

2.1 Community Life Statement with Behavioral Expectations

When Jesus Christ summed up the way His followers were to treat each other, He said "love one another as I have loved you" and "love your neighbor as yourself." On a college campus, this kind of love must take into consideration the relationships between learning and community.

Affirming the qualities of this relationship is vital. As students, staff, and professors learn to live together, we recognize the dual manifestations of love in justice and mercy. We attempt to work out what it means to live justly and mercifully in common agreements such as this one. We understand that life in a college will give priority and honor to the wise development of the mind.

Given this focus, our social and intellectual growth needs freedom for exploration complemented by a commitment to good will and graciousness. Personal discipline is also required. For example, civility is basic to all types of community, while academic honesty and respect for education are fundamental to an instructional environment.

Learning depends on truth-centered attitudes. It thrives in an atmosphere of discriminating openness to ideas, a condition that is characterized by a measure of modesty toward one's own views, the desire to affirm the true, and the courage to examine the unfamiliar. As convictions are expressed, one enters into the "great conversation" of collegiate life, a task best approached with a willingness to confront and be confronted with sound thinking.

Community is built upon other-centered practices. It flourishes in a place where love for God and neighbor is cultivated and nurtured. It grows strong when members practice integrity, confession, and forgiveness, attempt to live in reconciled relationships, accept responsibility for their actions and words, and submit to biblical instructions for communal life.

Scripture supports these attitudes and principles. It promotes relationships based on the ideals of trust, compassion, and forbearance, and praises actions that manifest sacrificial giving and sincere faith. Scripture also forbids attitudes such as pride and jealousy, and prohibits such actions as drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, and dishonesty. In keeping with these standards, the Westmont community has agreed to certain guidelines in the Student, Staff, and Faculty Handbooks.

Desiring to implement the teachings of Christ, Westmont encourages true fellowship, in the whole body of Christ, including the local church, for when we love each other we imitate Christ's love for us. As we seek to follow God in truth, certain choices make for greater peace: a respect for others as they make decisions contrary to ours, a readiness to listen carefully to those who represent situations or cultures unfamiliar to us, and a concern for how our preferences affect the lives of those around us.

We are committed to inquiry as well as pronouncement, rigorous study as well as kindred friendship, challenging teaching as well as reflective learning. Sometimes these tensions will lead to conflict. To live in unity, we must set ourselves to the practical task of discerning daily how to love well, how to inflesh the biblical call to justice and mercy. As we do so, our life together at Westmont will begin to resemble the community God has envisioned for us.

Behavioral Expectations

The Westmont community chooses, freely and willingly, to impose upon itself rules for behavior which serve both the long-range interests of the institution and the immediate good of its individual members. While we do not view these expectations as an index to maturity in Christ, we do regard violations as a serious breach of integrity within the community because each member has voluntarily chosen to associate with it and to accept its standards.

The college establishes the following specific expectations of the trustees, administration, faculty, staff, and students of the Westmont community:

- **Westmont will not condone practices that Scripture forbids.** Such activities include occult practices, sexual relations outside of marriage, homosexual practice, drunkenness, theft, profanity, and dishonesty. Westmont also recognizes that Scripture condemns "sins of the spirit" such as covetousness, jealousy, pride, and lust. By their very nature, these sins are more difficult to discern. Because they lie at the heart of the relationship between the individual and God they are of central concern to the Westmont community.
- **Westmont upholds integrity as a core value of the community.** Members are expected to take responsibility for their own violations of all behavioral guidelines and demonstrate commitment to the value of integrity in word and deed.
- **Westmont is committed to providing a learning and work environment free of harassment.**
- **Westmont upholds the laws of the local community, the nation, and the state of California.** Such laws include prohibitions against possession or use of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia, against purchasing or consuming alcoholic beverages by persons under the age of 21, drunkenness, and driving under the influence of alcohol.
- **Westmont expects our members who choose to marry to abide by the commitment to lifelong heterosexual marriage, and, whether single or married, to strive to maintain healthy family relationships.** (*See 2.2, Policy on Marriage and Divorce*).
- **Westmont recognizes that the use of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages presents a danger to personal health.** The college condemns their abuse, and raises questions about the use of tobacco and alcohol. Under no circumstances shall any member of the community use or possess these products on campus or when attending a college-related student activity.

Westmont will establish other rules and regulations necessary for orderly community life and will list them in appropriate handbooks.