The Integration of Global Thinking and Diversity Awareness within All Facets of the Westmont Campus

A Proposal Presented by WCSA
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Rationale:
As we begin 2013, the academic and global perspective is changing; an increased emphasis is placed on being internationally aware and culturally literate. The job climate has become increasingly competitive, and many are seeking work outside our nation. In addition, the necessity for global interdependence has led many corporations to expand overseas. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, “The world is being dramatically reshaped by scientific and technological innovations, global interdependence, cross-cultural encounters, and changes in the balance of economic and political power” (2007). The technological revolution has made global business and international communication a reality. We must respond, because this is the future of business, medicine, and other common careers for college graduates.

There are five planks that Westmont upholds – liberal arts, Christian, residential, undergraduate, and global. Westmont College Student Association (WCSA) believes these are foundational principles that make Westmont unique. We believe that the principle of a global learning environment must be re-evaluated and expanded to better cultivate well-informed, intelligent, and globally minded Christians.

The scholar and higher education expert James Smith says in his book Desiring the Kingdom that “a Christian education shapes us, forms us, molds us to be a certain kind of people whose hearts and passions and desires are aimed at the kingdom of God” (2009). This year, the vision of WCSA has been to encourage and equip the Westmont student body to better understand our world and act in a way that furthers the kingdom of heaven on earth. WCSA has set out to re-evaluate and expand the definition of being globally minded to include engagement at local, national, and international levels.

Furthermore, it is important to view global mindedness and awareness as a nuanced mindset that understands “global” as not only programs that enable students to study abroad, but as an integral part of each Westmont activity. WCSA strives to create a culture at Westmont that engages and celebrates the diverse backgrounds of each student, as well as international, inter-religious, and inter-cultural perspectives.

WCSA hopes to come alongside the Westmont administration to strengthen the global aspect of our institution. In this proposal, WCSA wishes to offer some ideas and promote further discussion about how a global outlook could be encouraged in the classroom, campus life activities, chapel, residence life, and student leader training.

Classroom Integration:
As the interconnections and interdependencies between nations become increasingly strong, WCSA believes that a Westmont education should shape students into competent global citizens. While the curricula of study abroad, foreign language, and international relations courses may naturally include global applications, WCSA believes that a global mindset has a place in every academic course.

We offer some suggestions for the classroom:
• Incorporate materials and textbooks that expose students to diverse cultural perspectives and experiences on course topics. A course syllabus could include authors from a variety of regions around the world.
• Hire new professors who display a well-rounded grasp of the world around them—particularly in their field of study—and are excited to integrate this knowledge in their classroom.
• Devote a period of class time each week to discussing global events that could potentially affect the subject matter of that class.
• Add questions on course evaluations that allow students to provide feedback for professors on their integration of global learning.

**Student Leaders and Organizations:**
Student leaders are in a position to encourage other students to value a global outlook. Leadership training should expose the student leaders to diverse ways of thinking and leading. Being aware and understanding their own context and culture will better equip student leaders to perceive the needs of the student body. Educating student leaders on diversity and global mindedness can better prepare them to influence and lead other students in conversations about race, socioeconomics, gender, culture, and religion.

We offer some suggestions for student leadership training:

• Design programs to teach student leaders about cultural context, i.e. “The Air We Breathe” program.
• Design programs to teach student leaders about the diversity of leadership styles around the world.
• Build relationships and partnerships with student leaders at SBCC, UCSB, or other colleges.
• Create a mentorship program or “Leadership Advisor” system with Westmont faculty or others in the community.
• Make attendance at the Student Congress on Racial Reconciliation (SCORR) mandatory for student leaders.
• Initiate hospitality programs for international students.

**Chapel:**
Chapel is the bridge between Westmont’s commitment to being a campus based fully on Christ and a liberal arts college that is devoted to furthering a global Kingdom. Chapel is a powerful opportunity to celebrate diversity of worship, learn from speakers of diverse backgrounds, and grow in faith.

We offer some suggestions for chapel:

• Designate a time in chapel to learn and pray about current global events.
• Explore various liturgical styles.
• Bring in speakers from different sectors of society with diverse views toward faith and the world.

**Campus Events:**
A college education is not limited to the classroom; rather global learning should be integrated into planning and participating in student life activities. WCSA believes that
campus events, whether educational or social in nature can enhance and consider the importance of cultural sensitivity and global thinking.

We offer some suggestions for campus events:

- Ensure that the themes and promotions reflect a respect of all cultures when planning events for Westmont on and off-campus, including dances and late night activities.
- Provide platforms for professors and other staff members to speak about their experiences in our global society and how it has shaped their perspectives.
- Promote events put on by Intercultural Organizations as school-wide events.
- Plan programs that spark conversations about current events, race, religion, culture, gender, and socioeconomics.

**Residence Life:**
Residence Life can also help with increasing Westmont’s integration of global thinking and living with a global minded framework. Dorm life is a great way to teach and show how a well-informed global outlook can be lived out in everyday life. Life in the dorms can often shape students through experiential learning and exposure to uncomfortable or new situations. Residence life staff has the opportunity to assist students in navigating through the diversity of relationships and lifestyles.

We offer some suggestions for Residence Life:

- Make newspapers and TV news easily available to help expose students to the events taking place beyond campus.
- Support international students in dorms by providing more resources to aid their adjustment.
- Celebrate holidays and events that are important in other cultures, i.e. Lunar New Year and Día de los Muertos.
- Better train and educate RAs on how to best support residents coming from a variety of experiences and backgrounds.

**Conclusion**
WCSA believes that Westmont can develop a culture that values global awareness as a vital aspect of our Christian mission. Our hope is that this document can be used as a catalyst for better integrating a global mindset into all arenas of the college.