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Rebecca Welzenbach
Illinois Wesleyan University

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IWU Hosts 2nd Annual MUSE Literature Conference

September 20, 2006

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. - Illinois Wesleyan University will welcome student presenters from nine Midwest universities to the second annual MUSE Undergraduate Literature Conference on Saturday, Sept. 30, in the Center for Natural Science, 201 Beecher St., in Bloomington.

The conference, which is free and open to the public, is hosted by IWU's Alpha Eta Pi chapter of Sigma Tau Delta (STD), the International English Honor Society, in conjunction with Illinois State University's Lambda Delta chapter.

This year's conference will feature 27 student presenters, whose papers address topics from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales to the Vietnam War's influence on the media. The students will represent Augustana College, Carthage College (Kenosha, Wis.), the College of the Ozarks (Point Lookout, Mo.), Knox College, Illinois College, Monmouth College, Oakland University (Rochester, Mich.) and Purdue University (West Lafayette, Ind.), as well as IWU and ISU.

STD co-president Anne Wilkinson, a senior English Writing and French double major, was encouraged by the wide range of applicants. "I think it is a sign of things to come and an indication of just how much can happen in a year," she said. "We would love for MUSE to become a big regional event, and that will take time, but I think we're getting there."

In addition to four sessions of presentations, the conference will feature three panel discussions on professional and graduate options for English majors and a [keynote address](#) by Michael Rothberg, associate professor of English and director of the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His talk, "Of Literature and Terror: Before and After September 11," will take place at 4 p.m. in room C101 of the Center for Natural Science, and address literature as a response to traumatic and tragic events such as the September 11 attacks.

The executive board members hope that hosting the conference will bolster their bid for this year's "Outstanding Chapter" award, for which they will apply in October. Other chapter accomplishments over the last year include publishing the first issue of The Delta, IWU's English Department journal, coordinating research colloquia, hosting book club discussions, contributing to campus book drives and, with the support of IWU's English Department, promoting student participation at regional and national conferences.

During the 2005-2006 academic school year, IWU sent four representatives to the Chicago Humanities Festival (Chicago, Ill.), five to The Annual English Language and Literature Conference (Joliet, Ill.), one to The International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts (Fort Lauderdale, Fla.) and one to the Sigma Tau Delta Annual Convention (Portland, Ore.).

"Last year's conference was a way for us to get our footing and become more involved with Sigma Tau Delta on a regional and national level," Wilkinson said. "Now we're beginning to really understand what goes into putting a conference together."

Founded in 1924 at Dakota Wesleyan College in South Dakota by Judson Q. Owen, a 1913 graduate of Illinois Wesleyan, STD seeks to confer distinction upon outstanding students of the English language in undergraduate, graduate and professional studies. IWU's Alpha Eta Pi chapter, founded in 1998, is one of more than 600 chapters worldwide.

For additional information about MUSE or Sigma Tau Delta, contact Wilkinson (awilkins@iwu.edu) or Rachel Shulman (rshulman@iwu.edu), STD co-presidents, or visit the STD Web site at <https://sun.iwu.edu/~sigmatd/>.

Contact: Rebecca Welzenbach, (309) 556-3181