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Japan Foundation Grant: \$136,780 Awarded to Illinois Wesleyan To Fund Japan-Asia Historian

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Albany, Cent. IL, Chicago Philanthropy, Int'l, Education
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Japan Foundation Grant

\$136,780 Awarded to Illinois Wesleyan To Fund Japan-Asia Historian

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--The Japan Foundation has awarded a \$136,780 grant to Illinois Wesleyan University to establish a professorship in Asian history with an emphasis on Japanese studies.

The three-year grant will allow IWU to begin a national search this fall to recruit a faculty member for the position with the goal of having the scholar in place for the 1996-97 academic year.

After the three-year grant from the New York City-based foundation expires, IWU will fund the faculty position.

W. Michael Weis, associate professor of history and director of the Division of Social Sciences, said: "As the world grows smaller, Japan grows in importance for the United States, especially as business and cultural contacts increase yearly. The more we learn about Japanese culture, the better our diplomacy and business relations will be."

Paul Bushnell, associate professor and chairperson of the history department, said: "We see this new faculty member as perhaps offering a freshman level semester gateway colloquium focused on an Asian topic, as well as developing upper division courses in Asian or Asian-American history. We want to be creative in planning for this position."

Among courses the assistant professor in Japanese history may teach are a freshman history seminar; courses in East Asian civilization, modern global history, Japanese history and culture, interactions in Asian-American history; and a Japanese history seminar focusing on issues since 1945.

Brian Hatcher, assistant professor of religion and humanities, will serve as project director for the grant. He is coordinator of IWU's Asian Studies program.

The Japan Foundation grant supports IWU's increasing emphasis on Asian and Japanese Studies, as part of the university's interdisciplinary International Studies Program, which has about 15-20 majors and 50-60 minors. An endowed professorship from the Tanaka Memorial Educational Trust allowed IWU to add a Japanese language position to the faculty in 1993. A U.S. Department of Education grant has enabled the university to add Japanese language books to the Sheean Library collection. In 1990, 600 titles on Asian Studies were donated to IWU.

(more)

IWU Receives Japan Foundation Grant/2

In addition to Japanese-language courses, IWU also offers various Japanese literature and culture courses, as well as art, business, history, anthropology, political science, religion, and physics courses dealing with Japan.

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. In recent years, the university's endowment has grown to more than \$92 million; a \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$24 million science building will open in 1995. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching promoted Illinois Wesleyan to a "Baccalaureate I" institution in 1994, a classification that places it among 164 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. *Barron's Profiles of American Colleges*, another respected college guide, rated IWU "highly competitive (+)" in its latest edition. *101 of the Best Values in America's Colleges and Universities* calls IWU "undoubtedly one of the finest small colleges in the country," adding, "Illinois Wesleyan has surged to national prominence on the basis of its reputation as a school with a rock-solid academic program."