what it's like to be a triplet, but we don't know anything different." Meagan, Don and Matt are not the only new members of the Illinois Wesleyan community who are accustomed to fielding such questions. As part of the entering class of 2015, the University will also welcome to campus triplet siblings Annaliese and Zachary Siegel of LaGrange, Ill., as well as twins Amelia and Johanna Linman of Bourbonnais, Ill.



Don, Matt and Meagan DeSalvo will start college in tandem at Illinois Wesleyan this year.

So how do the DeSalvos see their relationship developing as they embark on one of life's biggest transitions? "Everyone always says college is the time when people discover themselves and make lasting bonds," said Don. "I think going to college together will improve our relationship because our mutual respect and love will grow as we learn more about each other. College will make us more independent, and that will have a positive effect on our individual outlooks."

While Matt is largely unconcerned about the possibility of his relationship with his siblings transforming too drastically, Meagan has high hopes for her future with her brothers at Illinois Wesleyan. "My brothers have always been very protective of me, so in that aspect, I don't think they will change," she said. "They have promised to be less overbearing, though. I'll have to wait and see if that happens."

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