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July 19, 1996

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Sports & Scholars

**24 Bloomington H.S. Freshmen to Attend Innovative Summer Camp
Meshing Science, Math, Writing, Other Fields**

July 21-27 Program Dubbed Model Public School-Campus Collaboration

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Basketball jump shots, cue balls careening around pool tables, and laser beams bent by lenses will help 24 Bloomington high school freshmen sharpen their math, science, and writing skills, beginning this weekend, at the first Sports and Scholars summer camp hosted by Illinois Wesleyan University.

The innovative program--a collaboration among the Bloomington schools (District 87), IWU, State Farm insurance, and GTE--will run from July 21-27. The 24 students will continue to meet during the school year, IWU students will be available to tutor them, and the students will return to camp during the rest of their high school summers.

Richard Sens, Bloomington school superintendent, said: "I believe this program is an excellent example of a public school-university partnership.

"We've identified," Sens explained, "24 high potential students at the 8th grade level who are not achieving to their maximum capability and we're going to begin a process--using the summer camp--that will assist the students to achieve their capabilities."

The summer camp and school year program, Sens added, will help ready the youngsters for the world of work or college.

The students tapped for the Sports and Scholars program "may be a forgotten group," according to Sens.

"We have special programs for gifted students," he explained, "and programs for at-risk students and programs for special education students. However, these students are best described as not engaged in the educational process. The program's focus--during summer camp and the school year--will help engage them in the total school experience."

IWU President Minor Myers, jr., said: "The Sports and Scholars summer camp and mentoring program is a strong three-way partnership, linking the Bloomington Public Schools, IWU, and corporations like State Farm and GTE for the benefit of youngsters.

"This program," Myers said, "shows just how much can be done to help our communities and give opportunity to our children through new types of creative partnerships."

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Innovative Program

The summer camp's innovative curriculum, devised by Narendra Jaggi, IWU associate professor and chairperson of physics, stresses links between fields traditionally thought of as separate--fields like writing, computers, geometry, trigonometry, physics, and history.

The curriculum applies sports creatively as a catalyst to spur and sustain students' interest in learning.

"Beginning with sports," Jaggi explained, "we can try to find the best basketball jump shot with some students shooting and others videotaping the shooters and keeping statistics. We can determine what fraction of the shots go in. We can play back the tape and measure angles at which shots were attempted.

"By freeze framing shots," Jaggi said, "you can measure how fast a shot was launched and from what height off the floor. Pretty soon you have a collection of numbers that need to be tabulated and the students have no choice but to use a spread sheet program and get into computers.

"Students can recognize that a basketball is about half the width of a basket," Jaggi added, "so there is always a margin of error and shots can still be made. They can study the odds--what is the greatest error that can be tolerated and still make the basket?"

Studies of the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a basketball will introduce students to the concept of pi, Jaggi said, a concept that can be applied to baseballs, tennis balls, and others. Jaggi points out these studies can introduce students to notions of velocity, horizontal distance the ball travels, arcs, and mathematical concepts like sine and cosine. These studies also can trigger discussions of the history and philosophy of mathematics .

Campers will receive Internet and other computer training to help them conduct their studies.

Program Goals

Diane Stempinski, a Bloomington High School English teacher and a Sports and Scholars' program administrator, said: "The program has several goals. We hope to form a positive peer group that transcends academics. We hope the students achieve a B average or better, attend school at least 95 percent of the time, and receive at least a score of 21 on the ACT," a widely used college entrance test."

Jeff Lockenvitz, a 1984 IWU elementary education graduate, principal of Bloomington's Washington Elementary School, and a Sports and Scholars' program administrator, said: "We wanted a diverse group of students--diverse by gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, attendance rate, and grade-point average. We spoke to assistant principals at the students' schools and selected 24 students out of a pool of 104."

Twenty-four students were chosen, Lockenvitz explained, because that is a small enough group

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for the students to receive personal attention.

During the year, IWU student tutors will be available to assist the high schoolers with their homework. It's also anticipated that special events relating to the program--supported by State Farm and GTE--will be held during the school year.

Campers will sharpen their writing skills by keeping a daily journal, writing their families, and working with counselors serving as writing coaches. They also will receive word-processing training.

Recreation, Academics Mixed

The summer camp program is a balance among activities involving academics, self-esteem and social skills development, team building, and a healthy lifestyle focus. Recreational programs, including a cook out, pizza party, volleyball tournament, and a scavenger hunt are part of the week long program. Counselors will lead students in small group sessions designed to bond them into teams. Campers will choose a community service project to work on throughout the school year.

Campers will attend a play, *A Thousand Clowns*, at IWU's McPherson Theatre. The next day they will have a chance to talk to the play's leading man, James Sutorius, a 1967 IWU graduate and veteran stage, film, and television actor.

Field Trips Planned

Field trips are planned to the Illinois State University planetarium and a park where students will use telescopes to comb the skies, working with volunteers from an amateur astronomy group.

"Evening programs," Jaggi said, "are designed to be fun--but also to be educational, reinforcing things they've learned during the day."

For example, the evening with telescopes will give campers the chance to apply concepts of geometry and trigonometry, as well as using charts to pinpoint objects in the sky.

During the camp, students will live in IWU residence halls. Counselors include four Bloomington High School teachers, a State Farm employee and IWU graduate, and Verneé Irving, a 1996 IWU graduate who coordinated the summer camp program for the university.

The Sports and Scholars summer camp is funded by State Farm, the Bloomington-based insurance company.

Second Summer Camp Slated for Chicago High Schoolers

A similar camp for 31 Chicago high school freshmen will take place July 28-Aug. 3 under the Associated Colleges of Illinois-Chicago Scholars program, a sweeping new high school mentoring and four-year college scholarship project, linking Chicago public school students with 24 Illinois private

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colleges and universities, which was announced at IWU's Founders' Day Convocation, Feb. 14.

IWU is among campuses participating in the program aimed at expanding educational opportunity to inner-city youngsters.

The ACI-Chicago Scholars Program is modeled on Detroit's Wade H. McCree, Jr. Incentive Scholarship Program, launched in 1986. Rebie R. Kingston, director of the Office of Guidance for the Detroit Public Schools and an IWU trustee, helped establish the McCree program and her office administers it. IWU, which joined the McCree program in 1994, is the only private university and non-Michigan campus in the McCree program.

"The purpose of the ACI-Chicago Scholars program," Myers said, "is to ensure the college readiness of academically talented inner-city youth.

"What we're saying to these students is clear and simple," Myers added. "Work hard in school, keep your grades up, and 24 campuses across the state of Illinois will make sure the money--and academic support--is there for you to go to college."

Illinois Wesleyan University

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.

Editor's Note: To arrange interviews and tape Sports and Scholars sessions, call IWU Public Relations-News Services, 309/556-3181.