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## Wesleyan Awarded \$300,000 Grant for Humanities Initiatives

Jan. 23, 2013

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded Illinois Wesleyan University a \$300,000 grant to re-center the humanities, to reclaim its position at the core of the University's liberal arts curriculum. The *Re-Centering the Humanities* grant will allow Illinois Wesleyan to strengthen existing relationships and establish new connections between the humanities and other disciplines and between the humanities and the community.

"History, philosophy, religion, languages and literature serve as a gateway to the study of other disciplines," said Provost and Dean of the Faculty Jonathan Green. "The humanities help us understand complex issues, draw connections between disparate media and messages, and allow us to locate our thinking in the history of ideas."

The funds will be used to establish four major initiatives: Crossing Curricular Boundaries, Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries, Crossing Campus/Community Boundaries, and Crossing Faculty/Student Boundaries.

Within the Crossing Curricular Boundaries initiative, team-taught, interdisciplinary seminars will tackle problems facing our local community that involve the sciences, ethics, politics, sociology and environmental studies. Another goal is to create a speaker-and-performer series linked to curricular themes rising out of these seminars.

Crossing Campus/Community Boundaries connects to Crossing Curricular Boundaries by emphasizing the humanities in practice and thus countering the national trend in which the humanities are disengaged from service learning programs. *Re-Centering the Humanities* will help Illinois Wesleyan recruit visiting scholars and scholars in residence to expand the arts and humanities' service learning potential.

Students will be able to engage in full-time research as Mellon Humanities Scholars. The Mellon Humanities Scholars initiative, which will be similar in structure to the University's Eckley Scholars and Artists program, will provide qualified students the opportunity to work full-time during the summer on academic projects under the guidance of faculty members. Other research opportunities for students will include interdisciplinary May Term travel courses; the development of a Humanities Fellowship program for faculty interested in furthering inter-curricular fluencies and in creating innovative new courses; the initiation and expansion of undergraduate humanities conferences; the formation of teams of student consultants drawn from multiple disciplines; and the establishment of research partnerships, in which students work as research assistants to faculty.

Dan Terkla, professor of English, will serve as the director of *Re-Centering the Humanities*. He will work with faculty from across the university to implement the program. Mary Ann Bushman, associate professor of English and Writing Program Director; Sonja Fritzsche, associate professor of German; Emily Kelahan, assistant professor of philosophy; Sherilyn McElroy, professor of art; Rebecca Roesner, chair and associate professor of chemistry; and James Simeone, chair and associate professor of political science, will serve as members of the committee that will administer the grant, Green said.

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