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Aaron Returns to Illinois Wesleyan

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--Bob Aaron has made a U-turn and returned to Illinois Wesleyan as the university's top public relations officer.

Aaron, IWU's director of public relations from October 1991 until this past January, returned to campus this week (Sept. 15) as director of university communications.

From January-August, Aaron was director of communications at the University of Puget Sound, a 2,600-student liberal arts campus in Tacoma, Wash.

At IWU Aaron is responsible for the university's media relations program, serves as executive editor of *Illinois Wesleyan University Magazine*, develops publications such as the university's annual report, coordinates speakers and events, assists production of video projects, and carries out other communications-oriented projects.

Prior to joining IWU seven years ago, Aaron was director of the Office of Communications Services at the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges in Washington, D.C., where he oversaw media relations, publications, video productions, and special events from 1985 to 1991.

Aaron was based in Washington, D.C., beginning in the early 1970s. He worked as a public affairs officer at the U.S. General Services Administration from 1973 to 1977. From 1977 to 1980 he was managing editor of "Washington Report," a weekly business tabloid newspaper with a circulation of 800,000. He also covered national politics, foreign policy, and arms control. He was a correspondent in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China for "Washington Report" and "Nation's Business," a monthly magazine then with a circulation of 1.3 million. Both publications were published by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C.

Aaron's career shifted to higher education in 1981, when he became director of public affairs for the Washington, D.C.-based American Council on Education (ACE), establishing the council's first public affairs program in its then 65-year history. He headed a 25-group coalition, Action Committee for Higher Education (ACHE), which mounted a successful nationwide grass-roots public affairs program to defeat a Reagan administration plan to slash by 50 percent federal student financial aid funds. He also was editor of a weekly newsletter, "Higher Education and National Affairs." While in Washington, D.C., Aaron taught in Georgetown University's graduate program in public policy, teaching courses on "The Role of the News Media in Shaping Foreign and Domestic Policy," "Higher Education and Public Policy," and "The News Media, Interest Groups, and Public Policy."

He left ACE in 1983 to serve for two years as director of university relations at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, where his responsibilities included news media relations and the campus' publications.

A native of Chicago, Aaron received a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign in 1972 and a master's degree in journalism from the Urbana campus in 1973.