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Fall 9-10-2015

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Illinois Wesleyan Gets High Rating for Efforts to Create Inclusive Community

Sept. 10, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University has received a 4-star rating out of 5 for its inclusion efforts around sexual and gender identity.

The rating on the **Campus Pride Index** is an overall indicator of institutional commitment to LGBTQ+-inclusive policy, program and practice. Campus Pride, a national nonprofit organization for student leaders and campus groups working to create safer, more LGBT+-friendly learning environments at colleges and universities, owns the index.

Matthew Damschroder, assistant dean of students at IWU, said the Campus Pride Index is a vital tool for assisting campuses in learning ways to improve their LGBTQ+ campus life and ultimately shape the educational experience to be more inclusive, welcoming and respectful of LGBTQ+ and ally people.

"The fact that Illinois Wesleyan has earned this ranking is a testament of the hard work of many individuals in our community and speaks to the importance we place on supporting our LGBTQ students," said Brandon Common, director, **Office of Diversity and Inclusion**. "We need to continue to support our LGBTQ students and allies, however, in our inclusion efforts on campus."

Illinois Wesleyan's Campus Pride Index is reflected in eight categories: Policy Inclusion, Support and Institutional Commitment, Academic Life, Student Life, Housing and Residence Life, Campus Safety, Counseling and Health, and Recruitment and Retention of LGBTQ+ students.

Initiatives and accomplishments at Illinois Wesleyan include offering more than 12 Safe Zone workshops, which explore lesbian, gay and bisexual identity and culture, gender identity, and the experiences of transgender people; sponsoring a Safe Zone Reception and a Lavender Graduation for LGBTQ+ graduating seniors, friends, allies and senior campus leadership; broadening the scope of LGBTQ+ webpages and resources on the IWU website; planning for and building a gender-inclusive locker room in the Shirk Center addition slated for completion later this year; creation of a Pfeiffer Hall Rainbow Floor, a living-learning program focused on LGBTQ+ and identity development and educating for social justice; and the growth of the Pride Alumni Community and its mission to connect alumni, members of the LGBTQ+ community, friends and allies to Illinois Wesleyan.

"We are particularly proud of the sustained commitment to creating an inclusive campus community for all of our students, faculty and staff," said Karla Carney-Hall, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students.

Last academic year a **Re-Centering the Humanities grant** from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funded four events as part of the TRANSLIVES speaker/performer series. This year a Mellon grant will support several of the events in this fall's **Queer Lives speaker and performer series.**