



Summer 6-6-2022

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Entrepreneurship Program Ranked Best in Illinois, Among Top in Nation

June 6, 2022

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — As a destination along the state's innovation corridor, Illinois Wesleyan University's entrepreneurship program has been recognized as one of the best in the nation.

Illinois Wesleyan was ranked as the [best university in Illinois and the Great Lakes Region](#), as well as the [9th best undergraduate school in the U.S.](#), for entrepreneurial studies students pursuing a bachelor's degree, according to College Factual.

[The entrepreneurship major at IWU](#) is committed to awakening students to the excitement of learning and innovation while preparing them to function independently in a professional environment immediately upon graduation.

Tara Gerstner '01 is the IWU director of entrepreneurship and assistant professor of business, marketing and entrepreneurship. Gerstner said she hopes the ranking will encourage more students across all disciplines to explore the entrepreneurship program at IWU.

"Our IWU students have the opportunity to experience hands-on entrepreneurial learning by doing which makes them more marketable to employers," said Gerstner. "The current ranking of our academic entrepreneurship program demonstrates the success of our students as they not only start successful businesses, but also start successful careers in a variety of fields post-graduation. We work to be innovative in our teaching so as to encourage our students to be innovative in whatever field they are passionate about."

Using core data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) from agencies of the U.S. Department of Education, College Factual ranked colleges by examining degree completion, educational resources, student body caliber and post-graduation earnings.

This distinction from College Factual adds to numerous rankings that prove Illinois Wesleyan University is a launch pad for innovative and successful individuals – such as [IWU's 2021 ranking by Zippia as the best university in Illinois for job placement after graduation](#).

Upcoming entrepreneurial events at IWU:

- IWU will co-host the 2022 Bloomington-Normal Entrepreneur of the Year Awards on Nov. 3, honoring a member of the McLean County business community and an Illinois Wesleyan alumnus/alumna whose long-term achievements reflect a dedication to the spirit and practice of entrepreneurship.
- In an effort to encourage entrepreneurial thinking and new venture creation among youth, Illinois Wesleyan will also host the finals of the [Celebrating High School Innovators \(CHSI\)](#) competition on April 22, 2023.
- Illinois Wesleyan also produces regular [Titan Talks webinars](#), including a series on innovation. The next Titan Talks: Innovation Series episode will feature Haden Kirkpatrick, vice president of innovation and venture capital at State Farm, on Aug. 30.

By Julia Perez