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Illinois Wesleyan Announces National Search for School of Music Director as Pelusi Steps Down

Current Director Changing Roles After 20 years at IWU

May 15, 2018

Bloomington, Ill – Illinois Wesleyan University will launch a national search for a new director of its School of Music, as Mario Pelusi, director for 20 years, steps down to fully focus on his passions for composing music and teaching.

Effective June 1, Pelusi will embark on a one-year sabbatical to develop composition projects, and will return to teaching full-time at the IWU School of Music in the fall of 2019. While the search begins for his successor, Vickie Folse '86, Director of the School of Nursing and Caroline F. Rupert Chair of Nursing, will take on the additional role as Interim Director of the School of Music. Bill Hudson, Head of the Voice and Choral Department and Assistant Professor of Music, will serve as Associate Interim Director.

"I have always considered it a privilege to work with esteemed colleagues and with our wonderful students and to serve as Director of the School of Music," Pelusi said in a letter to colleagues and students. "Because of my innumerable time-consuming administrative responsibilities, it has not been possible for me to devote as much time as I would have liked, over the years, to composing new music—my first passion in the world of music—and to teaching, about which I also feel very passionate."

He will continue to direct the highly praised [IWU Summer Music Composition Institute](#), a one-week program for high school students interested in composition, which he founded 13 years ago.

"We are grateful to Mario for his many years of service to Illinois Wesleyan University, which brought our nationally recognized School of Music into its 150th year and beyond," said Provost Mark Brodl. "I appreciate his continued dedication not only to his personal passion for music, but also to passing on this passion to future generations of students.

"We share his pride in Illinois Wesleyan as one of the few universities in the country where young musicians can combine the professional training of an accredited school of music with an outstanding, broad-based education at a top-ranked liberal arts college."

Pelusi was appointed Director of Illinois Wesleyan's School of Music after a national search in 1998. Prior to joining Illinois Wesleyan, he held teaching positions at The Ohio State University, Reed College, the University of Southern California, the Lawrenceville School, and the New Jersey Governor's School of the Arts, and he was chair or director of the music programs at four of these institutions. Pelusi has also held executive leadership positions with national music organizations, including the Association of Illinois Music Schools, the National Association of Schools of Music, the College Music Society, and Pi Kappa Lambda.

Contributing to the local community as well as the IWU campus, Pelusi served on the City of Bloomington's Cultural District Commission Board and its building and executive search committees, making possible the creation of the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts where IWU's premier ensembles continue to perform.

Pelusi holds master of fine arts and Ph.D. degrees in composition from Princeton University, and bachelor's and master's degrees in composition from the University of Southern California. He has composed numerous commissioned chamber and orchestral works for some of this country's leading performers of new music and is the recipient of many grants, prizes, and fellowships.

In addition to his [work in composition](#), Pelusi's research interests include non-tonal theory, music analysis, rhythm in music, the process of creativity, music and mathematics, music and linguistics, and music entrepreneurship.

By Ann Aubry