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## Net College Price Within Reach

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# Net College Price Within Reach

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Your news feed has been pretty scary the past few years with all sorts of bad news headlines: millennials have to live with their parents because of crushing student debt loads; only major in (fill-in-the-blank) if you want a job after graduation; here's why you can't afford your dream school.

What's not showing up in your news feed? That net out-of-pocket tuition paid has gone down, at Illinois Wesleyan and at private nonprofit colleges and universities as a group, over the past decade.

Net out-of-pocket tuition is the final cost a student and his or her family pays after the financial aid is calculated. Financial aid includes scholarships, grants and loans, and at Illinois Wesleyan, that aid is considerable – about \$36 million annually for a wide range of financial assistance programs. More than two-thirds of Illinois Wesleyan students receive merit or talent scholarships, including Tony Hall '18 of East Peoria, Ill.

Hall did not initially consider a private university in his college search. For Hall, the opportunity to play college football, his dream since he was a little boy, ranked high on his list. But after narrowing his search to several state schools, Hall also widened his search to private universities and liberal arts institutions including Milliken, Augustana and Upper Iowa University.

"I considered all these schools pertaining to affordability, size, reputation and which sport I wanted to play, which was either wrestling or football," Hall said. "I recognized Illinois Wesleyan's costs were initially higher than the other schools."

After his financial aid package was extended, however, his cost to attend Illinois Wesleyan "clearly became very manageable. I also thought the value of my degree would be higher if I obtained it from Illinois Wesleyan." And when Hall considered Illinois Wesleyan's School of Nursing's reputation and the fact that typically 100 percent of its graduates are employed at the time they graduate, Hall was convinced his degree from Illinois Wesleyan would have more value than the other schools he was considering.

"A smaller school like Illinois Wesleyan allows for a better learning experience, in my opinion," Hall continued. "I chose to come to Illinois Wesleyan because of the closer relationships you can develop between students and professors and for the opportunities. For example, nursing faculty and staff take their junior and senior students to annual conferences. They also sponsor a career fair along with the Hart Career Center."

Everyone at Illinois Wesleyan supports students, according to Hall. "What I love about IWU is how caring the professors, [Financial Aid](#), the Hart Career Center, and many others are about the students' success," said Hall. "They all promote an awesome atmosphere for students, and it makes my experience unique. You can easily approach a professor and ask for help for literally anything. And the people that work in Financial Aid are phenomenal. They recognize if a student is having financial issues, and they will assist you."

Part of that help is administering gift assistance to more than 90 percent of students who, like Hall, qualify for some type of financial aid.

Investing in a college education is an important decision, but it shouldn't be scary. A commitment to financial assistance makes an Illinois Wesleyan education within reach of any student.



Tony Hall (right) appreciates the many opportunities for employment connections at Illinois Wesleyan, such as the Nursing Career Fair.