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Hennel's Drive for Success Leads to Wall Street

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Mike Hennel's undergraduate career at Illinois Wesleyan might be summed up in one word: ambitious.

Consider, for example:

- Intent on studying abroad, the financial services and economics double major Hennel challenged himself to be one of only 30 students selected from a handful of U.S. colleges and universities to study at Pembroke College, Oxford University;
- After meeting Goldman Sachs (GS) investment bankers, Hennel was determined to obtain a marquee internship with GS. He spent two months preparing for the interviews – brushing up on GS history, reviewing the company's financial statements, and staying abreast of the financial markets;
- With the GS internship essentially an eight-week-long job interview, Hennel worked hard to excel in the role, which paid off in an offer to join the firm's New York office fulltime as an investment management analyst.

"Hard work is required to achieve what we want in life," said Hennel. "I set my objectives to be accepted into the Pembroke program and to be chosen for the internship at Goldman Sachs, and I made sure I worked hard to attain these objectives. In the end, all the work paid off."

Even with a long-held interest in the financial markets, Hennel believes it's just as important to be a well-rounded student and individual. In fact, the opportunity to deepen his worldview through personal interactions made Illinois Wesleyan appealing when he was considering colleges.

"I went to a small high school and benefited from being able to engage my teachers on a personal level," said the Elmhurst, Ill. native. "What really drew me to IWU was the small class size. After visiting campus, I knew this was the college for me."

Hennel took full advantage of the personal relationships between faculty and students. "My years at IWU have been characterized by building relationships with my professors and talking about current issues," said Hennel. He said he demonstrated critical thinking and effective communication skills — hallmarks of a liberal arts education — in his day-to-day tasks at Goldman Sachs. "For me, critical thinking skills translated into knowing what questions to ask your manager and being able to work most productively," he said. "The one-on-one interactions between professors and students at IWU also enable students to learn how to effectively engage with colleagues."



Mike Hennel marvels at the depth and breadth of opportunities at Illinois Wesleyan, and the support from all corners of the IWU community.

Class of 2016

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Mike Hennel in London during his study abroad at Oxford University.

He said changing his major from accounting to financial services, along with spending a year abroad studying at Oxford, led to a bit of a juggling act to ensure he completed his coursework on time along with taking classes in which he was most interested. "The amount of support I received from the faculty speaks volumes as to how willing IWU professors are to help, both from an academic as well as a personal perspective."

Those personal relationships extend to others associated with IWU. While he was studying in England, Hennel and the other IWU students in his Pembroke cohort were invited to a concert by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, an honorary IWU Trustee. During the evening, the Earl learned that Hennel had been offered the GS internship for the following summer, and arranged for Hennel to visit the Goldman Sachs office in London and to attend a luncheon with investors discussing market outlooks and investment opportunities.

"I met GS employees who were former interns, which allowed me to get a feel for the company as well as day-to-day responsibilities," Hennel recalled. "The fact that he went

through so much to help me get acclimated to Goldman Sachs speaks volumes."

This willingness from all corners of the IWU community to help students has had a profound impact on Hennel. "I'd say what has inspired me the most here is how willing the faculty are to help students," he said. He marvels at the depth and breadth of opportunities at IWU, as well as the financial support available for endeavors he wanted to pursue. "If you are willing to put in the work, there's nothing you can't do here," said Hennel, who co-founded the IWU Investment Club, served as its president, and graduated summa cum laude.

His advice to other students? Be ambitious. "It's so easy to be complacent either when you are entering or leaving college, and that's what holds a lot of people back. When I started here, I never thought I would attend Oxford University or be working on Wall Street. But, I worked consistently and it paid off."

