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The Development of Student Government at Illinois Wesleyan University

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT AT ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

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The first formal student government at Illinois Wesleyan, the Student Senate, was established in the year 1915. Since that year, the Student Senate has represented student opinion on a number of issues on the campus, local and national levels. Because the leadership of the Student Senate changes on an annual basis, my project centers on providing a long-range view of the role of student government in representing the students of Illinois Wesleyan. While I studied all 76 years of the existence of the Student Senate, I chose to concentrate much of my research on the activities of the Senate since the late 1950's. It was at this time that Student Senate was given nearly full autonomy power over the expenditure of the student activity fee, a practice formerly unheard of at most other universities throughout the country. This practice has proved successful and the Senate retains control over the activity fee, allowing the Senate a current annual budget of over \$170,000.

Although my primary focus is on the student government of Illinois Wesleyan, I offer some thoughts on the relationship between university administration and student government at Illinois Wesleyan and the effect that this has had on the over-all effectiveness of the Student Senate at Illinois Wesleyan. Also, I compare and contrast it with other forms of government used at the university, state and national levels. Through a comparison of our student government system with those systems used in other areas of the country, as well as the use of historical data, I will determine if the present form of student government is the best for use at Illinois Wesleyan.