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## Meet the Class of 2020

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# Meet the Class of 2020

Sept. 15, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— The Class of 2020 has navigated its first weeks as students at Illinois Wesleyan University. They are a diverse group of students. Consider that:

- About 18 percent of the class reports “home” is somewhere outside of Illinois.
- Student-athletes comprise one-third of the class.
- Seventy students have had a close family member attend Illinois Wesleyan.
- More than 26 percent of the class self-identifies as a student of color or an international student.
- And 56 of the first-year students are the first in their families to go to college.

Statistics, of course, tell you very little about the person standing in line next to you at Sodexo, sitting beside you in your Gateway class, or working out in the weight area at Shirk.

Behind these numbers are real people – students with a myriad of aspirations, skills and talents. We introduce you to a few of the members of the Class of 2020:

[Adam Cady '20: Rock Island, Ill.](#)

[Max Crowninshield '20: Mount Prospect, Ill.](#)

[Brennan Harmon '20: Downers Grove, Ill.](#)

[Kira Rangel '20: Milan, Ill.](#)

[Aliza Saper '20: Aurora, Colo.](#)



New students got to know each other at Pre-Orientation activities.

## Detour Sets Rock Island Native on Path to IWU

If Adam Cady's journey from high schooler to student at Illinois Wesleyan was a Hollywood film, it might be called *The Accidental Titan*.

Cady toured Illinois Wesleyan in part because it was an easy side stop on his way from his home in Rock Island, Ill., to the campus of Washington University in St. Louis.

“By touring a lot of different schools, I figured out I wanted a liberal arts school, where I could work in small classrooms in close proximity with my professors,” he said. Cady noted his family’s “outstanding, engaging” experience with Illinois Wesleyan’s Admissions Office and tour guides was unparalleled.

After all those college tours, “Illinois Wesleyan was really the only place I applied,” he said. “I knew IWU would offer me great educational and career opportunities, as well as a deeply personal experience I couldn’t find anywhere else.”

Cady is double majoring in English-writing and political science. “Words are the most powerful tools we have, and politics provides a place to use those tools to directly affect change,” he said. He’s following those passions already by getting involved with the College Democrats and the student literary magazine, *Tributaries*. WESN radio and the *Argus* are also on his radar.

In the first few weeks, Cady said he’s polished his pool-playing skills in Munsell’s basement and become a big fan of Reverberation Records, a Main Street store across from the campus. In class his passion for literature has been reignited by Professor Kathleen O’Gorman’s course, “The Short Story.”

“I’ve made closer friends than I’ve ever had, fallen in love with my classes, and I can’t wait to see what comes next,” said Cady. Sounds like a good plan, and that’s no accident.



Adam Cady



## Future Teacher Follows in His Mentors' Footsteps

Max Crowninshield '20 hopes to follow in the footsteps of the teachers he admired most in high school — in more ways than one.

He's already taken the first step by enrolling at Illinois Wesleyan — the alma mater of John Camardella '03, Frank Mirandola '02, Qiana Drye '98 and Elizabeth Beer-Joiner '00. These Prospect High School teachers inspired Crowninshield to get involved in a program called Education Academy, which allowed him to take an Introduction to Education class and spend part of three days a week in a middle school near his home in Mount Prospect, Ill.

"I love being in the classroom and sharing my knowledge with others," said Crowninshield, who will major in history/secondary education. In his college search, he said he was "looking for a smaller school with a great reputation that also had a cross country and track team I could see myself being a part of."

His number one reason for choosing Illinois Wesleyan? "I knew I would receive a quality education in becoming the teacher I want to be, because most of my teaching idols went to IWU," he said. He also fell in love with the campus and bonded with the cross country coaches and team.

His experience thus far has been everything he wanted and then some, he said. "Everyone is supportive and nice, the campus is nice, and I see familiar faces everywhere." The classes have also been as rigorous as he had hoped.

"Some of the most influential people in my life have been my history teachers," he added. "I would love to be that influence for my own students someday."



Max Crowninshield '20 and John Camardella '03

*By Reilly Kasprak '17*

## New Titan Keeps It All in the Family

You could say Brennan Harmon was born to be a Titan.

As a fifth-generation legacy, Harmon said he has known about Illinois Wesleyan his entire life. His great-great-grandfather Ole Bly Pace, Sr., Class of 1913, played on the baseball team; great-grandfather Ole Bly Pace, Jr. '36, later served as a trustee; and both grandparents, Sheryl and Ole Bly Pace III, graduated from Illinois Wesleyan in 1963. Harmon's mom, Lezley, is a member of the Class of 1987.

Even though Brennan Harmon has been a Titan legacy since birth, the Downers Grove, Ill., native says he's created his own personal notions of family since arriving early on campus to join the football team.

"I've gotten the greatest sense of inclusion from everyone here and I've made some amazing friends already," said Harmon. "The most memorable things so far have been initiation into the football team, being able to call them my family, and to be part of the amazing tradition."

Harmon captained the Downers Grove North High School football team, where he started at center and played defensive end. "Once Coach [Norm] Eash reached out to me and I visited campus, I knew this place was home," said Harmon. "My family history, the great football tradition, and the amazing academic reputation all added up to the perfect combination to make me want to come here."

Harmon plans to major in [business administration](#) with a concentration in marketing. "I have a passion for business and I'm an athlete, so I want to try to mesh the two things I love," he said. "I want to explore something in the field of sports marketing."

He also plans to get involved in leadership activities, the Investment Club and a business fraternity. "I cannot wait to see what the next four years have in store."



Brennan Harmon '20 (left) and a photo of his great-great-grandfather Ole Bly Pace, Sr., courtesy of the 1913 Wesleyana



## Inclusive Environment Lures Diversity Leader to IWU

During her search for colleges, Kira Rangel '20 sought a place that encouraged individuality and inclusion. She found that and more at Illinois Wesleyan.

The music theatre major said she was accepted to several conservatory-like programs, "but they did not compare to Illinois Wesleyan when it came to expression. The experience I would have received from a conservatory would not have allowed me to meet the diverse people I've already met here."

Arriving on campus for [MALANA Pre-Orientation](#) for students of color, Rangel said the fun-filled orientation weekend has been among the most formative experiences thus far. "I was able to see IWU's commitment to embracing diversity," said Rangel, who served as co-president of her high school's Diversity Club. This year MALANA Pre-Orientation students shared several activities and events with students in [Engaging Diversity](#), a program for white students who want to embrace diverse relationships in their personal and academic lives. "Seeing the large number of white students who were eager to be allies for people of color, I really felt IWU appreciated social justice and equality," Rangel observed.

As a Titan, she plans to continue her involvement with social justice issues. Joining Student Senate, Black Student Union, SALSA and improvisation and a capella groups are also high on her "to do" list.

Rangel said she knew from an early age she wanted to attend a smaller university. She was also impressed by the reputation of the School of Theatre Arts. "I hope to work for a few years after graduation and then go on for my master's degree so I can work toward owning my own theater company," she said. "A conservatory would not have given me the all-around education I will receive here."



Kira Rangel

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## Perfect Academic Combo Sets the Stage for Acting Major

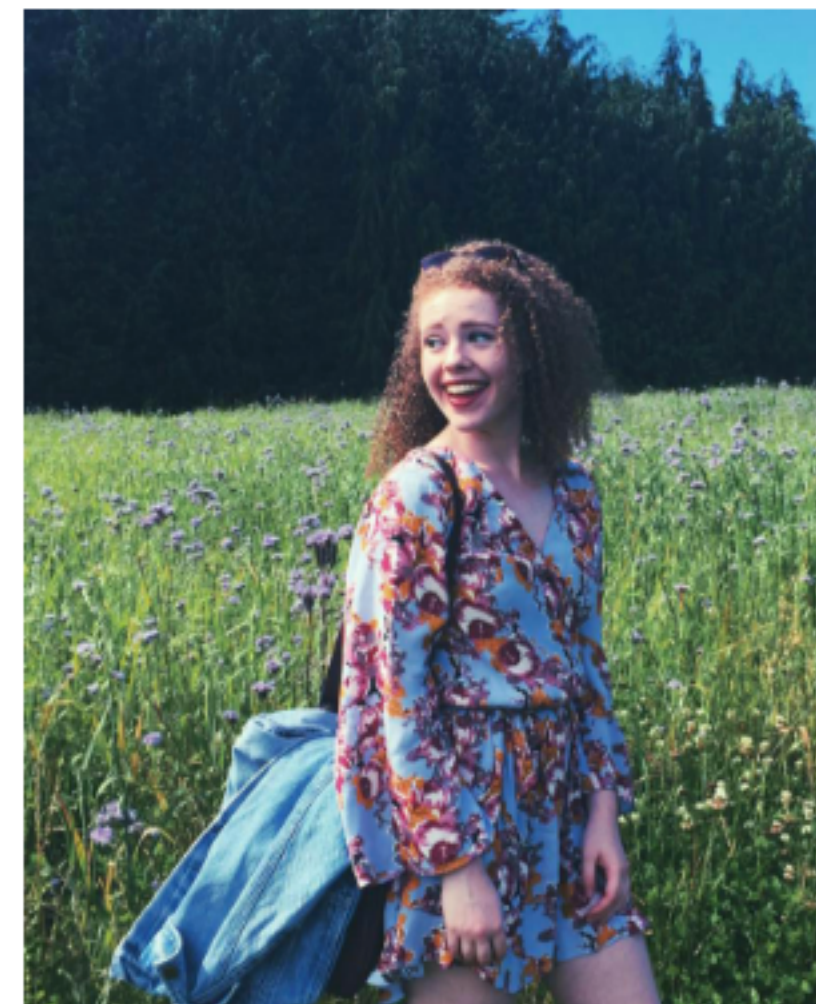
At the Denver School of the Arts, an arts magnet school for grades 6-12, Aliza Saper '20 learned how to raise money to sponsor guest artists, attend thespian conventions, pay for costume rentals and supplies and help support theatre-related charitable causes.

"I've been involved in theatre practically my entire life, mostly as a performer," said the Colorado native. Internships the past few summers extended her knowledge of the business side of theatre, so it was only logical she'd want to learn more about arts management in addition to perfecting her craft.

Illinois Wesleyan is one of only a few institutions to offer the perfect combination for Saper: a major in acting and a minor in arts management. The academic program coupled with her strong impression that Illinois Wesleyan values creativity and art made her college choice easy. "IWU was just meant to be," she said. "I'm so excited to learn, explore and discover new things in the realm of theatre."

Illinois Wesleyan's friendly, inviting environment has greatly impressed Saper. In the first School of Theatre Arts departmental meeting, new students were assigned to an 'older sibling' as well as an entire 'sibling family,' according to Saper.

"I think this is an awesome way to create community within the department," she noted. "As freshmen, there are lots of questions we have, so it gives us a network of people to go to if we need anything. I get to dive into my craft from the start."



Aliza Saper

By Vi Kakares '20