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Technos Awardee Ankush Kecht '23 Promotes Exposure to Other Cultures

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Even after traveling the globe during his childhood, Ankush Kecht '23 found opportunities to broaden his international experiences at Illinois Wesleyan and was ultimately named the 2023 Technos International Prize winner as a senior.

The prestigious award is presented annually, recognizing an IWU student who has excelled academically and has contributed to broadening international awareness and understanding.

Kecht said his blended family — with roots in Germany, England and India — provided him with a unique worldview regarding economic and social differences between cultures. His father also works for an airline, allowing for even more travel opportunities.

“I have strived during my time at Illinois Wesleyan to share my

experiences and how my upbringing shaped who I was. While doing this, I also try to make sure I listen and learn from others and their life experiences twice as much,” said Kecht, who majored in [biology](#) and [international and global studies](#).

While traveling abroad with IWU’s Freeman Asia Program, Kecht completed an internship with the Food and Nutrition Research Institute under the Department of Science and Technology in the Philippines where he assisted with on-site interviews, data collection and anthropometric measurements.

Kecht said the experience provided more than an opportunity for academic research.

As he interviewed residents of a small Filipino neighborhood, Kecht learned that a recent typhoon had caused a food shortage in the beach-side community. Despite nearly every resident having limited resources, Kecht witnessed a generous and selfless support system that he said isn’t present in more developed countries.



Director of the International and Global Studies program, Carmela Ferradans, left; and Ankush Kecht '23, right, winner of the 2023 Technos International Prize.



Ankush Kecht '23, right, checks the blood pressure of a patient during a trip to the Philippines with Illinois Wesleyan's Freeman Asia program. Kecht is the 2023 winner of the Technos International Award.

“Neighbors and family members shared with each other, with no thought or expectations of returns. There was no hesitation in their care for one another. It was simply the way they live. This community mentality, specifically when facing such immense hardship, depicts the compassion and resiliency of the Filipino people,” he said.

That attitude is something he tries to follow daily. At IWU, he served on the executive board of the South Asian Student Alliance and on the Students of Color in STEM organization, often inviting his peers to participate in culturally diverse events hosted on campus.

“I think it is imperative that young people find ways to expose themselves to different cultures and ways of life. Exposure is one of the best ways to work to eliminate prejudice. I feel it can be easy to look down on others when you have not shared their experiences and their way of life,” he said.

Beyond Illinois Wesleyan, Kecht plans to spend time traveling, working as a medical assistant and volunteering at a local hospital before enrolling in medical school in the fall of 2024. He hopes to practice medicine globally in the future, where he will continue to spread his message of empathy and acceptance.

The Technos International Prize is presented by the Tanaka Ikueikai Educational Trust in Japan. The Trust was founded by Kenji Tanaka, who created it in the spirit of improving international relations all around the world. The award promotes those ideals and recognizes IWU students who, through their work and actions, strive to ensure an atmosphere of global understanding.

By Julia Perez