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Sept. 11 Not a Factor in College Choice, According to Illinois Wesleyan Surveys

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Two separate surveys, one of entering first-year students at Illinois Wesleyan and one of those students' parents, indicated that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, had little bearing on the students' decision about where they would attend college.

In the survey of parents of entering students, only seven percent indicated that Sept. 11 had an impact on the students' decision to attend Illinois Wesleyan. Separately, six percent of the entering class said the terrorist attacks influenced their choice.

Results from the two Illinois Wesleyan surveys are echoed in a national survey conducted by the Art & Science Group, a Baltimore research company, and reported this week on *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* Web site. In that national survey, five percent of the students polled said that September 11 had had a "significant influence on the kinds of colleges" they considered.

In the case of both students and parents who said that September 11 had affected their decision to attend Illinois Wesleyan, location was the overriding factor that they cited. Several students indicated that they had been considering colleges in New York or Washington but elected not to pursue those options following the attacks. Others said that September 11 had prompted them to stay closer to home, not only to be near family but also to avoid flying.

Illinois Wesleyan's dean of admissions, James Ruoti, said he was not surprised by the findings.

"After a flurry of initial concern about the issue, we heard very little from students and parents as they were making their final decisions last fall and winter," said Ruoti. "By the time the attacks had occurred, many high school seniors were quite far along in the process and already had narrowed their choices to a few schools. It was unlikely that many of them would begin to sort through their options again in response to those events."