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Athlete Scores Entrepreneurial Fellowship to Launch Apparel Company

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— When she started playing lacrosse six years ago, Claudia Richman '19 couldn't find a large selection of hoodies or caps representing the sport she had fallen in love with.

Now Richman seeks to meet that market need, thanks to a \$5,000 grant from the [IWU Entrepreneurial Fellowship](#). Richman has created [1890 Lacrosse](#), a company providing casual lacrosse-themed apparel for youth girls through female college lacrosse players.

It's a market Richman knows well. She plays on the Illinois Wesleyan women's lacrosse team, and at St. Charles (Ill.) North High School, she was team captain and All Upstate 8 Conference her senior year.

"Sports have always played a large role in my life," said Richman. "As I got more involved with lacrosse, I wanted to spread the word about the sport and an apparel company seemed like a great opportunity to do that."

Richman's company name is taken from the first documented women's lacrosse game, played in St. Andrews, Scotland, in 1890. She has already produced long sleeve shirts, hoodies and hats, and she has enlisted a classmate, art major Anthony Lunsford '18, in creating new apparel designs and a website. She'll use the funds from her fellowship to travel to national lacrosse tournaments to sell directly as a vendor, for inventory, and for marketing expenses.

A recent NCAA report indicated women's lacrosse participation rose 109 percent from 2000-2014, with men's lacrosse participation up 95 percent.

Funded initially by Illinois Wesleyan alumnus Marc Talluto '94, the IWU Entrepreneurial Fellowship provides a \$5,000 stipend to help a student develop his or her idea and take the idea to market. In addition to the funding, student recipients receive support and guidance from a faculty member and an entrepreneurial mentor.

"I believe starting this company is important for my long-term career planning," said Richman, who is majoring in [psychology](#) and minoring in coaching with plans to become a sports psychologist. "I am learning how to drive a business and become business savvy. Not many people can say they ran their own company while still a student and an athlete."

Richman is the third student to receive the IWU Entrepreneurial Fellowship. Previous winners include [Cameron Loyet '18](#) for his company Honey Moon Chocolates, and [Tim Leiser '16](#) for developing an app to help nonprofits track volunteer hours.

The IWU Entrepreneurial Fellowship is just one of many [distinctive experiential learning opportunities for students](#). [Applications for the next round of funding](#) for the IWU Entrepreneurial Fellowship are due in mid-October.



Claudia Richman '19 will use her IWU Entrepreneurial Fellowship to market lacrosse-themed apparel.

