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Carnegie Foundation Reclassifies IWU in New Report

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A report released by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has reclassified Illinois Wesleyan University as a "Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) I" campus, a category traditionally home to colleges like Williams, Amherst, Oberlin, Bryn Mawr, and Swarthmore.

The report, with classifications of 3,600 colleges and universities, appears in part in the April 6 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Mary Jean Whitelaw, director of data management for the Carnegie Foundation, wrote IWU President Minor Myers, jr., on March 22, saying that the new category "means that most of the undergraduate degrees you award are in liberal arts fields and that the admissions policies of the college are selective."

"In the 1987 classification," Myers said, "Illinois Wesleyan was listed as a Comprehensive II institution, but in the new system IWU has been promoted to 'Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) I.' This category includes the 4.5 percent of American campuses which are primarily undergraduate, award 40 percent of their degrees in liberal arts fields, and which are selective in admissions. Other examples of 'Liberal Arts I' schools are Amherst, Williams, Oberlin, Carleton, Grinnell, Occidental, and Pomona."

"With the publication of the Carnegie report," Myers added, "IWU finds itself in the same classification as other widely recognized top-notch liberal arts institutions. IWU's faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends should be congratulated--their hard work has paid off and helped to make this possible."

Carnegie's last national classification of colleges in 1987 placed IWU in the "Comprehensive Universities and Colleges II" category, a category that has been discontinued in the current classification. IWU's classification change will affect its ranking by *U.S. News & World Report* in its annual "America's Best Colleges" edition.

For the past five years, the magazine has ranked Illinois Wesleyan as the No. 1 campus in the Midwest region. Other No. 1 regional campuses in the September 1993 were Wake Forest University (North Carolina) in the

South, Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Massachusetts) in the North, and Trinity University (Texas) in the West.

"Since *U.S. News* uses the Carnegie classification for the basis of its rankings," Myers said, "Illinois Wesleyan will no longer be No. 1 in the regional comprehensive group. The competition is obviously more keen in IWU's new group, but we already are well positioned within it. This new comparative setting reinforces many of the curricular planning efforts underway and provides a useful focus for strategic planning."

Robert J. Morse, a senior editor at *U.S. News* who is responsible for the magazine's annual survey of colleges and universities, told the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that because of the numerous shifts in the Carnegie classification the magazine's rankings of regional campuses will be "significantly different" this year.

Morse said that IWU was among the highly ranked regional institutions shifted to the national colleges group.

Myers told the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that he was "quite comfortable" with the change in IWU's classification because "the liberal arts pervade everything we do." Myers characterized IWU as thriving and predicted the new Carnegie classification will lead to "greater national visibility" for IWU.

The Princeton, N.J.-based education foundation has classified colleges and universities for more than two decades in a publication, entitled, "A Classification of Institutions of Higher Education."

"The purpose," of the classification system, Whitelaw wrote, "is not to rank colleges, but to group them according to their mission, clustering institutions with similar programs."

Over the years, the Carnegie Foundation has attempted to sharpen the definitions of various categories of campuses. In the new classification, Whitelaw said, "we will, for the first time, group all institutions according to the highest level of degrees they award--from associate of arts to doctoral degrees. This new grouping arrangement, we believe, will bring still more clarity to the classification."

She also made it clear that Carnegie will continue its practice of dividing various categories into subgroups "I" and "II" on the basis of the percentage of arts and science degrees awarded and admission policies.

In the current classification, 163 colleges have been classified as "Baccalaureate (Liberal Arts) I" schools. Along with IWU, other Illinois schools in this grouping are Augustana, Illinois College, Knox, Lake Forest, Monmouth, and Wheaton.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,800 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. *U.S. News* also rated IWU as a "best buy" in higher education in its first survey, "Paying for College," published in October, 1993.