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## IWU Junior Accepted to Prestigious Summer Psychology Program

March 8, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - Kathy Sentman of Batavia, Ill., a junior psychology major with a cognitive science minor at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, has been accepted to the American Psychological Association's Summer Institute, a ten-day intensive program designed to expose students to all facets of psychology through seminars as well as hands-on laboratory activities.

The program, which will be held at the University of Minnesota June 16 to 25, accepted only 32 students out of more than 300 applicants.

Sentman, who graduated from Batavia High School in 2004, was encouraged to apply for the program by Doran French, professor and chair of psychology, during her fall academic advising appointment. The application, which required essays and professor recommendations in addition to high school and college transcripts, was due in February.

"It's an opportunity that's available every year, but it's highly competitive," said Jean Pretz, assistant professor of psychology, who over the last two years has conducted research with Sentman on cognitive problem-solving techniques.

Along with other IWU psychology students, Sentman is currently working with Pretz to investigate the way that novices and experts in a field make decisions-either by analytically weighing the pros and cons of each possibility or by trusting a gut instinct. Although the results have not yet been calculated, Sentman had a first-hand experience with cognitive problem solving when she chose her major.

"When I was in high school I got it into my head that I wanted to be a pharmacist," she said. "I'd have a good job, a good salary, I'd be able to work anywhere, it would be great. But the more I thought about it, the more I realized I wouldn't really be happy like that and so I abandoned that idea and picked psych on a whim." Sentman's decision to "go with her gut" worked out well. "I can't imagine doing anything else," she said.

Sentman has been involved in various aspects of psychology research since her first year at IWU. This year she is heading a team of students responsible for data collection for a problem-solving and personality study.

Next year Sentman plans to continue her study of cognitive science with a thesis project, also related to the roles that intuition, analysis play in problem solving. She is looking forward to the summer institute as an opportunity to explore post-graduate options. "The people who apply to the program are from all over the country," she said. "It will be really exciting to meet people who will someday be my colleagues."

Founded in 1850, Illinois Wesleyan is a private, coeducational university with an enrollment of approximately 2,100 and a student-faculty ratio of 12 to 1. The University consists of the College of Liberal Arts, with 17 academic departments; the College of Fine Arts, comprising professional Schools of Art, Music and Theatre Arts; and the School of Nursing.



Kathy Sentman

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