Westmont College
Santa Barbara, CA

Special Visit Report

prepared for the
Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
of the
Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Team Visit: October 5-7, 2011
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Preface

When professors give assignments, some students respond with great interest and other students do a bit of moaning. In any case, professors intend for their assignments to be instructive, to stretch the students’ minds and make a difference for the future. Such was the case with the WASC educational effectiveness team report and Commission letter of 2007. The Commission letter outlines a syllabus of sorts and gave Westmont an important assignment.

We believe we have fulfilled the assignment well. The work is not completed, but of course it is the nature of the work that the task is never completed. It was an intellectual and physical challenge but it was a good challenge—and we rose to it. WASC encouraged Westmont to walk a little more quickly down paths already taken, to be more specific about maps used to plan for future trips, to consider how certain trails might need some clearing, and to account for these and other journeys in observable ways.

The WASC letter of 2007 mentioned four concerns. In short, Westmont has responded to these concerns in the following meaningful ways:

- **Strategic planning**
  - Greatly enhanced the strategic planning process
  - Implemented tasks on the map, including creating new college-wide documents and pushing ahead on building programs and financing
  - Significantly improved library facilities, resources and services

- **Assessment and Program Review**
  - Streamlined and implemented General Education assessment
  - Improved templates and other resources
  - Secured greater buy-in by academic programs and had an increase in the quality and number of reports submitted annually
  - Made major and minor changes to various programs based on assessment efforts

- **Sustained Leadership Support**
  - Hired a new President
  - Hired two Vice Presidents
  - Hired a new Director of the Library and Informational Services
  - Created a new position (and hired): Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness

- **Defining and Implementing (Religious) Diversity**
  - Thoroughly examined communication efforts to new students
  - Created welcoming programs for students coming from non-evangelical backgrounds
Westmont is delighted with these achievements, all the more so because the tasks have overlapped with an international “Great Recession,” the Tea Fire of 2008 that destroyed or damaged several buildings on campus, and the withdrawal of a $75 million pledge that had been the basis of construction projects already begun on campus.

We hope that WASC recognizes our accomplishments—and that our two institutions can enjoy many good years ahead of a strong, effective and educationally beneficial relationship.

Mission Statement. Westmont College is an undergraduate, residential, Christian, liberal arts community serving God's kingdom by cultivating thoughtful scholars, grateful servants and faithful leaders for global engagement with the academy, church and world.

History. Westmont College began in Los Angeles in 1937 with the establishment of the Bible Missionary Institute (later renamed the Western Bible College). In 1940 Ruth Kerr and the other founders realized that a liberal arts curriculum was the best direction for the school. The College was renamed Westmont, and Dr. Wallace Emerson, the first president, shaped the early development of a Christian liberal arts college.

By 1944, Westmont had outgrown its facilities in Los Angeles. The search for a new campus led to the former Dwight Murphy estate in Montecito with its 125 acres and beautiful Mediterranean house. Westmont purchased this property and moved to Santa Barbara in 1945.

Westmont received initial WASC accreditation in 1957. Following completion of the CPR (2005) and EER (2007), reaccreditation was granted in June 2007.

Set in the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains, Westmont’s wooded and scenic acres provide a beautiful environment for a residential college. The campus includes buildings and land from two former estates and the historic Deane School for Boys. The grounds still feature the pathways, stone bridges, and garden atmosphere typical of Montecito, a suburb of Santa Barbara.

New Developments

Fire. The idyllic foothill location is not enjoyed without cost. The picturesque location has been the site of several wildfires in recent decades. Although fires in 1964 and 1977 burned onto the campus, minimal damage was experienced. Such was not the case in 2008. Fire swept through the campus (and Santa Barbara) in November, destroying several academic buildings housing faculty offices, labs and classrooms, damaging portions of two dormitories and burning significant portions of the landscape. Fourteen faculty and several staff lost their homes in nearby neighborhoods. Despite having minimal warning of the approaching fire (high winds fueled the fire that started less than 0.5 mile from campus), the shelter-in-place strategy developed in conjunction with S.B. County fire officials functioned almost flawlessly. While the fire burned nearby, over 800 students, faculty and staff spent the night in the safe confines of the gymnasium supported by stored emergency supplies of food, water and blankets.

In the aftermath of the fire, the College closed for two weeks. Because of the scheduled Thanksgiving recess, only seven days of classes were lost. All classes resumed the Monday following Thanksgiving. Portable facilities were quickly brought to campus to provide necessary office, classroom and lab space. By January 2009, modular housing units became home for several dozen students. Although the campus looked tattered, spirits were high and the academic enterprise was again in full operation. Fire-damaged dorm rooms were repaired and in
use by the fall semester of 2009. It would be another year before temporary classrooms, labs and offices would be replaced with permanent facilities.

The fire had no discernable impact on student retention. In the prior year, retention from fall to spring semester was 96.7%. Following the fire, retention from fall 2008 to spring 2009 was also 96.7%. Retention from spring 2009 to fall 2009 was 92.1%, down 1.7% from the previous year. It is unknown whether this small decline in retention resulted from lingering effects of the fire or students finding it more difficult to afford Westmont during the economic recession.

Construction. For more than a decade, Westmont worked on a Master Plan approval process with the County. Westmont received approval of the revised Master Plan in 2007. In October of 2008, ground breaking ceremonies were held for two major academic buildings, which would add 77,600 square feet to the campus for faculty offices, labs, classrooms, art studios and an art museum. Less than a month later, fire swept through campus. (The College lost 7,677 square feet of building space in the fire.)

Departments most impacted by the fire were Psychology and Physics. Of the two new buildings ready for construction, one was already planned to house Psychology and Physics. Construction permits had been acquired just days before the fire. One of the destroyed buildings was scheduled for demolition the next week. The College could not have been in a better position to begin rebuilding. As a result, Adams Center and Winter Hall were finished and occupied as the fall 2010 semester began, less than two years following the fire.

Construction Financing. Influenced by a $75 million gift pledged in 2006, an ambitious construction plan was developed. The $75 million gift, along with other money already raised, were to be used to construct not only the buildings already mentioned (Adams Center and Winter Hall), but also a chapel/performing arts auditorium. The board voted at its October 2008 meeting to begin construction. The first installment of the long-term pledge was received in December 2008. However, Westmont received word in September of 2009 that the 11-year, $75 million pledge would go unfulfilled. As a result, the scope of the project was scaled back, eliminating the chapel/auditorium from the project (not yet under construction). Even with the reduction in project scope, additional funds were needed to complete Adams Center and Winter Hall (construction having started prior to receiving word that the gift would go unfulfilled). Westmont eventually secured long-term debt financing in January 2010 allowing for the completion of all buildings in the revised project on time and under budget. (Additional information on debt management is provided in Section IV.)

Continuing Realities

Enrollment. To fully understand Westmont, the context in which the College operates must be understood. The conditional use permit issued by the County of Santa Barbara states on-campus enrollment may not exceed 1235 students, and the historical average enrollment may not exceed 1200. (The historical enrollment average required by the County is a cumulative average, the record beginning in fall 1989.) Since Westmont has operated at full enrollment most semesters during the past decade, many semesters between 1200 and 1235, the enrollment average is currently 1199.
The enrollment cap provides some benefits. It has contributed to the rationale for developing study abroad programs. It has also facilitated increased admission selectivity as the application pool grew but enrollment targets remained largely unchanged. The cap has also forced the College to clarify priorities in light of limited resources. However, it does not provide the option of solving budget shortfalls or creating program enhancements by increasing enrollment on campus, a path pursued by many institutions of higher education.

Chief Academic Officer. One key leadership position has been vacant since December 2006, when Provost Shirley Mullen left Westmont to become President of Houghton College in New York. The CAO position has been filled on an interim basis, first by Physics professor Dr. Warren Rogers from January 2007 through June 2009, then by History professor Dr. Richard Pointer from July 2009 to the present. A search during 2008-2009 did not result in an appointment. The search was reactivated fall 2010 and continues. (A summary of key leadership changes is presented in Section III.C.)

II. Report Preparation

The College began addressing many of the concerns expressed in the 2007 Commission letter in the fall of 2007. This effort was led by the President and his executive team, the Program Review and General Education Committees and the newly established Strategic Planning Committee (replacing the Long-Term Planning Committee). The WASC Special Visit Steering Committee began meeting in January, 2010. Members were selected based upon their leadership responsibilities related to the four primary themes identified in the Commission letter for the special visit. Committee members were:

- Dr. Richard Pointer, Acting Provost and Dean of Faculty, Professor of History
- Mr. Chris Call, Vice President for Administration and Planning
- Ms. Jane Higa, Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students
- Dr. Ray Rosentrater, Associate Academic Dean, Director of Assessment and Professor of Mathematics (2009-2010)
- Dr. Tatiana Nazarenko, Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness (replaced Rosentrater on the Committee 2010-2011)
- Ms. Debra Quast, Director of Library and Information Services
- Dr. Bill Wright, Associate Provost and ALO

The Committee spent the spring of 2010 identifying the scope of the special visit report and discussing an appropriate response. Assignments were made to document work already taking place and new efforts requiring initiation. Members worked on individual assignments during the summer and fall of 2010. During the fall, committee members' work was distributed and discussed. In January of 2011, one committee member incorporated the members’ collective work into a first draft of the special visit report.

During the spring of 2011, the draft report was reviewed by the President and his executive team and several faculty committees (Program Review, General Education and Academic Senate). The report was also made available to the entire faculty. In May 2011, the report was discussed
by the Academic Committee of the Board and presented to the entire Board of Trustees. Through the process, the WASC Steering Committee discussed feedback received and made appropriate revisions.

III. Response to Issues Identified in the Commission 7/13/2007 Letter

Four areas were identified by the Commission for the Special Visit focus. These were (a) strategic planning, especially around the library; (b) assessment and program review; (c) sustained leadership development; and (d) defining and implementing diversity. Within the context of the CPR (pp. 6 & 32) and EER (pp. 6-7) team reports and the 2005 (p. 6) and 2007 (p. 4) Commission letters, the primary focus of the fourth theme was religious diversity.

A. Strategic Planning

Quoting from the Commission letter: “Strategic Vision, Especially around the Library. As noted in the 2005 Capacity Report, the Library and its related activities in support of student learning do not yet appear to hold the central role they warrant in institutional strategic visioning and planning processes. There is little evidence of a comprehensive rationale for the Library that reflects current national trends in library science and also responds to emerging 21st century information literacy demands. Though the Library has recently assigned liaisons to the various academic departments to ensure alignment of Library resources with department's learning goals, this work is in its early stages. Decisions about what additional services should be based within the Library also need to be linked to a guiding vision for the Library. The Commission urges Westmont to give the Library a more permanent place within the still-evolving strategic planning processes of the College, and to develop a clear expression of the role the library will play in fulfilling the academic mission of the institution. Appropriate action plans and timelines should devolve from such planning and then be linked to decisions about academic goals, as well as to institutional budgets and development priorities.”

1. Development of Strategic Planning at Westmont

The visiting team conducting the CPR visit in 2005 questioned the vibrancy of the long range plan adopted by the College 10 years prior. The team recommended Westmont initiate an integrated strategic planning process that:

- Is informed by both internal data (particularly evidence of student learning) and external assessment of strategic position on an ongoing basis.
- Has clear linkages with institutional research, and mechanisms for including evidence-based quality assurance mechanisms into the strategic planning process.
- Includes mechanisms to align institutional priorities with allocation of resources and allows for regular schedule of review by multiple constituencies.

The Commission Action Letter dated June 30, 2005 indicated:

The team noted that the College is coming to the end of a 10-year strategic plan and will be launching a new plan. The new planning process could become a unique opportunity to engage the College community in addressing the issues raised in this letter as strategic
priorities, as well as ... an opportunity to involve new faculty and Board members. The life cycle of the last plan was considerable and, in any new plan, the Commission will expect that [there] will be regular processes for monitoring progress and making revisions to the plan as needed.

Strategic planning at Westmont received a significant boost when the Board of Trustees voted unanimously on January 25, 2007 to hire Dr. Gayle Beebe as president of Westmont College. Before assuming the presidency on July 1, Dr. Beebe met with Westmont’s Long Range Planning Task Force to describe the successful strategic planning process he employed while president of Spring Arbor University. Based on positive feedback from the Long Range Planning Task Force and the trustee Planning Committee, Dr. Beebe implemented this strategic planning process at Westmont. This included hiring Mr. Tim Fallon of TSI Consulting as consultant to a new Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) and as facilitator of this committee’s meetings.

**Strategic Planning Committee.** The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is comprised of trustee, faculty, administrative and student representatives including the Director of the Library and Information Services, and the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness (Appendix B1). The creation of the new dean position and the addition to the SPC of this dean and of the library director address recommendations made by WASC in 2007. The general responsibilities of the SPC are to:

- Represent and interact with College constituencies to assess Westmont’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and to identify strategic priorities for possible inclusion on a three-year strategic map.
- Recommend a three-year strategic map, and annual strategic priorities, to the Board of Trustees.
- Review progress regularly on implementing strategic priorities.
- Make needed adjustments to the process of implementing strategic priorities; and recommend, when appropriate, strategic map adjustments to the Board of Trustees.
- Update the Board of Trustees, faculty and staff regularly on setting and implementing strategic priorities.

**Initial Strategic Planning Committee Retreat.** During a SPC retreat in September 2007, consultant Tim Fallon began by emphasizing those organizations with high strategic effectiveness (Appendix B2):

- Quickly formulate a “good enough” strategic plan.
- Move immediately to implementation – letting implementation teach them the ways that the strategy is on target and ways it needs to be improved.
- Review progress on implementation regularly.
- Make needed adjustments – as close to “real time” as possible.
- Focus on results, not activities.

In small groups, SPC members then assessed Westmont’s “current situation” by identifying the College’s strengths, weaknesses/areas of improvement, and critical issues facing Westmont in the next three years. These assessments were shared with the entire committee. Afterward, each
participant was asked to identify – in a word or phrase – the central challenge that Westmont faces over the next three years.

The committee agreed the College should “Create the platform for Westmont to reach the ‘next level’” by setting strategic priorities that:

- Clarify Westmont’s vision and strengthen its distinctiveness.
- Strengthen program quality and integration.
- Enhance Westmont’s national profile.
- Secure required resources.
- Build essential infrastructure.

Small groups then worked to propose strategic priorities in each of these five areas. Following reports from the small groups, the SPC discussed possible strategic priorities for these five areas and agreed that two additional areas also should receive attention as “cross-cutting priorities” that serve as a foundation upon which all the other strategic priorities rest:

- Clarify decision-making and secure appropriate involvement / strengthen communication with appropriate transparency.
- Strengthen and sustain the Westmont community / increase support for students, faculty, and staff.

The result was a draft “strategic map” that in one page showed recommended strategic priorities for the next three years (Appendix B3).

**Securing Community Input.** The draft strategic map was shared first with the Board of Trustees during their meetings in October 2007, and discussed at its retreat in January 2008. In February of 2008, it was shared with faculty and staff at a community-wide gathering during which SPC consultant Tim Fallon led a process soliciting responses from faculty and staff (Appendix B4) to three questions:

- What excites you about the draft strategic map?
- What issues and concerns do you have about the draft strategic map?
- What suggestions do you have to ensure successful implementation?

Mr. Fallon subsequently led a similar session that gathered responses from student leaders (Appendix B5).

**Adoption of Strategic Map and Tracks of Work.** The input from faculty, staff and student leaders was shared with the Strategic Planning Committee in April 2008, resulting in some changes to the draft strategic map. The Board of Trustees adopted Westmont’s revised strategic map for 2008-2010 in May 2008 (Appendix B6), and approved the recommended strategic priorities for 2008-2009. These priorities were then addressed through the establishment of “tracks of work” associated with these seven themes:

- Mission and Distinctiveness
- Institutional Review and Direction
- Key Leaders
- Funding
- Buildings
A member of the Executive Team headed up each track of work. Staff representatives served on each track of work; faculty representatives on five tracks of work; student representatives on two tracks of work; and trustee representatives on two tracks of work.

**Strategic Planning Web Site.** A strategic planning web site was created to give the internal community access to key strategic planning documents and materials. These resources include input from faculty, staff and students on the draft strategic map in 2008; the strategic map approved by the Board of Trustees, with priorities indicated for each academic year; and an overview of the tasks, accomplishments, and timeline for each track of work. Also included on the strategic planning web site are a list of SPC members and a description of the Strategic Effectiveness Cycle, which clarifies how meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee interact with meetings of the Board of Trustees. Vice President for Administration and Planning Chris Call continues to work with President Beebe and consultant Tim Fallon to ensure that the planning process remains on track.

**Strategic Planning Process and Accomplishments.** One strength of Westmont’s new strategic planning process has been to include faculty, staff and trustees in effective discussions about strategic priorities. In addition to holding forums with all faculty, staff and trustees about the draft strategic map in 2008, these groups also have been given the opportunity for input on a number of tasks undertaken by the seven tracks of work, including:

- A statement of what Westmont means by “evangelical,” “liberal arts,” and “diversity” (Appendix B7).
- A description of decision making at Westmont (Appendix B8).
- A new mission statement (Appendix B9).
- Criteria selected to determine the effectiveness of communicating core messages.
- An improved program review process.
- A new academic administrative position of Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.
- Plans developed and implemented for the capital campaign.
- Phase I construction of new buildings and infrastructure improvements completed on time and within budget.
- Phase I financing secured.
- Improved network stability and performance.

The strategic planning process’ annual cycle has been effective in reviewing the work on current priorities, making necessary adjustments, and forwarding appropriate recommendations to the Board of Trustees (through its Planning Committee) regarding key institutional documents (e.g., the mission statement) and new strategic priorities. The annual cycle also has influenced budget decisions – for example, the creation of the Dean for Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness position, additional investments in information technology, and the renovation of the library.

**Developing the Strategic Map for 2011-2014.** The development of the initial strategic map relied heavily on qualitative assessments of Westmont’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and
threats. The development of the second generation strategic map relied heavily on quantitative measurements. After the Strategic Planning Committee identified institutional assessment criteria (including evidence of student learning), the Director of Institutional Research, Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness, and several other administrators gathered data that provided the committee with important snapshots of Westmont relative to its aspirations and relative to peer institutions (Appendix B10). The SPC discussed this data (Appendix B11) at a retreat in December 2010 and then developed a draft strategic map for 2011-2014 (Appendix B12). This draft map was reviewed and modified slightly by the Executive Team and the Board of Trustees before being vetted with the campus community. In March 2011, input from students, faculty and staff (Appendix B13) was reviewed and discussed by the Strategic Planning Committee and led to revisions in the strategic map recommended to the Board of Trustees for 2011-2014 (Appendix B14). The Strategic Planning Committee also recommended to the trustees the strategic priorities for 2011-2012. The Board approved the recommended map and priorities in May 2011(Appendices B15 and B16).

2. Strategic Planning and the Library

The library was a topic of significant concern in both the 2005 Capacity and Preparatory Review and the 2007 Education Effectiveness Review. Significant progress has been made in addressing and implementing recommendations. The library’s place and function within the academic program has been strengthened by improving its effectiveness in promoting and assessing student learning and information literacy skills. The facility has been remodeled and efforts are underway to improve library programs with respect to trends and developments common to excellent academic libraries in the 21st century. The coordination of College planning and library planning has been improved by appointing the library director to the Strategic Planning Committee. The ability of the library to contribute to the academic program was enhanced by the addition of the director to the membership of the General Education Committee as well as the addition of a librarian to the Program Review Committee.

Issues raised by visiting teams and the Commission can be grouped into six categories: Facilities; integration with the institution; program review and student learning; collection and budget; staffing and budget; and vision. For each of these issues, feedback received from WASC will be summarized and then action planned or already taken will be described. The magnitude of the issues required developing a strategy of addressing needs in phases extended over several years. The first two areas of strategic focus were facilities and the integration of the library with the academic program.

Facilities. Given that stack space was 93% full, the CPR Team observed that addressing library space issues, both for materials and students, should be a high priority. The need for group study space and quiet comfortable study areas was also noted. The 2005 Commission letter stated there was need for improved basic maintenance including better lighting. It also noted that visits to the library had declined. Finally, concern was expressed regarding the amount of space in the library building allocated to non-library functions.

A major renovation of the library in summer 2010 addressed many of the WASC concerns. The goals of the project included creation of a Learning Commons, enhanced space utilization,
increased spaces for group study, enhanced technology capability and usage for individuals and groups, improved work-space for library staff, improved aesthetics in the building interior and increased comfort for library users. Over $500,000 was spent on the project.

The renovation included the following changes and additions to the library’s physical space:

- Moveable compact shelving for the storage of the back issues of periodicals and the children’s literature collection was added on the lower level.
- Relocation of materials to the lower level and the removal of dozens of shelving ranges from the main level provided the opportunity to create a Learning Commons with a variety of study areas.
- Total seats have nearly doubled, from 195 to 364.
- Two new computer labs with 22” dual platform iMacs were added, one an open lab seating 27 and the other a glass walled instruction lab seating 24. The library schedules the instruction lab for research and technology sessions conducted by classroom faculty and librarians. This lab is open for student use when classes are not scheduled.
- Two help desks were added in the Learning Commons, one for Information Technology staff and one for reference librarians.
- Two media:scape® group study rooms were added on the main level. These rooms, each with two large monitors, connection ports for laptops, a worktable with flexible seating for six, and white board walls, provide space and technology for collaborative projects.
- Three walk-stations, low-speed treadmills with adjustable work surfaces for laptops, books or study notes, were installed in the Learning Commons to accommodate students who learn best when moving.
- Comfortable, flexible seating was added throughout the library. Upholstered chairs with moveable tablet arms for laptops or study materials were added on both the upper and main levels. Tables and chairs can be moved around, enabling students to create their own configurations for collaboration.
- Book stacks for print reference materials and indexes were reconfigured, refurbished and moved to a location near the new reference help desk in the Learning Commons.
- On the upper level, five group study rooms with white board walls and spacious individual study stations were added.
- A carpeted silent study area was created on the lower level.
- Energy-efficient lighting was added on the main and lower levels.
- The library gained two conference rooms from spaces previously occupied by non-library functions.
- Acquired space on the lower level resulted in a new technical services area and space for an archives and rare books reading room.
- The library’s administrative back-area was renovated, and a new interlibrary loan work area was built along with an additional office for library staff.

Projects and alliances established as consequence of the renovation include the following:
• The reference collection on the main level and the circulating print collections on the upper level were weeded and shifted. This project resulted in collections more relevant to the core curriculum of academic departments and provided room for collection growth. The library will continue to evaluate the collection and deselect materials no longer relevant or in disrepair.

• Prior to its move to the lower level, the print periodical collection was assessed by librarians and department faculty. Periodicals not supporting the curriculum or research interests of faculty and periodicals available full-text online from a stable database vendor were deselected in order to create more shelf space.

• The renovation project was also an opportunity to forge new alliances with three academic departments on campus. A joint project between the library and the Music Department resulted in the acquisition and installation of a grand piano on the main level. A series of afternoon student recitals began fall 2010 and were well received. The library partnered with the Art Department and the Westmont Museum of Art on the installation of several significant paintings, sculptures and other pieces in the library. The Writer’s Corner, where students can find peer tutors for help with writing projects, was relocated to a space in the Learning Commons. The director of the Writers’ Corner and the Instructional Services Librarian are looking at joint ventures between writing centers and college libraries. These partnerships with the Art and Music Departments and the Writers’ Corner are important steps towards the transformation of the library into a more vital place for the academic life of the campus.

Students are enthusiastic about the renovated library and study spaces. This is borne out by usage statistics gathered both before and after the remodel. Usage statistics for the first six weeks of fall semester 2010 were compared with the same time period for 2009 and showed an increase of over 300 percent. Interlibrary loan requests also increased. Interlibrary loan of books increased 74% in fall 2010 over fall 2009. Also, the number of journal articles procured through interlibrary loan in the fall of 2010 increased by 86% over fall 2009.

**Integration with the Institution.** The CPR Team report, Commission letter and EER Team report all point to deficiencies in programming, both within the library and in the library’s relation to the larger College community. It was recommended that the library’s program review planning be better integrated with the program reviews being conducted in other academic departments and to ensure that library planning includes assessment of the adequacy of relevant library and information technology (IT) resources. The Commission also noted the importance for the College to address issues of usage, development, implementation and assessment of information literacy goals, and to connect the library more effectively to institutional planning, assessment, and conversations about the academic achievement of students. Finally, it was noted by the EER Team that, “The Library and its related activities in support of student learning do not yet appear to hold the central role they warrant in institutional strategic vision and planning processes.”

A major response by Westmont to WASC’s concern was to hire a new Director of Library and Information Services in 2009 with experience in academic library administration, strategic planning, library renovation, and current information literacy curriculum and teaching strategies. In fall 2009, the Director was appointed to the Strategic Planning Committee. The Dean of
Curriculum and Education Effectiveness and the Director proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook to include the Director as a member of the General Education Committee and a librarian with faculty status as a member of the Program Review Committee. At the November 2010 faculty meeting, both changes were unanimously approved. To better coordinate planning and programs between the library and IT, the Director meets regularly with the Chief Information Officer as well as with the Senior Director of Information Technology. The Director continues as a member of both the Academic Resources Committee and the Computer Technology Advisory Committee.

The library appointed an Instructional Services Librarian in summer 2010. This librarian attended the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Immersion Teacher Track Program in July 2010. During this intensive week-long program, she crafted a vision for teaching information literacy through developing critical thinking skills and using active learning techniques. This program also included seminars on student learning styles and assessment strategies. The Instructional Services Librarian is working on articulating the library’s instruction program goals, learning outcomes and assessment strategies. The document, *Library Instruction Program, 2010-2011* (Appendix B17(a)), demonstrates how the library’s instruction program goals are closely aligned with the College’s institutional learning outcomes and the Association of College and Research Libraries Information Literacy National Standards. The document, *Library Instruction Program – Multi-year Assessment Timeline*, details a three-year timeline for measuring library student learning outcomes (Appendix B18).

In 2009-2010, the library’s departmental liaison program was revised and expanded in scope by adding information literacy instruction and materials selection to the liaison’s duties. The expanded responsibilities provide opportunities for the liaisons to interact with their academic departments on several levels. Liaison librarians are developing relationships with their departments, assisting faculty in selecting materials for the library’s collection, providing research consultation and partnering for information literacy instruction.

In the renovated library, the library and IT implemented a combined library reference desk and IT help desk program. This partnership provides assistance for library users in one place and is located in the Learning Commons. The help desk is staffed with an IT representative and a reference librarian. Librarians are freed from having to manage printing and other hardware issues and therefore are able to focus fully on research assistance. Students are able to receive the help they need at one service point.

The Writer’s Corner, an English Department program providing writing assistance, also moved to the Learning Commons. With the addition of this peer-tutoring center, three units of the College are available to serve students in the Learning Commons: the English Department, IT and the library.

**Program Review and Student Learning.** The CPR Report noted the library’s role in enhancing student learning was not well established across campus. It stated that “library instruction courses have decreased and an adequate, integrated method for program review has not been enacted. In some cases, the library’s natural, instructive functions are simply not recognized and the library is not expected to fill its scholarly role.” The library was challenged to develop an
educational program that would support and complement the academic program of the College. In addition, an assessment program of the library’s educative function, resources and services needed developing.

In spring 2010, the library purchased a subscription to LibGuides, a web 2.0 technology used to create multi-media library guides and tutorials and to promote library resources to the academic community. LibGuides, which went live in September 2010, is a primary library instruction tool available via the library’s web site. The library’s liaisons created at least one LibGuide for every academic department. Each LibGuide provides guidance on finding books, articles and scholarly internet resources in a particular subject area. Faculty and librarians promote use of the LibGuides in their classes.

The adoption of LibGuides by instruction librarians makes it possible to provide an increasing amount of instructional material on the library’s web site by distributing their creation among all liaisons. Each liaison can modify the guides as needed. These guides are useful as a stand-alone resource or as follow-up to reinforce material covered in an instruction session. Professors have begun to refer students to the guide for their respective subjects. An analysis of data collected for the first semester of LibGuide use demonstrates an increase in the usage of the library web pages. Web page “hits” nearly tripled over the prior year. Several professors have requested that a new LibGuide be created to support their course assignments.

A formal process for assessing the library’s instructional program has been established. In fall 2010, the Instructional Services Librarian, along with the library liaisons, drafted a plan to assess six student learning outcomes at the rate of two in 2010-2011 (Appendix B17(b)), two in 2011-2012 and two in 2012-2013. The learning outcomes are:

- Students will identify important keywords, synonyms, and concepts related to their topic or research question in order to develop and execute a successful search strategy.
- Students will differentiate between book, article, and book chapter references in order to select the most appropriate search tool for locating a full text document.
- Students will compare library and non-library search tools--databases, catalogs, web sites--in order to achieve a greater understanding of how information sources are arranged and accessed online and in print.
- Students will examine information sources in different formats in order to understand the characteristics and purposes of each.
- Students will analyze the authority, credibility, accuracy, and publication cycle of information sources in order to select the most appropriate source for their research need.
- Students will create accurate in-text citations and references, using an appropriate style guide, in order to avoid unintentional plagiarism in their assignments.

Assessment will be a combination of formal and informal methods. The Instructional Services Librarian and the Director began working with the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness in spring 2011 to develop appropriate assessment methods and instruments.
In fall 2011, the library will administer the SAILS test, *Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy*, to a group of first-year students in order to gather benchmark data and discern which information literacy skills should be emphasized in our instruction program.

The one-unit research instruction course offered online by the library, APP-001 *General Research Instruction*, has undergone a complete revision. The course name was changed to *Research Across the Disciplines* and a new textbook was adopted. The class will be offered in a classroom setting in fall 2011 and taught by the Instructional Services Librarian. This course was promoted to faculty advisors and students in spring 2011. The course description reads:

APP 001 Research Across the Disciplines: This course is designed for undergraduates interested in acquiring a contextual understanding of how ideas are disseminated and communicated through scholarly and professional information sources. Students will explore the interconnections between research and writing, with an emphasis on the different paradigms of social science, science, and humanities research. The goals of this course are to have students engage with the conceptual framework of how scholarship "happens" across the disciplines, find their voices as individual researchers amongst other scholars, and gain confidence in their ability to locate, evaluate, and incorporate sources into their academic work. Appropriate for all class levels.

The library’s reference program expanded to include evening research help desk coverage by reference team librarians. The library also initiated a “roving librarian” program for the fall 2010 semester. Librarians were available for research help during lunch hours in the Dining Commons. Chat reference service began in fall 2010. Another Web 2.0 tool, Facebook, was used to promote these services.

**Collection and Budget:** The 2005 Commission letter noted that library funding had decreased. The 2005 CPR Team recommended that library collection expenditures should be increased, particularly for core reference and circulating collections, which are necessary to meet information requirements of the curriculum.

In November 2009, the Library Director submitted two proposals to the Provost: a comprehensive plan to renovate the facility and a request for an operating budget increase of $134,000 (spread over five years) to augment print, electronic resources and periodical acquisition. The Executive Team funded the library renovation but deferred funding of the operations budget request. As a first step in the budget augmentation, $15,000 was added to the resources budget for developing the core reference and circulating collections in October 2010.

In order to utilize the existing materials budget more effectively, a project to assess and de-select print periodicals and standing orders was completed in spring 2010. The library’s subject liaisons partnered with academic departments and critically evaluated print periodicals and standing book orders. Those titles deemed not relevant to the curriculum or available full text online were deselected. This project made additional funds available for new resources.

In May 2010, the library joined Camino, a resource-sharing pilot based on OCLC’s WorldCat Navigator product. Camino is a project of SCELC, the Statewide California Electronic Library
Consortium, and provides Westmont students and faculty quick and seamless access to over two million books delivered to campus. Camino went live in November 2010. Since then students and faculty have borrowed a total of 201 books with a high of 83 during February 2011. The library continues to monitor Camino activity, interlibrary loan volume and circulation as a measure of student use of hard copy books.

**Staffing and Budget.** Both the Capacity and Preparatory Review and the Commission letter commented on the small size of the library staff. The Capacity and Preparatory Review added that the “size of the professional staff is small for an institution with Westmont’s enrollment and curriculum. Because of limited staff resources, librarians have not yet been given liaison assignments to work with academic department on issues of collection development and information literacy. Faculty have especially noted the lack of a science librarian.”

The former library Director, who served for more than 30 years, retired in 2009. During the 2008-2009 academic year, a search for a new Director was conducted. The process resulted in the appointment of a new Director, who began her work in July 2009.

The library’s updated liaison program is in its third year. Information literacy instruction and collection development were added to the responsibilities of the department liaison librarians in 2009-2010. The liaisons meet and communicate regularly with their academic departments for collection development, instructional services and building relationships.

In spring 2010, the Director began reviewing all staff and librarian job descriptions, responsibilities and workloads. The library’s organizational structure and librarian and staff job responsibilities were modified in September 2010, resulting in more efficient and effective staff and librarian performance and service (Appendix 19). The transformation of the library organizational structure will continue with two pending retirements, one librarian in August 2011 and one librarian in summer of 2012. These retirements will provide the opportunity to address critical programming needs. The Director plans to hire librarians with strengths and experience in instruction, Web 2.0 applications and outreach.

A modest increase in professional staffing was accomplished in fall 2010 with the increase of 0.25 FTE in the library.

**Vision.** The Commission Letter of 2007 commented that “decisions about what additional services should be based within the Library also need to be linked to a guiding vision for the Library.” Although a new mission statement for the library was written in 2008-2009, a new vision and core competencies document will be drafted by the library faculty and staff during the academic year 2011-2012.

The Director and her staff have made significant progress in addressing WASC concerns. Commitment to continued improvement in the library and its programs is strong at Westmont. Accomplishments are particularly noteworthy having come during a time of national economic recession and fiscal restraint at the College.
B. Assessment and Program Review

Quoting from the Commission letter: “Assessment and Program Review. While Westmont's increased engagement with assessment of learning has been noted, there remains much to be done to achieve a higher level of systematic, sustained, and coordinated effort around assessment. The variability among units in the quality and depth of assessment efforts and attention to learning results needs to be markedly reduced. As identified again by the commission in 2005, Westmont must renew its efforts to achieve full and regular program review for all academic programs. In this regard, the institution should clarify the degree of ownership the departments have in assessing the six institutional learning goals, and how the results of such assessments can then be aggregated into program review for General education as a whole. The identification of assessment measures aligned with each of the six learning goals is worthy of Westmont's creative and sustained attention. At the Commission meeting, it was reported that the College has hired a full-time assessment coordinator to work with the faculty on these issues. This is a positive step and consideration will need to be given to support these efforts within each department.”

(There was a misunderstanding between Westmont and the Commission regarding the assessment coordinator position, as evidenced by the Commission statement quoted above. Although the need for a full-time "assessment coordinator" was recognized by Westmont in 2007, funds for the position had not yet been budgeted nor had a person been hired. It would be another three years before the position of Dean for Curriculum and Education Effectiveness was filled. Between 2007 and 2010, Westmont faculty Dr. Marianne Robins (History), Dr Lesa Stern (Communication Studies) and Dr. Ray Rosentrater (Mathematics) were (part-time) directors of assessment, with each receiving a teaching load reduction. More about the process of filling this new position at Westmont is described in the Leadership section, III.C.)

The 2007 visiting team identified multiple issues related to program review and assessment in the Team Report, focusing on: Consistency of work, infrastructure and sustainability.

- **Consistency of Work:** The team found program review reports and assessment updates were not being produced on schedule. Fewer five-year reports had been completed than the team expected. Moreover, the available reports exhibited great variability in style, structure, objectives, and the use of data. The observed variability of reports and the inconsistent use of terminology were recurring themes in the Team Report.

- **Infrastructure:** There had been a great expenditure of energy at the time of the team’s visit, but the results of the work were neither coordinated nor easily accessible. While reports were being generated, it was not clear how they would be used. The Team Report also noted the lack of guidance provided to departments as they wrote their reports. This was particularly evident in the lack of clear and consistently applied rubrics. Departments were too free to use their own presentation formats and assessment structures. Moreover, program-level assessment was not well coordinated with institution-level assessment. In general, the visiting team found the program review/assessment process (particularly for General Education) to be underdeveloped.

- **Sustainability:** The team expressed concern about the sustainability of the program review and assessment procedures in place at the time of the visit. The existence of multiple guiding documents was of particular concern. Consequently, the team
recommended coordinating, aligning, and streamlining the documents used to guide assessment efforts. In addition, there was a call for assessment and program review work to be brought into the institutional reward structures.

1. Program Review: 2007 to 2010

Consistency of Work. Part of the visiting team's disappointment in the number of available five-year reports stemmed from a communication failure on Westmont's part. The schedule of reports made it appear that reports would be ready at the beginning of the academic year, when, in fact, they were due at the end of the year. Nevertheless, it was the case that some reports were not completed on time and the quality of reports varied significantly.

This pattern has been turned around. Of the more than 100 reports expected from 25 units since the 2007 visit, all but 11 have been submitted. Most of the missing reports are from fall 2007 and the two missing reports from fall 2009 were from departments who had lost their offices or whose chair had lost his home in the Tea fire. (Two chairs lost both office and home.) All program units submitted fall 2010 reports (Appendix B20).

In addition to improving the rate of submission, reports are becoming more standardized in format. This result comes from significant work by the Program Review Committee and the Director of Assessment to improve and better communicate expectations for the use of report templates.

Significant strides have also been made in the assessment of the General Education program. Since the 2007 team visit, student learning outcomes have been proposed or established for all 20 GE areas. For each area, the process of establishing the outcomes began with a series of meetings with faculty teaching area courses. These meetings produced a set of draft outcomes that were reviewed by the General Education Committee which, in turn, provided feedback to the teaching faculty. The conversation between the area faculty and the GE Committee continued until a mutually acceptable set of outcomes was agreed upon. Often, these discussions would be paralleled by trial assessment projects to verify the reasonableness of the proposed outcomes. Currently, with the exception of a few strategic areas, most of these objectives are being treated as Certification Criteria (Appendix B21) for approving new courses rather than being actively used for assessment. (See the following discussion on sustainability.) The certification criteria for the Writing for the Liberal Arts and Writing/Speech-Intensive courses have been refined following a syllabus review conducted by the GE Committee in preparation for assessment in 2011-2012.

Beyond establishing learning outcomes, assessment work has been carried out in 11 of the 20 GE areas. Areas in which a complete round of assessment has been conducted are (Appendix B22):

- Reasoning Abstractly
- Performing and Interpreting the Arts
- Thinking Globally
- Serving Society; Enacting Justice

Areas for which partial assessment has been done:
- Biblical and Theological Canons
• Philosophical Reflections
• World History
• Exploring the Physical Sciences
• Modern Languages
• Physical Education
• Communicating Cross-Culturally

See the 2010 six-year Program Review Report for General Education for additional information (Appendices B23(a) and B23(b)).

Infrastructure. Since 2007, changes have been made to the systems and structures supporting program review and assessment.

• Templates for Annual Update Reports (Appendix 24) and six-year Program Review Reports (Appendix 25) have been refined. Each year, after processing the year's reports, the Program Review Committee reflects on how the templates might be modified to produce more effective and useful reports. In particular, the Committee looks for ways in which the templates can better communicate expectations. The templates have changed over time to better emphasize the need to shorten and focus the annual report and to provide a response to what has been learned from annual assessment activities.
• The templates are presented annually to department chairs in a session that highlights changes and provides an opportunity for questions and additional feedback.
• While reports were becoming more consistent, approaches to record-keeping remained variable. Records for a single department might be spread over multiple computers and filing systems. To counter this trend, a common electronic archive of assessment information was constructed in the spring of 2010. This archive provides a folder and a common set of subfolders for each program. While some migration work remains and a few departments have not yet developed good file-naming habits, use of the archive has begun. In particular, institutional data related to course and advising loads is distributed to departments via the archive and the fall 2010 reports from departments were submitted using the archive.
• The Office of the Provost established a course release program to provide time for departments to do assessment and program review work. Departments can apply for a course release every two years and releases are approved based upon the strength of the proposal and past performance. The course release schedule is coordinated with the six-year program review cycle so that a department is eligible to apply for a course release in the year prior to the Program Review Report being due. Most departments have appreciated this benefit and have used it effectively.
• Funds have been made available for department representatives to attend assessment training workshops. Faculty from three departments attended training sessions during the spring and fall 2010 semesters. In fall 2010, all department chairs participated in a workshop focused on developing effective mission statements and accessible student learning outcomes, conducted by the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.
• During the summer of 2009, Westmont retained Marilee Bresciani as a consultant to assist in aligning the multiple defining documents. As a result of the alignment, two additional standards were developed (Physical and Emotional Health, and Creativity). Both the General Education and the Program Review Committees spent time in the fall of
One of the most important developments in support of program review and assessment at Westmont was the appointment of a permanent administrative leader. Teaching faculty receiving load reductions were instrumental in laying a solid foundation for effective assessment at all levels. However, the need for full-time experienced leadership was apparent. Beginning fall 2010, the full-time position of Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness was established and Tatiana Nazarenko hired to fill the position. The change to a full-time position was a significant step in providing needed support for program assessment and program review work. Moreover, the outside perspective and expertise Nazarenko brought to the task are already bearing fruit. In particular, Nazarenko has been effective in envisioning and beginning implementation of coordinated institution-level assessment and in reducing the workload.

**Sustainability.** While Westmont has made progress toward a more sustainable system of assessment and program review, this area requires additional work.

The following initiatives have contributed towards improved sustainability:

- The Office of the Provost has established a program of course release for assessment and program review work.
- Assessment work has been incorporated into the list of expectations for department chairs and into the criteria for promotion and tenure. These changes have been approved by the faculty and incorporated into the Faculty Handbook. All Department Chairs participated in the assessment workshop in fall 2010 and additional workshops were held in spring 2011.
- A document has been developed to align the multiple documents that guide Westmont's academic program and a template has been provided to departments to aid them in aligning their work with the institutional goals (Appendix B27).
- Report templates have been modified to emphasize shortening and narrowing the focus of the reports.
- Most General Education outcomes have been converted into certification criteria. There were previously 68 learning outcomes associated with the 20 General Education areas. Ongoing assessment of this many outcomes was deemed unmanageable. With the approved 2011-2017 assessment schedule, the College will focus on assessing eight GE Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) aligned with the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).
- In 2011, Tatiana Nazarenko, Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness, was accepted to the WASC Assessment Leadership Academy.

2. **Program Review: Modifications to the Existing Model**

During the past several years, it became increasingly apparent that the College did not possess sufficient resources to maintain an effective assessment program of institutional and GE outcomes using the existing system of institutional, program and GE-level assessment. Even though most departments had made progress in shifting from “input-oriented” thinking to “outcomes-oriented” thinking, the complexity of the system previously established with a
combined 106 student learning outcomes (SLOs) prevented the faculty from developing and implementing an adequate assessment mechanism, purposefully collecting relevant evidence and analyzing it as well as implementing the required changes.

Shortly after her hiring in July 2010, Tatiana Nazarenko (Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness) began developing a unified system for all levels of assessment. Proposed changes were discussed at the WASC Retreat in October 2010 with Drs. Mary Allen, Amy Driscoll, Barbara Wright, and Laura Martin, as well as with Drs. Allen, Driscoll and Wright at the June 2011 WASC Assessment Leadership Academy. Their feedback was incorporated into the implementation plan. The following changes were proposed at institutional, GE, and program levels of assessment.

(a) Institutional level changes in process.
Six institutional learning standards with outcome statements were adopted by the faculty in 2002 and used throughout the decade in the CPR and EER studies (Appendix B28). In response to the EER Team report in 2007, the Program Review Committee began a review of these standards and outcomes. It was not surprising that the EER Team questioned the sustainability of the assessment program because faculty were already finding it challenging to assess these outcomes. As faculty understanding of assessment matured, it became apparent that many of the student learning outcomes were general statements that were not easily assessed. With time these statements have come to be recognized more as educational goals and aspirations than measurable outcomes. The principles embodied in the 2002 standards are now recognized as institutional learning goals (ILGs) that are not themselves assessed but that lead directly into more specific measurable institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). (Appendices B29 and B30)

This new conceptualization has guided a number of changes.

- Assessment terminology, including the language of the institutional learning goals and outcomes has been clarified. The new terminology was introduced to department chairs in fall 2010.

- The Program Review Committee, in consultations with faculty, developed institutional learning outcome statements (Appendix B30).

- In order to identify competency in an academic major program as an institutional priority, the following statement was provisionally added as an institutional learning outcome, “Graduates of Westmont College will demonstrate substantial knowledge of a field of study and the modes of inquiry pertinent to that field.” The task of assessing this ILO was assigned to the academic departments.

- Institutional assessment was streamlined by establishing a six-year cycle of gathering, interpreting, and presenting evidence of educational effectiveness for institutional learning goals. Each year during the six-year cycle, academic and non-academic departments will focus on the same institutional learning outcome(s). Also, the assessment of the General Education student learning outcomes will be intertwined in the six-year assessment cycle. The coordinated assessment efforts undertaken by academic and non-academic departments will be aligned and synchronized with the educational effectiveness efforts of the entire institution (Appendices B31(a) and 31(b)). The new Assessment package was presented to the Academic Senate and the faculty in spring
2011 and was provisionally approved. The faculty committed themselves to discussing and finalizing the Institutional Learning Goals and Outcomes in the 2011-2012 academic year.

- Starting in 2011-2012, each year one or two faculty with relevant expertise will serve as Lead Assessment Specialist(s) for the year-specific assessment. The faculty member(s) will receive one course release and, if needed, will participate in an assessment-related professional development workshop. In 2011-2012, English Professor Sarah Skripsky will serve as the Lead Assessment Specialist for assessing the written communication outcome and the corresponding GE outcomes. In preparation for this leadership assignment, she attended the two-week Dartmouth College Summer Seminar for writing professionals, which included training in assessing writing across the curriculum.

- A system of annual awards and prizes for best assessment practices was established. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology was awarded the Excellence in Assessment Certificate and $500 prize while the Departments of Computer Science and Education were awarded the Excellence in Assessment Certificates and $120 prizes. The names of these departments will be inscribed on the Excellence of Assessment plaque to be hung in the Voskuyl Library.

- New educational effectiveness resources were developed and posted on the educational effectiveness website.

(b) General education level changes in process.
Having completed assessment of 11 of the 20 general education areas since 2007, the faculty realized the existing model of assessing student learning in 20 GE areas requires considerably more resources than are currently available. Even though assessment data have driven some pedagogical and curricular changes in the GE curriculum, a substantial amount of faculty time and effort has been allocated to data collection, leaving little time for analyzing the evidence and developing and implementing strategies for improving student learning. As a result, faculty did not perceive their time allocated to GE assessment as well-spent. The existing assessment practices prompted the need for re-conceptualizing GE assessment.

Re-conceptualizing and restructuring the GE assessment plan began in fall 2010 and has been a major faculty effort during the 2010-2011 academic year. The task will be completed by spring 2012. To date, the major accomplishments of this reorganization include:

- Converting the existing 68 GE student learning outcomes into certification criteria for approving new courses for GE credit (Appendix B21).
- Determining which GE student learning outcomes will be systematically evaluated. More work needs to be done in order to reduce the number of GE SLOs by developing a few overarching outcomes for the Common Inquiries area and revising outcomes for Common Contexts, Common Skills, and Competent and Compassionate Action areas.
- Simplifying GE assessment by developing only one or two outcomes focused on observable and measurable student behaviors in each GE area (Appendix B32).
- Aligning GE assessment with the institutional assessment system and establishing a timeline for assessing institutional learning outcomes (ILO) and GE student learning outcomes.
(SLOs) during the newly established coordinated multi-year assessment plan (Appendix B31(a)).

- Updating the GE assessment web-site.

As a result of the joint efforts of Program Review Committee, General Education Committee, key faculty, and the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness, the College established a plan for assessing ILOs and GE SLOs during the 2011-2017 assessment cycle. The plan focuses on the following learning outcomes during the next six-year assessment cycle:

- **2011-2012**: Competence in Written and Oral Communication + GE: Writing for the Liberal Arts; Writing/Speech-Intensive Courses
- **2012-2013**: Christian Understanding/ Practices/ Affections + GE Biblical and Theological Canons
- **2013-2014**: Diversity and Global Awareness + Thinking Globally
- **2014-2015**: Critical/Interdisciplinary Thinking; Research and Information Literacy + GE Quantitative and Analytical Reasoning; Reading Imaginative Literature
- **2015-2016**: Active Societal/Intellectual Engagement; Physical/Emotional Health + GE: Understanding Society; Physical Education
- **2016-2017**: Creative Expression + GE: Performing and Interpreting the Arts; Exploring the Physical Sciences; Exploring the Life Sciences.

One of the lessons learned during the 2010-2011 assessment restructuring process was the need for regular and improved communication between the multiple committees involved with curriculum and assessment (Program Review, General Education, Senate), the Office of the Provost and the faculty.

(c) *Program level changes in process.*

- Departments have been encouraged to simplify program level assessment by revising department mission statements and program learning outcomes (PLOs). Departments with many program learning outcomes have been advised to focus on two to four outcomes. The Departments of Communication Studies, English, Modern Languages, Theatre Arts and Physics, as well as the San Francisco Urban Program, are examples of programs that have benefited from revisions to their mission statements and program learning outcomes (Appendix 33).
- There has been a shift towards evaluating PLOs in capstone classes, senior seminars and other upper division courses, where the established outcomes have been mastered rather than in classes where the learning objectives have only been introduced or are developing. Some departments are already making good use of capstone courses for assessment. Additional departments are considering transitioning assessment efforts to capstone classes next year.
- While over one-half of the departments have posted mission statements and program learning outcomes to department web pages, the posting of assessment information is a practice not yet well established by most departments.
There has been increased focus on closing-the-loop by connecting assessment results to pedagogy, curricular changes, professional development and/or resource allocation.

Faculty are being encouraged to participate in assessment-related professional development activities. Four faculty members and two administrators attended WASC training programs in 2010-2011. Additionally, two other faculty members have expressed their intention to attend WASC-sponsored workshops in the 2011-2012 academic year. Also, five faculty and administrators are applying for the Washington Center 2012 Summer Institute on Learning Communities.

In-house assessment-related training for department chairs and librarians has also been initiated. A training session for Student Life specialists has been developed in collaboration with the Associate Dean of Students.

Having streamlined and aligned institutional, General Education, and program levels of assessment, the College continues working on refining its assessment system and making it more manageable and meaningful for faculty, co-curricular specialists, librarians, and students.

3. Selected Highlights of Changes Implemented Resulting from Assessment Effort

The previous pages have focused on how program review and assessment processes have developed at Westmont since 2007. Before leaving this section, a few snapshots of what departments have learned from their assessment work and as a result, changes that have been implemented, will be highlighted. The following are examples of changes in program, staffing, pedagogy and/or curriculum that have been implemented during the last several years. Detailed information regarding these changes and all departments’ program review and assessment work can be found in the department program review reports (Appendix B20).

Art eliminated ART 001 (Principles of Art) as a major requirement. This course was replaced with an additional upper division studio elective course. The decision for this change came from the department’s program review. Comparing the program to several peer programs, the department determined that none of the peer programs required three foundational courses as Westmont did. Requiring students to take three foundational courses (Principles of Art, Design and Drawing) was disadvantageous to those students who needed more classes at an advanced level to qualify for admission to graduate or professional art programs. Upon analyzing assessment data, the faculty decided to trim lower division core courses by eliminating the Principles course as a major requirement, thus creating more opportunity for upper division work.

Biology established the case in their six-year program review for additional space and staffing. A new tenure-track position was approved and a person hired, who starts in January 2012. Also, new lab space becomes available in 2011-2012.

Communication Studies assessed the quality of student research conducted by seniors in the Mass Communication course, in which students are required to conduct independent research and prepare a report in a format consistent with professional standards. In response to assessment findings, the department added Introduction to Communication Research as a prerequisite to Mass Communication in order to improve the quality of the required research project. The course also became part of the major’s core requirements.
Computer Science changed the assignments and programming language of instruction in the first-year sequence Introduction to Computer Science I and II. The Computer Science faculty had noticed that too many students were dropping the courses. As a result, the registrar was asked to provide the data on who dropped and when. One problem that became apparent was a higher drop-out rate when an adjunct taught the course. The faculty also interviewed students who had dropped Computer Science II in spring 2009, and surveyed all students who had registered for CS-010 between 2005 and 2009. These interviews identified several reasons for the high drop-out rate. A common complaint was with the programming language used in the course. Following the department’s analysis, the Computer Science faculty developed qualifications for a replacement programming language and decided on adopting a new program. One faculty member attended a conference related to pedagogy in Computer Science and also adapted course assignments in light of comments on the survey, including new in-class laboratory work. Initial results suggest that the changes were successful. In fall 2010, the drop-rate in Computer Science I was 70% lower than the 2005-2009 average.

Education modified procedures and developed a different grading form for portfolios in ED-109: Liberal Studies Seminar. By assessing student learning and modifying their pedagogy, the department achieved one of its benchmarks, which was to have all student teachers score at least 4.0 (out of a possible 5.0) on all items of the Master Evaluations of Student Teachers.

History modified pedagogical strategies in HIS 198 (Historical Method, Bibliography, and Research). Assessment results from the HIS 198 class indicated students needed additional work in formulating a research thesis and in written historical argumentation. Individual weekly mentoring by department faculty is now required of HIS 198 students in order to provide personal instruction addressing these shortcomings.

Mathematics introduced the following curricular changes: Inclusion of MA 180 (Problem Solving Seminar) and MA 015 (Discrete Mathematics) as major requirements; reinstituting MA 008 (Functions and Models) as a prerequisite for MA 9 (Calculus I). MA 180 is a focal class for the department’s creativity learning objective. MA 015 was added as a requirement in order to provide students with additional practice at mathematical proof writing. MA 008 was added as a prerequisite for MA 009 as a result of determining some students enrolled in MA 009 were not adequately prepared to begin Calculus.

Political Science found students who had completed POL 040 (Empirical Political Research) before taking upper division classes wrote superior research papers in upper division classes than students who had not yet taken POL 040. In POL 040, students develop their research and writing skills. POL 040 was established as a prerequisite for several upper division classes.

Sociology and Anthropology modified its curriculum in order to meet disciplinary expectations established by the American Sociological Association (ASA). Prerequisites were established for Senior Seminar, and sequencing for Social Research Methods and Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis were introduced. Additionally, in response to assessment data the department faculty developed a number of pedagogical strategies for improving student learning in relation to the methodological skills outcome. These strategies include creating an evaluative rubric for papers and distributing it to students at the beginning of the seminar; creating a check-list of the basic elements of a research paper for the seminar students; modifying one of the pre-requisite courses to strengthen conceptual, theoretical, and methodological skills and separating assignments to be given in the seminar to assess student research methodology skills. These strategies have
resulted in encouraging findings. An additional benefit of these activities is department faculty now have a greater understanding of the pedagogical strategies used by their colleagues and they have a broader understanding of what their students are learning throughout the program.

C. Sustained Leadership Support

Quoting from the Commission letter: “Sustained Leadership Support. The leadership transitions at the presidential and provost level, combined with subsequent management appointments and realignments, present both great opportunity and some uncertainty. While the Commission encourages the new leadership to be committed to the academic priorities identified above, the pacing, priorities, and impact of the new leadership is yet to be demonstrated. The Commission urges the College's administration, faculty, and staff to seize this opportunity to work collaboratively toward sustaining the activities undertaken as part of the accrediting review. Westmont's short-range and long-range planning efforts, critical to sustaining institutional progress in each of the identified areas of attention, will be substantially shaped by new leadership. As such, the impact of these transitions warrants the continuing attention of the Commission.”

Westmont was in the midst of significant leadership transition when the EER team came to campus in February 2007. Four senior leadership positions were vacant. A new president had been selected, but would not assume his new responsibilities until July 1. Interims were serving as CAO and dean of faculty, and as vice president for finance. The search for a vice president for development had been suspended until the new president was in place. At the next level down in the academic administration, the director of the library and information services was approaching retirement. Also, with the educational effectiveness review completed, the need for additional leadership to oversee program review and assessment efforts was apparent. These responsibilities were still being covered by release time granted to teaching faculty.

Of the four executive positions open at the time of Westmont’s last WASC visit, only the CAO position remains open. The College has succeeded in filling the following positions: President, Vice President for Finance and Vice President for Advancement. Here is a summary of the progress made filling key positions (Appendix A4).

New President. Dr. Gayle D. Beebe was selected as the eighth president of Westmont College in January 2007. Before coming to Westmont, Dr. Beebe served as president of Spring Arbor University for seven years. He is a graduate of another Christian liberal arts college; received master’s degrees in divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and in philosophy of religion and theology from Claremont Graduate University; a MBA degree in strategic management from the Peter F. Drucker School at Claremont Graduate University; and completed his doctorate in philosophy of religion and theology at Claremont Graduate University in 1997. Early in his career, Beebe recognized the importance of strategic planning. Before coming to Westmont, he led planning projects at Spring Arbor University and Azusa Pacific University (where he served as dean of the school of theology).
New Vice Presidents. Shortly after arriving, Dr. Beebe hired Mr. Doug Jones as Vice President for Finance. Mr. Jones, who took over his responsibilities in September 2007, previously worked as Dr. Beebe’s CFO at Spring Arbor University.

Another of President Beebe’s former colleagues at Spring Arbor joined the Executive Team in October 2008. Dr. Reed Sheard began his tenure at Westmont as Vice President for Technology and CIO. He also became Vice President for Advancement in December 2009.

Chief Academic Officer. President Beebe led the search for a chief academic officer during the 2008-2009 academic year. After a finalist was brought to campus for public interviews in spring 2009, President Beebe and the search committee determined that the right candidate had not been found to serve as Westmont’s chief academic officer and dean of faculty. The demands placed on the president and other key leaders by the College’s capital fundraising campaign necessitated deferring the search for a chief academic officer to the fall of 2010.

Given the deferred search for a chief academic officer, it was necessary to appoint a new interim to serve in this role. Interim Academic Dean Warren Rogers had just completed two and a half years in the position and was eager to return to the classroom. As a result, Dr. Beebe consulted many faculty, as well as some administrators and trustees about the appointment of a new interim. Two candidates, one internal and one external, were interviewed. Dr. Richard Pointer, Westmont Professor of History for 15 years, was selected to serve as acting provost beginning in the summer of 2009. Dr. Pointer, first recipient of a newly established endowed chair, came highly recommended by colleagues. He has served with distinction as chief academic officer and dean of faculty, and is held in high regard by faculty, President Beebe, his colleagues on the Executive Team, and trustees.

President Beebe renewed the search for a chief academic officer in the fall of 2010. The search committee consisted of those who served on the committee two years previously plus the addition of Acting Provost Rick Pointer and Faculty Vice Chair Tom Fikes.

Director of the Library and Information Services. Debra Quast began her responsibilities as the new Director of the Library and Information Services on July 1, 2009. Director Quast came to Westmont from Azusa Pacific University, where she served in various library roles for 21 years, most recently as Chair of University Libraries. She reports to the Provost and serves on the Strategic Planning Committee. Director Quast spearheaded a major renovation of Voskuyl Library during the summer of 2010, which has tripled student usage of the library.

Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness. In 2008, Interim Academic Dean Rogers was authorized to initiate a search for a full-time Director of Assessment. A dip in enrollment and uncertainty over national economics resulted in the decision to suspend the search in January of 2009. During Dr. Pointer’s first year as acting provost, he advocated for reinitiating the search and for a modification of the position to Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness. After receiving approval for the new position, Dr. Pointer chaired the search committee that concluded with the hiring of Dr. Tatiana Nazarenko, who started her work at Westmont in July 2010. Former dean of instruction and assessment liaison at Centralia College (WA), she has more than 20 years of college-level teaching and administrative experience. She
reports to the Provost and serves on the Strategic Planning Committee. In her relatively short
time at the College, Dr. Nazarenko has brought expertise and experience, as well as seasoned
leadership, to the development of a more mature and sustainable process of assessment.

**Impact of New Leaders.** Each of these new leaders clearly has advanced the College’s work in
the areas of assessment and strategic planning. Shortly after his arrival, President Beebe
launched Westmont’s strategic planning process. The strategic map that emerged from this effort
includes key initiatives now being implemented.

One of the first strategic planning tasks launched was the creation of several working groups to
bring greater clarity to key College documents (the Mission and Distinctiveness track of work
from the Strategic Planning Map). In the past two years, a revised College mission statement, a
document clarifying what Westmont means by "evangelical," "liberal arts," and "diversity," and
the document "Biblical and Theological Foundations of Diversity" were approved (Appendices
B7 and B34).

Another of the first strategic priorities (Appendix B6) that received attention was “Institutional
Review” (Appendix B35):
- Continuing to strengthen focus on student learning and development (strategic map cell
  B-2);
- Conducting mission-based program review (strategic map cell B-3).

The new Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness position helps ensure that recent
improvements in these areas will grow and be sustained. The new Dean's responsibilities include
serving on the Academic Senate (curriculum and academic policy committee) and the Program
Review and General Education Committees. Likewise, the addition of Dean Nazarenko and of
Director of the Library and Information Services Quast to the Strategic Planning Committee
helps ensure that (in the words of the Commission Action Letter) “short-range and long-range
planning efforts, critical to sustaining institutional progress in each of the identified areas for
attention, will be substantially shaped by new leadership.”

**D. Defining and Implementing (Religious) Diversity**

Quoting from the Commission letter: “Defining and Implementing Diversity. Two stated goals
for Westmont College are affirmed by the Board and referenced in the team's report: ‘Members
of the Board of Trustees affirmed the Christian evangelical identity of the College and its
commitment to be a welcoming community for all students.’ While the Commission upholds
Westmont's core values of staying true to its founding identity and being a welcoming community
for all, a concern remains as to whether the institution has engaged in a sustaining conversation
about the potential conflict implied by these two goals. The potential conflict was illustrated in
the 2005 Capacity Review by the concerns of Catholic students who did not perceive themselves
as being truly welcomed at Westmont. The Commission urges the College to continue to address
how it can continue to be true to its evangelical belief system while creating an environment that
is genuinely welcoming to those whose personal beliefs might exclude them from that system.”
The 2005 and 2007 visiting teams identified several issues related to religious diversity and students. The issues centered around three themes: clear communication of Westmont's Protestant identity, creating a welcoming community, and engagement in an institutional conversation addressing the tension between institutional values and admitting students who come from different faith traditions. The experience of Roman Catholic students was cited as the principal concern.

1. Communication and Admissions

For decades Westmont has had an open admission policy relative to religious faith. Students from non-Protestant faith backgrounds and students with no expressed faith have been admitted. The recruiting strategy has been to make explicit what Westmont is and what is expected of all enrolled students and then have students self-select out if they don't want to attend a distinctively Protestant, evangelical college like Westmont. As a result, conversations with prospective students about required religious studies classes, chapel attendance and behavioral expectations are normative. The intent is to enroll students who will be comfortable and flourish in this particular type of learning environment, regardless of their religious background. Although in small numbers, students from non-Christian faith traditions have enrolled in recent years and every year students enroll who profess no faith commitment.

For years Roman Catholic students have been the largest non-Protestant group on campus (Appendix B36). The numbers of Catholics fluctuates annually but has consistently represented 3% to 5% of the student body.

How is the religious identity of Westmont communicated to prospective students? Printed and web-based materials explicitly describe Westmont as a Christian learning community. The Statement of Faith, the seminal document defining Westmont's theological identity, begins as follows: “Westmont College is a liberal arts college committed to Jesus Christ and belonging to the worldwide evangelical Protestant tradition (emphasis added). In that tradition, the College’s trustees, administrators, and faculty participate in many different churches and with them confess such historic statements of the church as the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed. In faithfulness to God, who is the source of truth, and under the authority of Scripture, we joyfully and humbly affirm the following articles of faith, which guide our learning, teaching, and living.” (Appendix B37) The preamble establishes Westmont in the Protestant tradition. It does not equate or limit Christianity to the Protestant tradition but it does suggest that Westmont is a particular type of Christian community. A survey was administered to Catholic students in 2006 and again in 2010. In 2006, 17% of respondents thought Westmont could "definitely" do a better job describing Westmont as a Protestant college and 25% believed we "probably" could do better. In 2010, 19% responded "definitely" and 30% responded "probably" (Appendix B38). Although in both years the majority of respondents stated the materials were clear, the large minority opinion will be used as impetus to reexamine materials.

Included in the application packet materials is the "Community Life Statement." This document uses inclusive language to describe the type of Christian community Westmont seeks to create, including specific behavioral expectations (Appendix B39).
The admission application requests information regarding church and denominational affiliation. As already indicated, the information is not used for denying admission. However, if a student identifies a non-Protestant faith heritage, it is noted and leads to a follow-up contact. An admission counselor contacts these students and provides additional information pertaining to the Protestant nature of the College and answers any questions the applicant may have. In 2006, 42% of Catholic survey respondents remembered having a personal conversation with an admission counselor but few remembered the content of the conversation addressed faith issues. In 2010, 63% responding remembered the contact but again, less than 50% of those responding recalled specifically discussing Westmont's Protestant identity (Appendix B38). The results indicate admission staff should be more direct in their contact, but it is also important to remember that students completing the survey were trying to recall conversations that occurred as much as 4 years earlier. Survey results have been discussed with the Dean of Admission and steps will be taken to make these phone contacts more memorable.

2. Welcoming Community

Campus Pastor and Chapel. Beginning in 2001, each fall the Campus Pastor makes a declaration in chapel during New Student Orientation that there are a number of denominations that form Christ’s church. He states that although Christian denominations and independent churches meet in buildings and locations across Santa Barbara, they all belong to one church in a common belief in Jesus Christ as Savior. On occasion, when the Campus Pastor lists denominations in the area to make this point, he always includes Catholic churches.

An important marking point for all Catholic students (as well as students who worship at Lutheran and Episcopal churches) is the celebration of Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. Ash Wednesday has been celebrated on campus for all but one year since 2002.

Catholic churches are invited to the fall Church Day and lists are available for students to request rides to all area churches. A list of local churches with address and contact information is available to students on the Campus Pastor's web page. Santa Barbara Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches are included here.

Guest speakers, including Catholic speakers, are included in the required chapel program attended by all students. In recent years, Catholic speakers have included Paul Ford, Renee Bondi, Janice Daurio, and Jim Ault (2006-2007); Father Greg Boyle and Peter Kreeft (2008-2009); and Father Greg Boyle (2009-2010 & 2010-2011).

President Beebe’s chapel talks often reflect positively on the historic church fathers and mothers who are key contributors to Catholic history and theology. It is impossible to overlook the high regard President Beebe has for the contributions made by past Catholic and Orthodox men and women as one reads his recent book co-written with Richard Foster, Longing for God - Seven Paths of Christian Devotion (2009).

A Catholic Student Focus Group was part of the 2010 External Review of the Campus Pastor’s Office. The students in the focus group overall had a “positive experience” in chapel. What they missed in chapels was a more sacramental, less mediated, intimate experience of worship.
The focus group also mentioned being surprised by how many Westmont students misunderstood Catholic beliefs. Some ideas to help address the misunderstanding are presented below.

Catholic Student Groups. The club “One in Christ” was formed by one Catholic and two Protestant students to foster greater understanding among Catholics and Protestants. “One in Christ” continued for two years (2006-2008). Beginning fall semester 2009, Catholic students attending a local Catholic church began encouraging other Catholic students to have times of fellowship together. These experiences resulted in various gatherings being held on campus during spring semester 2010, coordinated with our campus pastor and an area priest, who is a Westmont alum and on staff at a Catholic Church in nearby Isla Vista. In 2010-2011, Catholic students submitted an application to have official club status on campus. The application was approved and the club currently meets on campus.

Coursework and Co-curricular Programming. Required reading in many Religious Studies and Philosophy courses include Catholic scholars who are presented in a favorable light. Catholic authors are also regularly on the reading lists in English courses. An adjunct instructor who is writing a book on Father Junipero Serra took his current students on a field trip to the Santa Barbara Mission as one means to better understand Serra’s life work. Two other courses in the department are the Victorian Literature and Catholicism seminar and a course on British Literature and Catholicism taught recently on England Semester.

One residence hall hosted a group of Catholic students from Los Angeles in a “Q & A” format to allow students an opportunity to learn more about the faith experience of committed Catholics. As part of their training this past August, the Intercultural Program leaders met with a priest and nun at the Santa Barbara Mission to expand their understanding about spiritual practices and Sabbath from a Catholic perspective.

The examples cited provide snapshots of ways Westmont is seeking to cultivate a welcoming environment for Catholic students. Of particular importance is the creation of the Catholic club. The Student Life department is working with the club to insure that the leadership and participating local churches know of the College’s desire to enrich the lives of all our students. The analysis of the spring 2010 survey, along with results obtained from a 2011 focus group (Appendix B40), will provide updated insights regarding the experience of Catholic students on campus. We are also interested to learn the degree to which Catholic students are represented in various leadership roles. Other ideas under consideration include:

- Plan a Faculty Forum on strategies to pedagogically handle students’ statements/questions in the classroom that evidence a negative bias or a lack of understanding regarding Catholicism.
- Increase Catholic student awareness of ways to get rides to local Catholic churches.
- Host an evening program where a Catholic priest and an evangelical pastor talk about the distinctives of their theology.
3. **An Institutional Conversation**

Westmont cares deeply about the campus community and all aspects of student experience, so there is a genuine effort to understand the community and deal with problems. There have been numerous informal and formal conversations on the broad topic of making Westmont a welcoming community for all students during the past five years. The focus of conversations has included gender issues, sexual orientation, ethnic diversity and religious diversity. These subjects have been discussed at Executive Team meetings, faculty meetings and forums, Student Life Dean's Council meetings and at the institutional Diversity Committee meetings. There have been focus groups led by Student Life personnel, Admissions staff and the faculty. The results of the 2006 and 2010 survey of Catholic students were distributed to the faculty and senior administrators. During this same period reports summarizing data from the Higher Education Research Institute’s CIRP and CSS surveys and the NSSE survey have been distributed widely to faculty and staff. Each survey has components dealing with the campus environment.

The new UCLA/HERI Diverse Learning Environments survey was administered to all students in spring 2011. It is expected this data will provide a better understanding of students' experiences at Westmont, both within and outside of the classroom.

We continue to look for methods to educate and model to our students that we value all people in our community. The "Community Life Statement" (Appendix B39), "Biblical and Theological Foundations of Diversity" (Appendix B34) and "Diversity Matters at Westmont" (Appendix 41) are key documents that define who we are and how we seek to implement our educational mission. But getting this mission expressed correctly in writing is not enough. During the past year the Diversity Committee began discussing how to use these documents more effectively to make them a real part of community life. One example of this was having an African-American, female administrator speak at new-student orientation (Fall 2010) on the theme of diversity.

**IV. Other / New Issues Westmont is Addressing**

Section I reported that the College proceeded with construction despite the withdrawal of a $75M pledge. Construction financing, debt management and plans for debt retirement are key elements of the present reality. Here is a description of what has been enacted and planning for the future.

**Debt and Debt Management**

From 2007 to 2010, total debt on the financial statements increased $44.7 million; $42.5 million of this was due to a new bond issue that generated funds to pay for new construction. Current bonds include $5 million of fixed rate (4%) bonds that were initially loans to the College from private individuals. They were converted to "real" bonds at the same time $60 million of variable rate bonds were issued. The $5 million fixed rate bonds come due December 2012, and interest is paid annually in December. The $60 million variable rate bonds have had an extremely low interest rate (0.25% weekly average since the bonds closed in January, 2010). The rate adjusts once each week. In the first year, interest paid was approximately $150,000.
There are various fees associated with the bond issue, most notably a 2% annual letter of credit fee paid to the banks that are backing the bonds with their own financial strength. As is common, Westmont essentially hired three banks to put forth their financial strength as the main source of backing for the bonds. This helped investors feel secure about their investments, and meant they were willing to accept a lower return since there is less risk. US Bank, Comerica Bank, and Rabobank were hired to provide a portion of the strength behind the $60 million. Westmont pays the banks a fee, and receives a much better interest rate from investors. In all, fees are approximately 2.3%, so the all-in cost (including interest) over the past year has been 2.55%, or approximately $1.5 million.

The College has been, and for the foreseeable future will be, paying interest and fees out of a reserve account established in the early 2000s for debt service. The fund currently has just over $28 million in it. Payments are drawn from the fund as needed, and the fund is replenished (partially) by $400,000 per year, coming from the College operating budget. Clearly, the outflows outpace the replenishment.

The strategy at this time is to take advantage of low interest rates until fundraising can raise the amount needed to fully pay for construction. The bonds were never intended to be a long term funding source, only a short term cash source to pay the contractors until such time that fundraising retires the debt. These are 30-year bonds, but the plan is that approximately $45 million will be paid back on an accelerated basis (within 5-8 years) so that the amount of money spent on debt service is minimized and the risk of future fluctuating interest rates reduced. The goal is to return within 10 years to the same level of debt on the books as in 2007, which was $20 - $22 million.

If fundraising is not entirely successful, several options have been discussed with the Board. A summary of these scenarios focus on asset liquidation, specifically liquidation of some of the endowment and/or some of the real estate the College owns (excluding the main campus). Any major action here could have ripple effects on College operations and programs, which could necessitate budget realignment to account for reduced endowment. Another option, if fundraising is not entirely successful, is for the College to enter into some sort of an interest rate hedge to artificially fix a portion of the variable interest rate. Trustees reviewed this option in the spring of 2010 but decided to first give fundraising the opportunity to raise funds necessary to reduce the bond debt. However, it may be that an interest rate hedge will be more attractive if a significant portion of the bond debt isn't eliminated during the next several years.

**Fundraising**

In the present challenging economic climate, the goal is to raise as many gifts and pledges as possible in a short period of time. Westmont’s very aggressive strategy has involved Advancement gift officers and the President making solicitations to over 50,000 households. Campaign activities were designed to create and encourage powerful community encounters between the College and potential donors.

The following event types were held or are still planned for 2011:
• Regional Events - 12 campaign dinners across the country with expected attendance from 100 to 225 at each event.
• Regional Dinners - 25 to 28 smaller scale dinners targeting 20 to 30 guests per dinner.
• President's Lunches - Six lunch events focused on the greater Santa Barbara area with 20 to 30 guests per event.
• Business Leaders Lunches - Six lunch meetings organized through a public relations consultant of 25 to 28 Los Angeles-based philanthropic leaders.
• President's Weekend in Palm Desert - 50 couples/households with significant financial capacity at a 3 1/2 day retreat that presents a total immersion into the mission and vision of Westmont and includes solicitation of all participants.
• Conference Calls - 12 conference calls providing the widest reach into the Westmont community. Hearing directly from the President, there is the potential of reaching as many as 18,000 people.
• Westmont Impact - Launch of a highly interactive web-based social giving site.
• Campaign mailings and solicitations will supplement these special events.

Significant progress was made during the first year of the Bright Hope for Tomorrow capital campaign. In the period April 2010 to April 2011, $19.8M was received in gifts and pledges.

V. Concluding Statement

This report has focused on issues raised in the 2007 Commission action letter. The College is in a stronger place today as a result of work already completed and efforts continuing into the future. Important foundational work has been completed and processes established.

As noted, President Beebe arrived in 2007 with a commitment to implementing a new form of strategic planning at Westmont. The system he enacted is consistent with the expectations WASC has for accredited institutions. Although strategic planning is guided by a campus committee and a Board committee, the entire community is involved. Town hall meetings attended by faculty, staff and students, the collection and review of data, working groups functioning throughout the year that regularly report to the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board are all new and/or enhanced regular elements of the current planning process.

The EER team and Commission were particularly interested in challenging the College to implement planning and bring change to the library. The stimulus from WASC contributed to energizing new leaders in key areas. The new Director of the library and the new VP for Informational Technology partnered in developing an ambitious plan for the use and functionality of library space. The program design was guided throughout by the desire to create a more effective space for student learning. The WASC review helped elevate library renovations as an institutional priority.

Issues raised by WASC regarding leadership were important for several positions. The two positions for which institutional priorities and WASC priorities directly intersected were the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness and the Director of the library. During the last decade progress was made in areas of program review and assessment. Considering these
efforts were led by faculty with little or no professional training in this type of work and who received modest teaching load reductions for their efforts, the accomplishments of the past decade seem even more impressive. By 2007 the need for additional expertise and leadership was widely recognized. In the midst of the significant economic recession it would have been easy to postpone indefinitely filling this position. The needs in the area of program review and assessment identified by WASC reinforced the institution’s resolve to fill the Dean’s position. Although there was never doubt the library director’s position would be filled, the need to find a Director who could lead a modernization effort of both the physical space and of library services was a primary objective of the search.

Partnership with WASC has been central in the accomplishments made in program review and assessment. In addition to hiring a Dean to direct the work, much has been accomplished in aligning institutional mission with institutional, general educational and program specific learning objectives. Greater clarity has led to refinements in student learning assessment, making it more sustainable. Most important, departments are finding assessment valuable and are making program changes based upon assessment data. Program review is slowly becoming part of the campus culture and is viewed more positively by many faculty.

The issues addressed in the EER team report and the Commission letter on diversity, particularly the focus on Catholic students, were more difficult to process and understand, since the statements were incongruent with our self-understanding. Earlier reference was made to foundational institutional documents such as the “Community Life Statement” and “Diversity Matters.” These are living documents and are central to the type of community Westmont seeks to create. They guide the work of the Office of Student Life as well as daily living and programming in all residence halls. The administration and faculty are committed to these principles. Making Westmont a hospitable community for diverse populations has been a deliberate objective for several decades. A few tangible signs of success are:

- A 262% increase in students of color enrolled (9.9% to 26.0%) as a percentage of total enrollment from 1990 to 2010 (Appendix B42).
- Retention and graduation rates of students of color close to rates of majority students (Appendix 43).
- Modest increases in women faculty and faculty of color (Appendix 44).
- Permanent multicultural representation on the Westmont College Student Association.

The 2007 EER team did not find new evidence of dissatisfaction expressed by Catholic students but instead, made reference back to the CPR 2005 report. The CPR team did not identify the number of Catholic students interviewed in reaching their conclusions stated in the 2005 report. Even though the College did not believe the statements represented the opinions held by the majority of Catholic students at Westmont, the statements were taken seriously. Between 2006 and 2011, focus group discussions were conducted with Catholic students (Appendix B40) and a survey (twice) of all Catholic students was administered (Appendix B38). While data from a few individual survey items identified areas of concern, overall survey results indicate the majority of Catholic students have a positive experience at Westmont. Retention and graduation rates of Catholic students have also been examined (Appendix B45). These rates show some variability, perhaps because of the small sample but overall, the persistence of Catholic students to degree.
completion is not as good as it is for the annual all-student cohorts. As described in Section III.D., the Office of Student Life and the Campus Pastor’s Office continue to consider ways of expanding co-curricular programming to enhance the experience of Catholic students.

The decision to administer the UCLA/HERI Diverse Learning Environment Survey (DLE) reflects the ongoing commitment to understand the experiences all students have. The DLE will allow comparisons between gender and ethnic groups and will permit further analysis between students enrolling from different faith traditions. An additional benefit of the DLE is it will allow comparisons between Westmont students and a national sample.

The period 2007 to 2011 has been a time of challenge and change at Westmont. A major fire swept the campus but as a result of disaster preparation and effective crisis management, recovery occurred quickly and effectively. New construction and the renovation of existing facilities have enhanced program opportunities and the student experience. College finances were also challenged by an international recession, a one year drop in enrollment (0.25%), the freezing of tuition for a year, and the withdrawal of a major gift. Nonetheless, the operating budget ended each fiscal year without a deficit. Construction financing was arranged and buildings were built. And in the summer of 2010 when enrollment was projected to exceed the County imposed cap, an assistance program was developed to send 25 students to approved off-campus program sites for the fall. (The College reported a campus enrollment of 1235 fall 2010; the County cap is 1235.)

Next Steps

Here is a summary of ongoing initiatives:

**Strategic planning**. The planning process initiated by President Beebe has a three-year focus. The 3rd year of the original plan ended spring 2011. The next plan (2011-2014) has been developed, approved by the Board and set for implementation in fall 2011.

**Strategic planning - library**. Facility renovations have been completed. Staffing and accessions goals need to be finalized and approved. Then a multi-year budget augmentation plan which meets these goals requires implementation.

**Program review**. The alignment process between institutional, general education and program learning objectives needs to be completed and the resulting new institutional assessment plan fully implemented.

**Senior leadership**. The College aims to fill the position of Provost and Academic Dean of Faculty by the end of December 2011. The Dean of Admission recently announced her retirement. This marks a significant transition in the Admission Office. She has been Dean for a decade and Associate Dean and Associate Director for nearly 20 years prior to becoming Dean. The search for her replacement began in February 2011. Phone and campus interviews were conducted in April and May. In June, Mr. Silvio Vazquez accepted the appointment as Dean of Admission and begins in mid-August. Mr. Vazquez has 20 years of admissions experience in higher education.
**Community life.** Results obtained from the Diverse Learning Environment Survey administered in the spring of 2011 will be used to better understand campus climate and used to plan new initiatives as needs are identified.

**Debt management / Fundraising.** Interest rate fluctuations will be closely monitored along with fundraising results. Debt service management will be adjusted as required to minimize impact on College programs and the operating budget.