



2010

Fall 2010 Letter

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Recommended Citation

Wilson, Richard, "Fall 2010 Letter" (2010). *From the President's Desk*. Paper 4.
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From the President's Desk

Fall 2010 *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine*

Despite national reports about the uncertain economic outlook and its impact on colleges and universities, I find myself very optimistic about the future for Illinois Wesleyan. This optimism comes from my confidence in the plans that we have developed over the past year, the willingness of the faculty and staff to make adjustments in response to the "new realities" we are facing, and the wonderful support we have received from our alumni and friends.

Following are examples of the positive results we had in 2009-10 that position us well for the year ahead:

- We ended the 2010 fiscal year with a balanced budget, and we expect to sustain that outcome for the foreseeable future.
- We enrolled one of the largest and most talented groups of students in our history.
- We had a 91 percent retention rate this fall for returning students.
- We experienced a 7.7 percent total return on our endowment from June 30, 2009 to June 30, 2010.
- We met our targets in terms of annual gifts to The Wesleyan Fund and the *Transforming Lives* campaign.
- We have witnessed a welcome shift of attention on campus this fall from financial matters to academic opportunities and challenges.

Two of these accomplishments deserve further comment. First, we are very grateful for the gifts provided by alumni and friends to The Wesleyan Fund and to the *Transforming Lives* campaign. The \$3.4 million in gifts to The Wesleyan Fund provides core funding for academic scholarships, and such assistance has never been more important to our students and their families. Gifts to the campaign reached \$82 million, and we have made good progress on the critical goal of building the University's endowment to levels comparable to our peers. We set aggressive goals for The Wesleyan Fund and the *Transforming Lives* campaign and, with your help, are being successful.

The second special comment relates to our agenda for the coming year. We have two very important initiatives underway: (1) a campus-wide self-study being conducted in preparation for a reaccreditation visit by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association in 2012-13 and (2) a strategic review of the curriculum, including the general education program. I cannot tell you how much I look forward to these discussions on topics central to our mission.

The attention given to fiscal matters over the last two years was important, but the opportunity to shift the lens back to academic matters is both exciting and inspiring.

Sincerely,

