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German Exchange Student Gives IWU Students an "Education on the Go"

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — As vivid yellow signs with the names of major German cities on them appeared across Illinois Wesleyan's campus, it may have seemed as if the University had found a new location.

However, the signs are actually part of a project called "All Roads Lead to Germany." IWU German exchange student Sebastian Schoebel and the German Studies Department placed the bright signs in an effort to attract more students to the German studies program.

Twenty-three-year-old Schoebel, a native of Dresden, Germany, has energetically worked with IWU German studies students to put this project, a first at Illinois Wesleyan, into motion.

"As soon as I got the idea, I immediately set out and did it," said Schoebel, a modern history and American studies student who modeled the placards after common German street signs. "These signs were important to me because I think every student should know more about Germany. It is the biggest economical engine in Europe and has a rich heritage."

Recruiting the help of Associate Professor of German Julie Prandi and her students, the signs were finished in a matter of days. "Each student had to research a major German city and then come up with interesting facts or important events that took place in the city," said Schoebel.

Each sign lists the name of a major German city such as Berlin or Dresden and the approximate distance between Bloomington and the city. The signs also feature one historically significant piece of information about German history, a concept that Schoebel refers to as "education on the go."

"In just seconds, anyone can learn an important fact about Germany just by walking to class," said Schoebel.

After receiving positive reactions from many IWU professors, Schoebel can only hope that this project will bring students a little closer to Germany. Although Germany is "half a world away" he hopes that one day soon when professors greet their classes, their students will comfortably respond with the words "Guten Tag" (Good day).

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