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## Students Inspired to Find 'Sense of Adventure' at the New Student Convocation

August 17, 2011

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – The 2015 class of Illinois Wesleyan University received words of advice on finding their voice, and preparing themselves for the years ahead on Tuesday (Aug. 16) at the annual New Student Convocation in Westbrook Auditorium.



*Professor of Political Science William Munro*

"The diversity of your backgrounds, interest, talents and ideas will add enormously to the vitality of our campus community and will enrich the broader community in which you will live," said University President Richard F. Wilson welcoming the students, and bidding them to "bear forth the University's hopes" for the future.

Keynote speaker, Illinois Wesleyan University Professor of Political Science William Munro, encouraged students to embrace a love of learning as a way of life. "You stand on the cusp of a new phase in your lives," he said.

As winner of the Kemp Foundation Award – the University's highest teaching honor – Munro received the privilege of addressing the New Student Convocation. Munro presented the students with a challenge – to step beyond the fears they might have of people's perceptions, and delve into the questions of the world around them.

His speech, titled "The Second Question," was inspired by a moment in a class when students were hesitant to answer the simple question, "Do you believe in human rights?" Their reluctance worried Munro, until he realized they were not afraid of the question, but what would happen next. "They understood that once they had committed to the first question, a second was likely to follow: 'Why do you believe in human rights?' or 'What do you mean by human rights?'" said Munro. "They were daunted by the prospect of these second questions. And yet second questions provide the crucial bridge between knowledge and wisdom. They are the kinds of questions we need to ask."



*Emily Stitch of the new class entertains on the bassoon at the First Year Convocation.*

To find the strength to ask difficult second questions, student might think they need to possess a touch of the daring, said Munro, but the answer is simpler than that. "I do not think that you need to be exceptionally brave to take on these experiences, or to ask second questions, given the supportiveness of the IWU community," he said, "Rather than courage or braveness, I prefer to think that you need a sense of adventure and a sense of community to actively engage and explore."

The audience also heard from Interim Vice President for Student Affairs Roger Schnaitter, who offered advice to the students via note cards his own students composed during his days of teaching psychology. "I asked them to write down what they wish people had told them about their first year, that no one had told them," said Schnaitter. Laughter filled the auditorium with answers such as "8 a.m. classes are the devil," and "You will never, ever, ever get enough sleep." Appreciative nods followed comments such as "You really need to study. For REAL. Don't put it off," and "Forget about a profession, study what captivates you."

Students also heard advice from the Student Senate President Steve Lessaris '12 who told them, "Don't forget who you are now, and don't forget who you want to be." Young Alumni Committee Chair Justine Robinson '06 urged the new students to

earn the title of Titan. “You will be pushed harder than you ever imagined, because – as a Titan – we have a responsibility to take our symbol beyond our mascot, and incorporate it into everyday lives.”

The Convocation was also a welcome for new University Provost Jonathan Green, who began his duties this month. “Like you, I am turning Titan,” said Green, referring to the Turning Titan Orientation program for new students. Green prompted students to ask question in the vein of Socrates. “The most meaningful aspects of our lives – justice, truth, beauty and love are also the things we most struggle to understand, yet here we gather at the brink, prepared to plunge into the inky shadows of the unknown,” said Green. Through the knowledge students will draw from their years at Illinois Wesleyan, they will bring light to the darkness, he added. “You will analyze challenges through the backdrop of received wisdom and experience, with a mind open to all possibilities, and you will diligently apply what you have learned to affect positive change.”



*University Provost Jonathan Green*

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