



Across Cultures

NOTES FROM WESTMONT'S DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

ISSUE 13

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WESTMONT COLLEGE'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

BASED ON EXCERPTS FROM THE LONG RANGE PLAN

It's been ten years since Westmont's current Long Range Plan was presented to and adopted by the Board of Trustees. One of the eight priorities included in the plan is "that the Westmont community be creatively and energetically responding to the significant issues related to diversity—including both ethnic and gender diversity." But why? Here are relevant excerpts from the Long Range Plan.

The Educational Challenge

One's view of the world, including one's understanding of the Christian faith, is profoundly shaped and at times severely limited by one's own particular history and culture. Because of this, an important dimension of self-understanding and self-criticism must include being a community informed and enriched by thoughtful and intentional study of and interaction with cultures other than our own.

The Rationale for Greater Diversity

As a Christian institution, we have special reasons for celebrating diversity as an aspect of God's creation, and for striving to create community out of rich diversity as an aspect of building God's Kingdom in the world.

As a liberal arts institution, diversity contributes to a more interesting and more stimulating intellectual environment. To the extent that diversity of gender, ethnicity, class, etc. among students, staff and faculty brings together a range of perspectives on the world, it is valuable for stimulating intellectual and personal growth.

As an institution that is committed to preparing students to live compassionate lives in the world, and to give leadership both within and outside of the evangelical

world, our commitment to diversity is part of creating an environment where students can be helpfully apprenticed in the art of dealing with diversity in constructive ways.

The Aims of a Westmont Education

Our world has increasingly become interconnected and interdependent, despite deep divisions and antagonisms. To prepare people to function intelligently, effectively and for the good in a world of global politics, global economics, and global communications must be one of the aims of a Westmont education.

Such an education can play a significant role in transforming lives and putting students on a trajectory that will yield, over time, graduates who are characterized by a range of valuable knowledge, helpful skills and positive attitudes—graduates with:

- Knowledge about the world in which God has placed them.

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Westmont strives to be a community informed and enriched by thoughtful and intentional study of and interaction with multiple cultures. As a liberal arts college rooted in Christ, we celebrate diversity as an aspect of God's creation; we strive to create community out of rich diversity as an aspect of building God's Kingdom in the world; we value the range of perspectives on the world that stimulates intellectual and personal growth; and we seek for faculty and staff to apprentice students in the art of dealing with diversity in constructive ways. It is an aim of Westmont to prepare graduates who will function intelligently, effectively and for the good of our increasingly intercultural world.

From Long Range Plan Excerpts

AN INTERVIEW WITH THONGKHAM "T.K." ERICKSON

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ADMISSION FOR DIVERSITY CONCERNS

What attracted you to Westmont and to your position?

I was attracted to Westmont because of its excellent academic reputation, the beautiful location, and its commitment to Christ-centered higher education. I was also really excited about the opportunity to focus more of my time and energy on diversity issues, which this position has allowed me to do. Ultimately, one of the greatest privileges of this position is the opportunity to have an impact on students' lives.

What goals and dreams do you have for Westmont graduates as they enter an increasingly multicultural world, and how does this shape your view of your work?

My dream for every Westmont graduate is that they find their identity in Christ, as well as the core of what it truly means to be God's child. I also want graduates to have the

Continued under T.K., page 3

PROGRAM STANDARD ON DIVERSITY

Commitment, *cont. from page 1*

- Interpersonal competence that enables them to participate in dialogue, work with a group, and be characterized by tolerance and appreciation of differences.
- The resources and skills necessary to handle tensions that arise between Christian faith and other seriously argued positions, to live confidently yet self-critically, in a world of competing ideologies.
- Broad and expansive sympathies, including concerns for the spiritually lost, the homeless and hungry, those suffering from racial and gender prejudice, and the destruction of our biotic, cultural and sociopolitical environments.
- The knowledge, skills and motivation to be effective participants in the civic, charitable and cultural lives of their communities.

After the adoption of the Long Range Plan, the faculty approved the following **Program Standard**:

Students have the understanding and skills to engage people unlike themselves—both

individuals and groups—in ways that affirm others as persons created in God’s image. Students are able to approach others respectfully—avoiding the natural tendency to deal with differences by vilifying, romanticizing, or victimizing.

Student Learning Outcomes

Self-Reflection. Students demonstrate increased self-reflection on how their beliefs, values, ideas, and practices—while not solely a function of one’s context—are influenced by social class, gender, ethnicity, culture, and historical moment.

Discussion and Analysis of Issues. Students demonstrate the ability to bring the dimensions of social class, gender, ethnicity, and culture to the discussion and analysis of issues within their disciplines, as well as to discussions of broader social, cultural and political issues.

Formulation of Knowledge. Students are able to recognize that, while knowledge is not solely a function of social construction, any

formulation of knowledge may be affected in important ways by gender, social class, ethnicity, and culture.

Cross-Cultural Communication Skills. Students have gained increased cross-cultural communication and adaptation skills, empathy, self-awareness, flexibility, understanding of the influence of context, social roles, and culture on behavior, and the ability to locate and evaluate information about other cultures.

Process of Making Choices. Students understand the process of making ethical, Christian choices within multiple cultural contexts, avoiding premature judgments.

Essential Christianity v. Cultural Peculiarities. Students have an understanding of the Christian church cross-culturally, distinguishing between what is essential to Christianity and what is peculiar to a particular culture.

Foreign Language. Students will have an appreciation of the advantages and insights to be gained from the study of foreign languages and literature.



ETHNIC/INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

FALL SEMESTER/2005

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Native American/Alaskan	19	22	21	16	24	20
Asian/Pacific Islander	48	63	78	77	85	98
Black	13	8	10	15	23	26
Hispanic	102	92	77	89	105	127
Non-Resident Alien	11	6	7	11	13	11
TOTAL	193	191	193	208	250	282
College Enrollment	1334	1381	1330	1347	1376	1379
% of Total Enrollment	14.5%	14.1%	14.8%	15.9%	18.2%	20.4%

Prayers by Chinese Christians

When boiling water for tea

☪ I pray thee, Lord, to send down spiritual fire to burn away the coldness of my heart, and that I may always be ☪ hot-hearted in serving thee.

On pruning a tree

☪ I pray thee, Lord, to purge me and take away my selfishness and sinful thoughts, that I may bring forth more ☪ fruits of the Spirit.

On writing a book

☪ I pray thee, Lord, by the precious blood of Jesus, to pay my debt of sin and write my name in heaven, making ☪ me free in body and soul.

MY SUMMER IN CHINA

by Luz Martinez, '07

Luzinchina has been my email name since early 2003 when I felt called to go to China. This summer this email name came true. I went to China finally after a few years of prayer and preparation.

I felt prompted by the Lord to start going to a Chinese Church in my hometown, Oxnard. It was amazing to be immersed in the culture, to sit in the pews and listen to bilingual sermons in Chinese and English, and to share meals with them. People there began to pray for the day I would be able to go to China.

On my 21st birthday most of my friends and family members gave me Chinese gifts and some of them even prayed that I would be able to go soon.

China has been one of my main interests at Westmont as a Political Science/International Affairs major. Many times I have chosen China as one of my research topics, in my Third World Development Class with Dr. Penksa and my Cultural Geography class with Dr. Mullen. Overall, I get pretty excited when China comes as one of the topics in any of my classes or conversations.

During the fall of 2004, I felt that the time had arrived so I decided to do research on how to get there. Fortunately Elena Yee suggested an organization that sends Christian English Teachers to China. The irony of this is that English is my second language and here I was applying to be a teacher.

Katie Dietrich, one of my Westmont friends, one of her best childhood friends, and a bunch of other college students from all over the US joined me in a team sent to the city of Nanning in Guanxi Province.

When we got to the Nanning Airport, some students were there to receive us with flowers. When they saw me one of them said, "You look Chinese, you look like us!" I was so honored and flattered but I did not know enough Chinese to make a conversation. I began to realize how important language is, and appreciated my Spanish language and my own people.

Consequently, I began to think how wonderful it would be if I go back to my own people and even help families of low

STUDENT INTERCULTURAL CLUBS

2005-2006

Asian Student Association

Core Team Leaders: Jean Bae, Jen Chin, Barnabas Teo, Yuko Hirayama
Advisor: Jane Higa

Black Student Union

Officers: Raina Link, President, and Sonya Coles, Vice-President
Support Leaders: Zelek Kebede and Jay Ofori
Advisor: Clark Morgan

Latino Cultural Organization

Co-Leaders: Marlene Valderrama and Stacie Zaragoza
Support Leaders: Stephanie Hansen and Roberto Valladares

Nomads (MKs, international and third culture students)

Co-Leaders: Amy Wang and Emily Stocking
Advisor: Brenda Smith

Racial Equality and Justice

Co-Leaders: Chris Hodgman, Sarah Fry and Zelek Kebede
Advisor: Elena Yee

income in the town I grew up. People have always made the assumption I will end up going back to Latin America and work there because I know Spanish. Even though I considered this option in the past, it now became my own heart's desire and not a suggestion from someone else.

Teaching and other activities made our days long. We had something to do from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., plus times for devotionals and lesson planning. But we enjoyed spending time with our students during meals, trips and other activities outside the classroom (including games).

It was hard to keep eating similar things everyday, and I missed Mexican food. But I found really good bread in China similar to the sweet Mexican bread we have in the American Continent. I would buy one every morning on my way to school and a bowl of warm soy milk.

It was amazing to love on these people and be able to get to learn from them. They are very smart and have a passion for learning. The only way to share our hope in Christ was to live for Him and to show his grace and compassion.

My heart is still with them. Sometimes I sit in my room and can't stop staring at their pictures. I remember all the good times, and even forget how hot and humid it was in the city of Nanning.

I wish to go back someday. I have a great hope that I will see my students once again in the future. I strongly believe that God has great plans for these people. I am

willing to go wherever the Lord sends me. I have been in South Africa and China already, plus I am still someone in a foreign country, even though I am an American citizen now. Nevertheless, I will continue to pray for his perfect will.

Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to my people? Who will go for us?" And I said, "Lord, I'll go! Send me." "Yes, go..." Isaiah 6:8-9a.

T.K., *cont. from page 1*

ability to communicate and work with people from diverse backgrounds, so that they can impact our global society by implementing changes that will better our world. My role is to be a mentor and an advocate for all Westmont students, but particularly those from diverse backgrounds. I want to help students get involved in activities and programs that will stretch their understanding of themselves, as well as the world they live in.

How can the Westmont community be praying for and supporting you?

The area of diversity is very sensitive and challenging at times. Please pray that I will not lose focus and purpose during difficult times. Please pray for positive responses to the area of diversity from both Westmont and surrounding communities. Thank you very much for the warm welcome I have received so far. I ask for continued patience and support during this time of transition. Words of encouragement and listening ears have been much appreciated, and I pray that will continue.

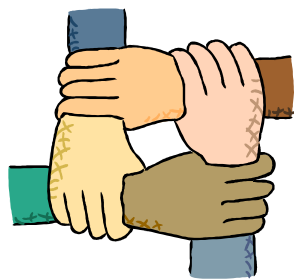
MY URBAN PROGRAM SEMESTER *by David Engdahl, '07*

I was a freshman, and all too unsure about my future. I had no major, no aspirations and no drive to become something special. They tell people like me that in time, I will be led to what I was meant to pursue.

I've been told that for far too long and decided that my pursuit begins by seeking out some greater good and exploring myself outside the busyness of sixteen units or the distractions of living among 1,200 other people. My attention was turned towards the Urban Program. The possibility of being exposed to the most diverse city in the country, with a plethora of various opportunities for discovering what occupation means to different people was exactly what I felt I needed to jumpstart my own "career."

We've all heard of San Francisco and its lures, but few ever get the pure pleasure of getting to dive into it headfirst. Through what other program can you settle into a city and get beyond the tourist traps? Where else can you explore current issues regarding homelessness, poverty, environmental issues, homosexuality, the broken church and racial issues first hand? The academics are only a springboard for you to dive headfirst into the city with the knowledge of the facts.

This is the stuff that we should be aware of. These are the issues that we need to take sides on. The issues that the majority of people in our country deal with in one way or another are exactly what we as Christians need to understand in order to know how to help.



DIVERSITY COMMITTEE 2005-2006

Jane Higa, Chair

Chris Call	Jane Messah
Toya Cooper	Michele Molkoy
Julissa Delgado	Shirley Mullen
Mary Doctor	Helen Rhee
Bob Duchin	Greg Spencer
T.K. Erickson	Jenni Stanford
Joyce Luy	Bill Wright
Elena Yee	

I'm not talking about what we think we understand, but what we understand having lived among it all; from being taught by the people we thought we were hoping to teach.

From the Urban house's location, you can walk five blocks to famed 1960s hippie epicenter Haight-Ashbury district, walk seven or eight blocks to the most colorfully diverse Castro district, ride your bike ten or twelve blocks to the Mission district full of Mexican-American history and culture, or ride under a mile to downtown, the financial district, and China Town. In such a dense and manageable city, crossing these neighborhood lines is like crossing into separate countries in themselves, and it's all at your fingertips.

Aside from classes, there is the internship. I ended up as the operations intern at The San Francisco Bicycle Coalition doing a variety of enjoyable tasks ranging from processing membership dues to the weekly crossing guard gig a block from the Urban house.

The SFBC is a non-profit group promoting the bicycle for everyday use in light of environmental and transportation issues in the city. The reason I decided on it was largely based on the fact that people were dedicating their work to something they strongly believed in, and that directly crossed paths with their recreational interests. I had received this advice my freshmen year during vocation week, but again was able to

live it and gain a fuller understanding while being surrounded by the people who do this full-time.

To sum up what could be discussed in much more detail, the semester was a challenge to the self. Taking preconceived notions or views of life with you and expecting none of them to be tried is as foolish as trying to keep everything you thought about the world when you were eight years-old into the real world today.

So what happened to me? I declared a Psychology major last spring after returning from San Francisco simply because it is what I enjoy studying...something I learned while away. I only hope to find a "career" in something that interests me fully, with the faith that God will use my abilities for something great.

I find myself more involved in the news and current events with more understanding of the issues. Also, I have nineteen great friends, many with whom I still keep in great contact, even those from Wheaton and Gordon College – bonds that were formed for a reason.

I've urged my classmates to be part of the Urban Program so they will discover for themselves what it means to be a part of this world – a part of the work world, a part of the politics surrounding us, a part of a diverse community, a part of Christ's church, and a part of finding who you want to be and how to take the path that will lead you there.

Great is, O King, our happiness in your kingdom, you, our King.
We dance before you, our King, by the strength of your kingdom.
May our feet be made strong; let us dance before you, eternal.
Give praise, all angels, to him above who is worthy of praise.

- A prayer in a sacred dance of the Zulu Nazarite Church

DIVERSITY WEBPAGES

www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/diversity/ - a source of information about diversity at Westmont.

www.diversityweb.org - Diversity Web, the most comprehensive compendium of campus practices and resources about diversity in higher education; provided by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).