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First-Year Biology Majors Forage For Food on the Quad

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Interview/photo opportunity

First-Year Biology Majors Forage For Food on the Quad

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— As science laboratories go, the one being used this week by Illinois Wesleyan's first-year biology majors is hardly what you might expect.

Spread around the Eckley Quadrangle on a windy, spring morning, teams of students are hunting frantically for macaroni noodles, sometimes having to dodge NERF balls shot at them by a teaching assistant.

This is a far cry from dissecting fetal pigs or frogs.

These exercises are part of a foraging ecology lab activity, under the direction of Adjunct Assistant Professor Margaret Griffiths, in which students are learning to evaluate the challenges of foraging for food in the wilderness. The lab has several parts. In one exercise, students hunt in a 10' x 10' area to see how quickly they can find enough food (five noodles) for one day. In another, the macaroni is camouflaged with green paint. A third exercise pits two teams against one another in a 20' x 20' area, and the fourth and final portion introduces the concept of predators—the teaching assistants who shoot the foraging students with NERF balls if they fail to work together.

The general biology classes will meet two more times this week for the foraging ecology lab on Wednesday from 6:30 to 9 p.m. and on Thursday from 2:30 to 5 p.m. If interested in an interview or photo opportunity, contact Ann Aubry or Sherry Wallace in the Illinois Wesleyan Office of University Communications at (309) 556-3181.