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IWU Nursing Student Headed for the *Real* "ER" for Internship

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Move over George Clooney, Angela Thiessen is headed for the *real* "ER"--that's the Emergency Room at Christ Hospital in Chicago's south suburbs.

Thiessen, a junior majoring in nursing at Illinois Wesleyan University, will be an intern next month in the hospital's emergency room, one of the area's largest.

Thiessen, a former emergency room volunteer at Bloomington's BroMenn medical center, will work her internship during IWU's unique May Term, a month-long period when students take a single on-campus course designed for intensive study, or take travel courses across the United States and overseas, or participate in internships to gain on-the-job experience.

"I will be following a clinical trauma nurse specialist," Thiessen explained. "These nurses have extra training involving intensive care units and critical care. They are trained to think fast."

The benefit of her internship, according to Thiessen, is the ability to get experience by observing professionals and then trying things yourself. Emergency room experience also should be a plus for Thiessen when she enters the job market after graduation.

Thiessen will have morning, afternoon, and late night rotations and a 40-hour work week. She also expects to observe trauma nursing classes taught by her nurse-mentor.

As an emergency room intern, Thiessen can expect to see victims of car wrecks, stabbings, gunshots, and drug overdoses.

"I like working in emergency rooms," Thiessen said, "because I like the variety of work and I deal best with stressful situations, where I have to think on my feet. My adrenaline flows in those circumstances."

Thiessen expects the biggest challenge she will face at Christ Hospital will involve dealing with some very critical cases and patients who don't survive.

"I've never dealt with death in any of my clinicals," Thiessen said. "The first death I experience--I'm sure I won't forget it."

"But you can't grieve for every case," she added, "you just have to tuck it away and deal with your next case because someone else needs your help."

During an IWU travel course to the Netherlands, Thiessen observed emergency room operations at a hospital in Maastricht.

"I saw them pump a patient's stomach," she said, "because of a drug overdose."

She also has been a volunteer in the emergency room at BroMenn, working a 3-10 p.m. shift once a week for a semester. That experience gave her a memory, she said, that will "stick in

my mind forever." It involved the police serving an arrest warrant on a man brought to the emergency room with scrapes, cuts, and maybe a broken leg or arm from an automobile accident.

After wrapping up her Christ Hospital internship, Thiessen is eyeing possible assignments at St. Francis Hospital in Peoria or Bloomington's BroMenn medical center for the balance of the summer.

Next semester, she will take courses involving critical care; home care; a senior seminar class, the professional nurse; and possibly a research honors project or another internship.

Thiessen's career goals include hospital work after graduation from IWU to sharpen her basic skills. Ultimately, she wants to return to graduate school to earn a nurse practitioner degree in critical care and a doctorate. Down the road, Thiessen would like to teach and work as a nurse part-time.

After graduation, Thiessen is considering joining the U.S. Army or Air Force.

"Military service jobs are competitive," she said. "But it's an option, especially since I like to travel."

Thiessen is a member of Alpha Tau Delta, the professional nursing fraternity, and Sigma Theta Tau, the honorary nursing fraternity. She also tutors freshman nursing majors in anatomy and physiology.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,850 students in a College of Liberal Arts, College of Fine Arts, and a four-year professional School of Nursing. A \$15 million athletics and recreation center opened in the fall of 1994; and a \$25 million science building opened in the fall of 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 161 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.