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Rachel Hatch
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Nine Students Joining the Teach for America Corps

May 9, 2007

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Nine Illinois Wesleyan University students will join Teach For America, the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit to teaching low-income students in urban and rural public schools for the next two years. This is the highest number of students from Illinois Wesleyan accepted into the program in one year.

"So many students and corps members have told me this is a life changing experience," said Bix Gabriel, regional communications director of Teach for America. "The students have the opportunity to make a real impact every day."

The students will be sent across the United States this fall to assist in classrooms. The students, all Class of 2007, are:

Sarah Campbell, an international studies and political science major from Rochester Mills, Mich., who graduated from Rochester Adams High School.

Brian Jbara, an economics and English literature major from Kalamazoo, Mich., who graduated from Hackett Catholic Central High School.

Patrick Halloran, a history and religion major from Danville, Ill., who graduated from Danville High School.

Katie Korder, an education studies major from Urbana, Ill., who graduated from Urbana High School.

Melissa Monaco, a religion and sociology major from St. Charles, Ill., who graduated from Geneva Community High School.

Mike Nicoletti, a political science and religion major from Lake Zurich, Ill., who graduated from Lake Zurich Senior High School.

Amanda Paz, a women's studies major from Chicago who graduated from Northside College Prep High School.

Drew Snodgrass, a political science and religion major from Chapin, Ill., who graduated from Triopia Junior-Senior High School.

Sarah Ziebart, a theatre arts and sociology major from Versailles, Ky., who graduated from Urbana High School.

"I think it will be a chance to be part of something truly amazing," said Paz, who considered joining the Peace Corps, then realized she could serve the same goal of helping people with Teach for America. "I'm glad to be part of combating the inequity that can go on in education." A former math education major, Paz will be teaching math to middle school students in Newark, N.J. "I guess I've come full circle," said Paz, who changed her major to women's studies while at Illinois Wesleyan. "I'll always be grateful that I can be a teacher and still hold onto a passion for women's studies I discovered at IWU." Paz currently plans to attend graduate school after her time with Teach for America.

More than 2,800 students will join Teach for America across the nation this year. The organization actively recruits on more than 500 college campuses, where it seeks applicants from all career interests and backgrounds who demonstrate a record of outstanding achievement.

"We know that when students in low-income communities are given the opportunities and support they deserve, they can and will excel," said Jack Carey, Teach For America's Illinois Wesleyan recruitment director. "We are so pleased that Illinois Wesleyan graduates have decided to join us in our mission to ensure that every child receives an excellent education."

Beyond their two years, corps members take their insight and added commitment to assume leadership roles in addressing educational inequity, said Gabriel. "We've noted many students continue on a third year with the corps, while others take the ideals of Teach for America into graduate work, volunteer work and their careers," she said.

Since Teach For America placed its first 500 corps members in classrooms in 1990, more than 12,000 outstanding college graduates have joined its movement to eliminate educational inequity. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org.

Contact: Rachel Hatch, (309) 556-3960