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Business Students Network with Industry Leaders

March 3, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Students in two of Illinois Wesleyan University's registered student organizations attended recent conferences where they rubbed shoulders with the leading minds in finance and marketing.

The Illinois Wesleyan [Investment Club](#) attended the Beecken Petty O'Keefe & Company Private Equity Conference in Chicago. The conference brings together private equity professionals, limited partners, financing sources, investment bankers and students to network and share insight in a constantly changing economy.

Investment Club president Mike Hennel '16 said he chose this conference to allow students to learn about other industries in the finance category. "A number of our members do not have majors related to finance," said Hennel, noting the club gives every student a chance to learn about investments through trading simulation and discussion.

Member Shinnosuke Sawada said the conference opened doors that are often difficult for undergraduate students to open. "Private equity companies usually recruit MBA students or people who have worked at finance companies for many years," said Sawada, an exchange student from Toyko's Keio University majoring in economics and sociology.

Hennel also wanted to attend the conference so members had opportunities for networking. "Developing networking skills is critical given it is a skill which will always be required, no matter the profession," said Hennel, an economics and [financial services](#) double major. "Whether students are looking to work for an investment bank, a private equity firm or attend graduate school, the conference offered opportunities for networking with individuals from all those areas."



Members of the Investment Club networked with industry leaders in Chicago.



Students at a marketing conference posed with faculty members Fred Hoyt (far left) and Karen Bussone.

Illinois Wesleyan's [American Marketing Association student chapter](#) headed south for the annual conference of the AMA's St. Louis chapter. The event connects students to industry professionals. Speakers this year included those who lead marketing efforts for MasterCard, Express Scripts and Hostess Brands, among others.

"The MasterCard speaker talked about staying innovative in a particularly interesting presentation," said Cassidy Tarpey '16, club president and [business administration](#) major with a concentration in marketing. "It's always a good experience for our marketing students to get a chance to interact with peers from other schools and listen to marketing professionals talk about their experiences."

Both conference trips gave students the opportunity to engage in experiential learning outside of the classroom. "It is important to study finance or accounting in the classroom, but it is more important to talk and share opinions about today's fluctuating financial markets with actual workers," said Sawada. "Through the

networking opportunities at this conference, I expanded my knowledge of the financial industry."

