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# Chloe Xu '24 Promotes Healthy Body Image Through Eckley Scholarship

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — During her time as a [2022 Illinois Wesleyan University Eckley Scholar](#), Chloe Xu '24 examined how the weight of peer pressure can be damaging to body image.

Her Eckley project is titled “The Impact of Peer Influence on Body Image and Disordered Eating.”

The topic is personal to Xu. “I grew up in a toxic beauty culture and have friends who still occasionally suffer from stomach aches due to unhealthy dieting,” she said.

As a double major in psychology and interdisciplinary education, Xu is interested in understanding the mechanisms behind peer pressure and body image and educating others about them.

“I hope to help people who are still worrying about their body shape by promoting a healthy beauty standard and healthy body image,” Xu said.

Assistant Professor of Psychology Marie Nebel-Schwalm mentored Xu for this project. Nebel-Schwalm is also the faculty mentor for The Body Project, [a registered student organization](#) that promotes body positivity, acceptance and inclusivity.

Xu and Nebel-Schwalm’s work will likely continue throughout the rest of Xu’s time at Illinois Wesleyan.

Finding more variation and complexity than could be determined in one round of research, Xu said she was inspired by her Eckley project to keep investigating.

Xu is planning to continue her research by completing a senior research honors project within the topic of body image. She said completing an Eckley Fellowship also helped her determine topics to pursue in graduate school.

“It gave me an early exposure to conduct research, academic writing and work with professionals,” Xu said.

[Established by the late IWU President Emeritus Robert Eckley and his wife Nell](#), the Eckley Summer Scholar program provides a stipend of \$4,000 for each scholar to spend the summer conducting academic research or artistic activity under the mentorship of a faculty member. The program is designed to develop and deepen a student’s creative and research competencies.



Chloe Xu '24

*By Maria Harmon '23*