



Summer 6-5-1997

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Recommended Citation

Taylor, Justin, "Volunteer Service Illinois Wesleyan Joins Statewide Community Service Program" (1997). *News and Events*. 6823.
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June 5, 1997

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Volunteer Service

Illinois Wesleyan Joins Statewide Community Service Program

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Building a house over spring break, raising funds for neighborhood centers, conducting clothes drives for the Salvation Army, and tutoring local school children are regular activities for Illinois Wesleyan University students.

In an effort to expand volunteerism at IWU and adapt it to a service learning program, IWU has joined the Illinois Campus Compact for Community Service (ICCCS).

IWU President Minor Myers, jr., says he "looks forward to the exciting opportunities such a partnership will foster." He believes, "linking volunteerism and the curriculum will increase students' sense of community, sponsoring more awareness as responsible citizens."

Shawn Sweeny is director of the compact based at Illinois State University. She describes the compact's main function as "promoting community service and service learning to enrich the educational experience and promote civic responsibility."

The compact is a consortium of 16 public and private colleges and universities, working together to devise programs to expand community service. The compact also works with universities to develop service learning by incorporating volunteerism into the curriculum. IWU has several courses which have service learning components, including Sociology 120, Social Problems.

The compact has seven goals: to provide program development and technical assistance, facilitate opportunities for students, encourage student and faculty involvement, articulate educational benefits, build public awareness, leverage funding, and provide resources to assess program

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Campus Compact/2

effectiveness.

ICCCS was formed in 1992 after the steering committee of the Leadership in Volunteerism Experience (LIVE) recommendation to form a statewide community service coalition was accepted by the LIVE conference. This year marks the eighth LIVE conference with 16 member schools attending. The conference will be held in October at Rockford College.

IWU's membership in the compact expands the university's growing community service program. For example, IWU has seen consistent growth in the annual "Make a Difference Day" program in the fall and Volunteer Weekend in the spring, two nationwide community service programs. The 1996 fall event attracted almost 1,100 volunteers to work on about 55 projects aimed at improving Bloomington-Normal. The 1997 Volunteer Weekend saw IWU students volunteer with 13 local agencies, as well as other activities.

Illinois Wesleyan's last two annual reports were committed to volunteerism and highlighted programs such as the sports and scholars program for high school freshmen, sponsored by IWU, GTE, and State Farm Insurance. Twenty-four Bloomington High School entering freshmen spent a week during the summer of 1996 at IWU, participating in the unique program which blended physics, mathematics, astronomy, writing, trust-building exercises, and other subjects with a cookout, volleyball, a scavenger hunt, and other social activities. The summer camp's innovative curriculum--devised by Narendra Jaggi, IWU associate professor and chairperson of physics--stressed links among fields traditionally thought of as separate--fields like writing, computers, geometry, trigonometry, physics, and history.

Myers called programs such as ICCCS "absolute magic." He also said, "The lesson in all this is that one man or woman can make a difference--a big difference."

President Bill Clinton agreed in a letter he sent to Myers about IWU's 1996 annual report, *Touching the Future, American Collaborations*. "Initiatives like the ones highlighted in this report," Clinton said, "reflect the dedication and ingenuity it takes to make learning fun and effective . . . I appreciate your investment in our country's future."

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Campus Compact/3

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 1,900 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and its Schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and 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 \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts--a facility housing 60 faculty offices, six classrooms, and other facilities for social science, humanities, business and economics, and interdisciplinary studies' faculty--is slated to open next fall, as well as a \$6.5 million residence hall, accommodating about 118 students. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching ranks Illinois Wesleyan a "Baccalaureate I" institution, a classification that places it among the 161 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges.