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Scholars at Risk Advocates Participate in Global Congress

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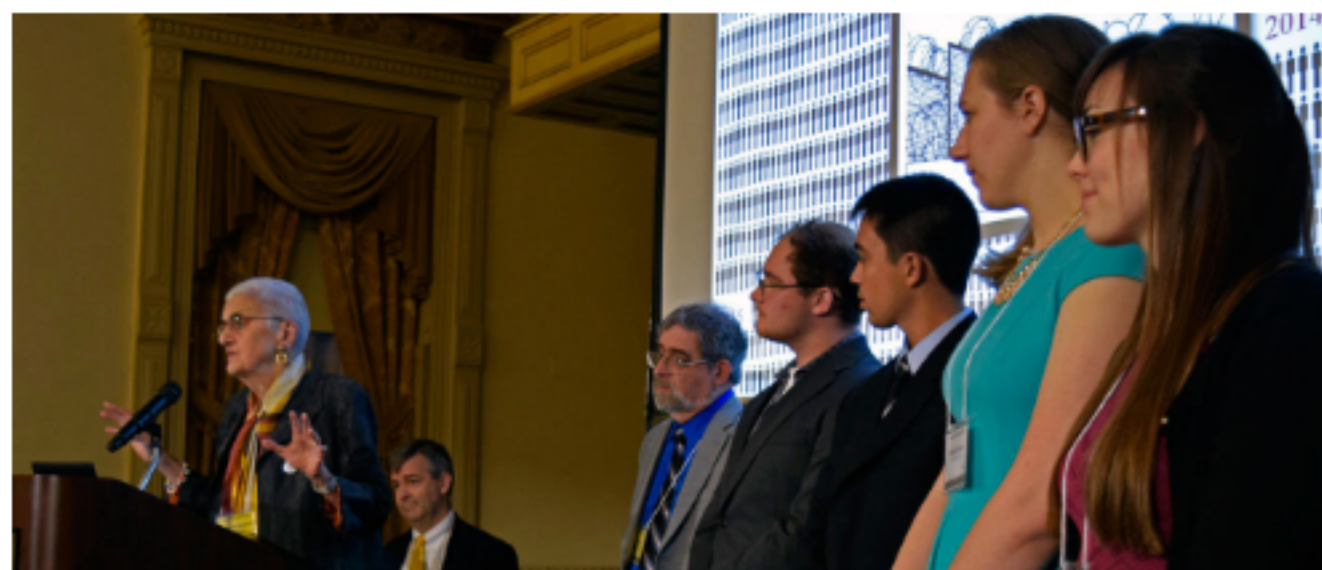
BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Students from Illinois Wesleyan University and other member institutions accepted the Scholars at Risk 2016 Courage to Think Defender Award on behalf of Egypt's wrongfully detained students and scholars at the recent Scholars at Risk 2016 Global Congress.

[Scholars at Risk](#) (SAR) is an international network of higher education institutions and individuals dedicated to promoting threatened scholars, preventing attacks on higher education and promoting academic freedom and related values worldwide. Illinois Wesleyan is a founding SAR member and Illinois Wesleyan Ben and Susan Rhodes Endowed Professor of Peace and Social Justice Irv Epstein is one of the group's longest-serving board members. The director of Illinois Wesleyan's [Center for Human Rights and Social Justice](#) and chair of [educational studies](#), Epstein also attended the Global Congress.

Illinois Wesleyan also offers a Scholars at Risk Advocacy Seminar with the goal of assisting SAR in promoting academic freedom and defending the human rights of scholars worldwide. Illinois Wesleyan's SAR Advocacy Seminar is the first non-credit undergraduate seminar of its kind in the U.S. Participants Jonas Wightman '16 and Kira Miller '16 shared the work of Illinois Wesleyan's Scholars at Risk Advocacy Seminar at the 2016 Global Congress, and Wightman accepted the Courage to Think Defender Award along with a student representative from SAR members Carleton College, Roger Williams University and the University of Iowa.

SAR selected student representatives to accept the award in recognition of their efforts to conduct research and advocacy on behalf of threatened scholars and students around the world. "The students are vital to raising awareness around cases of imprisoned scholars and students like these, and to promoting academic freedom globally and locally," said Clare Robinson, Advocacy Director at SAR.

Over the past several years, SAR has observed an overwhelming crackdown on Egypt's higher education community. According to data from the Egyptian NGO, Association for Free Thought and Expression, over 2,000 university students and professors have been detained by security forces since July 2013.



Jonas Wightman '16 (fourth from right) and Professor Irv Epstein (to his left) at the Scholars at Risk 2016 Global Congress. (Photo courtesy Scholars at Risk Network)

