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## A Monster Start for Entering Students at Illinois Wesleyan

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — What will entering college students be reading when they arrive on campus this fall?

At Illinois Wesleyan, members of the Class of 2009 have been asked to read Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* prior to their arrival on campus on August 23.

This is the first time in several years that the University has made such a summer reading assignment, and Frank Boyd, director of general education at the University, sees the shared text as a way to introduce students to the intellectual life of the campus.

During their first week on campus, students will break into discussion groups where they will be joined not only by faculty but also by members of the staff and administration to talk about *Frankenstein*.

In addition, the classic 1931 movie, *Frankenstein*, directed by James Whale and featuring Boris Karloff as the monster, will be screened in the Hansen Student Center. In addition, a Shelley scholar, Anne K. Mellor of UCLA, will present a lecture later in the semester.

"We are excited about reintroducing this program," said Boyd. "Other colleges have similar assigned readings, and the books that they choose are quite varied. We assume that students are likely to be familiar with the text, either through reading the book or seeing a movie. But the numerous themes that exist in this book offer opportunities for lively discussion and for discovery of a variety of ways to look at the same text."

Other colleges are taking different directions with their assignments this year. For instance, Macalester College choose *Don Quixote* while entering students at Colgate University will read Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Smith College has assigned Diane Gilliam Fisher's *Kettle Bottom*, a collection of poems written from the point of view of West Virginia coal miners in the 1920s.

"We are especially glad that nearly 30 members of the administration and staff will join the discussion groups," Boyd said. "It's important that our students realize that we place a lot of value on the role of the community."

