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## Illinois Wesleyan Wins Undergraduate Science Research Award

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## *Illinois Wesleyan Wins Undergraduate Science Research Award*

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Illinois Wesleyan University has won a prestigious award for undergraduate research programs from the Merck Company Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

The Merck/AAAS Undergraduate Science Research Program is a national competitive awards program designed to enhance undergraduate science education in the areas of biology and chemistry and, in particular, to encourage programs that foster understanding of the interrelationship of these sciences. The funding supports research stipends for undergraduate students and ancillary programs that foster interactions between the biology and chemistry departments.

Awards are made to no more than 15 colleges and universities each year, and winners receive \$20,000 annually for up to three years. A panel of scientists and educators chosen by the AAAS selects winners based on a variety of factors, including not only scientific merit of the proposed project but also the ability to engage undergraduate students and to provide interdisciplinary research opportunities with faculty members.

"This is wonderful news and a strong vote of confidence in the quality of the undergraduate research opportunities that are available at Illinois Wesleyan," said Thomas Griffiths, associate dean of the faculty and the Earl H. and Marion A. Beling Professor of Natural Sciences. "The particular goals that the Merck/AAAS program cites are consistent with what we want to accomplish in encouraging students to pursue graduate education in chemistry and the life sciences and also to emphasize interdisciplinary work."

The Merck/AAAS grant will support two separate projects in which Illinois Wesleyan faculty will be working with undergraduates.

The first project will examine one aspect of biological sensing, specifically how cells sense oxygen on a molecular level. Laura Moore, assistant professor of chemistry, will direct that project. The second project will expand on research that has been conducted by Loni Walker, assistant professor of biology, on plant hormones known as gibberellins in non-flowering plants. In addition to Walker, that project will be co-directed by Rebecca Roesner, assistant professor of chemistry.

This is the fourth year in which the Merck/AAAS awards have been made. In addition to Illinois Wesleyan, winners are Birmingham-Southern College, Calvin College, College of Staten Island/CUNY, Davidson University, Earlham College, Gustavus Adolphus College, Lebanon Valley College, Marist College, State University College at Buffalo, State University of New York-Geneseo, University of Redlands, Vierbo University, Wheaton College, and Wilkes University.

The Merck Company Foundation was established in 1957 by Merck & Co. The American Association for the Advancement of Science is the world's largest general scientific society and publishers of the journal *Science*.