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# Julia Savich '16 Pursues Her Passions Across Disciplines

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— If you could look up “poster child for the liberal arts” in the dictionary, Julia Savich '16 would surely be listed there.

A physics major applying what she learns in one class to her other courses, Savich is also a prize-winning poet, a hobbyist painter, a rock climber, and all-around young woman interested in just about everything. She says IWU has stimulated her natural curiosity in ways she never imagined as a first-year student.

“Illinois Wesleyan’s small size encourages students to branch out to others outside of their majors,” she said. Meeting people from different educational backgrounds sparked her own interest in various subjects. Savich said working with others from non-physics backgrounds affirms the value of collaboration.

“I have worked with art, biology, history and environmental studies professors during my time here on non-class related projects, each of which were willing to take time out of their busy days to meet with me one-on-one and develop a cross-disciplinary idea,” she said.

One such example is this semester’s technical drawing theatre class. “I’ve been using what I learn in the theatre class to hand draft diagrams for my directed study physics course on renewable energy systems. This happens all the time in my classes, and I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

Another example of Savich’s thirst for learning occurred during Professor Given Harper’s May Term travel course to Costa Rica. “Tropical Ecology was my favorite class because Dr. Harper’s knowledge of birds and his excitement about seeing uncommon species were infectious, and we were in a perfect place to experience this. On multiple occasions, we came to a quick halt driving down the bumpy, unpaved road because Dr. Harper spotted a bird high up in the tree canopy.”

Her interest in the natural world stretches back to high school; in fact, Savich entered IWU as an environmental studies major with a physics minor. At that time, “I didn’t know what you could do with a physics degree, and I didn’t think I liked math and science *that much*,” she recalls. “As it turns out, I *do* like math and science that much.”

So much so, Savich will enter the master’s program in Engineering Design Innovation (EDI) at Northwestern University this fall. EDI is the practice of seeing a project from an initial concept through developed prototype to the finished product or service.

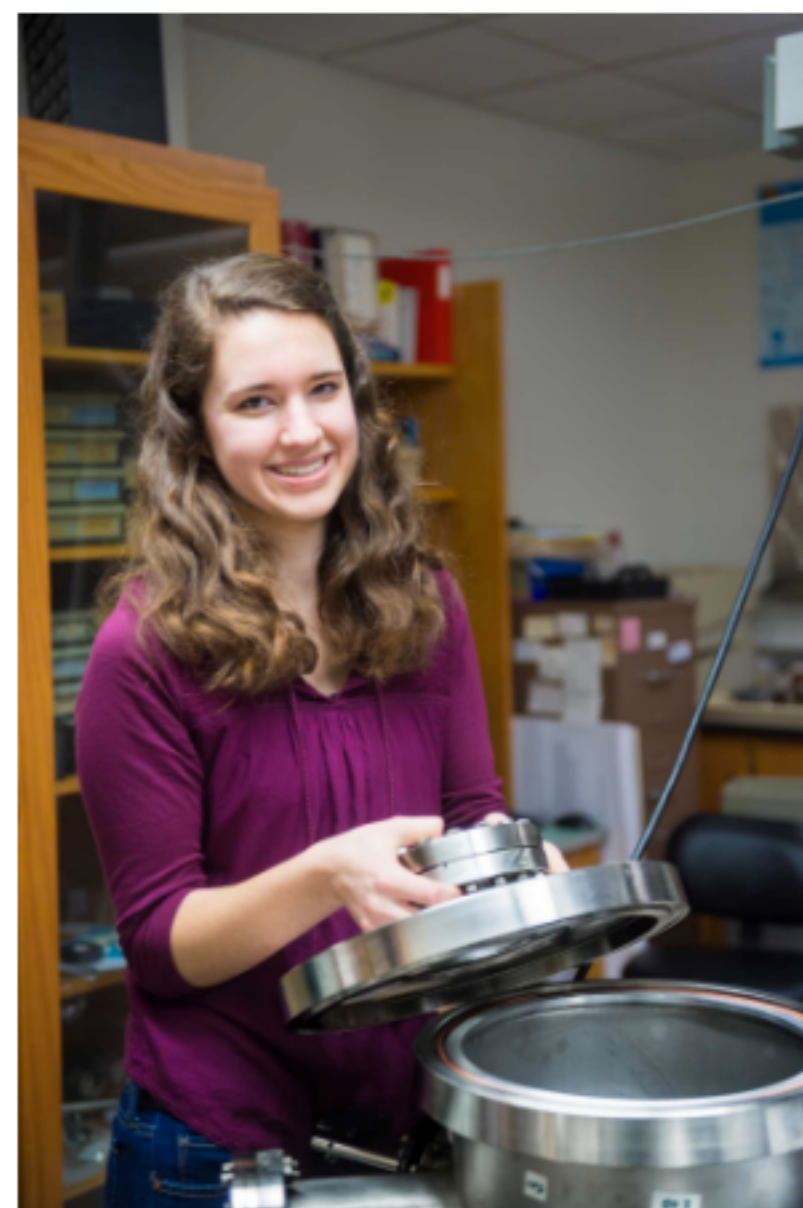
“After talking with people from many different backgrounds, I finally found the specific label of EDI for what I had been describing as my dream job for years,” she said. “EDI is a new field. I wanted a program tailored toward students with technical backgrounds looking to develop the design skills necessary to become a product design engineer with a focus on making everyday products more energy efficient.”

And in yet another example of the influence of diverse ideas exemplified by the liberal arts, Savich said working with Habitat through Humanity has shown her the value of hands-on problem solving and developed her desire to improve the quality of life for others.

“Finding your passion takes hard work and a lot of exploration,” said Savich. “You want to find that thing that makes you jump out of bed at six in the morning and keeps you going until someone else tells you it’s time to stop. Finding that passion takes time, and the time I spent here at IWU allowed me to do that.”

## Class of 2016

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Applying what she learns in one class to another, Julia Savich '16 embodies the liberal arts.