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# Illinois Wesleyan Now a Peace Corps Prep Program

Sept. 9, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University is now a university partner with the Peace Corps through the Peace Corps Prep program – a partnership offering students a unique combination of undergraduate coursework and community service that prepares them for careers in an international realm.

Illinois Wesleyan students can now apply to the new [Peace Corps Prep program](#), which will be housed in the Action Research Center (ARC). The program is open to all students of any major. Upon completion of the program, students will receive a signed certificate of completion from the Peace Corps.

Students interested in learning about the program can attend a program launch event Tuesday, Sept. 20, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Illinois State University's Bone Student Center, 200 N. University St., Normal. Illinois State is also a new Peace Corps Prep university partner. Current and returned Peace Corps volunteers will be on hand to answer questions, along with Sheila Crowley of the Washington, D.C. Peace Corps office.

The Peace Corps Prep program prepares students for international development fieldwork and potential Peace Corps service. To receive a certificate from the Peace Corps, students must complete work sector training, master a foreign language, and gain intercultural, leadership and professional development experience through existing Illinois Wesleyan courses and community service opportunities.

"We believe the Peace Corps Prep program allows our students to live out the University's mission as students seek meaningful opportunities to make a difference in the world," said Deborah Halperin, ARC director. "Illinois Wesleyan students who join the Peace Corps return to campus with wonderful stories of how their Illinois Wesleyan experience prepared them to serve, in both expected and unexpected ways."

In recent years, Illinois Wesleyan has averaged five or six Peace Corps volunteers in each graduating class, according to Provost and Dean of the Faculty Jonathan Green. "We are proud to build on our history of over 130 Peace Corps volunteers, which is a logical outgrowth of the University's long-standing commitments to global citizenship and social justice. By becoming a Peace Corps Prep institution, we are affirming this tradition, and we are providing current and prospective students a clear and visible pathway to service in the Peace Corps."

Three Illinois Wesleyan students have already joined the Peace Corps Prep program, including Raelynn Parmely '17, the president of the newly established [Peace Corps Prep registered student organization](#).

Through an internship at ARC this summer, Parmely discovered her passion for helping other students access service work and become more competitive in their respective fields of work.

"Completion of the Peace Corps Prep program will not only make me more competitive for community and economic development graduate programs, but it also neatly presents my skills and assets," said Parmely, who is double majoring in anthropology and sociology.

Halperin stressed that students do not have to apply to the Peace Corps to receive Peace Corps Prep certification nor do they have to apply to the Peace Corps after they receive the certificate. In addition, completion of the certificate does not guarantee acceptance into the Peace Corps, which has seen a record number of applications in recent years.

Students who are interested in learning more about the Peace Corps Prep program can visit the [Action Research Center](#) in CLA or follow the program on [Facebook](#).

More than 70 leading academic institutions nationwide offer Peace Corps Prep programs. Established in 2007, the program aims to support college and university efforts to provide substantive, globally focused experiences for their students. Those who successfully complete the Peace Corps Prep program make competitive Peace Corps applicants.

**About the Peace Corps:** *The Peace Corps sends the best and brightest Americans abroad on behalf of the United States to take the most pressing needs of people around the world. Volunteers work at the grassroots level to develop sustainable solutions that address challenges in education, health, economic development, agriculture, environment and youth development. Through their service, volunteers gain a unique cultural understanding and a life-long commitment to service that positions them to succeed in today's global economy. Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961, nearly 220,000 Americans of all ages have served in 140 countries worldwide. For more information, visit [peacecorps.gov](http://peacecorps.gov) and follow the Peace Corps on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

