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Rachel Hatch
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Rincker Receives Grant to Study Women's Organizations in Pakistan

December 6, 2007

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — The American Political Science Association has awarded Illinois Wesleyan University's Meg Rincker a \$3,500 grant to continue her research on women's organizations in developing democracies. Rincker, a visiting assistant professor of political science at IWU, will use the funds to conduct surveys in Pakistan.

"In new and emerging democracies, political decisions are often made by local governments," said Rincker, who has also conducted a similar survey in Poland. "The goal of the surveys is to discover if these local governments are more accessible to women's groups than the national government."

Rincker, who has been with IWU since 2005, will carry out the surveys through connections with two scholars at the University of Punjab in Lahore, Pakistan. "Scholars there will assist in carrying out the surveys in Pakistan's four provincial capitals and the national capital of Islamabad," said Rincker.

The surveys will assess the priorities of women's groups across Pakistan, and whether recently empowered provincial governments are responding effectively, said Rincker. "We want to know what issues are most important to women," she said, noting the surveys will ask about healthcare, female literacy and the practice of "honour killings," where women are killed, often by male relatives, for bringing shame upon their families through perceived sexual immodesty.

The group will also speak with government organizations charged with women's empowerment. "We hope to find out whether the government is responding to the needs of women," said Rincker, "and if they have the funds and staff to serve them."

Pakistan is the second of four countries Rincker and her colleague, Candice Ortvals of Pepperdine University, are surveying as case studies for an upcoming book. "We are looking at Poland, Pakistan, Spain and Chile," said Rincker, "We wanted a broad array of countries where women may have similar political opportunities but face different cultural constraints."



Meg Rincker

Contact: Rachel Hatch, (309) 556-3960