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Julia Perez
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Illinois Wesleyan Introduces Direct Admission for Local High School Students

BY JULIA PEREZ | SEPTEMBER 11, 2024

NEWS



BLOOMINGTON, ILL. — As a commitment to our shared Bloomington-Normal community, Illinois Wesleyan University is launching a new initiative offering direct admission to all eligible students at five area high schools.

Beginning Sept. 16, 2024, qualifying seniors from Bloomington High School, Normal Community High School, Normal Community West High School, University High School and Central Catholic High School will be guaranteed a spot at IWU, streamlining the college admissions process and expanding educational opportunities in Bloomington-Normal.

"We recognize the exceptional education that takes place at Bloomington-Normal high schools and we are pleased to build on those efforts to support our community. We're thrilled with the academic strength of students admitted through this program right in our own backyard," said Illinois Wesleyan President Sheahon Zenger.

Admitted students will receive more information through their respective high schools, eliminating the need to complete traditional application paperwork.

"We are collaborating with these local high schools to identify eligible students, ensuring we're reaching those who will thrive at IWU while providing a supportive admissions experience. Direct admission to Illinois Wesleyan alleviates stress and removes barriers for students by streamlining the application process. This collaboration also helps retain talented young adults within our community," said Admissions Constituency Relations Liaison Molly Munson.

The local direct admissions process began as a pilot program with Bloomington High School in 2023, which doubled the number of BHS students attending Illinois Wesleyan for college this year.

"We are really excited that BHS students and other students from our community will have this opportunity to be directly admitted to Illinois Wesleyan," said Bloomington High School Principal Tim Moore. "I applaud IWU for making an effort to not only recruit local students, but for making the process for qualified students to be admitted seamless."

This effort comes at a time of growth for IWU, with new student enrollment reaching the second highest level in a decade. The latest cohort of Titans includes 502 new students with nearly 30% identifying as first-generation college students and 32% as students of color.

As the first university in the area to establish a direct admissions partnership with local high schools, Illinois Wesleyan is setting a new standard for collaboration and community engagement in higher education. IWU continues to support local students through the [McLean County Scholarship](#), which was established through the leadership of donor Byron Tucci '66 of Bloomington, a member of the Illinois Wesleyan Associates.

The McLean County Scholarship provides a total scholarship package of at least \$34,000 per year to admitted students graduating from a McLean County high school. Funded by the Illinois Wesleyan Associates — a group of local business and community leaders dedicated to advancing local education — the scholarship underscores IWU's commitment to nurturing talent and fostering educational opportunities in the region.