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Rachel McCarthy
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Bollivar '88 Receives Communication Innovator Award

March 27, 2019

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Linda Bollivar '88, executive director of the [Multicultural Leadership Program](#) (MCLP), was recently awarded the Communication Innovator Award, one of three Crystal Awards from the Association for Women in Communications - Bloomington/Normal.

The Communication Innovator Award recognizes a woman who has achieved excellence in communicating a project, mission, or event that benefits the Bloomington-Normal community. Recipients are marked by their leadership abilities, civic engagement and ability to connect with and inspire audiences.

"To me, effective communication involves finding the right amount of detail for each situation," said Bollivar. "I've worked in a wide variety of settings with people of different ages, religions, cultures, abilities, etc. I always try to think about what information my audience already has, and what is most relevant to them so that I can adapt my message accordingly."

For several years, Bollivar has guided the growth of the Multicultural Leadership Program, a non-profit organization that offers professional leadership development for current and aspiring community leaders. Throughout the nine-month program, MCLP participants come to better understand their own leadership style and how to work within a diverse team through seminars, discussions and hands-on experience leading a project to benefit local non-profits.

MCLP's location less than a block away from Illinois Wesleyan's campus has facilitated a steady connection between the two organizations, linked by shared values. "Because of IWU's commitment to diversity and inclusion, the University has been a strong supporter of the Multicultural Leadership Program since it was started in 2009," said Bollivar, who also maintains her ties to the University through her husband, Miner Linnaeus Sherff Endowed Professor of Botany David Bollivar. "Our offices have been on IWU's campus since the fall of 2014, which has provided the opportunity for us to partner with wonderful interns over the years."

Linda Bollivar has held a number of leadership positions before MCLP, such as director of Faith in Action and program director of Sugar Creek Alzheimer's Special Care Center. Bollivar, who graduated from Illinois Wesleyan with degrees in psychology and French, has found that her broad liberal arts education at Illinois Wesleyan has given her the skills to be successful in a range of leadership roles.

"In my nonprofit leadership career, I've been amazed at how much of my time is spent writing in a wide variety of formats such as emails, and press releases, in addition to one-on-one communications, presentations and even media interviews," Bollivar shared. "The strong liberal arts focus really prepared me well for being able to communicate effectively with a wide variety of audiences."

By Rachel McCarthy '21