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Hannah Dhue
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Illinois Wesleyan to Celebrate Establishment of Center for Human Rights and Social Justice

Feb. 19, 2014

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan will celebrate the establishment of the Center for Human Rights and Social Justice on Friday, Feb. 21 at 4 p.m. in the Hansen Student Center (300 E. Beecher St., Bloomington). Guest speaker Professor Martha Nussbaum, author and human rights advocate, will deliver an address titled, “The New Religious Intolerance: Socratic Self-Examination and Sympathetic Imagination.” The event is free and open to the public.

To further commemorate the Center, Illinois Wesleyan’s annual Undergraduate Student Research Workshop on Human Rights in the Liberal Arts, which brings students and faculty from different disciplines together to share in the study of core human rights issues, will be held Friday, Feb. 21-Saturday, Feb. 22. For locations and a complete schedule of the workshop events, visit the website at www.iwu.edu/human-rights/workshop.html.

Located in the Center for Liberal Arts (CLA), Room 145, The Center for Human Rights and Social Justice will bring the numerous human rights programs and initiatives on campus together, which will enhance opportunities for collaboration and the exchange of ideas. Professor of Educational Studies Irving Epstein serves as the Center’s director and Professor of Political Science William Munro and Associate Professor of Anthropology Rebecca Gearhart were named as associate directors.

“We see the Center as being essential to understanding a liberal arts education – you can’t talk about liberal arts without knowing what it means to be a human. Rights and responsibilities we have to one another raise basic questions we ask ourselves all the time,” said Epstein.

According to Epstein, the chief goal of the Center is to promote human rights and social justice as academic studies, which are crucial assets to an Illinois Wesleyan education.

During the summer of 2013, the fledgling Center sponsored two summer internships at national human rights organizations. Recently, Illinois Wesleyan’s Center for Human Rights and Social Justice joined the Midwest Coalition for Human Rights, a network of over fifty organizations, service providers and university centers that work to protect and promote human rights.

Epstein is excited to see the Center grow, and is honored to bring Nussbaum to campus for the ceremony.

“We chose Martha Nussbaum because she is one of the most prolific authors in the United States on various aspects of human rights. Because of her deep connection to the liberal arts, we thought it would be very fitting for her to inaugurate the Center.”

Nussbaum was named the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago Law School, where she serves on the board for the Human Rights Program. An author of nearly 20 books and an editor of 15,



Martha Nussbaum

Nussbaum's works have earned numerous awards, including the Association of American University Publishers Professional and Scholarly Book Award for Law, which she received in 2004 for her book *Hiding From Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law*. She has also served as a research advisor for programs sponsored by the United Nations University.

Epstein wants to continue to encourage the campus community to get involved with the Center for Human Rights and Social Justice. To access upcoming events, internship offers and links to their Facebook and Twitter feeds, visit the Center's website at www.iwu.edu/human-rights/.

For further information regarding the ceremony, the workshop or to become more involved with the Center for Human Rights and Social Justice, contact Epstein at iepstein@iwu.edu.

Contact: Hannah Dhue, '15, (309) 556-3181, univcomm@iwu.edu