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Notes to reader:

1. The CD provided contains:

   a. The complete Educational Effectiveness Report.

   b. Hyperlinks to supporting evidence and documentation. As you review the paper
document that follows here, there is text highlighted in red and blue. The red text
indicates an active link to supporting documentation found on the CD. Material
highlighted in blue refers the reader to additional data that will be available at the time of
the team visit in the form of Institutional Exhibits.

   c. A web-based institutional portfolio may be found at
      http://www.westmont.edu/_academics/pages/portfolio/
      The Educational Effectiveness report and all supporting documentation can also be
      accessed from this web page.

2. Abbreviations and acronyms used in the document include:

   AADS   Academic Advising & Disability Services
   CLA    Collegiate Learning Assessment
   CCCU   Council of Christian Colleges & Universities
   CPR    Capacity and Preparatory Review
   GE     General Education
   GEAC   General Education and Assessment Committee
   HERI   Higher Education Research Institute (UCLA)
   IDI    Intercultural Development Inventory
   LSAT   Law School Admissions Test
   MCAT   Medical College Admission Test
   NSSE   National Survey of Student Engagement
   OCP    Off-Campus Programs
   PAC    President’s Advisory Council
   PRC    Program Review Committee
   RS     Religious Studies
Westmont College

REPORT ON EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

I. Institutional context

The Westmont of 2006 is a far stronger institution than the one described to WASC in our 1994 self-study. A wide range of indirect indicators—from student selectivity, retention, and faculty-student ratio, to endowment and rates of alumni giving—all point to the increasing quality of our educational program. Great strides have been taken with respect to recruiting and retaining a diverse student body. Multiple surveys continue to demonstrate high levels of faculty and student overall satisfaction. For the first time in thirty-five years, we have adopted and fully implemented a revised General Education program. We have created endowed faculty chairs in three areas, enhancing the College’s ability to recruit and retain world-class scholars. The establishment in 2000 of the Institute for the Liberal Arts, among other factors, has contributed to clarifying our core educational identity. On October 27, the Chancellor announced an anonymous gift to the college of $75 million. This has been designated by the Board of Trustees towards the completion of the Master Plan. In short, we believe we are more effective today than at any time in the past in carrying out the College’s stated mission to provide a high quality undergraduate liberal arts program in a residential campus community that assists college men and women toward a balance of rigorous intellectual competence, healthy personal development, and strong Christian commitments.

Our many strengths and trajectory of increasing quality notwithstanding, we continue to face significant challenges. Reconciling our enrollment cap of 1200 students with our educational aspirations and ever-rising expectations for resources demands on-going creativity. We currently fall short of our eventual goal of making Westmont affordable for any student we admit. After a five-year-plus effort to obtain County approval for our Updated Master Plan, we have a much refined and more sophisticated proposal—but still no final resolution. We are experiencing, moreover, major transitions in administration. The Spring 2007 semester brings us a new (interim) Provost and potentially a new President. The Vice-President for finance has also announced his retirement. The search for a Vice-President for Development has been suspended until a new President has been hired.

Among our greatest current challenges is finding ways to demonstrate the quality of a Westmont education that both satisfy current practices of outcomes assessment and do justice to the qualitative and longterm aspects of a liberal arts education. Since receiving the report of our 1995 reaccreditation from WASC, we have made concerted efforts to follow through on the Commission’s recommendations. As demonstrated in our institutional exhibits on the History of program review (1995 to present) and General Education Revision (1998-2003) sustaining a campus-wide dialogue on outcomes-based assessment has been an on-going institutional priority. Academic administrators and faculty have been deeply engaged in discussions of the qualities we want our graduates collectively to exhibit, of ways to demonstrate that we are achieving such outcomes, and of how to integrate our best community thinking on assessment into a workable system of program review. That we have formally adopted a new system for program review only recently should be attributed not to institutional inertia but rather the consistently high levels of faculty involvement we have sought and attained. The timeline below provides a sense of the institution’s progress between 1995 and the present. The Institutional exhibit on Irvine-sponsored departmental self-studies offers a more tangible indicator of what was achieved earlier in this interim period.
### Institutional progress toward a system of review focused on student outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>The Irvine Foundation-sponsored Futures Project, involving six faculty sub-committees, refines the institution-wide learning outcomes proposed at the time of the 1995 WASC review. Indicators for the College's six institution-wide outcomes are developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>After prolonged discussion at different levels of the College, the faculty votes provisionally to accept the six outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2001</td>
<td>Academic departments complete Irvine Foundation-sponsored self-studies. The Assessment Advisory Group provides feedback to each department on its program review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>The Program Review Task Force proposes a structure for administering program review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2002</td>
<td>The Program Review Process is formally adopted by faculty and the Program Review Committee (PRC) is constituted as a standing committee of the faculty. At the same time, the six student learning outcomes are officially endorsed by the faculty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2003</td>
<td>Westmont's Institutional Proposal, emphasizing the six institution-wide outcomes, is approved by WASC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2004</td>
<td>Departments submit assessment plans to the College's PRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2004</td>
<td>The first two departments are scheduled to submit “Five-Year” assessment reports under the newly adopted program review Process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the beginning of the process, the college recognized that the longterm success and authenticity of any assessment model depended on faculty buy-in—that is, on the development of a model that “arose out of who we wanted to be as an educational institution rather than [what might appear to be] an imposition of an external body…We wanted a model that was consistent with how we saw ourselves as a Christian liberal arts college” (Final Report on the Irvine Futures Project, 10/97). The ongoing work of the Futures Project Steering Committee, Assessment Advisory Committee, and Program Review Task Force (AKA: ad hoc Program Review Committee) culminated in the faculty’s formal adoption of our Program Review process in April 2002. At the same time the faculty recognized Program Review as a permanent standing committee of the college and adopted a Five-year Schedule for Review of individual departments.

### Capacity and Preparatory Review (March 2005)

Westmont’s institutional proposal was accepted in January 2003. The Capacity and Preparatory self-study was submitted in December 2004 in preparation for an initial review team visit in March of 2005. In its Report of 4/26/05, summarizing findings from Westmont’s Capacity and Preparatory Review (CPR), the visiting team noted strengths in at least five areas:

- The clarity of the institutional mission and identity, and the strong sense of commitment to that mission and identity the team found among multiple Westmont constituencies
- The Board of Trustees, which the team found to be “engaged, focused, knowledgeable, and committed”
- Financial planning and excellent processes for managing and reporting on finances
- The progress the college had made, particularly in the two years immediately preceding the review, in diversifying the student body; and
- The progress of the college in responding to at least three of the recommendations made by the visiting WASC team made in 1995.
Having encountered an “energized and focused campus community, full of activity and people excited about what they were accomplishing,” the team nonetheless raised serious questions. The team’s report and subsequent Commission Action Letter of 6/30/05 identified four major areas of concern:

- Insufficient evidence of institutional commitment to assessing student learning, and related concerns about implementing an effective program review process. Substantive questions aside, the letter expressed dismay at what appeared to be the slow pace of progress since the time of the last review
- Library capacity and planning issues
- The College’s self-disclosure to students with respect to Catholicism
- Strategic planning

Institutional response since June 2005

Since receiving the Commission’s Action Letter in June 2005, the College has attempted to respond to identified concerns in a timely and comprehensive manner. Steps taken since June 2005 with respect to each of the major areas of concern are summarized below.

(1) With respect to assessing student learning/implementing an effective program review process, the College:

- Reorganized the Program Review Committee (PRC), assigning a faculty liaison to each of the College’s twenty-seven units of review.
- Received a special written assessment update from each department in September 2005.
- Received in June 2006 Annual Progress reports or scheduled “Five-Year” Reports from all twenty-seven of the College’s units of review. The PRC has provided a written response to each report.
- Hired an additional staff member in the Provost’s office, one of whose major responsibilities has been to support the assessment process.

(2) With respect to Library capacity and planning issues, the College:

- Created in the Summer of 2005 the Academic Resources Committee, which has worked to better integrate two sets of issues previously separated (library resources and the use of technology in the College’s academic programs).
- Completed physical improvements, as slated, including new carpet, painting, and re-organization of collections (Summer 2006).
- Increased the library’s budget line for resources/acquisitions by $25,000, effective Fall 2006.
- Developed a liaison program to link librarians with the College’s other 26 units of review (not including in this case the library itself).
- Undertaken a peer and faculty review of all individual library staff. Based on this review, we arranged for an external consultant to visit during the spring of 2007.

(3) With respect to the College’s self-disclosure to students vis-à-vis Catholicism, the College has:

- Undertaken a written survey (as well as organizing a focus group) in order to understand more clearly the experiences of Roman Catholic students.
- Disseminated to all faculty, the Board the Trustees, and to all self-identified Catholic students a written report based on the survey above: Experiences of Roman Catholic students.
- Invited local Catholic priests to participate in the local church fair during student Orientation.
- Organized a student club for promoting interaction between Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic students.
- Charged the Associate Provost with following up on identified recommendations in a written update to the community two years from the original report.
(4) With respect to strategic planning, the College has:

- Constituted the Long Range Planning Task Force, which began work in October of 2005.
- Completed the work of two additional task forces—Hiring for Mission and Athletics. A third major task force—Housing—submitted its final report during the Fall 2006 semester.
- Identified more explicitly the function of the President’s Advisory Council as the College’s Strategic Planning body.
- Identified more explicitly the function of President’s Staff as the College’s Executive Strategic Planning body.
- Conducted additional meetings of the Long Range Planning task force, which will be establishing goals and priorities for the next 5-7 years. In the planning process, the task force has attempted to base its recommendations as explicitly as possible on the use of data.
- Identified transitions in the Long Range Planning chair. The Vice Chair of the Faculty will assume this role effective January 2007.
- Identified a committee of the Board and Administration to take the next steps in investigating the viability of recommendations coming from the Housing Task Force.
- More explicitly than in the past, encouraged departments to link budget requests—either line-item increases or CIP requests—to the department’s long-term vision and assessment work.
- Identified a committee of trustees and administrators to make recommendations in the use of the $75 million to leverage other gifts toward the completion of the first phase of the master plan.

For a more extended delineation of institutional response to the CPR visit, as of 3/1/06, see the College’s Institutional Exhibit: Progress Report.

II. Description of institutional approach to educational effectiveness self-study

In keeping with published WASC guidelines (1/03) Westmont has chosen a thematic approach to its educational effectiveness review. While mindful of all four WASC standards, the College chose at the Institutional Proposal stage to focus on the following:

- Gaining greater clarity on the extent to which we were achieving identified student learning outcomes in general education
- Gaining greater clarity on the extent to which we were achieving learning outcomes in departmental programs
- Strengthening the College’s program review process.

As much as possible, the measures used in our educational effectiveness review have been built into the College’s regular information-gathering institutional infrastructure. The reaccreditation schedule has served in certain cases as a catalyst to full implementation. Other assessment mechanisms (for example the HERI-sponsored surveys) are institutionally long-established. In either case, the infrastructure is largely now in place to keep these measures going, independent of the College’s participation in reaccreditation reviews.

A. Extent to which we are achieving learning outcomes in general education

As noted in the chart on page 2, Westmont has identified six comprehensive sets of outcomes for its graduates. Originally the College identified eleven. On the recommendation of the visiting WASC team in 1995, these eleven were re-framed and condensed to six. The outcomes pertinent to specific disciplines were eliminated, leaving only those standards perceived as potentially applicable to all areas of the College. Faculty sub-committees assigned to each of the six began work in 1996 to clarify their meaning and to propose more specific indicators—or at least more discrete components—for each provisionally adopted standard. The faculty voted in the Spring of 2002 to officially adopt this set of outcomes and indicators.
Relative to where the College stood in 2002, we have a clearer strategy now for assessing the six outcomes. Since much of the early institutional effort focused on developing greater clarity and faculty ownership for the standards, questions related to their assessment initially received less systematic attention. As the institution's academic departments were, in some sense, “the College,” it was assumed that the individual departments would be responsible for demonstrating the standards’ fulfillment (see Institutional Proposal). As one step toward such a demonstration, between 1999 and 2001 eighteen academic departments and two additional program areas completed departmental self-studies (AKA: Irvine self-studies) showing how each individual program was contributing already, and might contribute further, to achieving the six outcomes. Until the formation of the WASC Steering Committee in 2002, then, assessment of the six student outcomes was by default the responsibility of the individual academic departments and programs.

As of May 2006, the General Education Committee began to take responsibility for assessing the six outcomes. The PRC is working with the College’s Faculty Council during the Fall of 2006 to charge the GE Committee with this task more formally. This assumption of responsibility is based on a three-fold rationale. One, a recognition that individual departments need to be focused more than in the past on the assessment of discipline- or program-specific outcomes. Two, the College's new General Education core, effective for students entering Fall 2004, was constructed as much as possible with six outcomes in mind (see Chart aligning the six outcomes with GE categories). Assessing the effectiveness of General Education and the fulfillment of the six outcomes have thus become significantly overlapping tasks. Three, unlike the WASC Steering Committee, the GE Committee is a standing committee and is better able accordingly to monitor the College’s achievement of the six outcomes on a continuous and on-going basis.

Longterm, the College will be able to assess to a much more direct degree the effectiveness of the General Education program in helping students attain the six outcomes. The new General Education program is now fully implemented, and assessment routines closely linked to required coursework have already begun to be administered. Initial assessment of General Education (2004-05) focused on the extent to which students understood the rationale for mandated coursework. Since then, as shown in the Annual Report for General Education, 2005-06, the strategy has shifted significantly toward the direct review of student work (see the GE committee’s most recent Assessment Plan for General Education: Performance Indicators for the six institutional learning standards). As indicated in the proposal, a comprehensive exhibit of the College's work in conceiving and fully implementing the new General Education requirements will be available to the visiting team in February 2007.

For present purposes, however, given (a) the recent date of implementation of our new General Education program; (b) that the College has yet to graduate a class under the revised program; and (c) that for the last three years many classes have contained mixtures of students under the “old” and “new” requirements, we are less concerned to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular set of inputs. Rather, we have focused at this time on the degree to which our students, at the end of a Westmont education, have attained our stated general outcomes.

Evidence examined for this portion of the review consists of four broad categories: (1) departmental reports; (2) selected exhibits of student work from individual departments; (3) initial assessment activity carried out by the GE Committee; and (4) institutional survey data. This fourth category includes the Senior Interview (one-on-one faculty-to-graduate conversations, annually beginning 2004); the HERI Senior Survey (primarily 2000 and 2002; initial results from the 2006 administration may also be available by the time of the site visit); the National Study of Student Engagement (2001 and 2004); and the Alumni Survey of 2001.

Focus question for institutional self-study:

- To what extent are our graduates, as a result of their Westmont education as a whole, able to demonstrate achievement of our six learning outcomes?
B. Extent to which we are achieving learning outcomes in departmental programs

This is the area where our growing institutional understanding of the assessment process has shifted, or at least been clarified, most significantly since Westmont’s Proposal was submitted in January of 2003. Although careful study of the Proposal reveals some ambiguity on this point, it was understood at the time that the departmental review process would be emphasizing the extent to which the six college-wide learning outcomes—rather than discipline-specific outcomes—were being achieved at the departmental level. The Irvine-sponsored Departmental self-studies (1999-2001) had focused on the department’s contribution to institution-wide goals. The department’s responsibility to assess disciplinary or program-specific goals apart from the six college-wide outcomes was not explicitly stressed (although it was always assumed this was something departments were continuing to do—along with or as part of their efforts in the area of the six learning standards). This emphasis on College-wide goals contributed to the way in which the Institutional Proposal was framed, but was almost certainly a factor as well in slowing down the development of viable departmental programs of assessment.

Through dialogue associated with initial implementation of our program review process and the reaccreditation process, we recognized the need for departmental assessment processes to attend, more explicitly than they had in the past, to department-specific outcomes. As an institution that takes seriously our liberal arts identity, we never want to privilege discipline-specific knowledge and skills at the expense of attaining shared humanistic ideals—nor do we wish to suggest a rigid separation between these categories of outcomes. Nonetheless, since the time of our Institutional Proposal, we have given renewed attention to articulating department-specific educational outcomes—especially for departments where there may be less obvious and hypothetically less extensive overlap between programmatic and institutional goals.

Plan for determining the extent to which departmental outcomes are being achieved:

When in 2002 the college formally adopted a new program review process, all departments were placed on a five-year cyclical schedule of review. The first two reports were to be submitted to the Program Review Committee (PRC) in December 2004. Despite having been asked to build on their recent self-study and other assessment-related discussion, departments early in the review cycle were not as successful as we had anticipated in developing a true “five-year” report. The limited number of completed five-year reports, and the apparent dearth of readily-available evidence for the departments as a whole, was identified by the CPR visiting team as a major set of concerns, and was one factor in the decision to delay Westmont’s Educational Effectiveness visit until February of 2007.

In order to prepare for the Educational Effectiveness visit and to accelerate the gathering of relevant evidence, the Provost and the PRC temporarily modified in August of 2005 reporting requirements for all twenty-seven units of review. Each unit currently submits to the PRC an annual report (and will continue to do so until we reach the end of our first five-year cycle in 2008-09). Although we have maintained the published five-year cycle, relatively few departments have in fact five years’ worth of substantial and intentionally-gathered data to reflect upon. As an index to the current level of achievement at the department level, then, all of the reports submitted for 2004-05 or 2005-06 may be viewed, not simply those designated “Five-Year” reports.

The joint WASC Steering Committee/PRC has reflected on each report, using as a general reference point the committee’s published criteria for responding to Departmental Annual Reports. The PRC has provided written and oral feedback to the department chair, Provost, Associate Provost, and Dean of Curriculum.

Focus questions for institutional self-study:

- To what extent has each of the college’s twenty-seven units of review provided evidence of implementing a shared and sustainable process of inquiry into their own educational effectiveness? To what extent has each of the college’s twenty-seven units of review provided evidence of effectiveness in achieving educational results?
To what extent have assessment efforts implemented thus far led to documented changes in programs?

C. Strengthening our program review process

As an integral part of our Educational Effectiveness self-study, Westmont committed to examining and exploring ways to strengthen our program review process. At the time of the Institutional Proposal, the new process had not yet been implemented. The design and implementation of program review was of particular concern to the visiting team at the time of the CPR, validating our original institutional assumption that the process itself would need sharpening. The visiting team raised questions about the apparent autonomy of the departments in conducting their reviews. Related to this, the team found insufficient evidence that departments would be held accountable for carrying out a rigorous self-review. Assigning an Assessment Liaison in August 2005 to each department was one of the College's initial steps toward a stronger process. As discussed in Section III (C), however, we recognize that refining routines of review will be an on-going process.

In addition to strengthening processes for departmental review, the College has considered how to assess more systematically the student's overall Westmont experience. We have sought, first of all, to locate more explicitly the responsibility for institution-wide assessment and for responding to data gathered. Through the first two rounds of the Senior Interview project, we have been reminded of the proportionately significant impact, especially on a residential campus such as ours, of co-curricular experience. Such experience includes residence life, Intercultural Programs, Chapel, off-campus service opportunities, Reel Talk (a film and discussion series), Tuesdays with Morals (a lunch forum on current issues), and public lectures such as the Erasmus, Pascal, and Phi Kappa Phi series. We have renewed accordingly our commitment to an assessment process that encompasses the totality of our students' lives while in college.

Through the self-study process, we have also come to recognize how many departments or cross-disciplinary entities sponsor public exhibitions of their graduates' work. Such events include the Student Research Symposium, the Celebration of Summer Research, the Celebration of Student Teaching, the Internships Reception, the Athletics Department's Golden Eagles Program, and various final presentations in the visual and performing arts—occasions that speak to the quality of our students and/or programs. How best to capitalize on these for purposes of institutional review is yet another question we have explored as we seek to strengthen our overall processes of departmental and institution-wide assessment.

Focus questions for institutional self-study:

- To what extent have we defined a workable process that fosters appropriate departmental and institutional reflection, and that provides useful data for strategic planning at departmental and institutional levels?
- What specific routines and practices need to be incorporated into the process of institution-wide assessment in the future?

Summary statement: Institutional plan for self-assessment of educational effectiveness

As indicated in the proposal, the College has used the current cycle of review as an occasion (1) to focus on the effectiveness of Westmont's general education (in the sense of students' experience as a whole) in relation to adopted institutional outcomes; (2) the effectiveness of our nineteen academic departments and eight additional units of review; and (3) the effectiveness of our program review processes. Each of these three broad (and obviously at times overlapping) areas is examined in Section III.

How faculty have been involved in determining educational effectiveness

It would be difficult to point to a moment in time, a particular decision, or procedure relative to assessment where the faculty have not been involved. Faculty committees and sub-committees formed at the time of the previous WASC self-study have engaged in a continuous dialogue relative to the student learning outcomes tentatively identified in 1994. The overhaul of
General Education, which originated similarly in the last cycle of WASC review, has been from the beginning a faculty enterprise. Forums for reviewing educational effectiveness at the institutional level involving the faculty include:

- General Education (GE) Committee
- Program Review Committee (PRC)
- Academic Senate [department chairs]
- Faculty Forum [weekly; all faculty, administrators, and student life staff invited]
- Full meetings of the faculty [monthly]
- Departmental meetings

Use of authentic student work

Reflection on authentic student work occurs at both the departmental and institutional levels. As of October 2007, eighteen of the College's nineteen academic departments, as well as at least five of eight remaining programs (approximately 85% of the total), have provided evidence to the PRC of reflecting on actual student work (see Appendix B: Evidence of collective examination of student work). Assessment Liaisons will work closely with departments who have not yet provided this evidence, in order to do so by the time of the team visit in February 2007.

At the institutional level, actual student work (in the sense of written work constructed by students), as well as evidence drawn from departmental reports, has been used in the assessment of the General Education program (see Annual Report for GE, 2004-05 or 2005-06).

III. Development of themes from Institutional Proposal

At the time of the institutional proposal, the College anticipated the following three outcomes from the re-accreditation process:

(A) Greater clarity on the extent to which we were achieving identified student learning outcomes in general education.
(B) Greater clarity on the extent to which we were achieving learning outcomes in departmental programs.
(C) A clearer sense of how to strengthen the College's program review process.

(A) Achieving identified student learning outcomes in general education

At the end of a Westmont education our graduates should manifest a range of specific qualities or behaviors associated with the following:

- Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking
- Active Societal & Intellectual Engagement
- Diversity
- Written & Oral Communication
- Research & Technology
- Christian Orientation

The overwhelming sense of the evidence we have gathered is that, unless specifically noted otherwise below, our graduates are indeed achieving these outcomes. Evidence drawn from a wide range of sources has been organized in this section by standard.

As explained in Section II, we are concerned here with the outcomes of general education in the broadest sense of the term. Given the recent transition from one set of General Education requirements to another, it is not our intention in this section
to attribute student achievement to a particular set of inputs. Our immediate purpose is to demonstrate the outcomes of a Westmont education.

Following each standard below is (1) a list of selected evidence pertinent to one or more designated components; (2) a description of selected student work and additional data available at the time of the team visit; and (3) a brief summative reflection, including discussion of concerns and implications for action related to that specific outcome. Appended to the Diversity standard is some additional evidence on relevant institutional inputs. A final set of reflections, with particular reference to the Revised General Education requirements, is included at the end of the section of the whole.

**Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking**

Students are versatile thinkers, able to use appropriately the tools provided by different disciplinary methodologies and to understand that each discipline implies a particular epistemological orientation. Critical interdisciplinary thinking requires students to combine a variety of discipline-specific reasoning abilities in attempts to solve problems or answer questions. It also requires them to have the ability to frame appropriate questions; to think abstractly; to test definitions of key terms and categories of analysis, and to examine one's own assumptions.

**Selected evidence of fulfillment**

**General skills; Complex problem-solving:** The success of Westmont students in graduate school is one indicator that the College is inculcating critical thinking skills. According to the most recent study of baccalaureate origins of research doctoral recipients in the United states, 1995-2004, Westmont ranks higher than all but three California colleges in its division, outperforming a number of more established and more visible peer institutions. Over this ten-year period Westmont produced 112 research doctorates, placing the College 104th in the nation in its category. This standing is particularly striking given that the rankings in this case are based on absolute numbers, not in proportion to total numbers of graduates. Of the 112, 58 (52%) were produced in the last four years, charting an optimistic trajectory for Westmont in future rankings. In the production of research doctorates, Westmont also compares very favorably with Selected CCCU-member colleges and universities and other Protestant or Catholic colleges in California. For further evidence of Westmont students' entry into and/or success in graduate programs typically calling for a wide range of critical and/or interdisciplinary skills, see also Data on graduate and professional study from Chemistry, available at the time of the team visit.

**General skills; Range of disciplines:** Thirty-two Westmont students took the MCAT from 2004-06. In all three sections for which means are available (Physical Sciences, Verbal Reasoning, and Biological Sciences), Westmont students outperformed the national norms by substantial margins. On a related note, ten of fifteen first-time applicants during the 2004 cycle were accepted into at least one medical school (67% acceptance rate, versus a national rate of acceptance into at least one school for first-time applicants currently around 45%).

**General skills; Range of disciplines:** Between 1998 and 2004, Westmont graduates were accepted into at least sixty law schools, including Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Stanford, the University of Chicago, and Yale.

**Range of disciplines:** Over the last five years, 13.4% of Westmont’s graduates have completed a double major. Three individuals (0.14%) have completed a triple major. These statistics may be seen both as an educational input (activity leading to interdisciplinary thinking) and as an outcome reflective of an institutional ethos that fosters exploration of multiple disciplines.

**General skills; Range of disciplines:** Westmont students in the Liberal Studies (pre-elementary education) major have been highly successful on the California Subject Examination for Teachers (Multiple Subject), requiring demonstration of knowledge in seven disciplinary areas. While the failure rate for all California students on recent administrations of the test has been in the 25-37% range, 100% of the graduates of our Liberal Studies program have passed the examination since its inception in 2003-04. For
further evidence of multi-disciplinary achievement, see Liberal Studies portfolios demonstrating competencies in (among other areas) the seven basic subject areas defined by California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Range of disciplines: 91.5% of Westmont seniors report having taken an interdisciplinary course, as opposed to 60.7% of students at all four-year private colleges (HERI Senior Survey, 2002). (A more extended discussion of survey and interview evidence pertinent to the Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking standard may be accessed here.)

Selected departmental projects relevant to one or more components of this standard

General critical thinking skills. The Philosophy Department has collected pre- and post-test samples of student work to show improvement in students’ reasoning, including the ability to recognize and to articulate the premises and conclusions of an argument, within classes that meet the GE requirement for Reasoning Abstractly.

General critical thinking skills. The History Department’s analysis of student essays from Spring 2005 (HIS 1) includes attention to a range of critical thinking skills, including detecting bias and the framing of appropriate questions. (The History Department is also working to identify evidence pertinent to Limits and Appropriate attitudes).

Range of disciplines: The Religious Studies department has reflected collectively on senior research papers illustrating the habit of mind of drawing on a wide range of disciplines, including philology, cultural anthropology, ancient Near Eastern and ancient Greco-Roman history, religion, textual analysis, history of interpretation, literary criticism, and biblical theology, among others.

General skills: The GE Committee reviewed fourteen essays completed in Spring 2006 by students in the first longitudinal GE study group—using a rubric with clearly delineated components of critical thinking. See GE Annual Assessment Report, 2005-06 for details.

Reflection, including actions taken or under consideration

Available test data, graduate and professional school records, patterns of survey and interview data, and student work samples are mutually supporting in showing that Westmont students are attaining this standard as a whole. With respect to individual components, we have identified less extensive evidence to date that students are recognizing the Limits of critical thinking in the search for truth, or that students are demonstrating Appropriate Attitudes. We have referred to the GE Committee a charge to (a) identify appropriate tools for gathering additional evidence relevant to these two components; and/or (b) identify additional existing evidence that these components have been achieved. Portions of the recently implemented Collegiate Learning Assessment (Fall 2006 for first-year students) will eventually allow us to compare achievement in this area with a national sample.

Inherent in the design of the new General Education core is a shift toward the treatment of issues from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Thus for example individual courses from math, philosophy or religious studies may all fulfill the requirement in Reasoning Abstractly. Courses from at least ten different departments may all fulfill the requirement in Thinking Globally. This stretching of disciplinary boundaries holds the potential for students in the future to be even more prepared to engage in Critical-interdisciplinary thinking.

Despite overall patterns of success of Westmont graduates in law school and individual scores in the 90th percentile, available LSAT means are somewhat lower than we might have anticipated. We will continue to inquire as to how best to interpret these data, and what changes in curriculum or advising procedures, if any, may be called for.
Active Societal & Intellectual Engagement

It is our hope that students are equipped to benefit from a Westmont education over the course of a lifetime. As a result of their educational program, they will have the skills, attitudes and commitments that enable them to be effective in both their personal and vocational lives throughout all the stages of their lives.

Selected evidence of fulfillment

Effective participants; Sympathy; Interpersonal competence: Approximately 250 students participate voluntarily each year in Potter's Clay, a week-long service program in Mexico (In addition, 50-75 participate annually in an extended weekend service project to Mexico). The project is organized and funded primarily by students. Similarly, approximately 60 students serve annually in a week-long project in inner-city areas of Los Angeles and San Francisco. Home stays in the former program give students opportunities to interact with persons with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Effective participants; Sympathy: The Office of Student Life's Center for Leadership & Learning facilitates the work of approximately thirty students annually who organize themselves for small-group summer service projects around the world (Emmaus Road). In the last three years, for example, students have traveled to Guatemala, Indonesia, Russia, France, and Tonga.

Interpersonal competence; Responsibility, Christian vocation: The Internships office has calculated the number of students participating in internships from two recent graduating classes. These figures include internships arranged through the Department of Education and those completed through the College's Urban program in San Francisco. For the class of 2003, 67% of graduating seniors had completed an internship for academic credit. For the class of 2004, 61%. (Also see below, departmental exhibit from Internships program relevant to the development of Christian vocation.)

Sympathy; Equipped for lifelong learning: Since 2004, the Tuesdays with Morals program (sponsored by the Gaede Institute for the Liberal Arts) brings together students and faculty for weekly lunch-hour discussions on topics ranging from the Iraq War, homosexual marriage, and national elections; to ethical eating, video game addiction, and caring for the elderly. Estimated attendance is fifteen to forty, with students typically comprising two-thirds of participants. Students are challenged to consider multiple perspectives, offered possible resources for further study, and given opportunities to see faculty and staff model what it means to be socially engaged and life-long learners.

Equipped for lifelong learning; Effective participants: The Office of Student Life Program sponsors a daily newspaper readership program in the residence halls. By encouraging students to develop a routine of regularly reading a newspaper the Readership Program is designed to foster lifelong habits of attending to current events. An estimated 10% of students pick up papers daily, and at least one resident assistant posts particularly interesting articles on the bulletin board daily. In conversations with resident directors, students indicate that they are more aware of local, national, or international news and issues because of the Readership Program.

Effective participants: Over fifty Westmont graduates of Westmont's Economics and Business Department have since 1990 successfully launched new companies.

Interpersonal competence; Christian vocation: At least 80% of the Education Department's credential program graduates from 2002-005 (44 of 55) have accepted jobs as full-time K-12 teachers. Others have worked as long-term substitutes or gone into alternative fields of employment—education-related and otherwise.

Interpersonal competence; Responsibility: Westmont students avail themselves of a wide range of semester-long Off-Campus Programs. For the past ten years, an average of 182.6 students have participated in OCP-sponsored or OCP-approved programs (the past five-year average is 192.4, suggesting continuing overall momentum in the rate of student participation). The ten-year
average represents approximately 56% of the annual graduating class. Including Westmont-sponsored summer programs raises student participation levels to an estimated two-thirds of Westmont graduates. Given OCP’s growing emphasis not merely on educational travel, but rather deep and systemic engagement with another culture, high rates of participation in these programs provide evidence of partial achievement of several other institutional standards, apart from Active Societal & Intellectual Engagement.

Effective participants: Growing rates of alumni giving to Westmont over the past ten years are one concrete indicator of graduates’ willingness to participate in charitable causes (see also, Alumni Survey for self-reported data on giving in general). During the 1997-98 calendar year, only 20% of Westmont’s alumni contributed financially to the College. Since then the percentage of alumni making gifts has steadily increased, to 37% in 2004-05, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

Effective participants: One-hundred-forty students voluntarily attend each in a series of six musical concerts in downtown Santa Barbara through the Westmont in the Arts program, operating in conjunction with Santa Barbara’s Community Arts Music Association (CAMA). Approximately ten faculty members attend each concert along with students and facilitate discussion after each event.

Effective participants: Students concerned about issues of social justice initiated their own alternative campus newspaper, The Ferreter, in 2005-06, and have continued publication to the present.

Effective participants; Sympathy: In 2002, 76.8% of Westmont students reported performing volunteer work at some point during the previous year—a percentage only slightly higher than the national norm for private four-year colleges on the HERI Survey, but 9.8% higher than Westmont seniors reported on the same survey in 2000. (A more extended discussion of survey and interview evidence pertinent to the Active Societal & Intellectual Engagement standard may be accessed here.)

Departmental projects or goals relevant to one or more components of this standard

Responsibility for one’s own education. Academic Advising & Disability Services has reported success with first-year and returning students in helping them to take ownership of their disability and associated rights and responsibilities (See Assessment Report from 2005-06).

Christian vocation: The Internship Program has collected a variety of evidence to show that students participating in the Internships Seminar demonstrated a deepened and expanded understanding of Christian vocation by the end of this course (2005-06).

Equipped for lifelong learning; Christian vocation: The Office of Life Planning has recently completed a major survey primarily pertinent to institutional inputs in these components. The same office has collected letters from employers of recent Westmont graduates, including testimony relevant to these same components.

Interpersonal competence; Christian vocation: Master Teacher evaluations of student teachers consistently demonstrate high overall satisfaction with Education Department graduates, providing indirect evidence of students’ ability to succeed interpersonally in the workplace.

Reflection, including actions taken or under consideration

There is strong evidence to suggest that Westmont students are gaining the skills, attitudes, and commitments enabling effective participation in society before and after their graduation from Westmont. Two concerns have surfaced in this area—both more related to inputs than outcomes, but nonetheless worthy of further inquiry.

(1) In Senior Interviews, two student comments (2005) indicate a desire for more guidance in transitioning to life after Westmont and for faculty to be more intentional in discussing their own trajectory of vocation.
(2) NSSE data from 2001 and 2004 (including both first-year students and seniors) reveal somewhat lower levels of *Active and Collaborative Learning* and *Enriching Educational Experiences* relative to other baccalaureate-liberal arts institutions. These NSSE categories relate closely to the institutional standard's components of *Interpersonal competence* and *Effective participants*. Since Westmont has already implemented a senior capstone course or experience as part of the new GE core, we expect that the College's comparative ratings under *Enriching Educational Experiences* will rise on future administrations of the NSSE. The *Active and Collaborative Learning* score, related to relatively low reported numbers of assigned group projects, in-class presentations, and class participation, has been slated for further discussion on the GE Committee during the Spring of 2007.

Effective Fall 2006, a sample of reflective essays from courses or internships approved for *Serving Society; Enacting Justice* are being collected and reviewed for the level at which students achieve this outcome as a whole.

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**Diversity**

*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.*

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**Selected evidence of fulfillment**

*Self-reflection; Formulation of knowledge; Cross-cultural communication skills.* Off-Campus Programs reports that students participating in the Westmont-in-Mexico semester in 2004 and 2005 made noteworthy shifts in all three of these components, as measured by the *Intercultural Development Inventory*. See also related exhibit, below.

*Discussion and analysis of issues: Essential Christianity vs. cultural peculiarities.* Both majority and non-majority students have helped to create and/or participated in a growing number of intercultural groups on campus, including the Asian Student Association, Black Student Union, Latino Cultural Organization, Nomads, Italian Americans, and Hawaii Club. Each group plans multiple annual events, with attendance reaching a high of thirty for individual gatherings.

*Essential Christianity vs. cultural peculiarities:* Majority students wishing to expand their peers' understanding and experience of Christian worship, and African-American music in particular, created in 2002-03 a Gospel Choir. The choir has performed regularly on and off-campus since then, and reached at one point a membership of over one hundred majority and non-majority students.

*Self-reflection; Discussion and analysis of issues; Formulation of knowledge.* The Student Life Office, in conjunction with the Provost's office, sponsored a series of Supper Club discussions during the 2004-05 academic year, bringing together "pro-diversity" and "skeptical-of-diversity" groups of students from a wide range of ethnicities. In addition to the intentionally small number of students who participated directly in the Supper Club itself, approximately 75 students attended a public report on the impact of the program. A presentation on the Supper Club program was made to the regional WASC conference in April 2005.

*Discussion and analysis of issues:* A minimum of 290 students participated in six residence hall programs funded through the Intercultural Office during the 2005-06 year. Each Residence Hall sponsored an event ranging from viewing and discussing the film *Crash*, to celebrating aspects of particular ethnic cultures, including food, art, and dance. The primarily informal evidence gathered indicates that students discussed a range of diversity-related issues, including racial identity and involuntary and voluntary racism.

*Self-reflection; Discussion and analysis of issues; Formulation of knowledge.* In addition to nineteen faculty and staff, seventy-nine students participated in the February 2006 Summit for Justice jointly sponsored by Residence Life and the Intercultural Programs office. Students reported a heightened awareness of the impact that race and class have on one's opportunities and on one's world
views. 66% of the students stated that their “perspectives on race, power, and privilege changed” during the weekend (36% agree, 30% strongly agree). Some participants commented in the retreat evaluation that the small groups did not address the concept of white privilege. The Intercultural Programs Office responded to this feedback by sponsoring a white privilege workshop the following month. This session was attended by fifty-five students and eight faculty and staff.

Cross-cultural communication skills: On the HERI Student Survey (2002) Westmont seniors reported socializing frequently with different ethnic groups at a rate of 57.6%, as opposed to 46.8% at all private four-year colleges. 55.7% of Westmont students reported attending a racial/cultural workshop, as opposed to 25.5% at all private four-year colleges. (A more extended discussion of survey and interview evidence pertinent to the Diversity standard may be accessed here.) Granted that at least four of this standard's seven components are linked to the development of certain attitudes and dispositions, as much or more as behavioral outcomes, testimonial evidence related to this standard may be of particular value.

Departmental projects or goals relevant to one or more components of this standard

Self-reflection; Formulation of knowledge; Cross-cultural communication skills: Students participating in one of the College's newest Off-Campus Programs, Westmont in Mexico, provide program evaluations that speak eloquently to each of these components (Reflections on Westmont in Mexico, Irvine Grant Report, June 2005).

Discussion and analysis of issues: The Sociology-Anthropology has begun to analyze senior seminar papers for evidence of multiple outcomes, including conceptual skills relevant to this component, for example intellectual habits of examining issues through the lenses of class, gender, and ethnicity.

Self-reflection; Process of making choices; discussion and analysis of issues: The History department has collected essays from HIS 10 reflecting students' skills in these areas, and is in the process of analyzing this material. The History department has also collected student analyses of primary source documents, with particular reference to gender, social class, ethnicity, and culture (Formulation of knowledge).

Cross-cultural communication skills: The Department of Education's Evaluations from Master Teachers and First-Year-Graduate Employers include evidence relevant to the ability of student teachers and graduates to teach English Learners. Several other Teaching Performance Expectations on the same surveys provide indirect evidence of graduates' ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural settings.

Self-reflection; Discussion and analysis of issues: Portfolios completed by students in the Liberal Studies Major (pre-elementary education) include artifacts and/or short essays demonstrating students' ability to reflect on issues of cultural diversity.

Self-reflection; Discussion and analysis of issues; Formulation of knowledge: The Urban Program (a component of Off-Campus Programs, with three permanent full-time faculty) has collected student portfolios that demonstrate students’ achievement of multiple components of the Diversity Standard during their semester of study and work in San Francisco. Note also that the Urban Program is highlighted in William Kratt’s dissertation, Diversity in Evangelical Higher Education (Claremont Graduate School, 2004) as one particularly positive and promising aspect of Westmont’s program with respect to diversity.

Additional information on Diversity-related institutional inputs

(1) The College’s ability to foster the understanding and skills to engage people unlike themselves has been significantly enhanced in recent years by our success in attracting and retaining higher percentages of non-majority students. Over the ten year period from 1995 to 2005, the total percentage of students of color enrolled nearly tripled, from 7.8% to 21.6. The percentage in each of four categories of students of color more than doubled over the same period.
<table>
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<th>Fall 2005</th>
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<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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</table>

Of the twenty-seven private colleges in California participating in the James Irvine Foundation Campus Diversity Initiative, Westmont was 6th in the percentage change of first-year under-represented minority (URM) students, 2000 to 2004 (this, even without factoring in the continued high growth of first-year students of color, 2004-05). Over the same period, Westmont was 2nd of the 27 institutions with respect to positive percentage change in URM students who were Pell Grant recipients.

Finally, and equally encouraging, as the College indicated in its Final Report to the James Irvine Foundation on the Campus Diversity Initiative, retention, graduation rates, and average GPAs for students of color are in most cases equal or nearly equal to those in the white non-Hispanic category.

(2) With respect to curricular inputs, the GE Committee since at least 2004 has made available to students at the time of registration a list of courses identified as including substantial content relevant to diversity. This list suggests both the availability of experiences leading to outcomes specified in the College’s Diversity standard and the College’s commitment to helping students take full advantage of the experiences available. (It also provides one additional example, at the institutional level, of how curriculum has been aligned with a set of articulated purposes.)

(3) The College recently developed the Liberal Arts Ambassadors Program through the Gaede Institute for the Liberal Arts. Non-majority students at the College have been equipped to reach out to non-majority students in local high schools, enhancing the Westmont students’ own understanding of the College’s educational philosophy and at the same time helping to improve access to Westmont and other liberal arts colleges for future non-majority students.

Reflection, including actions taken or under consideration

The College continues to focus attention on providing additional inputs in this area (especially more faculty and administrators of color). In the meantime, available evidence related to articulated outcomes suggests that Westmont students are in fact gaining the understanding and skills to engage people unlike themselves. One component of the standard which survey evidence had consistently flagged in the past—Foreign language—has been addressed as part of the revised GE program. Unlike the previous set or requirements, the new core includes a requirement of one additional foreign language course for every student not demonstrating advanced proficiency or evidence of a primary language other than English. As noted above, at least four of the seven components of this standard pertain in large part to attitudes. At such point as the College should decide to revise the six standards, it may be valuable to include increased attention to more measurable outcomes pertinent to diversity.

**Written and Oral Communication**

*Students will be effective communicators, both as speakers and writers, in a wide range of contexts. Their communication, both at the personal and professional level, will be characterized by clarity, accuracy, and graciousness.*

Selected evidence of fulfillment

*Lower to higher order thinking skills; Rhetorical effectiveness:* For seventeen years, the Department of Economics & Business has organized the Westmont Collegiate Business Plan Competition, which involves four teams of students speaking before a panel of
outside judges, including investment bankers, local entrepreneurs, and private equity fund managers. Since 1993, Westmont students have earned thirteen invitations to national final or semi-final events. A Westmont team in 2003 won first place at the Midwest Enterprise Creation Competition sponsored by the University of Indiana and Syracuse University (See the Economics and Business department’s web-page for related information on the department’s Entrepreneurship emphasis).

Rhetorical effectiveness; Lower to higher order thinking skills; Creativity and intellectual virtues: Since 1996 the College has sponsored a campus-wide Tournament of Expression and Speech, involving a total of 256 students annually in the following categories. 128 students take part in the Debate Tournament and another 8 students per class participate in the categories of Extemporaneous Debate, Persuasive Speeches, Great Speeches, and Scripture Alive: Oral Interpretation. Judges for the tournament are drawn from across the Westmont and Santa Barbara community.

Mature, critical assessment: There are approximately 40 student visits to the College’s Writers’ Corner each week, for a yearly estimated total of 1200 visits (Since individual students make multiple visits even within a particular week, let alone the year, this does not represent 1200 different students.) Department of English faculty explicitly teach student tutors to mentor emerging writers in self-assessment skills, rather than to edit student-clients’ work for them.

Rhetorical effectiveness: English Professor Steve Cook has compiled a list of eighteen students who have had work published that they originally completed in his sections of Advanced Composition.

Creativity and intellectual virtues; Rhetorical effectiveness: Westmont’s student yearbook, The Citadel, won a number of national awards in both 2004 and 2005. The 2004 yearbook was awarded the Gold Crown by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, its highest honor. The 2004 edition also received the Associated Collegiate Press’s Pacemaker Award, its highest honor, and the same organization's First Place Convention Award.

Rhetorical effectiveness; Creativity and intellectual virtues; Lower to higher order thinking skills: Since 1997, at least 318 students have participated in the Student Research Symposium. Participants prepare a visual display summarizing research results and explain their work orally through a poster session. Much more detail on the Student Research Symposium, including abstracts of student projects, may be viewed in the Institutional Exhibit on the Research Symposium.

Rhetorical effectiveness Creativity and intellectual virtues: Over 800 students annually participate in the College’s Spring Sing, a three-hour-plus musical revue, demonstrating stage presence and communication skills appropriate to this particular venue.

Rhetorical effectiveness: On the HERI Student Survey (2002) Westmont students were more likely than the national sample to report much stronger writing skills compared to when they first arrived in college (40.0 vs. 32.3). Westmont students’ perception of growth in public speaking was negligibly higher than the national sample (30.6 vs. 29.9). NSSE and Senior Interview data follow similar patterns. (A more extended discussion of survey and interview evidence pertinent to the Written & Oral Communication standard may be accessed here.)

Departmental projects or goals relevant to one or more components of this standard

Rhetorical effectiveness; Lower to higher order thinking skills; Creativity and intellectual virtues: The Communication Studies department and selected outside judges recently evaluated a set of small-group projects from Persuasion & Propaganda for evidence of students’ ability to communicate with clarity and use evidence properly, among other criteria.

Rhetorical effectiveness; Creativity and intellectual virtues; Christian faith without clichés; Mature, critical assessment: The English Department has worked for two years toward a rubric for evaluating literature papers. Identified criteria for an A paper include elements of each of the components listed here.

Rhetorical effectiveness: The Office of Life Planning provides both workshops and one-on-one assistance (the Resume Doctor program) to equip students to prepare resumes that effectively communicate with today's employers. Before they leave Westmont,
nearly 15% of our students have utilized this service. An exhibit of “Before” and “after” resumes will be available to the visiting team.

**Rhetorical effectiveness:** The Athletics Program has videotaped and begun to analyze their Golden Eagle presentations, in which the athlete with the highest GPA from each of the College’s intercollegiate athletic team speaks at an annual awards banquet.

**Rhetorical effectiveness:** The Physics department has focused on improving student writing in the laboratory, in particular prodding students to demonstrate clarity and precise, concrete language.

**Historical and cultural awareness; Lower to higher order thinking skills:** The History department has collected student writing samples from History 185 in order to evaluate student success in selected lower/higher order thinking skills (particularly those most relevant to disciplinary concerns).

**Rhetorical effectiveness; Mature critical assessment:** The Education Department has collected student portfolios from the Liberal Studies major (representing, in fact, work accomplished throughout the College), demonstrating students’ ability to communicate in writing and to engage in appropriate self-assessment.

**Rhetorical effectiveness Creativity and intellectual virtues:** From 50-75 students participate annually in productions by the Department of Theatre Arts. See selected reviews.

**Reflection, including actions taken or under consideration**

The College has assembled ample available evidence pertinent to *Rhetorical effectiveness*, and some critical mass of evidence for most of the other components of the standard. There is less systematic evidence of students’ ability to communicate relevant to *Christian faith without clichés*.

Evidence from a range of sources suggests that our graduates have demonstrated written communication skills more consistently than oral communication skills. Such concerns were one factor in the design of the new GE requirements. Effective Fall 2004, all students must take three writing- or speaking-intensive courses. (This invitation to include speech-intensive coursework does not yet ensure that all students will actually opt to include speaking-intensive courses. This is a matter however that the GE Committee will continue to discuss).

The Collegiate Learning Assessment core on writing tasks (first baseline data gathered August 2006) will eventually be used to compare our students’ achievement in the area of written communication with their counterparts elsewhere.

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### Research and Technology

*Students will have the skills and critical understanding necessary to make use of appropriate technologies in accessing, evaluating and communicating information. In addition, they will possess the critical capacities necessary to evaluate the impact of technology on their work and in the world—understanding both the possibilities and limitations of technology.*

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**Selected evidence of fulfillment**

**Organization and communication:** During 2005-06 (including May Term) 832 students were enrolled in courses that use Eureka, an electronic course-management system. For the same period, there were in total 112 active courses and 45 active faculty using the system.
Organization and communication: The Math Department introduced technical word-processing software in three courses during the 2004-05 and 2005-06 academic years. All of the students in the most recent course produced one or more papers using the technical word-processing software.

Research and documentation; Organization and communication: As noted under the Communications standard, since 1997, at least 318 students have participated in the Student Research Symposium. Participants prepare a visual display summarizing research results and explain their work orally through a poster session. Of these 81.1% were completed in the Division of Natural Sciences, 13.0% in the Social Sciences, and 6.0% in the Humanities. Much more detail on the Student Research Symposium, including abstracts of student projects, may be viewed in the Institutional Exhibit on the Student Research Symposium.

Research and communication; Organization and communication: During the 2005 calendar year, students in twenty-three courses participated in research sessions taught by one of the College’s reference librarians. A form to evaluate the effectiveness of such sessions is under development during the Fall 2006 semester.

Research and documentation: Over the last five years 29 students have completed Majors Honors Projects. Of these, 21 were from the Division of Natural Sciences, 6 from the Humanities, and 2 from the Social Sciences. During the current academic year, 8 projects are slated, 6 from the Natural Sciences and 2 from the Humanities. A complete list with more detailed information may be viewed in the Institutional Exhibit on Major Honors.

Research and technology outcome as a whole: According to the HERI Student Survey (2002), Westmont seniors’ evaluations of technology inputs (including the availability of internet access, the quality of computer training assistance, and computer facilities) all exceeded the average for private four-year colleges. (A more extended discussion of survey and interview evidence pertinent to the Research & Technology standard may be accessed here.)

Departmental projects or goals relevant to one or more components of this standard:

Research and documentation; Organization and communication: As of 2006, the Chemistry department had compiled a list of 31 papers with 87 student co-authors that have been presented at professional chemistry conferences since 2000; a list of 17 papers with student co-authors that have been published in research journals since 1998; and a list of 4 papers involving student co-authors that have been published in chemical education journals since 1998.

Discernment; Research and documentation: The Library’s surveys of First Year and Senior students indicate that students are making substantial growth in knowledge of research processes over the course of their Westmont education (2005-06).

Organization and communication; Research and documentation: The Biology department has established a portfolio of student work, including BIO 5 project posters, Summer Research Symposium posters, Biochemistry project PowerPoint files, and Microbiology Project papers—all demonstrating effective use of technology in oral and poster presentations.

Integrity; Research and documentation: The Psychology department has worked for several years to help students use APA style appropriately, to improve the quality of senior research projects, and to reduce plagiarism. In PSY 115: Child Development, Spring 2006, for instance, 85% of the students’ rewritten papers complied with APA standards. Department studies of plagiarism in sections of General Psychology showed a decline from 72+% in identified plagiarism on first course assignment to 8-14% on a third assignment and 0% on a final assignment, after repeated exercises in class on avoiding plagiarism. For further analysis, see Psychology’s Annual Report for 2005-06.

Research and documentation; Organization and communication: The Physics department maintains a list of its majors who have presented work at national meetings of the Division of Nuclear Physics of the American Physical Society and a list of students who have co-authored peer-reviewed journal articles with faculty lead authors.
Reflection, including actions taken or under consideration

Students in the natural sciences are demonstrating clearly at least two components of this standard. The disproportionate number of examples from the natural sciences, however, along with relative participation by department in the Student Research Symposium and patterns of survey and interview data suggest some potential unevenness across the College in the extent to which the research and technology standard has been achieved. There is limited available evidence, in any case, that the components of **Discernment, Ethical issues, and Possibilities & limitations** are being fulfilled. It is conceivable that the standard itself needs rewriting to reflect a broader applicability across College programs. In the meantime, in order to gain a clearer picture of current research practices, the WASC steering committee has forwarded to the GE Committee a request to identify department by department where students are encountering assignments requiring research, and the nature of the research in each case.

Discussion of institutional achievement in this area has already helped to direct efforts to gain more specific information on students’ reference needs. Beginning the 2006-07 academic year, the GE Committee is working with Library staff on two measures of student achievement: (1) a summative exam to be given to students completing APP 001 (General Research Instruction) and course-related bibliographic training sessions. The percentage of the total student body involved in these sessions will be tracked; and (2) Reference librarians are developing a test to be administered to entering students during Orientation Week. Skills of entering students will be compared to those of seniors participating in senior seminars. Designated Library liaisons will also meet with faculty teaching selected senior seminars to identify the research-related strengths and weaknesses of students in each of these classes.

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**Christian Orientation**

We want students to be informed about the Christian faith, and we desire that their lives be characterized by practices, affections, and virtues that grow out of a life of Christian faith. In keeping with that faith, we are committed to pursuing these goals in a spirit of hospitality and invitation, rather than in a spirit of coercion, manipulation, or intimidation.

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Selected evidence of fulfillment

_**Practices:**_ There are currently sixteen registered ministry programs that Westmont students have initiated and sustained, in partnership with the **Student Ministries Office**. Ministries range from Compassion (provides child care for children while mothers are in counseling) to Bread of Life (builds relationships and brings food to members of the homeless community) and Juvenile Hall (builds friendships with struggling youths). Including the Vespers program (voluntary Sunday evening worship service) it is estimated that approximately half the student body is involved with one or more of these sixteen ministries.

_**Practices:**_ On the most recent city-wide United Way Day of Caring (Fall 2006), Westmont had the highest participation of any group in the Santa Barbara area. A total of 115 members of the Westmont community (including some faculty and staff) participated in a variety of service projects, applying their faith in practical ways. This year’s total was the highest in the history of Westmont’s involvement in the Day of Caring.

_**Affections:**_ The vast majority of Westmont seniors (92.2%) reported having a personally meaningful relationship with God (agree or strongly agree). 99.1% reported attending religious services, often or sometimes; and 91.3% reported sharing their faith, often or sometimes, with another person. There is evidence here likewise that students’ faith is not rigid or static (HERI Senior Survey, 2002). *(A more extended discussion of survey and interview evidence pertinent to the Christian Orientation standard may be accessed here.)*
Selected departmental projects relevant to one or more components of this standard

*Knowledge (integration of knowledge about the Christian faith with disciplinary knowledge):* The Art Department has collected progress statements and written reflections from students as part of its demonstrated commitment to help majors think about what it means to work as a Christian artist.

*Virtues:* The Music Department has collected testimony from several years of majors on how their musical development has expressed one or more specific Christian virtues. Multiple music faculty have reflected on how one exemplary student’s collected work and performance illustrate various Christian virtues.

*Affections; Practices:* One of the criteria the Kinesiology department has established for the Senior Seminar capstone paper is the extent to which their majors, in reflecting on their own vocational mission, report a maturing Christian faith.

*Affections; Practices; Virtues:* One of the outcomes the Athletics program looks for in its Golden Eagle Scholar-Athlete banquet presentations is evidence of students’ personal faith and an understanding of the implications of that faith for athletic competition.

Assessment activity pertinent to Christian Orientation has helped to shape the College’s Chapel program, in particular decisions about music. The creation and hiring (2005) of the Adams Chair of Music and Worship (which includes responsibility for music in the Chapel program) were motivated in large part by survey data indicating a perceived need for richer and more varied experiences in the College’s corporate worship.

Under both the current and previous General Education requirements, the Religious Studies Department has primary responsibility for institutional inputs leading to student achievement in the component of Knowledge. The Department is working during Fall 2006 to construct a three-part Christian Orientation “exit exam.” The GE Committee has worked with the Religious Studies Department on the construction and logistics of the testing. Results of pilot testing will be available to the WASC visiting team in February 2007.

**Summary statement on the extent to which students are achieving the College’s general learning outcomes**

There is evidence to suggest our graduates are achieving at least five of our six articulated outcomes fairly consistently. In the remaining area, Research & Technology, we need to engage in additional discussion as a faculty to determine whether the current language adequately captures our collective hopes for students. Moreover, we need to gather additional information to determine which groups of students are achieving the current standards at what particular levels.

Our assessment efforts to date vis-à-vis the six standards raise two more global, and indirectly related, concerns.

One, there is strong evidence that the College needs to communicate more effectively the standards themselves to students. Many students participating in one-on-one interviews with faculty have commented to the effect that the outcomes helped them to understand the education they had received the past four years, but it would have been even more helpful to encounter the standards earlier in their Westmont career. We also need to ensure that new faculty and relevant staff are consistently oriented to the outcomes.

Two, and even more important, we need to continue to clarify the relationship of the six outcomes to the new General Education requirements. The Revision of Westmont’s General Education suggested by the visiting WASC team in 1995 was originally carried out with the goal of aligning coursework more explicitly with specified educational outcomes. Further, we aimed to make such alignment more visible to students. We hoped that they would understand their General Education
experience not only in terms of sampling a range of disciplines, but in terms of fulfilling core institutional competencies and commitments.

To a great extent, the College appears to have succeeded in its original aims. The categories of the new General Education requirements are, as intended, inherently educational—pointing to the outcome to which a particular set of courses is directed. Thus for example individual courses in a wide variety of disciplines may all fulfill the categories of Thinking Globally, or Reasoning Abstractly. All course syllabi approved by the GE Committee for one or more requirements (see sample [ENG 6-1-Spring 2006]) must include a section identifying for students specifically how the course is designed to fulfill larger educational aims of the College. Our Summer Orientation program for first-year students now focuses as much on the philosophy behind the requirements as the requirements themselves. Two of the required GE Common Contexts courses—introductory-level history and philosophy classes—have been designed to acquaint students early in their student careers with the nature and purpose of a Christian liberal arts education. The College’s implementation of a revised GE program represents, in fact, a major institutional achievement since the time of the last WASC review.

The relationship of the new GE categories to the College’s six student learning outcomes, however, remains potentially ambiguous. There is considerable overlap between the GE categories and the six outcomes, but the relationship is neither simple nor consistently direct. The desirability of synthesizing or rhetorically harmonizing the six outcomes and the General Education categories (along with a third institutional document, What do we want for our graduates?) will be referred to the GE Committee, in consultation with the new Provost and new President upon appointment.

III (B) Achieving student learning outcomes in departmental programs

As described in Section II, the College originally planned to center this section of the self-study on the extent to which the six institution-wide outcomes were being fulfilled within departments. Following the WASC review of 1994-95, institutional assessment efforts had focused on “embedding” the College’s six outcomes in each of its constituent individual programs. Over the next ten years, departments invested considerable time in reflecting on the extent to which these institution-wide outcomes applied to the work of their own programs. Until relatively recently, however, less systematic attention was given to developing strategies within departments for the assessment of department-specific knowledge and skills.

Recognizing the need to sharpen discipline-specific outcomes, the PRC eventually asked departments to stretch beyond what they had described in the Irvine self-studies. In the Assessment Plans submitted in January 2004 by each of the College’s twenty-seven units of review (nineteen academic departments and eight additional program areas), departments were asked to identify both discipline-specific outcomes and one or more institution-wide outcome of particular relevance to the department. (For evidence of the progress departments have made since 2004 in articulating departmental outcomes, see Appendix A, Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators).

As departments began to implement their plans in 2004-05, it soon became apparent that many were overstretched—trying to assess too many things simultaneously. While this would be a concern in any institution, it is particularly so in an institution where seven of the nineteen academic departments consist of only three full-time tenure-track faculty; and at least three of the eight additional units of review consist of a single program administrator. Consequently, in responding to the Special Assessment Updates of September 2005, the PRC urged departments to focus their assessment efforts on one or two areas.

Since the Summer of 2005, departments have been pursuing their assessment work in close consultation with their assigned Assessment Coordinator (AC). So long as they have provided evidence of moving forward and evidence of continued dialogue with the PRC, departments have had some degree of freedom to define what particular topics needed to be addressed. Again, in consultation with their assigned AC, they have had considerable latitude with respect to methodology.
Thus the variety manifest in the sets of reports received for 2004-05 and 2005-06. A broad spectrum of approaches may be observed with respect to at least three variables.

There is a range of approaches, first of all, in the extent to which the department has focused on outcomes relevant to College-wide standards or knowledge and skills pertinent solely to the discipline. Departments such as Philosophy, English, and Religious Studies have focused much more on their respective contribution to General Education and the six College-wide outcomes. The Education, Chemistry, and Economics & Business departments, on the other hand, have thus far emphasized the degree to which graduates have demonstrated department-specific knowledge.

A second variable is the extent to which departments have chosen to engage in a broad-ranging, comprehensive self-study versus a decision to focus much more narrowly on a single topic of departmental concern (or similarly, in programs with many sub-components, a decision to focus on one component only). Annual reports for Student Life and Off-Campus Programs, for instance, have highlighted in both cases a single element within the larger domain. Closely related to this tension is the decision to emphasize the achievement of outcomes within specified individual courses versus summative or more obviously programmatic student accomplishments.

A final, less tangible variable is the extent to which departments have chosen to focus on the “already achieved” or the “yet to be accomplished.” Most departments, in fact, have leaned in the latter direction, taking their considerable student achievement for granted and focusing assessment efforts disproportionately on goals yet to be fulfilled. Many departments greatly under-publicize the extent to which their graduates are routinely accomplishing departmental outcomes. Longterm, in the interest of gathering more consistent evidence of educational quality, the College will no doubt need to give greater structure to departments in the assessment process, including additional required categories of evidence. See Section IIIc for additional discussion on this point.

What follows is a program-by-program list, beginning with the nineteen academic departments and followed by the eight additional units of review. In each case sample evidence from Annual and/or “Five-Year” reports has been identified pertinent to the two focus questions of our institutional self-study:

**Units of review, Part I: Academic Departments (19)**

**Art**

*Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others*

- The department has created a portfolio for documenting and encouraging exemplary student written work.
- Vocabulary lists have been developed for each course, with pre- and post-tests and targeted levels of proficiency.
- A comparative rubric is currently under development to measure growth between the sophomore project and senior year capstone project.

*Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals*

- In reference to Departmental Goal #1 (*Students will learn to use the proper language of the visual arts as appropriate for critical analysis, and also use proper terminology of media and technique when critiquing and analyzing works of art*) student vocabulary quizzes administered 2005-06 in Watercolor II improved from 9% to 63%; and 91% to 100% proficient; vocabulary quizzes in Drawing I went from 0% to 75% proficient.
- Four exemplary Art History papers have been archived in the departmental portfolio. Also archived are two papers from Art for Children and one Senior Seminar paper.
Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- The department instituted in 2004 a Sophomore show, in response to student and faculty perceptions that students were not as prepared as possible for their Senior show.

Summary statement:

The department has implemented a range of assessment strategies relevant to articulated outcomes, and is continually refining and exploring new means of documenting and reflecting on student work. The program has committed two departmental meetings a month for group reflection on student achievement. The program is making satisfactory progress toward documenting its group reflection. A variety of creative strategies for exhibiting student work publicly and the involvement of outside voices from the broader arts community serve to validate student achievement.

Biology

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- The department established during 2005-06 an electronic portfolio of student work, including BIO 5 project posters, Summer Research Symposium posters, Biochemistry [BIO 113] project PowerPoint files, and Microbiology [BIO 110] project papers.
- The department has developed specific written criteria for assessing student progress toward Department Goal #3 (presenting the findings of a scientific investigation).
- During the spring of 2007, the department will begin annual administration of the Educational Testing Service's achievement test in Biology, both to first-year students and seniors.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Two student papers presented in the 2005 Student Research Symposium demonstrated students' ability to present findings and the implications of scientific research through an oral presentation. Departmental criteria were all met, with the exception of missing references to published literature in the introduction and discussion sections of their posters.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- In response to departmental reflection on BIO 5 posters and Student Research Symposium papers, the faculty will provide to students during the 2006-07 school year a departmental style manual. This will enhance consistency across the major and give students a clearer advance sense of what the department expects to see in formal written work.

Summary statement:

A set of strategies developed and implemented relatively recently includes appropriate whole-department reflection on student work, using clearly articulated criteria. Both entry-level and senior-level student work has been evaluated for evidence of achievement of departmental goals. The department is scheduling an annual program of nationally-normed tests to elicit additional data on students' mastery of disciplinary content.

Chemistry

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others
• The department administers the American Chemical Society exams in selected courses annually, including general, organic, analytical, inorganic, and physical chemistry. The department has identified a standing goal of students’ average scores at the 60th percentile or above, plus at least 30% of individual students scoring at or above the 80th percentile.
• Faculty maintain a data base of graduates’ post-graduate career paths, including both further education and employment.
• The program tracks students’ scores on the MCAT.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

• From 1999 through 2002—years for which the most complete data is available—the department knows of 23 graduates (out of total of 29; or 79%) who entered chemistry-related fields of their choice, including 65% of the total who entered doctoral-level programs.
• For the Spring 2005 administration of American Chemical Society examinations (five courses covering four subject areas), the departmental benchmark of 60th percentile average was met in four courses; a 59th percentile average was achieved in the fifth course. The department benchmark of at least 30% of students scoring above 80th percentile was exceeded in all five courses. In Honors Chemistry, 95% of students scored above the 80th percentile.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

• In response to the American Chemical Society’s Committee on Professional Training, the department will modify curriculum to encourage all students to take a course in biochemistry (from most recent cohort, only 7 of 11 graduates completed the biochemistry course).

Summary statement:

The Chemistry Department has an array of well-established processes for on-going assessment in place and an impressive collection of data to support the educational effectiveness of its program. The department has a particularly strong accountability system for disciplinary content-knowledge, as well as substantial evidence of students’ proficiency in research. Data on the career and advanced professional training paths of recent graduates provides additional corroborating evidence of program quality.

Communication Studies

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

• The department has developed a new mission statement and has articulated student learning outcomes.
• A pilot alumni survey was developed and administered during 2005-2006 to determine graduates’ perception of the extent to which the Communications major achieves its mission.
• Faculty have developed a rubric to be used department-wide in the evaluation of written work. Faculty reviewed samples of student work from several courses as a basis from which to create the rubric. Papers used to create the rubric were archived and will be added to annually in order to develop a departmental portfolio.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

• The recent alumni survey described in department’s 2005-06 Annual Report indicates high levels of graduates’ satisfaction in ten areas especially pertinent to department goals.
• Four group projects completed during COM 129: Persuasion & Propaganda were shown in a public forum during the Fall of 2005.
Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- As a result of the review of COM 129 projects, expectations for that particular assignment will be modified vis-à-vis the clarity of directions for public performance.
- In response to earlier findings that students were too often unprepared for upper-division courses, the department has committed to enforce more consistently pre-requisite requirements introduced during 2004-05 for COM 98.

Summary statement:

The department has developed a foundation toward effective assessment, despite having a small number of faculty and some recent turnover. The alumni survey is under revision. Faculty are reviewing assessment tools from the National Communications Association. Department has also recently hired a new faculty member with expertise in assessment, and is creating a portfolio of student work to be available for public review.

Economics/Business

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Alumni have been comprehensively surveyed on a periodic basis, most recently in 2005.
- Employer evaluation letters from student internships over a 25-year-plus period are regularly discussed as a department and archived.
- One-on-one senior exit interviews have been administered selectively since 2004, for a total of ten formal interviews completed as of 2006.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- In national and international business competitions requiring the demonstration of skills and knowledge closely related to departmental goals, thirteen student business plans since 1990 have been selected as semi-finalists. In the Midwest Enterprise Creation Competition in Indianapolis in March 2003, for instance, Westmont students won first place and $7500.
- On the most recent Alumni Survey, 34% of departmental graduates (as opposed to 22.6% in 1992) reported earning an MBA, other master’s degree, JD, or doctorate. Essentially all alumni responding to the question (97%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were well prepared for their graduate school experience.
- Departmental alumni have in recent years been accepted into and successfully completed law school at institutions such as Harvard, UCLA, and New York University. Alumni have also completed graduate programs in economics and/or business at Yale, Northwestern, Dartmouth, the University of Washington, and other top-ranked schools of business.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- In response to alumni surveys and other signs that students have not fully understood the educational philosophy of the major, the department has recently developed and widely circulated a purpose statement, to be discussed in classes and included in all promotional materials.

Summary statement:

The department has devoted considerable thought to its mission and desired outcomes for graduates, and has collected a range of data indicative of students’ achievement and departmental quality. The program is working to link specific assessment strategies more directly to particular departmental outcomes, and to build into its assessment infrastructure more collective review of student work.
**Education**

*Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others*

- The department receives extensive evaluation from master teachers annually on each student teacher. Evaluation procedures explicitly reference State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s 13 TPEs (Teaching Performance Expectations), and thus are linked to department goals.
- The department has for many years surveyed first-year graduates on their level of preparation for the profession. At the same time, the department has surveyed the employers of first-year teachers.
- State exams such as the CSET Multiple Subject (Liberal Studies majors) and the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA—Elementary Credential Program graduates) provide evidence of whether department is meeting state standards for content-knowledge and professional knowledge.

*Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals*

- Both in 2004-05 and 2005-06, average evaluations of student teachers in 45 of 47 areas of proficiency met the departmental benchmark of 4.00 (Very Good) on a five-point scale.
- 100% of Credential Program graduates have passed the RICA.

*Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts*

- A memo was sent to all faculty teaching Liberal Studies courses, encouraging them to give students more practice in research (August 2006).
- Effective 2005-06, Credential Program students complete additional activities/assignment related to utilizing data from state tests in order to plan compensatory instruction.

*Summary statement:*

A wide range of instruments and resources all point to the effectiveness of the department in meeting goals in both the Liberal Studies program (pre-elementary education) and the Credential program (elementary and secondary education). The department emphasizes teacher candidates’ ability to demonstrate proficiencies identified by the State of California as essential both for individual candidates and for program accreditation.

**English**

*Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others:*

- The faculty collectively reflected on selected student papers during 2004-05 in light of the department goal that students be able to think analogically.
- Based on collective grading of ENG 6 papers, the department has developed a detailed grading rubric for use in ENG 6—a course typically used to fulfill the General Education requirement in Reading Imaginative Literature. The descriptors are designed to help students develop a clearer understanding of the characteristics of well-written literature papers. The rubric has served as a fulcrum for departmental conversation about assessing writing in general.
- The department has recently developed a much more comprehensive list of learning outcomes for its graduates.

*Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals:*

- Assessment of senior papers during 2004-05 indicated that students had the ability to think and write analogically at an acceptable level.
Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts:

- Effective Fall 2004, the department is distributing to all students in ENG 6 classes a detailed rubric delineating the qualities of papers at different performance levels.

Summary statement:

A departmental focus on collective reading and reflecting on student writing has led to greater consensus about what constitutes quality work. The department continues to strategize toward the most effective means of demonstrating to others the achievement of its majors and how to involve those outside the department in this process.

History

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Department faculty all regularly attend the capstone course (HIS 198), in which majors complete a research project. Reflection on student accomplishment in this course is the focus of at least one departmental meeting each year. The faculty have developed a set of benchmarks and a grading rubric for the papers’ assessment.
- History majors in HIS 198 complete a written survey that includes assessment of historical methodology.
- The department has articulated learning outcomes and developed these with great precision for discipline-specific skills.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- In HIS 1 (introduction to methodology for majors), Spring 2005, student analyses of primary sources showed significant growth with respect to interacting with details, identification of bias, wrestling with pertinent historical questions, and evidence of historical analysis (see Five Year Report, p. 7 and ff., for details).
- In HIS 121 students demonstrated measurable growth, pre- and post-testing, with respect to identifying historical arguments, conclusions, and assessing the reliability of documents.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- Concerns about students’ grasp of historical methodology surfaced in initial departmental conversations pertinent to assessment efforts. This led to the decision to require HIS 198 of all history majors, and to seek to clarify the relationship of HIS 1 (introduction to methodology) and HIS 198 (capstone course in which methodology is also a major preoccupation).

Summary statement:

Assessment activities at both the individual course and whole program level gauge students’ growth. Considerable emphasis has been given to the departmental contribution to students’ General Education experience. At the same time the department has assembled a range of data demonstrating majors’ achievement relative to articulated outcomes. The program has established habits of examining actual student work and reflecting collectively on the same.

Kinesiology

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- A rubric has been developed for collecting evidence pertinent to four departmental goals, in papers to be completed by all majors in their Senior Seminar. Quantitative benchmarks of attainment have been set for each of the four goals.
• The department has developed its own senior exit interview questions and administered the set of questions to ten of thirty graduating seniors in 2006. A number of other seniors were interviewed previously using the college’s generic format for senior interviews.
• A comprehensive survey of alumni was completed in 2004.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

• Student papers in the Senior Seminar class indicated that 93% reported evidence of some or well-developed career goals, surpassing the departmental benchmark of 80%. With respect to demonstrating awareness of social justice issues pertinent to kinesiology, 44% indicated a growing or well-developed understanding, well below the departmental benchmark of 80% (2005-06)

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

• Several courses, including General Nutrition, Special Populations, and the Kinesiology program in Europe will all provide increased attention to social justice issues beginning in 2006-07.

Summary statement:

Survey data and student self-reporting point to high quality of program—as well as highlighting the attention the program has given to cultivating students’ habits of reflection. The department demonstrates continuous growth in refining its assessment strategies.

Mathematics and Computer Science

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

• The faculty have articulated specific outcomes for students’ use of technical word processing software in selected classes, and followed through in reporting on student success.
• The department provides mathematics instruction for Liberal Studies students. The department goal is that all of these students pass the mathematics portion of the CSET.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

• Math and Computer Science majors have participated in the on-campus Student Research Symposium and have co-authored with faculty articles four articles in peer-reviewed journals since 2003.
• The department evaluated students’ use of technical work processing software for assignments in MA 19, MA 108, and MA 110 during the 2005-2006 academic year. Target figures for the students’ use of the software were met.
• Ten of eleven available CSET scores for Liberal Studies students in 2004-05 and 2005-06 received a 4 in mathematics—the maximum score. All of the students passed this portion of the exam. For Westmont Liberal Studies students as a whole, math scores were the highest of the seven content areas tested.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

• Even though the department met its goal in student use of technical word processing software, the faculty found that due to the high cost of easy-to-use software, it is only available on the computers in the laboratory in the library. Since this was less convenient for students than having it on their own computers, they tended to use this software only when required. More easily available software is more difficult for students to use. As a result, the department is rethinking whether or not this outcome should be retained.
Summary statement:

The department has begun to implement assessment activity focused on one particular skill area and has identified an area of emphasis for program improvement. The faculty have developed a more explicit list of student learning outcomes, and are working toward the implementation of a more comprehensive set of assessment strategies in order to document student achievement and overall program quality more fully.

Modern Languages

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Beginning in January 2004, the department administered pre- and post-test exercises to assess language fluency in Spanish 2, 3, 4, and 100; also in French 1 and 3. A departmental benchmark of a 60-point increase was established. As of June 2006, the department is emphasizing alternative pre/post strategies toward assessing achievement of fluency.
- A departmental writing portfolio has been created with representative pieces of student writing from all language levels, using the essay portion of the final exam wherever appropriate.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- In French 2, Spring 2006, from 87-100% of students achieved targeted proficiency levels, exceeding departmental benchmarks and at the same time demonstrating significant pre/post course improvement.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- Lower-division Spanish curriculum has been redesigned, such that Spanish 1, 2, and 3 are now all “introductory” in the sense of students’ being introduced to new material. No longer are students expected to “review” material in Spanish 3 that they were never exposed to.

Summary statement:

The department has gathered considerable data especially pertinent to outcomes of language fluency and cross-cultural perspectives. Continuous reflection on the assessment process thus far has led to discarding some initial strategies and experimenting with new ones. Data from both language classes on campus and participants in department-led off-campus programs suggest that students are achieving articulated outcomes.

Music

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Faculty engage in a comprehensive review of the work of one senior student annually. The focus in 2005-06 was the extent to which the student’s work demonstrated the Christian virtues delineated in the pertinent departmental goal. All seniors have participated in a self-assessment exercise likewise focused on the attainment of Christian virtues within the field of music.
- A piano proficiency exam with detailed criteria is a graduation requirement for all majors.
- The department has on file audio and video recordings of selected student performances and juried exams.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- The portfolio of one recent senior (2005-06) includes eleven musical scores and recordings, as well as faculty reviewers’ comments.

Westmont College Educational Effectiveness Report
• The department has archived results of piano proficiency exams since 2001.
• The department has collected seniors’ self-assessments of Christian virtues as developed and demonstrated through the music major and various ensembles.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts:

• Based on the last review of a selected senior’s work, the decision was made to evaluate the effectiveness of the sight-singing curriculum. The chair has recommended changes in the days and time of class meetings, has committed additional time to sight-singing and dictation, and is in the process of greatly enhancing student resources through the development of an on-line learning module.

Summary statement:

The department has incorporated into its own assessment work the results of working with an external consultant. In addition to group reflection on student achievement and actual student work, the most recent department report includes extensive discussion of its long-term vision and specific steps leading to fulfilling the vision.

Philosophy

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

• Specific written assignments and exam questions in required General Education classes target selected departmental goals.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

• Students in Professor Callaway’s PHI 6 class moved from an average of 2.06 to an average of 3.28 (maximum score of 4) on a pre-test/post-test exercise in recognizing, evaluating, and constructing philosophical arguments (2005-06).
• In Professor Taylor’s Honors section of PHI 6, all 23 students demonstrated the ability to articulate the role of philosophy in a Christian liberal arts education, including an understanding of worldview, philosophy, and Christian liberal arts education.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

• Department faculty have decided to collaborate on the preparation of thorough instructions on how to write a well-crafted argument, to be included as an appendix to the syllabus of all Reasoning Abstractly courses offered by the department.

Summary statement:

The department is currently emphasizing its contributions to General Education rather than the achievement of particular outcomes by its majors. Faculty have worked to sharpen the language of their goals, and to apply shared goals to assessment strategies within individual classes. Initial assessment efforts indicate departmental success in demonstrating growth in students in targeted areas.

Physics

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

• The department has engaged in collective examination of student laboratory abstracts, identifying areas where students are and are not meeting departmental standards for scientific writing.
• Graduates over the last nine years have been tracked with respect to numbers engaging in collaborative research with faculty, numbers earning advanced degrees, and the particular graduate programs into which majors have been admitted.
Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Student laboratory reports on file and collectively examined by the department demonstrate students’ ability (among other skills) to describe effectively experimental procedures, draw appropriate evidence-based conclusions, and follow recommended format.
- Over the last nine years, ten students have pursued advanced degrees in engineering or physics, including eight in physics doctoral programs. Among other schools, graduates have been admitted to Stanford, the University of Chicago, Cambridge University (UK), the California Institute of Technology, and UC-Berkeley.
- Eight of seventeen students who have participated in collaborative research with faculty over the past nine years — supported in many cases by the department’s National Science Foundation Research at Undergraduate Institutions grants—have presented work at national meetings of the Division of Nuclear Physics of the American Physical Society.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- A training program for departmental teaching assistants instituted in the Fall of 2006 has been informed by survey data from other students, pinpointing areas where assistants in the past have been more or less effective.
- The department has adopted a universal template for scientific abstract writing that all laboratory instructors will follow. Students will also engage in the future in more peer review of assignments being submitted.

Summary statement:

The department has emphasized the production of student research and the success of its graduates in internships and graduate study in order to validate the quality of its programs. Disciplinary standards are implicitly enforced through competition to collaborate in faculty research, to present at national conferences, and to gain admission or earn fellowships for graduate study. The department’s recent efforts with respect to laboratory reporting provide formative feedback to students earlier in the program, enhancing all students’ chances for later success.

Political Science

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- The department reviews selected student papers from PO 40—Empirical Political Research—and several upper division courses in light of departmental standards for student research.
- Since 2000, the department administers alumni surveys in order to determine graduates’ perceptions of their political science education.
- The department receives and archives internship-supervisor evaluations.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Student papers from PO 40 and other courses have been reviewed and discussed by the department faculty.
- The department has compiled a notebook on the performance of students on the LSAT (not all students who take the LSAT, however, are Political Science majors).

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- As a result of reviewing student research papers, the department is refining the assignment in PO 40 and similar projects to more fully achieve student learning outcomes in the area of research.
- The department is committed to placing more emphasis on career preparation, including scheduling personal assessment and career focus workshops with the Life Planning Office, and taking fuller advantage of resources available from the American Political Science Association.

Westmont College Educational Effectiveness Report
Summary statement:

The department is building a framework toward an effective assessment program. The faculty have identified a student-requested area for program improvement (career preparation). They continue to develop strategies for more comprehensive assessment of student learning outcomes.

Psychology

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Papers in selected courses have been studied for evidence of plagiarism, and the number of plagiarism incidents measured.
- Common grading rubrics are used in the General Psychology sections and in the four upper-division laboratory courses.
- All senior research students are required to exhibit their work at the College’s annual Student Research Symposium.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- In PSY 115: Child Development, 85% of students’ final rewritten papers complied with APA standards (2005-06).
- In PSY 1: General Psychology, scores on student papers increased 2 to 8 points from the first to the last assignment, reflecting professors’ intentional efforts to teach discipline-appropriate writing skills.
- In PSY 1: General Psychology, incidents of plagiarism declined from at least 72% of the class on the first assignment to between 8 and 14% on the third assignment (2005-06).

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- In response to concerns about the quality of senior research, the departmental requirement was changed from a 1-semester, 4-unit course; to a 2-semester sequence of 2-units each.
- The number of assignments in General Psychology has been changed so students can learn paraphrasing and source-acknowledgement successfully.

Summary statement:

The department has collected considerable data directly relevant to program improvement goals. Careful analysis of student writing and the emphasis given to one particular program concern (plagiarism) has led to measurable improvement—a clear example of closing the assessment loop.

Religious Studies

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- The department has administered pre- and post-tests of content in selected sections of the three required General Education [Common Contexts] courses taught in the RS department. Effective Fall 2006, the department will administer knowledge pre- and post-tests in all sections of Common Contexts courses and compile aggregate results.
- Two research papers from the Spring of 2006 were examined collectively in relation to departmental criteria for Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking.
- A survey of alumni from 1991-2005 was completed in the spring of 2006, including forty respondents, focusing on Active Societal Engagement and Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking.
Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Student papers examined in the Summer of 2006 demonstrated achievement of departmental goals for use of contemporary biblical scholarship, critical thinking, and interdisciplinary habits of mind.
- Among many other alumni quotes pertinent to the achievement of critical thinking: “Learning basic critical techniques enables me to find my own answers by using various research techniques;” “[The department] taught me how to question and embrace hard teachings and problems;” “[I have the tools to navigate and synthesize complex arguments;” “Specifically, the Religious Studies degree helped me acknowledge the complexity of faith, history, interpretation of texts… It was so important to be challenged with alternative viewpoints, both conservative and liberal, so I could wrestle with Truth and Reality, becoming more aware, gaining deeper knowledge and faith and sharpening my thinking, writing, and analytical skills by constantly being challenged with things that are not black and white, but often very grey.”

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- In response to student concerns expressed over a number of years, the department has recently hired a full-time faculty member in world religions.

Summary statement:

The department has devoted attention both to the achievement of its majors and the achievement of students in the department’s three required GE courses. The faculty are working closely with the College’s GE Committee on institution-wide assessment of the Christian Orientation standard. Department faculty continue to work toward the refinement of assessment strategies that foster continued group reflection on summative student achievement.

Sociology-Anthropology

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- The department has clearly articulated and published student learning outcomes organized into four skill areas. As of 2005-2006, the department reads and evaluates all senior seminar papers for evidence that students are demonstrating achievement in all four skill areas.
- Since 2003, a survey to assess student perceptions of achievement of student learning goals has been administered to graduating seniors, either through the mail or (more recently) during the senior seminar.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Initial reading of selected senior papers in 2005-06 indicated that students were not, in fact, demonstrating certain major skill areas—methodological skills and faith-learning integration in particular. This finding has informed the changes below.
- In the senior survey, students report weakness in the area of methodological skills, particularly quantitative analysis. This data is consistent with faculty observation of weak skills or lack of use of these skills in courses where they would be appropriate.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- Effective 2006-07, clearer assignment criteria for senior seminar papers have been developed along with grading rubric and benchmarks.
- Because of personnel changes, the department has not been able to offer quantitative analysis as a part of its own course offerings. The program has committed to finding candidates with strengths in teaching methodology in its upcoming
search (2006-07). In addition, the department is selecting courses where modules requiring quantitative skills can be incorporated to reinforce methodological (particularly quantitative) skills.

Summary statement:

Despite some transitions in leadership, the department has collected survey data and has begun to assess student work in relation to articulated outcomes for student learning. The department’s assessment infrastructure has been refined and the program is now clearly poised to demonstrate the achievement of its majors.

Theatre Arts

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Departmental faculty reflect together on senior projects, identifying evidence of achievement with respect to three sets of established goals.
- Departmental faculty interview all majors one-on-one for 15-20 minutes at the end of each semester (instituted 2005-06).
- Selected graduating seniors have been interviewed in May, beginning 2004. Samples of faculty written reflection on interviews are included in 2005-06 annual report.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- The senior projects themselves—written faculty reflection on which is available for review—attest to student achievement in relation to departmental criteria.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- The department is currently exploring how to build more creative individual work into students’ experience earlier in the program.

Summary statement:

The department has collected a variety of evidence of student achievement and the effectiveness of its programs. Faculty have engaged in collective reflection on Senior Projects in relation to articulated outcomes. Particular emphasis is being given to interviewing majors—not simply at the end of the program, but throughout the student’s academic journey.

Units of review, Part II: Other areas of the College (8)

Academic Advising and Disability Services (AADS)

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- AADS has clearly articulated student goals regarding use of services, accommodation letters, self-advocacy, and faculty compliance with requested accommodations.
- Individual data is maintained on each student who has identified disabilities with regard to goals mentioned above.
- One-on-one meetings with students with disabilities include time for collection of evidence relevant to program goals.
- Students on academic probation also have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with Director of AADS. During Spring 2005, for instance, over half of the students on probation met with director.
Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- During 2005-06, 100% of first-year students were successful in properly requesting and eliciting one-time services. Requests for continuing services were, in the case of proctored exams, 85% successful in Fall 2005 and 88% successful in Spring 2006.
- For second-year students with identified disabilities, 100% were successful in properly requesting and eliciting one-time services. Requests for continuing services were, in the case of proctored exams, 79% successful in the fall semester and 81% successful in the spring.
- For students placed on probation during the spring of 2005, 69.6% (just short of program goal of 70%) were successful in getting off probation within one semester.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- New communication procedures were developed during the Spring of 2006 for students needing scanned books.

Summary statement:

Especially for a one-person department, Academic Advising & Disability Services has a clearly defined, established, and effective set of procedures for assessing program goals. Department has set clear quantitative benchmarks of success, gathered data systematically, disaggregated data by class rank, and provides evidence of meeting articulated program outcomes.

Athletics

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- The annual Golden Eagle Scholar-Athlete banquet gives coaches an opportunity to reflect publicly on how program goals have been achieved in the lives of particular student-athletes. (Golden Eagle awards are given to the senior with the highest GPA on each of the College's athletic teams, and by their nature, these awards call attention to the ideal of excelling on and off the athletic field.)
- The department monitors graduation rates and academic GPAs of all students receiving sports-related financial aid.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- The Golden Eagle Scholar-Athlete banquet itself is video-recorded. Samples of written coaches’ comments concerning student achievement of departmental goals are included in the Athletics Annual Report, 2005-06.
- In one recent four-year period (the most recent data available), students receiving financial aid for athletics graduated in the expected four years at a rate of 83%, as opposed to 73% for the College as a whole.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- Based on an analysis of what did and did not work in the recent Personal Player Development Initiative in women’s tennis, the department is now building in a video-analysis component to the project, as well as more two-way conversation. The model will soon be extended to men’s and women’s basketball.

Summary statement:

The program has collected a variety of information pertinent to the success of the College’s athletes. Graduation rates and GPAs of athletes commensurate with or exceeding institutional averages attest to the success of the program in meeting articulated goals. The department is continuing to work on its processes for faculty reflection on student testimonials, more explicitly linking student comments to the department’s desired outcomes.
Chapel

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- A brief survey concerning the purpose of chapel was conducted during Spring 2006. Over 700 responses were received.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- As of October 2006, the program is still struggling to produce substantial evidence of student learning. The assigned Assessment Liaison is working closely with the program, and plans to have evidence of student work and appropriate reflection thereon available to the visiting team as of February.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- During the Summer of 2006, a brochure describing the purpose of chapel was developed and prepared for distribution to all students. This was done in response to the survey identified above.

Summary statement:

The campus pastor’s office has recently begun to institute a program of assessment. Desired outcomes have been articulated, and some initial efforts (that is, a student survey) to gather data were launched during the Spring of 2005. The program will continue to work on sharpening its statement of outcomes and continue to experiment with additional assessment strategies during 2006-07. The College will continue to support the department as it moves forward in the assessment process.

General Education (Revised program effective for students entering Fall 2004)

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- In the Fall of 2004, a group of twenty-five entering students was selected to form an initial assessment cohort—students who agreed to participate in a survey each term probing one or more aspects of the GE program. Collected student writing includes essays on the goals of the GE program itself, student critiques of their own previous essays (assessed in relation to nine criteria for evidence of communication skills), and essays on current controversial issues (assessed by a faculty committee of six during the Spring of 2006 with specific reference to Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking).
- In the Fall of 2006, one hundred randomly selected students were assigned to take the Collegiate Learning Assessment exam (CLA). The performance task portion of the exam is being used to assess critical-interdisciplinary thinking and compare Westmont students with their counterparts at schools with a similar academic profile.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Approximately half of the student responses from the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 cohort assessments contained specific examples which demonstrated either understanding or appreciation of the purposes of the GE program. For example, one student wrote, “The ideas I discuss in one class often flow fluidly into the next, and although the subject matter may be entirely different, there is always some element of each class that can be transferred from one subject to another. It was necessary, both in New Testament and in World Art, for me to attempt to step somewhat outside of my own cultural context in order to see and better understand other cultures. Discussions about classifying art also flowed nicely into discussions about classifying plant and animal life in Biology.” Another student wrote: “The emic perspective constitutes an anthropological concept of seeing through the eyes of the group being studied. This was a really new concept for me, but I realized it is so important for effective communication as a politician, in the medical community, or in sharing the gospel. In this sense a GE course, otherwise unnecessary, will help make me better in my chosen field of study.”
• Of fourteen essays written in the students' fourth semester at Westmont and evaluated by faculty for evidence of critical-interdisciplinary thinking, five were rated as “Developed,” seven as “Developing,” and two as “Undeveloped.” There was a high correlation between students whose work was rated as “Developed,” and those who had completed at least two writing-intensive courses.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

• As noted elsewhere, the overall design of the revised (effective Fall 2004) program of GE represents the College’s responsiveness to assessment data. One example would be the inclusion of a foreign language requirement, an area that much survey data had indicated was a weakness in the old program.

Summary statement:

The General Education Committee is shifting from an initial assessment strategy focused on how well students understood the nature and purposes of the revised GE program to a focus on student performance. The GE Committee’s strategies are clearly aligned to the College’s six Student Learning Outcomes. In addition to monitoring survey results, the GE Committee has already collected and analyzed several sets of student writing prompts, and will continue to include in its portfolio of assessment strategies the direct examination of student work.

Internships

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

• Students in the Internship Seminar do pre- and post-semester writing exercises, currently focused on students’ understanding of vocation.
• Internship supervisors evaluate students’ performance on the job.
• Interns share portfolios and speak at a public forum for other faculty, students, and on-site supervisors at the end of each semester.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

• Evaluation of students’ written work on the meaning of vocation reveals significant growth over the course of the semester. Students are more apt to recognize, for instance, that vocation is an on-going process, that it is not limited to one’s paid employment, and that it involves the world’s needs, not simply the needs of the individual.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

• Expectations for the Internship class will be modified for students receiving only two credits of internship, rather than all students having to complete the work designed for those enrolled for four credits of internship.

Summary statement:

Especially for a one-person department, the Office of Internships has implemented a wide-ranging set of assessment strategies. Program outcomes are linked to broad institutional outcomes. The department has engaged in extensive reflection on the meaning of data gathered, and has identified potential program changes as a result of such data and reflection.
Library

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- A library skills pre-test is administered to students in the General Research course (APP 1), and a formerly-optional post-test will be administered to all students in the future.
- A survey has been administered to seniors and freshmen.
- A majority of students attending course-integrated library instruction sessions complete evaluation sheets.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Senior scores on the Library skills survey demonstrate major progress in knowledge of reference tools and techniques relative to first-year student scores (see Library Annual Report, 2005-06, for complete data).

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- Existing online help pages are being revised, 2006-07, in response to student survey comments.
- Course-integrated library instruction sessions are in a continual state of revision in response to student evaluations. For example, one course-related session will have double time in response to student concerns expressed the previous time it was offered.

Summary statement:

The library staff has instituted a variety of processes for the collection and analysis of data, including indicators of student knowledge, collections, and physical facilities. Survey data available to this point suggest that students are growing in their knowledge of research tools and procedures over the course of their time at Westmont. Expansion of the liaison program—linking individual staff members with each academic department—holds the potential to involve more faculty in library programs in the future and to improve assessment of how the library is meeting student and faculty information needs.

Off-Campus Programs

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Off-Campus Programs has clearly articulated student learning outcomes that relate to selected college-wide student learning standards.
- The percentage of students participating in a Westmont off-campus experience is calculated annually.
- Students participating in the Westmont-in-Mexico program take the Intercultural Development Inventory before beginning the orientation course, and at the end of the re-entry course taken after the semester in Mexico. Students keep portfolios of all written work completed during orientation, in-country, and in re-entry courses. These portfolios are also evaluated by program staff.

Sample evidence of student achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Compared to the class of 1996, when 52% of graduates had enrolled in a Westmont off-campus program, 60% of the class of 2005 had participated in such a program.
- Students participating in the Fall 2004 and Fall 2005 Westmont-in-Mexico program made significant gains on the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) in the direction away from ethnocentrism and toward ethno-relativism between pre-and post-test. Student essays indicate greater self-understanding, cultural awareness, and cross-cultural adaptation skills consistent with the IDI findings.
Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- Based on data showing that students in the natural and behavioral sciences were least likely to participate in Off-Campus Programs, the department recently asked chairs in the sciences to partner in identifying appropriate programs, as well as conducting its own research toward the establishment of new programs particularly accessible to and appropriate for science majors.

Summary statement:

The range of opportunities administered through Off-Campus Programs raises particular challenges in the assessment process. Strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of individual off-campus programs are long-established, both the programs sponsored by the College and OCP’s many partners. The institutionally-sponsored and relatively recent Westmont-in-Mexico program has been a focus of much recent assessment activity—particularly as this is increasingly being seen as a model for other off-campus programs. Recent meta-assessment efforts have focused on understanding (and improving) student access to off-campus opportunities.

Student Life

Sample evidence of processes in place to demonstrate educational effectiveness to others

- Student Life has articulated specific student learning outcomes with specific indicators for performance and behavior. During the Fall of 2006, each component program under Student Life is adapting the learning outcomes to its particular area.
- The Office of Life Planning, a program within Student Life, completed a program effectiveness survey of over 500 students during the Spring of 2006. For a complete report on the survey, see the Student Life Annual Report, June 2006.

Sample evidence of achievement in relation to departmental or program goals

- Data is kept on student participation in a range of service activities.
- The department has “before” and “after” samples of student resumes as a result of completing the Life Planning Office’s Resume Doctor program.

Example of changes made in response to assessment efforts

- The Office of Life Planning is working throughout the 2006-07 year to develop an advertising/marketing campaign to raise the visibility of its services on campus.

Summary statement:

Like Off-Campus Programs, the Office of Student Life is the umbrella for a number of component programs (among others: Residence Life, the Counseling Center, the Office of Life Planning, First Year Programs, and Intercultural Programs)—potentially complexifying the task of assessment. Outcomes for the Office of Student Life as a whole have been identified, along with links to the College’s six student learning outcomes. As each department articulates these outcomes in the context of each particular department, specific assessment strategies will be identified, including the use of institutional surveys, participation in the Senior Interview project, and specific assessment projects targeting a particular component program.

Reflection on implementing processes and demonstrating achievement of identified learning outcomes at the department level

In September of 2006, departments and programs were asked to complete a nine-point self-assessment of their assessment infrastructure. Twenty-five of twenty-seven departments responded. In 15 of 25 cases (60%), the Program Review
Committee agreed with the department’s self-judgment. What is reported below is the judgment of the PRC rather than the department itself (Chart showing both perceptions may be viewed here).

Of the College’s twenty-seven units of review, as of October 2006, we would classify

- Four departments as having provided evidence of well developed assessment infrastructures, including evidence of actual results pertinent to identified outcomes.
- Seventeen departments as having provided evidence of emerging assessment infrastructures (including six “high emerging” and two “low emerging”), including some evidence of actual results pertinent to identified outcomes.
- Six departments as having provided evidence of a minimally developed assessment infrastructures, and/or less evidence of results pertinent to identified outcomes.

Of the College’s nineteen academic departments all have provided some evidence of making changes in response to data collected. Likewise, of the College’s eight other program areas, all have provided some evidence of making such changes. A central theme in the changes reported is a commitment to provide additional clarity to students about course or program expectations. The faculty themselves report in a number of cases greater clarity and consensus about expectations as a result of engaging in group reflection. Modern Languages, History, Sociology, and Art are examples of departments where recent assessment activity has been instrumental in leading to curricular or program changes.

**Summary statement for Section III (B): Achieving departmental outcomes**

Relative to where Westmont stood in 2002 or even March of 2005, the College’s departments and programs have significantly strengthened their individual assessment infrastructure. Virtually all departments have made substantial progress toward providing evidence of student achievement in relation to articulated outcomes. The PRC continues to work one-on-one with each department or program, especially those currently categorized above as having a minimally developed assessment infrastructure.

**III (C) Strengthening our program review infrastructure**

At the time of the Institutional Proposal (2003), Westmont committed itself to strengthening its structures for program review. Strengthening in this case meant—first of all—full implementation of a substantially new process. In 1994, when the previous WASC self-study was prepared, there had been no formal system for regular and on-going departmental review. Developing and refining such a system, however, has been a priority for the College ever since.

Much of the institutional history leading toward the creation of the Program Review Committee (PRC) in 2002 has already been related. Nevertheless, to understand the College’s current stage of development, it is essential to revisit something of that story—including the infancy of the process at the time of the Capacity and Preparatory Review in 2005. The role of the Irvine self-studies (1999-2001) as a prototype and de facto guide for later assessment efforts at the department level bears particular scrutiny. These twenty reviews provide strong evidence of engagement on the part of the faculty as a whole (again, see exhibit on Program Review, 1995 to 2005). Likewise, they demonstrate deliberate and systematic alignment of individual programs with College-wide outcomes (see for instance the report from Psychology) and provide evidence of extensive dialogue between departments and the provisional review committee. The completed reviews are admirably broad-ranging in their description of each department’s current activity and the directions each might explore in the future. Finally, the process leading to the reports further acquainted faculty with the notion of an outcomes-based model of review, and at least raised questions pertinent to assessment.
The self-studies did, in fact, fulfill their intended purposes—based on Westmont’s understanding of the assessment process at the time. As a model for later program review documents, though, these reports also reveal certain potential weaknesses: (1) As discussed previously, the focus of the reports on broad institutional outcomes obscured in many cases the need to articulate clearly discipline- or program-specific outcomes; (2) The reports themselves (as opposed to institutional response) reflect primarily an internal perspective, that of department members; (3) The sections on assessment are at times underdeveloped, more exploratory than firmly committed, and/or they focus on assessment at the course level rather than on capstone experiences or other summative program measures. In any case, and perhaps most consequentially, the reviews talk about assessment rather than reporting on and analyzing the results of assessment activity already undertaken; and finally (4) Few if any reports include the kinds of comprehensive and detailed data (e.g., numbers of graduates, other demographic data, precise budgetary information, implementation timelines) often called for in program review reports intended for purposes of strategic planning.

The report of the CPR team in April 2005 and Commission Action Letter of June 2005 are relatively silent on this set of twenty reviews—neither the weaknesses nor strengths of this significant three-year-plus project appear to be discussed directly. All of the issues discussed above, however, were raised to one degree or another in relation to the College’s overall achievement. In particular the visiting team expressed concern about #2 (the College’s model of review, which appeared to include too little perspective from outside the department, and held the potential for too little departmental accountability) and #3 (the apparent unavailability of student work to demonstrate achievement of articulated outcomes).

Since receiving the Commission Action Letter of 6-30-05, the reorganized joint PRC-WASC Steering Committee has actively sought to address all four of these issues. At the conceptual level, the committee has worked to sharpen the College’s overall assessment strategy and structure. At the same time its members—doubling as Assessment Coordinators—have worked individually with each of the College’s twenty-seven units of review to implement existing policies. Collectively the committee is helping to establish within each department a set of procedures that includes the examination of actual student work. The preceding section of this report (reviewing each department’s achievement of identified outcomes) may also be seen then, on another level, as evidence of the College’s achievement in relation to its third goal—strengthening its structures of review. Subsequent pages provide more focused discussion of the four issues identified above.

(1) Clarifying program-specific outcomes

Identifying and gaining consensus on outcomes is obviously fundamental to all further assessment activity. With the support of the Assessment Coordinators, all twenty-seven of the College’s units of review have worked to clarify a list of outcomes specific to their own program. In most cases, such outcomes were at least implicit in the earlier self-studies and 2004 assessment plans, but were not necessarily articulated in a manageable form conducive to department-level assessment activity. Appendix A, labeled Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators, includes lists of standing outcomes for each department or program.

One recurring theme in conversations between departments and the PRC has been how the department will know it has succeeded—or not succeeded—in meeting articulated goals. A review of departmental reports from 2005 and 2006 indicates that a majority of departments have heard and acted on the message to identify benchmarks of success. What qualifies as a benchmark is itself a judgment call. In addition to quantitative targets (80% or more of graduates will....) we have included a variety of strategies by which progress can be measured (e.g., pre- and post-testing, establishing baselines against which to measure change, securing comparative data from other institutions). At least 14 of 19 academic departments and 5 of 8 other program areas in the College have provided evidence of an established benchmark, or of having implemented substantial measures toward the establishment of one. See Appendix C: Evidence of establishing benchmarks for one or more articulated outcome. As noted in this appendix, Assessment Liaisons will continue to work with departments who are still working toward identifying such benchmarks.
(2) Ensuring “external perspective” and strengthening departmental accountability

A specific focus of team inquiry at the time of the CPR visit was the role of outside consultants in validating the quality of programs and the degree to which outcomes were being achieved. The team pointed to the “significant autonomy” the PRC’s charter had granted to departments in defining the scope of their review. With specific respect to the use of outside consultants, the College has not changed its original guidelines (which explicitly encouraged, but did not actually require, departments to avail themselves of an external consultant. Music, Physics, Education, Economics, and Student Life have all recently employed outside consultants as part of their long-term planning and/or assessment processes. The Library is scheduled to have an outside consultant visit during the Spring of 2007). The PRC has, in fact, urged each department to provide Evidence of how voices outside the department and/or outside the College validate quality of program, or quality of student work (see Appendix E). As shown in this link, thirteen of nineteen academic departments and six of eight other program areas (a total of 59%) have provided such evidence. Fourteen of the nineteen total reporting external voices are involving persons or associations from outside the College. In other cases, colleagues from outside the department (but within the College) are involved. The PRC will continue to work with remaining programs to identify ways in which outside perspectives are already being incorporated, and/or ways to build such perspective into the overall set of assessment routines.

More generally, with respect to strengthening departmental accountability systems and ensuring that departments are not acting autonomously, the PRC has taken the following three steps: (1) It has established somewhat more explicitly what the committee expects to see in each annual report, providing structure and criteria for the PRC’s response to departments; (2) It has developed an accountability document, spelling out consequences for departments that fail to make satisfactory progress in their own review efforts. Such measures include one or more of the following:

- Request for department to meet with Provost and/or President
- Required reading on assessment, and/or conference attendance, with report due back to Provost, PRC, and/or Faculty Council
- Assigning reviewers to the department or program from outside the department
- In extreme cases, a department’s requests for faculty development grants, sabbaticals, or discretionary professional development money could be frozen;

and (3) As a further step toward an on-going culture of accountability, effective October 2006, the PRC has made available to the Academic Committee of the Board all departmental Five Year Reports.

Finally with respect to departmental insularity, it should be noted that—inherent in the structure of the PRC itself—there is a modicum of accountability and out-of-department perspective. Since August of 2005, assessment coordinators have provided an external lens on their assigned departments through regular two-way communication between departments and the PRC. One indicator of the Assessment Coordinators’ involvement is the fact that in the departmental reports for 2005-06, at least 10 of 27 departments or programs have provided explicit, flagged evidence of responding to PRC feedback. Similarly, the GE Committee provides perspective and accountability from outside the departments, as it chooses to accept, reject, or ask for modifications in courses submitted for General Education consideration.

(3) Carrying out collective assessment of student work in relation to departmental outcomes

Helping each department and program within the College develop and implement routines of review that include the collective examination of student work has been a major thrust of the PRC since the summer of 2005. At least 18 of 19 academic departments and 5 of 8 other program areas in the College (approximately 85% of the College’s total programs) have provided evidence of collectively examining actual student work as part of their 2005-06 reporting process. This represents improvement over the previous year’s report, particularly among the academic departments. During 2004-05, no more than twelve of the nineteen academic departments (63%), and arguably fewer, submitted evidence of collective reflection on student work or student achievement. Given how critical this component is to the effectiveness and credibility of an overall
institutional assessment strategy, we will be continuing to emphasize this area, and have given increased attention to departments still wrestling with how to do this effectively. For the status of the departments and programs as of October 2006, see the following link—Appendix B: Evidence of examining actual student work. A related chart showing the variety of approaches used by different programs may be accessed here—Appendix D: Evidence by department of the use of a range of data and assessment strategies.

(4) Refining a review process at the department level useful for purposes of strategic planning

The most recent set of annual reports from the College’s twenty-seven review units provides clear evidence that we are growing in the area of assessment, in particular our examination of student achievement. Further, as shown in Section II(B) of this report, departments have provided growing evidence of using the results of their assessment activity to improve programs. As the PRC has examined and discussed the annual reports, however, we have recognized that relatively few departments have yet seen the processes of assessment and strategic planning (including budget requests, faculty searches, and vision statements) as part of a seamless whole. This is less a reflection on the performance of departments than it is the nature of the template the PRC has provided to date. One of the PRC’s next priorities is to re-examine our template for departmental reports, identifying specific categories of data that might be added to improve the usefulness of the documents for purposes of strategic planning at either departmental or institutional levels. A draft template, reflecting the PRC’s growing sense of departmental and institutional needs and our collective assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the 2005-06 departmental reports, will be available at the time of the team visit.

Assessing the effectiveness of the PRC from the perspective of the academic departments

Aside from the direct evidence of departmental achievement (Section III [B]) and the PRC’s response to the four sets of issues identified above, some sense of the extent to which our current committee structure and procedures for program review are moving forward may be gathered from an informal written survey conducted in September 2006. Sixty-one members of the faculty, administration, or Student Life staff completed the survey. Finding adequate time for assessment is a pervasive concern, as expanded below. To a much more limited extent, there are lingering concerns about attempting to quantify things that cannot be quantified. Nonetheless, generally positive and grateful responses to the work of the PRC and individual liaisons (AKA: assessment coordinators) are one possible indicator that the College has made progress in the area of faculty buy-in.

Among the items faculty identified as positive in relation to the PRC and assessment coordinators themselves:

- Encouragement
- Clearer expectations [than in the past]
- Opportunity for formative feedback (many faculty, however, express a desire for even more of this)
- Individual prodding/gentle pushing
- Motivating to have direct contact with one person
- Perspective from outside the department
- Good communication (again, a number of respondents ask for even more)

Among the items faculty identified as positive for the department as a result of recent assessment activity:

- Moving toward a clearer vision of who we are and want to be as a department (this is a pervasive theme)
- Less resistant to the whole idea of assessment and actually see it as a way to improve our program
- More specificity in course syllabi
- A sense, finally, of beginning to know what this is all about
• We've found a home/use for a whole [lot] of statistics we'd already been collecting
• Increased recognition of the need to be clear with students about departmental goals
• Increased recognition of the need to receive perspective from outside the department
• Helps us learn more about one another within our department
• Helps us focus on the good things that are happening
• Increased consciousness and need to be proactive in articulating departmental goals [to students]
• Realizing how much assessment we already do
• Learned that things we assumed were clear (policies and procedures) were not

With respect to sustaining assessment momentum at the department level, again, adequate time is by far the most frequently articulated concern. Among the other needs and concerns identified:

• A need for continued encouragement and inspiration, not just more work
• Someone within department whose course load or job description actually includes built-in time for assessment work
• Greater continuity of ACs
• Greater continuity and consistency as to the PRC’s expectations—some mixed messages about the process
• Need for discipline-specific, not just generic, models of effective assessment
• Discipline-specific help and support (an AC from the humanities was assigned to sciences)
• More specific and more immediate feedback from AC
• Need time and stamina. Past work done too frantically. Previously, “we rushed out of the ‘pondering’ stage to the ‘reporting’ stage” [too quickly]
• Need faculty members with assessment expertise already, or additional load credit for those who are trying to gain that expertise
• Continuing to get support in understanding the language of assessment
• ACs as an extra “layer” where messages in either direction are sometimes modified
• Continue to break down what seems an overwhelming task into manageable pieces
• Quite a lot of data collection going on, but need more time to evaluate it all more regularly
• An on-going need for orientation as new persons come on board

For the College’s response to these continuing needs and concerns, see Section IV, which has been informed in part by this survey.

Clarifying the College’s infrastructure for assessment of educational effectiveness at the institutional level

In addition to the College’s on-going efforts to strengthen program review vis-à-vis the departments, Westmont has worked in recent years to sharpen its strategy for institution-wide assessment. Our Educational Effectiveness self-study has revealed to us the absence until recently of an officially designated group whose charge includes a focus on College-wide assessment. The Associate Provost’s office has carried out a regular program of institution-wide assessment for many years and has taken responsibility likewise for analyzing and disseminating the results of various studies. At the same time, it was not always clear whose job it was to respond to assessment data—whose job it was, in other words, to close the assessment loop. Since 2002, the role of synthesizing data from multiple sources and communicating it to relevant parties has been assumed by the WASC Steering Committee (in its original form, or as combined with the PRC), but this is not a standing committee of the College. Accordingly, as noted in Section IIA, the PRC is recommending that the function of institution-wide assessment be formally assigned to the General Education Committee, and its name altered to reflect this additional role.

During the Fall of 2006 the joint PRC-WASC Steering Committee is drafting specific recommendations for the scope of the assessment charge to be given (to what in the future will tentatively be known as) the General Education & Assessment Committee (GEAC). Among the specific elements to be included in these recommendations are the following:
It will be recommended that the GEAC work with the Associate Provost in determining:

- what specific data to collect pertinent to General Education, and pertinent to the Westmont experience as a whole; and according to what particular time-frame
- how most effectively to disseminate data to pertinent administrators, to departments, and to the faculty as a whole; and according to what particular time-frame
- who is primarily responsible to respond to data gathered, and according to what particular time-frame
- how better to demonstrate evidence of the institution fulfilling its Research/Technology outcome and the components of several additional standards where there is less extensive evidence of fulfillment currently available
- how better to inform students of, and instill in them an understanding of, the six College-wide outcomes

One additional specific initiative which the PRC has recommended the GEAC assume responsibility for is the development of what we have temporarily referred to as a Jury System. Throughout the Educational Effectiveness self-study, we have become increasingly aware of the number of departments and programs which sponsor or regularly participate in some kind of public exhibition. As delineated in Appendix F, the students in at least 10 of 19 academic departments already participate regularly in such a community exhibition. Moreover, as shown in Appendix G, at least 16 of 19 academic departments offer capstone courses or experiences that could potentially generate or logistically facilitate such an exhibition. It has been proposed that during Spring 2007 the GE Committee appoint a standing sub-committee for (1) devising tools to document appropriately the range of (often summative) achievement on display in these exhibitions; (2) providing regular feedback to departments on the work of their students; and (3) encouraging remaining departments to find ways to make the achievement of their students more visible to the entire Westmont and Santa Barbara communities.

**Summary statement:** To what extent have we defined a workable process that fosters appropriate departmental and institutional reflection and that unambiguously leads to program improvement?

Of the three themes explored in preceding sections, this is the one where we need to focus the most additional effort. Apart from the issues discussed above, it merits additional attention because it undergirds the other two domains and has obvious implications for the College’s work in strategic planning. There is evidence, yes, to suggest that educationally our students are leaving us with vastly more than they brought in. And yes, we have made progress in cultivating within departments—and within the College as a whole—routines of collective assessment that serve to document this transformation. Nonetheless, there is still much to be done in continuing to build and refine systems that will sustain current momentum over the foreseeable future. Our next steps in such building and refining are discussed in the following section.

**IV. Integrative component**

**A. How successful have we been in fulfilling the goals outlined in our proposal?**

**Goal 1:** Inquiry into the extent that we are achieving student learning outcomes in general education.

In this area we believe the College has been successful, on two levels. Procedurally, we have assembled and reflected upon a range of data that is relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative, and/or actionable. We have reflected on student work samples for each of our six outcomes, identified pertinent items from surveys comparing Westmont students with their counterparts nationwide, and conducted for three years faculty-senior one-on-one interviews focused explicitly on the six outcomes. As all components of our new GE core (effective for students entering Fall 2004) are now in place, we are in the early stages of implementing an additional set of assessment strategies more directly linked to required GE coursework (see Annual Reports from GE for 2005-06).
Substantively we have succeeded, to the extent that available evidence suggests our articulated student learning outcomes are being fulfilled to a high degree. Through the Educational Effectiveness review process, we have learned we need to pay closer attention in particular to the Research & Technology standard. Further, the GEAC will seek additional evidence of achievement pertinent to several individual components under the remaining standards. We have renewed our commitment to communicating to students these institution-wide outcomes more explicitly and systematically than in the past, both within classes and in official College literature. Finally, we need to continue to assist students and faculty in understanding the relationship between the new GE categories and the College’s six learning outcomes. The GEAC will continue to work toward a greater integration of the two rubrics, both rhetorically and in practice.

Goal 2: Inquiry into the extent we are achieving articulated goals within departmental programs.

Accrediting agencies currently appear to be focusing as much on defining a process as mandating particular substantive results to be achieved. This is equally true at the institutional level. Westmont’s own inquiry in this area has focused as much on the status of departmental procedures and departmental infrastructure as actual “results.” As of September 2006, all twenty-seven of the College’s units of review have an Assessment Plan on file. Moreover, since the time of the CPR visit, all faculty and program coordinators have implemented one or more components of their plans. We are encouraged by the number of departments reporting reflection and improvements on the plans themselves.

In the end the best response to this question is the assembled annual reports. At least 25 of 27 units of review reported in 2004-05 or 2005-06 unambiguous evidence of student achievement relevant to departmental learning outcomes. Departmental reports aside, we are pleased with the quality of student work so many departments have made public. Encouraging likewise are the steps departments have taken toward articulating how their students’ work incarnates (or does not incarnate) departmental goals. The diversity of the programs themselves, however, in conjunction with the varied ways in which departments have framed their goals, in the end precludes easy generalizations. Ultimately, our response in this second area is closely tied to our response to Goal 3, below.

Goal 3: Building a stronger institutional infrastructure for program review

At both the department and institutional levels we can report progress toward a stronger review infrastructure. As noted above, since the time of the proposal all twenty-seven departments have developed Assessment Plans, including the identification of goals and strategies for gathering relevant data. All twenty-seven likewise have submitted at least one annual or “five-year” report describing assessment activities completed or in progress. At the same time, procedurally at least, we have seen considerable variation in the sophistication and amount of data gathered, reflected upon, and responded to. Based on processes implemented to date, the data made available thus far to the wider College community, and the quality of reflection on both, the PRC has characterized the twenty-seven units of review as follows:

- 4 programs provide evidence of a well developed assessment infrastructure
- 17 programs provide evidence of an emerging assessment infrastructure
- 6 programs provide evidence of a minimally developed assessment infrastructure

Responsibility for assessment of Westmont’s educational effectiveness as a whole is to be formally assigned to the GEAC. This is in addition to the committee’s responsibility to assess the effectiveness of the GE requirements. The PRC, meanwhile, has developed a temporary rubric for responding to departmental reports and a set of accountability mechanisms to employ for departments that fail to make satisfactory progress.
B. What have we learned about ourselves, and about the process of learning about ourselves?

We will focus for the moment on the second half of the question: what we have learned about the process of learning about ourselves. Six items relative to assessment stand out as we reflect on institutional efforts throughout this past cycle of review:

1. Effective assessment takes time. Westmont faculty and administrators have always engaged—at institutional, departmental, and individual levels—in a range of appropriate assessment activities. We have not always been as intentional as we needed to be, however, in planning for structured and communal reflection on the data once collected. We have been reminded in this cycle of review how much time—and communal time in particular—that thoughtful assessment requires. We are learning, as departments and as a College, to reserve regular blocks of time for collective assessment.

2. Effective assessment is not necessarily intuitive. Just as effective performance in graduate school does not guarantee good teaching, so also we have been reminded that having effective teachers, scholars, and administrators in our community does not guarantee well developed programs of assessment. All faculty, but especially those in each program charged with preparing assessment reports, require access to appropriate literature, workshops on- and off-campus, continued exchanges with peer departments, and continued one-on-one dialogue with those coordinating assessment efforts at the institutional level.

3. Individual accountability does not necessarily or easily translate into collective accountability. We have recognized more clearly in this process that we have stronger structures for individual faculty accountability than structures for departmental accountability. This is reflected not only in the institutional infrastructure, but less tangibly (and perhaps all the more powerfully so) in the institutional culture. In the future, greater departmental accountability can be effected in part through the way the chair’s role is defined (see Section C, item #3, below). Departmental accountability and accountability for chairs are part of a larger set of College-wide, accountability-related questions that the Faculty Council is exploring during the 2006-07 year.

4. Assessment activity in itself does not guarantee appropriate reflection and follow-up. Westmont has a long tradition of collecting a range of student data. We have realized more clearly in this review cycle that we have not consistently closed the assessment loop in the form of measurable, documented response to data we have gathered—especially at the level of the institution as a whole. To the extent that we have, in fact, engaged in such collective reflection, we have not always made time to document this in written form. Assigning responsibility to the GEAC to make follow-up recommendations on whole-College assessment efforts is one step toward a more deliberate assessment system, one in which appropriate reflection and follow-up are not left to chance.

5. Assessment activity too often has been carried out in isolation from strategic planning. Even when working within a paradigm of assessment-leading-to-program-change, we have too often failed to integrate, formally and explicitly, our processes of assessment with our processes of strategic planning. As one step in the right direction, departments were encouraged in Fall 2006 to begin linking requests for budget-line increases more explicitly to a five-year vision for the department, and linking requests likewise to evidence of student needs emerging from assessment data.

6. In our attempt to balance structure and freedom—and in choosing whether to emphasize departmental or institutional initiative—the PRC may have expected too much of departments early on. A concern not to intrude became in effect a lack of sufficient guidance and support. Accordingly, although departments have since the Capacity Review in Spring 2005 increasingly embraced the assessment mandate, initial assessment efforts have been at times less fruitful than anticipated in producing tangible results. While continuing to recognize, then, the diversity of departments; and while continuing to maintain room for negotiation, we need to offer more dialogue and direction, where appropriate, from a central institutional source. Judging from the faculty survey of 9/06, assessment coordinators have been generally successful in providing such direction and facilitating such dialogue during the past academic year.
C. Where do we go from here?

1. One strong possibility that has emerged from this cycle of review is the creation of an additional full- or half-time position in assessment. The person filling this position would work closely with the Associate Provost for Institutional Research and either serve as chief deputy for the College’s Accreditation Liaison Officer or conceivably fill the latter role as well. Among other responsibilities, the Director of Assessment would serve on the PRC and GEAC, work closely with department and program chairs (especially during periods of transition—see below), facilitate training opportunities and department-to-department sharing, network as systematically as possible with counterparts at sister institutions, and (as the GEAC’s executive arm) both disseminate and draft recommendations of response to institutional data. The PRC has recommended that this position be incorporated into the College’s current Strategic Plan (in early draft form, as of October 2006).

2. We are currently drafting recommendations to the Faculty Council, Personnel Committee, and Professional Development Committee to build assessment activities more explicitly into the institutional reward structure—specifically articulating assessment as one valued form of institutional service under the criteria for promotion and tenure. Apart from potentially changing the Faculty Handbook, however, we need to continue to emphasize this in the day-to-day life of the institution. We need to infuse a valuing of assessment activity into the culture at large, and any departments in particular, where the institution’s new emphasis may not have fully taken root.

3. Recognizing more explicitly the need for consistent, systematic, and on-going assessment at the departmental level, and the need to link assessment more explicitly with strategic planning, we may wish to re-think our practice of rotating departmental chairs every three years. In the event that we maintain the current model, we need to find other strategies for ensuring continuity of departmental plans, for mentoring and training new chairs with respect to assessment, and for maintaining accountability over periods of transition. One simple but potentially useful strategy toward continuity and communication within departments has arisen from Sociology-Anthropology. Each faculty member in that department now has an Assessment Handbook with a complete and continuously updated set of historical and procedural documents pertinent to the department’s efforts. As of Fall 2006, the PRC has encouraged all departments adopt this example.

4. With respect to the tension between structure and freedom mentioned above, we almost certainly need to give more emphasis to the former. While preserving flexibility for departments and productive levels of freedom, we need to continue to provide structure and support to departments in the form of completed models and detailed procedural templates. We need to continue to respond to faculty requests for models of successful assessment strategies specific to their particular discipline. Maintaining a continuously updated and easily navigated Assessment web-page is one potential means toward addressing this need. One faculty member has also suggested publishing a monthly internal assessment newsletter with reminders about deadlines, opportunities for growth in this area, and inspiring narratives from departments deemed particularly successful in their assessment activity. Both of the latter ideas, if adopted, might well be folded into the job description of the Director of Assessment, above.

5. The PRC has detected a growing divergence between the January 2004 Assessment Plans and current practice. This may be seen as institutional progress, to the extent that it is a function of departments’ growth in their understanding of the assessment process, and/or greater clarity about departmental goals as a result of assessment activities already implemented. At the same time, for purposes of clear internal communication, we need to work toward greater congruence of assessment plans and practices. As an initial step in this direction, we have invited departments to share with the PRC their re-written plans in their annual report for 2006-07. The requirement of an updated assessment plan may also be officially written into future templates for five-year program reviews.

6. For purposes of strategic planning, we need to expand our current institutional understanding of what constitutes program review. So eagerly in recent years have we worked to include the review of student work that we have at times begun to equate this with program review. For institutional planning purposes we need a more comprehensive template for
information to be included and reflected upon in the review process (for example, number of graduates over time, graduates by sex or ethnicity; destination of recent graduates, budgets, faculty loads). In many cases, the extra data is already available through the Office of Institutional Research, so this would not necessarily involve extra faculty time for assembling such data. More systematic sharing of this data among the faculty, however, and more explicit departmental and institution-wide reflection on the same has the potential to strengthen our planning and resource-allocation processes. Access to more comprehensive and more detailed data (together with appropriate reflection) can assist the Provost and Associate Provost, for instance, in representing the educational accomplishments and needs of the College to other relevant planning bodies, including President’s Staff, the President’s Advisory Council, and the Board of Trustees.

7. We have learned in the Educational Effectiveness review process that we need a more systematic, integrated, and accessible system for tracking our graduates. Systematic tracking of those who are accepted and complete graduate and professional school would provide particularly useful information. Our current practices may provide too much latitude to departments, and do not guarantee that data collected at the institutional level is shared and reflected upon by departmental faculty (and vice-versa). Responsibility for coordinating the tracking of graduates might well become part of the proposed (above) Director of Institutional Assessment’s responsibilities, in conjunction with the Office of Alumni.

8. While we are pleased with the overall trajectory of many indicators of institutional quality, we have become increasingly aware in our self-review that we lack a clear and widely-shared sense of what counts as “good enough.” In the area of faculty salaries, we have set a quantitative target—as a percentile of salaries at designated peer institutions. In relatively few other areas, however, have we engaged in this kind of benchmarking. Should we be pleased that retention, say, is better this year than last, or disheartened that it is still not equivalent to (say) Pomona? The percentage of students from historically under-represented groups has grown markedly in the last five years, but many campus voices would say we have not done nearly enough. What would count as “enough,” in this and many other spheres, has been too rarely discussed. While we would probably never agree to set quantitative benchmarks of quality throughout the institution, we might well benefit from moving a bit further in the direction of measurable benchmarks.

D. How will we sustain momentum?

Following through on the changes in Section C, above, will itself ensure a high degree of momentum. In addition to these, however, we have committed ourselves already, or have drafted recommendations toward, each of the following:

1. Working with peer institutions on matters related to assessment. Westmont’s February 2007 Institute for the Liberal Arts workshop represents one major step in this direction. We are enthusiastic about sharing what has worked—and what has not worked for us—and are similarly enthusiastic about learning from others. We continue to believe that a commitment to ideals of liberal learning and a liberal arts environment raise particular challenges in the assessment process (As noted in WASC literature, it is professional schools who have traditionally been more successful in specifying measurable outcomes), and we recognize fully that we cannot resolve these challenges alone.

2. Involving ourselves with the WASC organization. At different times individuals in the College have held WASC leadership positions, served on review teams for sister institutions, and presented at regional assessment conferences. Currently, our involvement appears to be less than it might be, and we are committed accordingly to identifying individuals who can contribute to a range of WASC activities and raise Westmont’s visibility within the organization. Apart from services rendered to others, we believe a higher level of involvement and broader, more intimate acquaintance with developments at other colleges will help to energize and inform our own on-going assessment efforts. The PRC is recommending that WASC involvement be emphasized in the priorities of both the new President and the new Provost.

3. Identifying the PRC and GEAC as priority committees. Granted that no structure or organizational scheme is better than the persons who carry it out, the College will continue to take seriously the task of constituting the two committees most
directly involved with reflecting on educational effectiveness. Currently, only two of the College’s standing committees have priority in selecting members. Recognizing the continuing demands of the tasks before us relative to program review, the PRC has recommended to the Faculty Council that (effective the current academic year) the PRC and GEAC receive priority status in the process of constituting College committees.

4. **Incorporating resources for additional assessment activity in department budgets.** On the faculty survey administered in September 2006, several department chairs expressed concern about having sustainable means to pay for assessment work already underway or for work to which the department was committed in the near future. The Biology department, for example, is scheduled to begin an annual administration of the ETS subject exam to all first-year majors and senior majors in Spring 2007. In order for the College to continue to move ahead with assessment and allow departments to fulfill their commitments to projects of this nature, the PRC has recommended to the Provost that adequate funds for budget-line increases in this area be procured.

5. **Providing additional release time, compensation for summer work, and/or compensating for additional assessment activity by scaling back on other College activity.** Closely related to the item above—to the extent that it has implications for the budget—the PRC recognizes that faculty are concerned about the additional assessment-related responsibilities they have assumed in recent years. Department chairs, in particular, have indicated that they have reached their limits with respect to time. Here again, in order to sustain current momentum, the PRC has asked the Provost to explore ways to provide additional time to support faculty in their assessment activity.

6. Most important and implicit in what has been said throughout this document, we believe our greatest hope for success is more explicitly and more consistently weaving our routines of effective assessment into the everyday fabric of the institution. Many academic departments have already committed to designating certain regularly scheduled meetings explicitly for assessment. At the institutional level, similarly, we need to continue to designate certain sessions of the Academic Senate, Faculty Forum, Full Faculty, PAC, and President’s Staff—among others—for routine assessment-related business.

7. Finally, just as individual faculty members have expressed a need for continued encouragement if they are to sustain current efforts, so also with those in the College most directly involved with evaluating educational effectiveness. Some of the greatest encouragement we have received has been from peers able to testify to benefits the assessment process has brought them. On the September 2006 survey of faculty, one particularly skeptical chair, in a department traditionally notorious for its skepticism, wrote the following:

*The major thing is that we have moved away from doing assessment for WASC and toward doing it for ourselves. Our reviewing student presentations highlighted the need for more direct instruction in that area.*

Such comments have energized us to date, and we trust will continue to sustain us in our collective on-going task of helping Westmont become ever more educationally effective.