Westmont College  
Department of Education  

Annual Assessment Report #2: 2005-06  
Submitted June 2006 with Additions in August 2006

This is an accumulating report. Material in black is, with minor tweaking, what was submitted for 2004-05. New or substantially revised material for 2005-06 is reported in red.

A number of key pieces of data for the preceding academic year are normally submitted to the Education program over the summer (RICA scores, CSET scores in part, Survey of First-Year Graduates, Survey of Employers of First-Year Graduates, student teaching portfolios and evaluations from master teachers [secondary and Costa Rica student teachers]. Accordingly, while this report is being submitted on Westmont’s standard due date (June 15), additional material for 2005-06 will be added throughout the summer. Department discussion of data compiled in this report will take place this year primarily in August.

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Part I: Liberal Studies Program

Background

The Liberal Studies program was revised in accordance with state mandates, effective for students entering Westmont Fall 2003. This past year’s junior class—students preparing to enter the Credential Program Fall 2006—was the first cohort to enroll in ED 109: Liberal Studies Seminar and to prepare, accordingly, a content portfolio aligned to the new (2003) curriculum.

Liberal Studies Goal A

All students will demonstrate adequate command of the academic content defined by the State of California as essential for future elementary teachers.

At least 4 important sources of data have been used to assess program quality with respect to Goal A.

(1) CSET-Multiple Subject examination results. Discussed September 2005. Also, August 2006.
(2) Survey results from first-year graduates of the Westmont Credential Program (Liberal Studies students typically enter the Credential Program upon completion of their LS program). Survey includes a list of required Liberal Studies courses. Students are asked to rate each course on a four-point or (beginning with graduates returning surveys at the end of the 2003-04 academic year) five-point scale. The Department discussed this data at our October 2005 meeting, in addition to a number of related but less formal conversations. Also, August 2006

(3) Senior Interviews, administered to selected seniors beginning in May 2004. Department discussed our interviews shortly after completing the interviews, in May 2004 and May 2005. The entire cohort of Junior liberal studies majors participated in a shorter group discussion of the questions, and each of the 12 students completed the written portion of the interview. In addition, one complete interview was conducted in May of 2006.

(4) Portfolios completed in ED 109 (Spring 2006) and candidate evaluation forms reflecting on the process. Each full-time member of the Education department participated in at least one 90-minute+ session of reviewing in depth two to four student portfolios. At least two full-time faculty members participated in each of the portfolio presentations.

(1) CSET Results

The most obvious measure of performance in this area is the ability to pass the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET)-Multiple Subject. First of all, we expect that 100% of our students will pass this exam, and thus be eligible to enter a Teaching Credential Program, here or elsewhere. Moreover, based on results received so far, we would like to maintain a composite average for our graduates of 3.00 or higher in each of the seven major subject domains.

Our Liberal Studies program was revised in 2002-03 to align with the state of California’s Content Standards for Elementary Subject Matter. This is the same set of Content Standards that the CSET-Multiple Subject is aligned to.

In theory then, our students should do fairly well on the exam. Anecdotally, however, we have heard from reliable sources of at least one California colleges where approximately half the students did not pass the CSET-Multiple Subject, on the first attempt, in the first year it was required. Moreover, typical pass rates for all California students reported on institutional CSET reports indicate that 25-37% of students do not pass in any given administration.

The CSET-Multiple Subject was first required for admission into Westmont’s Credential Program in the 2004-05 school year. Since students in the past were only required to

With minor updating, October 2006
submit to us (and to the state) evidence of PASSING (not component subject-area scores), we still do not have complete evidence of our students’ achievement. Currently, however, students entering our Credential Program are institutionally required to submit this material to us, so we should have more complete evidence in the future. Further, we will invite Liberal Studies graduates NOT entering our Credential program to submit results as well.

2004-05

Total number of Westmont Liberal Studies graduates continuing into the Westmont Elementary program: 10

Total number passing: 10

Total number of results containing subject-break-downs available as of January 06: 3

2005-06

Total number of Westmont Liberal Studies graduates continuing into the Westmont Elementary program: 9

Total number passing: 9

Total number of results containing subject-break-downs available as of May 06: 8

With minor updating, October 2006
### CSET: Westmont student results by subject area (Maximum score = 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Area</th>
<th>2004-05</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading/Language/Literature</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History/Social Science</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Development</strong></td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td><strong>2.875</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Interpretation of CSET Results, 2005-06:

Data does not differ markedly from 2004-05, or from preliminary data on 2005-06 submitted in January.

The high area for the two years averaged together remains Math. The lowest single score remains the 05-06 average for Human Development.

As we noted in the January 06 document, Human Development is a course often taken off-campus. Our initial suspicion that this average is affected by off-campus preparation is not necessarily borne out when the eight scores are disaggregated (Westmont coursework vs. non-Westmont coursework). It is true that the only individual sub-score of (1) on all eight sets of 2005-06 student scores was in Human Development, and received by a student who took the course off-campus. For the 2005-06 cohort as a whole, however, the 5 students who took the course at Westmont scored an average of 2.85; while students who took the course off-campus scored an average of 2.67 (first attempt at this section) or 3.00 (when a student re-take is factored in).
**Action/Departmental Response:**

Clearly we need to continue to examine the data in this area. In the meantime, as a first step, we have alerted the Psychology Department responsible for this course of potential concerns in this area.

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(2) Data relevant to Goal A (mastery of academic content) from surveys of first-year graduates of the Westmont Credential Program

Traditionally we have looked at completed First-Year Graduate surveys as they have come in, but the overall review of the data has been less formal.

During the Fall of 2005, we summarized numerically the data for the last four academic years, calculating a numerical quality point average for each course. We also studied the tabulated data together.

Given Westmont’s small size, the lack of anonymity on campus, and the fact that in many cases a single professor has taught a particular course, we have chosen not to share publicly the results of this survey. At the same time, this data is being maintained in the department and is available upon relevant request.

*With minor updating, October 2006*
Interpretation and use of results:

Of the twenty courses listed on the survey, one consistently is rated extremely low. These results closely match data reported by students on the College’s regular course evaluation forms (i.e., the University of Illinois system). We believe that we have addressed this issue in large part already through changes in our part-time instructor for this one course. In any case, based on information available, student dissatisfaction with this particular course is not primarily based on concerns about resulting mastery of academic content.

Results, 2005-06:

Similar patterns of course satisfaction emerge from the 2005-06 data. Average ratings for only one course represent a major concern—a different course, incidentally, than identified previously, and the result of a particular part-time professor (mentioned by multiple respondents by name) from another department whose contract was not renewed.

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(3) Senior Interview Data

As of January 2006, a total of six senior Liberal Studies majors have been interviewed one-on-one by Department of Education faculty, using the College’s Senior Interview assignment (3 during May of 2004; 3 during May of 2005).

Seniors interviewed commented on both their experience in the Credential Program and the Liberal Studies program. As much as possible, we have tried to separate for reporting purposes data from these interviews. Selected concerns relevant to Program Quality in the Liberal Studies Program are as follows:

By design, this data relates to the College’s six Student Learning Outcomes, and in particular, the extent to which selected Liberal Studies majors felt these outcomes had been achieved in their lives. We are well aware of the limitations of this sort of self-reported data. At the same time, we believe this has been a valuable exercise for students themselves, as they prepare and then reflect in one-on-one conversation; and a valuable exercise for ourselves, in thinking concretely and personally about the College’s overall intended outcomes, as these may or may not be embodied in the lives of our graduates.

With minor updating, October 2006
Interpretation of quantitative data:

- Students report apparently substantial growth in all six areas.
- One generalization that emerged from conversations with students, and which the quantitative averages would support, is how much reported growth there is in the area of Diversity. Diversity is the lowest score upon entry, and remains the lowest upon leaving. But perhaps more significantly, it is one of two areas where the greatest reported growth occurs.
  - Student (05) said, “I grew up only 20 minutes from Watts, but I never went there till I went [with fellow Westmont students] during Spring Break in the City.”
  - ED 105 (Cultural Diversity in the Classroom) had an impact for several students (one pointed out need to address other groups, not just Latinos). Also fieldwork in multicultural settings completed as part of Liberal Studies coursework. Potters Clay, Chapel, and Student Life initiatives were also important in effecting changes—not just classes. Students could not separate out academic program from overall life experience in a residential community.
  - Clearly there’s still work to be done. Student (05) says it’s still possible to go through Westmont avoiding really understanding those who are different.

- One standard in which the Liberal Studies program may have a unique problem: attaining competence and confidence in doing academic research (all 3 students raised this, 04). Interviewer notes from ’04: “research probably the weakest part

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Westmont Standard</th>
<th>Students’ perception of attainment Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upon entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Orientation</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Societal and Intellect. Engagement</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written and Oral Communication</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Technology</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the major, because major is scattered over many disciplines.” No major significant research paper assigned in Liberal Studies major, according to another student, '04 (did write one major paper in Credential Program). “I still don’t feel 100% confident in the area of research” (04).

Response thus far to issues emerging from Senior Interview data:

- We have already made changes (effective Fall 04) in ED 105 (Cultural Diversity) to include groups other than Latinos.

- We need to ponder further the issue of research competence within the major.

2005-06 Survey of Liberal Studies Juniors, using an abbreviated Senior Interview format

In the Spring of 2006, all twelve students in the first cohort of Liberal Studies majors to complete the revised (2003) program were surveyed, using the Senior Interview form. All students were given a chance to highlight orally issues of particular personal concern and respond, in turn, to the concerns of peers.
2005-06 (Juniors enrolled in ED 109)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Westmont Standard</th>
<th>Students’ perception of attainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upon entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Orientation</td>
<td>5.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Societal and Intellect. Engagement</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written and Oral Communication</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Technology</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interpretation:**

There is some overlap here with the results of individual interviews completed at the end of the Education credential program. Students in this cohort reported growth in all areas. Even more than in previous interviews, however, students expressed concerns (supported by the numerical data) about their research and technology skills. To some extent, this seems to have reflected dissatisfaction with a particular course in Educational Technology in which many of the students were simultaneously enrolled. Alternatively, some students identified “research” with what their peers in the natural sciences were doing, and failed to recognize that assignments completed in the humanities or social sciences might in fact constitute “research.” At the same time, a number of students indicated that they needed more work on research format and research procedures, and simply more practice.

**Departmental Response:** The addition of California History in the 2003 program gives students a bit more research experience than in the past, but we need to consider other courses where students might gain further research experience.

One student indicated that she had actually regressed significantly in the area of Christian Orientation. She had entered with lots of answers, and was leaving with questions and doubts. For her, at least, this represented a loss rather than growth.

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Students expressed particular appreciation for their course in Advanced Composition (11 of 12 students on an open-ended response!), several mentioning the impact of a specific professor. Thus in relation to previous results, the high score for growth, above, in the area of Written and Oral Communication.

Under Diversity and Active Societal Involvement, students also frequently mentioned the impact of off-campus programs—formal semesters away from campus and volunteer programs over the summer: the Urban Program in San Francisco, the Mexico semester, Potters Clay, Russia mission trip, Racial Justice/Mississippi trip, Spring Break in the City, Juvenile Hall work, among others. Clearly we need to continue to encourage our students to participate in such activities, and when feasible, to incorporate off-campus study in students’ four-year academic programs.

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(4) Liberal Studies Seminar Portfolios

Twelve students nearing completion of the revised Liberal Studies major prepared portfolios documenting achievement in each of the seven major academic areas identified as essential content for prospective elementary teachers. In addition, the portfolios included, among other components (1) self-assessments where students identified areas where they felt particularly unprepared; (2) evidence of understanding of issues related to diversity; (3) evidence of inter-disciplinary thinking; and (4) evidence of thinking about their education in light of the Christian faith.

Faculty participation and examination of portfolios

Students enrolled in ED 109: Liberal Studies Seminar were divided into four groups of three, who met with one another, course instructor, and one other faculty member from the Education Department or Liberal Studies major. In addition to all three members of the Education Department, Professors Rosentrater (Math) and Pointer (History) assisted in reflecting on the completed portfolios and candidate discussion of the same.

As an initial processing strategy, we identified examples of the work produced by students to demonstrate achievement in each of the seven main subject areas, plus three cross-disciplinary issues of special concern (see below). We also identified articulated student or faculty concerns by area, and have listed all areas where students indicated they felt weak relative to the content guidelines identified by the state of California for elementary teachers.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content area</th>
<th>Sample assignments completed by students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) English</td>
<td>- ENG 2 Research paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ENG 6 Research paper on Shakespeare’s Theatrical effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) History</td>
<td>- HIS 178 Fictional letters re: Transcontinental Railroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(based on primary sources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- HIS 7 Reflection on <em>Myths America Lives By</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Math</td>
<td>- MA 160 essay on creativity and mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- MA 160 paper on Significance &amp; Origin of Pi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- MA 160/165 Group Exercise Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Science</td>
<td>- LS 12 Position statement on organic farming/Sustainable lifestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- LS 12 Research/Position paper on Stem cell research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Visual/Performing Arts</td>
<td>- ART 180 Lesson on Painting an Alternative Universe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ART 180 Lesson on Degas’s paintings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Health and PE</td>
<td>- KNS 156 Review of assigned book on grieving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- KNS 155 Sports Skill Lesson Plan (Tennis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- KNS 155 School observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Human Development</td>
<td>- PSY 115 Case Study of a preschooler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ENG 106 Lesson on factors affecting language development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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(A) Diversity
- Reflection on experience at Urban Semester (focus on SES)
- Reflection on being an RA, and how a White Anglo can contribute to discussion of diversity
- Reflection on community service, using Spanish
- HIS 7: Reflection on Autobiographical narrative (Olaudah Equiano)

(B) Interdisciplinary thinking
- California through the eyes of children (paper on history taught through children’s literature)

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### Areas of perceived weakness, relative to state standards for elementary teachers

As one component of the portfolio, each student was asked to review the massive outline of content in seven academic areas that the state of California has identified as important for elementary teachers to master. Students were asked to identify the 3 particular topics they felt LEAST prepared to go out and teach.

In a number of cases, the area identified was a function of not having completed a particular course---to be taken over the following summer.

In the case of Linguistics/Language Structure and/or Phonics, students entering Credential Programs will receive additional coverage of pertinent topics in their course on Teaching Reading. This area may have been flagged by multiple students in part because it comes first in the list of topics.

Perhaps the greatest surprises were the numbers of students who indicated uncertainty in Ancient and/or Medieval History, and in various physical science topics. In both of these cases, it may be a reflection of courses taken as first-year students (and subsequent forgetting of detailed information), the extent of the detail identified by the state as essential, and/or a student’s personal aversion to a particular area of the curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Math-</th>
<th>Computational Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History -</td>
<td>Medieval and early modern times (3x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ancient and Medieval worlds (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CA: Developments since 1850s (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Historical content in general (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science-</td>
<td>Structure and properties of matter (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motion and energy (2x)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structure and composition of the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Solar System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Earth science in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environment/Ecology—Living and non-living things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English-</td>
<td>Linguistics/Phonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language Structure/Linguistics (4x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching students to read (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Visual/Performing Arts
  Dance (2x)
  Theatre (2x)
  Analysis of art
  Music in general

Health/PE
  Physical education in general

Departmental response to list of student self-identified weak areas:

As we do this exercise in the future and compare results from year to year, we will see if there are recurring patterns, and/or areas where our curriculum needs to be strengthened. In passing, it is interesting to note that NO student identified content under Human Growth and Development—of the seven domains, the area where our students have tested the lowest on the CSET.

Observations on student portfolios in general, and our oral discussion of the same

Students were generally appreciative of the opportunity to reflect on their first three years of college preparation as a whole. Some indicated they wished they’d known more detail about the portfolio assignment, earlier in their course of study.

Students were particularly enthusiastic about their choices of academic concentrations within the Liberal Studies majors. This was the first group of students in the major to have content choices, and a disproportionate number of comments focused on the positive impact of courses in their chosen content area.

Students expressed some surprise, and at times concern, that the particular professor they had for any given course made so much difference in what they experienced, relative to peers.

The role of group work in required math classes was an area of considerable disagreement. Some students found it helpful—others much less so: “Couldn’t the professors simply lecture?”

Students expressed concerns about the quality of three courses, all taught by adjuncts. We need to closely monitor these courses in the 2006-07 academic year.

Final thoughts on Liberal Studies portfolios:

We are excited to have this baseline documentation of what students are learning throughout the Liberal Studies major. Obviously this gives us, and external observers, one more set of lenses on what our students are experiencing. At the same time, apart

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from our response to individual students, we are struggling with how best to interpret this accumulated material—that is, how to make meaningful generalizations leading to program improvement. One possible direction in the future is to use the College’s Six Learning Outcomes as a processing device—collecting evidence of achievement under each category. The three sections above, lettered A-C, would seem to lend themselves particularly well to such a strategy. We invite the PRC’s response on this point as we continue to try best to interpret this material.

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Other assessment data relating to overall Liberal Studies program quality, but which is NOT tied directly to either the Department’s or College’s current articulated goals:

Source of data: (2) Survey of First-Year Graduates (4 years of data)

Three other issues, apart from course content and relevant to the Liberal Studies program, emerged as “watch items” from the survey (Note that neither this section nor this report as a whole include graduates’ many commendatory statements; this section is simply identifying concerns):

(a) Accommodating and advising students who wish to participate in Westmont’s off-campus programs and still complete the “fast-track” program (Liberal Studies Major + Teaching Credential in 4 years), (one student, 04-05; one student, 01-02)

Partly this is an issue of students wanting to have their cake and eat it too. Students can only fit so many options into their 4 years. In any case, they can always choose the “regular” five-year (four-year Liberal Studies Major + Teacher Credential) program. Nonetheless, this set of concerns is something we want to continue to monitor.

(b) Ability to speak Spanish.

“For students looking to get a California credential, Spanish classes should be required or strongly advised” (one student, ‘04-05).

“‘I had 2 Spanish-only students [in first-year graduate’s first elementary classroom], so that was quite a challenge,’” [explaining her response to how well prepared she felt to teach ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse students], (one student, ‘03-04).

Under the new (September 2003) Liberal Studies program, students may elect a concentration in Hispanic Studies, which requires that students have at least 12 units of Spanish, take classes through Spanish 4, and take an upper-division course in Spanish on the culture of Latin American or Spain. Since this option within the major first

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became available, it has been one of the most popular of the nine Content Concentrations. Even students who choose other Content Concentrations are encouraged to take classes in Spanish, as part of their Westmont course of study or off-campus. Students from the Liberal Studies major have been well represented as participants in the new semester-long Spanish-language intensive Westmont-in-Mexico program. Furthermore, every year a number of Liberal Studies students go on to complete student teaching requirements in Costa Rica, where they live with a Spanish-speaking host family.

(c) Initial Advising and support. One student (03-04) who wrote that “during the credential program, everything was excellent,” indicated that she had not felt that way earlier, as a Liberal Studies student. Two students (02-03) expressed similar sentiments, on how much MORE support, attention, and belonging they felt once they had made it to the Credential Program.

We have worked to meet with students as early as possible in their program, establishing a special lunch hour for prospective Liberal Studies students during Summer Orientation (first tried June of 2003). At the same time, we developed a handbook for students that explains requirements more explicitly. Since the time these particular students entered the program, we have scheduled at least one social event for Liberal Studies majors each semester, as well as a Liberal Studies departmental chapel each year. A picture board and birthday chart for Liberal Studies majors also provide a bit more of a sense of belonging for students who need extra support.

Concluding thoughts (Part I, Liberal Studies Program):

- A bit of meta-assessment:

We have for many years collected systematic data relevant to program quality. We also believe the program has been responsive to the data (i.e., we have closed the assessment loop by making pertinent changes).

We are growing in the area of discussing and formally processing the data as a department, and making all of this a routine part of our Departmental culture.

- Where do we go from here?

In addition to continuing to act on the concerns discussed here, our next step with respect to Review of the Liberal Studies major will be to discuss the first cycle of Liberal Studies portfolios in the late spring of 2006.
Concluding Thoughts on Liberal Studies major: June 2006

We continue to find strong evidence that students are getting the academic content they need to be successful on state exams, to teach elementary school, and to enrich their own lives. Especially considering that this year’s group of juniors is the first to complete the first three years (the “content” component) of the revised Liberal Studies major, we are pleased with their self-assessments and with the quality of the work presented in the portfolios.

Students are being exposed to a wide range of assignments--assignments very much in line with the college’s identified six learning outcomes. Samples of course assignments and other reflective writing offer particularly strong evidence of students’ understanding and appropriate habits of mind vis-à-vis critical thinking, diversity, and active societal engagement.

Necessary or completed action:

- Notified psychology department, June 2006, about potential concerns about human growth and development, as reflected on student CSET performance.

- Will send in August 2006 a memo to all professors teaching courses in Liberal Studies major about considering ways to strengthen students’ research skills.

- Changed advising memo in April of 2006 to include more detailed information on Liberal Studies Seminar, so that students receive an additional regular reminder to save work-samples for subsequent selection and reflection.

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Part II of II: Teaching Credential (Fifth Year) Program

Introduction

As indicated in both the Department of Education’s Assessment Plan and the September 2005 special update, we have a long tradition of collecting a range of data on students. Such data would include:

1) Master Teacher evaluations of Student Teaching (annually since at least the 1980s; written comments provided on ‘05 results; ‘06). Also (1B), Master Teacher Evaluations of Program (annually beginning ’06)).

2) First Year Graduates Survey, including a new component tied to the State of California’s TPEs (see below) introduced in 2004-05 (annually since at least the 1980s: written comments on ‘05 results, ‘06)

3) Employers of First Year Graduates Survey (annually since at least the 1980s; written comments provided on ‘05 results; ‘06)

4) Senior Interviews (annually, beginning with May 2004 graduates). While the Interviews speak to both the Liberal Studies program and the Credential program, we have chosen to provide written reflection on these interviews (’04 and ’05) in the Liberal Studies section only. The one elementary Senior Interview completed spring 2006 was (intentionally, in contrast to previous interviews) of a student who was NOT a “fast-track” student, and had thus completed ONLY the Liberal Studies program, not the Credential program. One secondary interview was also completed.

5) Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) results (Elementary program only; annually. Results analyzed by domain ’05; ’06 data in process).

6) Students’ Student Teaching Portfolios, including candidates’ essays reflecting on performance and achievement in each of the State of California’s six evaluative domains, with related artifacts (selected outstanding portfolios saved annually since at least 2004; ’05; ’06).

7) One or more components of the State of California’s Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA). This has been administered informally since 2002; a more formal assessment of TPA Task #4, with archived results, will begin Spring of 2006. At least two candidates’ TPA Task #4 (including faculty evaluations of how the work fulfills state-mandated skills) from the Spring of 2006 have been saved. We will reflect on this work during the Fall of 2006.

8) Teacher and principal comments on program quality from meetings of the Westmont Teacher Education Advisory Board (some gaps, but typically one annual meeting; written comments, using informal surveys, begin Fall of 2005). Will continue to do this in November 06.

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Department archive: All of these sources of data are on file and available through the Department Secretary.

Given the range of sources listed above, the major challenge in reporting on program quality is less one of generating data, than of thoroughly processing the data available and scheduling sufficient time to discuss it as a whole department.

In any case, the composite picture emerging from available data speaks emphatically to the quality of our candidates and the strong level of preparation they received in Westmont’s Teaching Credential program.

For the 2004-05 Annual Report, we are reflecting on items above, numbered 1, 2 (in part), 3, and 5 only (elementary credential program only).

For the 2005-06 Annual Report, we continue to reflect publicly on data in each of the categories above (#1 (adding this year 1B), 2, 3, and 5), and have added secondary credential program data wherever applicable. Although we have gathered appropriate student work samples under #6 and 7, and while we continue to reflect on this material as a department, we have not yet attempted to generalize about program quality from these particular two sets of data.

Primary and overriding program goal:

Students completing Westmont’s Teaching Credential Program will demonstrate at a high level the thirteen sets of competencies identified by the state of California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing as essential for the classroom. “High level” in this case would translate into an average score of 4.00 (“Very Good”) on our five-point survey scale, as found on the Master Teacher Evaluation form.

These competencies (what the state identifies as Teaching Performance Expectations, or TPEs) are listed on the Student Teacher Summative Evaluation of Professional Competencies form, used by Master Teachers in the field to evaluate our student teachers.

The thirteen Teaching Performance Expectations were identified by the state in 2001, and have been the basis for much of our evaluation of individual student teachers since then.

Data evaluated for the “2004-05” Annual Report:

(1) In the 2004-05 academic year for the first time, we tabulated numerically evaluations by master teachers of our elementary candidates. Of 11 teacher candidates completing the program, 10 master teacher responses were available at the time of tabulation.

Of the 47 specific elements listed on the form, master teachers scored our candidates at an average of 4.00 or above (Very Good) in 45 areas. Whether in Costa Rica (3),

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Carpinteria School District (3), or Santa Barbara School District (4), master teachers clearly thought extremely highly of our students.

For specific average scores in each area, please see attached forms.

The two areas where our candidates’ performance was rated, on average, below Very Good, are as follows:

--TPE #1 (e) Visual and Performing Arts

- Plans a variety of activities in art, music, theater, and dance, as school schedule and instructional responsibilities permit.

--TPE #8: Learning about Students

- Gets parents and families involved in learning

In both of these cases, we believe the slightly lower scores are probably less a reflection of program quality or our teacher-candidates’ performance than the nature of student teaching and the nature of contemporary school culture. Most public schools do not allow a great deal of time for the Visual and Performing Arts, and so the score in this case is probably primarily a function of the school schedule. As to getting parents involved, this is inherently much more difficult to do as a student teacher.

Potentially of more interest and significance than these two slight sub-score dips are the relatively lower scores (that is, relative to other TPEs) in all four elements of TPE #7: Teaching English Language Learners. None of these drops below 4.00, but all four averaged scores in this area are closer to Very Good than Outstanding.

- Has a theoretical background for identifying and analyzing issues pertinent to English Language Development, as these issues surface in actual individuals.

- Actively seeks knowledge about students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including results of students’ previous language assessments and the characteristics of students’ first language. Uses this information in helping students’ progress in English.

- Collaborates effectively with other professionals, para-professionals, and families in supporting students’ language development.

- Supports students’ acquisition of English and students’ comprehension of academic content through a wide variety of instructional strategies, including visual support, facial expressions, gestures, and other body movements; and the clarity of teacher’s own spoken English.

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Once again, the lower scores in this area may reflect in part something about the topic itself—in this case, the inherent difficulties all teachers face in meeting fully the needs of their English Language Learners.

At the same time, this area was also one of the lowest rankings (3.50, between Average and Very Good) in our recently revised Employer of First Year Graduates Survey for 2004-05 (May 2004 graduates).

Accordingly, this is an area we want to pay particular attention to, continuing to (1) monitor the one course (ENG 106) taken by students in the Liberal Studies program that is explicitly designed to prepare students in this critical area; and (2) be even more intentional in our Credential Program courses to build in as much discussion and practice as possible for our candidates in addressing English Language Learner needs.

Data for 2005-06

Elementary student teachers:

The overall pattern of data for elementary teachers this year is remarkably similar to 2004-05. Once again, we had 11 student teachers, with ten currently available (one evaluation from Costa Rica still not in). Distribution of student teachers was identical—4 in Costa Rica (3 scores available); 4 in Santa Barbara, and 3 in Carpinteria.

Percentages overall are a bit lower for the 2006 cohort than in 2005—the averages significantly skewed by the negative evaluation of one student teacher. The benchmark of 4 (Very Good) is met again this year, however, in 45 of 47 areas—exactly the same as last year. One of the two areas where we did not meet the benchmark is, in fact, the same as the year before:

*TPE #1 (e) Visual and Performing Arts

- Plans a variety of activities in art, music, theater, and dance, as school schedule and instructional responsibilities permit.

The other area where this year’s teacher-candidate average dips below 4 is also in the Visual & Performing Arts area.

- Demonstrates familiarity with, and an ability to teach in accord with state-adopted standards in the arts.

Last year we noted that these particular scores were “probably less a reflection of program quality or our teacher-candidates’ performance than the nature of student teaching and the nature of contemporary school culture. Most public schools do not allow a great deal of time for the Visual and Performing Arts, and so the score in this case is probably primarily a function of the school schedule. We continue to believe this is the best interpretation of the data. At the same time (ACTION POINT) we will push

*With minor updating, October 2006
our elementary candidates to take more initiative in this area, and also raise the issue of OPPORTUNITY to teach the arts in our conversations with master teachers.

Note that scores in the four areas under TPE #7: Teaching English Learners (a “watch” area based on last year’s scores--only minimally higher than 4) did not stand out this year as an area of concern.

Secondary student teachers:

This is the first year where we tabulated secondary student teacher evaluations. Given the small number of teachers (n=5), and that a single teacher may receive evaluations from 1-3 master teachers, a particularly outstanding or ineffective student teacher may skew averages.

We had a total of five secondary student teachers this year, as follow:

English: 2  
Art: 1  
Math 1  
Physical Education 1

On both the subject matter sections applicable to individual’s chosen field, and the 27 proficiency areas applicable to all student teachers, the average rating on a scale of 1-5 met our benchmark of 4 (Very Good). The lowest scores were all in the area of TPE 7: Teaching English Learners. A number of master teachers marked this area as Non-Applicable—curiously so, given the demographics of the schools where student teachers were placed. But the average on the evaluations where we do have scores is still lower here than in any other area of proficiency. The two lowest (4.14 in each case):

- Actively seeks knowledge about students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including results of students’ previous language assessments and the characteristics of students’ first language. Uses this information in helping students’ progress in English.

- Collaborates effectively with other professionals, para-professionals, and families in supporting students’ language development.

As we’ve indicated previously for elementary teachers, low scores in this area may reflect the inherent difficulties of the task, more than a lack of preparation. On the other hand, student teachers focused on teaching a particular subject may need to be reminded of the linguistic backgrounds of many of their students and become even more intentional in devising strategies to help 2nd-language students achieve optimal success.

Action:

With minor updating, October 2006
We will continue to emphasize the need to adapt to the needs of English Language Learners throughout the secondary classes, particularly ED 121 and ED 171, as well as Student Teaching Seminar.

Master Teacher Evaluations of Program

This year for the first time we asked master teachers to complete, in addition to the lengthy evaluation of their own individual student teacher, a brief evaluation of the PROGRAM. What we have found is that master teachers have a great deal of difficulty disentangling their assessment of a particular student teacher from their assessment of the program (see the third comment from master teacher, below). How valid an instrument it is, then, remains in doubt. The exercise does include, however, one element not addressed elsewhere—Quality of communication with department (To what extent were the college’s expectations for you as a master teacher made clear prior to and throughout the semester?). A total of 16 evaluations was received this year, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of forms received</th>
<th>Average rating on Communication/Clarity of Expectations (5 pt scale)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Elementary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Secondary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected master teacher comments:

“I have always been extremely pleased with the program. The caliber of students I have received is excellent.” (CR)

“I have had excellent experiences with Westmont College student teachers.” (CR)

“Of course, seeing the college’s program through [being acquainted with one particular student teacher] is very limited in terms of really understanding the program…but [this student teacher] was poised and professional and responsible and caring, so if that is the results of the program—good job…” (LOCAL SECONDARY)

“The strengths of the Westmont teaching program are many. First, the program allows flexibility regarding the teacher’s take-over...In other programs the take-over is often abrupt, being determined by a date versus a student teacher’s readiness. In addition, the student teachers seem very well supported by Westmont personnel, especially Dr. [G] Tucker. There is a genuine respect and affection between student and staff as exemplified by the mutual praise and admiration during the student teachers’ portfolio presentations. The one suggestion...might be to put more teaching...candidates at [the same] school so that student teachers can support each other over the course of the week...” (LOCAL SECONDARY)
“I appreciate [supervisor’s] desire for [student teacher] to be stretched and challenged so she can be prepared. I enjoyed the year-end get together with each of the students presenting.”  (LOCAL SECONDARY)

“I feel that the student teacher has too much classwork to do while teaching. I feel it is difficult for them to juggle so much. I feel they should focus on what they are doing inside the class they are working in to get the most out of the experience. I also think a take-over should be after testing, so that they have more academic time instead of test-prep time.”  (LOCAL ELEMENTARY)

“Maybe an informational meeting in Dec. to help us know the expectations of us and the student teachers. I also would have loved to have received more instruction as to the mid-placement evaluation and the 3-way conference. It would have been helpful to know how to prepare/what to expect.”  (LOCAL ELEMENTARY)

Response to master teacher concerns:

- This final comment is not representative—coming from a relatively young master teacher who has not worked with Westmont student teachers before. We use as many of the same master teachers from year to year as possible. Nonetheless, this points to an area (orienting first-time master teachers) where we can improve.

- The idea of multiple student teachers in the same building (3rd comment above) is one we support in theory, but this is not always feasible in practice.

- As to student teachers having too much auxiliary work during student teaching, this is indeed a problem, but not one within the institution’s control. Relative to programs at other colleges, we have actually worked to keep classwork or demands from the state to a minimum during student teaching. From the bulk of our responses it seems our student teachers are (relatively speaking) much MORE focused on their classroom responsibilities.
Assessment Data items (2) and (3): Follow-up surveys

Two additional sets of data recently tabulated and also organized more or less around the 13 Commission on Teacher Credentialing TPEs speak to the quality of our candidates’ preparation.

Both of these sets of data are disappointingly small.

We received back only four Employers of First Year Graduates forms for this class, and only six First Year Graduate Program Evaluation forms. There were nineteen graduates in this particular class, although not all chose to pursue employment in the field of education.

Accordingly, as a procedural goal, we are currently exploring ways to convey more explicitly both to employers and to our graduates the value of this information, and boost thereby our rate of returns for future surveys.

(2) In the 2004-05 Survey of First Year Teachers, graduates (May 2004) were for the first time asked to evaluate their experience and level of preparation using the 13 state TPEs (see attached form).

In ten major areas and all the core subjects listed in TPA 1 (subject-specific instruction), candidates reported an average level of preparation of 4.00 (Very Good) or above.

In two major areas, and in the two starred sub-points under TPE #1, graduates indicated an average level of preparedness below 4.00.

- **TPE 4:** *Making Content Accessible* (To what extent was I prepared to make information and skills clear and meaningful to students?)

- **TPE 13:** *Professional Growth* (To what extent was I given strategies and/or resources for continuing to grow professionally after completing the program?)

- **TPE 1A:** *Subject-Specific Instruction* (To what extent was I prepared to teach effectively one or more of the following?)

  - Reading/Language Arts/English
  - Math
  - Science
  - History/Social Science
  - Creative/Performing arts *
  - Physical education *

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Even as we celebrate graduates’ overall perceptions of their level of preparation, we need to ponder what the relative dips in these areas might mean.

- TPE 4: This may reflect the inherent difficulty of the task. To some extent, making material meaningful to a particular student or particular class is something that an individual teacher must do on one’s own. It’s not clear what specifically the program should be doing more of in this area.

- TPE 13: If future surveys support this initial data, we may need to be more intentional about giving students strategies for life-long professional growth, doing even more to introduce them to relevant professional associations and professional publications.

- TPE 1: Creative/Performing Arts and Physical Education. These are areas where graduates receive most of their preparation in their Liberal Studies major, prior to formal entry into the Credential Program. A lower score in this area may be a function of the time that has elapsed since students took these courses, or may reflect limited opportunity (and/or need) to teach these subjects during Student Teaching and during the first year of full-time employment. We may need to develop additional strategies for candidates to integrate their preparation in these areas into methods courses in other subjects, or to find ways to help candidates review more systematically the preparation in these areas they received years ago.

Data for May 2006 graduates:

We received responses from 8 of 11 elementary graduates and 0 of 2 secondary (post-graduate) program completers.

Results were similar on the whole to the May 2005 cohort.

In 12 out of 12 of the general TPEs, first-year graduates reported an average level of preparation of 4.00 (VERY GOOD) or above. In TPE #9, INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING, all 8 responses were 5s (OUTSTANDING).

In five of six subjects listed under TPE #1, graduates indicated being prepared at an average level of 4.00 or above.

- **TPE 1A: Subject-Specific Instruction**  
  *(To what extent was I prepared to teach effectively each of the following?)*

  -Reading/Language Arts/English  
  -Math  
  -Science  
  -History/Social Science  
  -Creative/Performing arts  
  -Physical education

With minor updating, October 2006
Only in the area of Creative/Performing arts did graduates’ average level of reported preparation fall below 4.00—and in this case it was well below (3.50). As noted elsewhere in this document, this is an area that our analysis of master teacher evaluations has also flagged for potential concern. Once again, we believe this represents more the limited opportunity to receive practice in the arts during student teaching than a reflection on the quality or extent of coursework in the arts.

On the whole, first-year graduates indicate an extraordinarily high level of satisfaction and high level of self-reported preparation for the proficiencies California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing has articulated as important for beginning teachers.

Free response section of first-year graduates survey:

At least one student comment in the free response section is worth some public discussion—

*It would have been helpful to practice filling out report cards and writing comments. For example, looking at all their language grades and then deciding the report card grade, and then figuring out how to explain/justify it to a parent. Here, having examples below, at and above level work would be really helpful. I hadn’t taught third grade before, so it was tricky figuring out if their work was on target/below/above at first. Also, the “how to say it” parent conference papers really helped, but what would also really help would be to role-play parent conferences in class. For example, have the student teachers give mock report card grades for some students, then do a “conference” with another student teachers acting as the parent. That way they’d get practice explaining and justifying grades, as well as discussing a child’s behavior appropriately before doing it with real parents. Some confidence in this area would really help; these parents can be really pushy, rude or question your ability as a teacher.*

**Actions:** Remind future student teachers that they will have to be the ones to take initiative in getting practice in teaching the Creative & Performing Arts. Also discuss this with master teachers during orientation.

Identify one or more particular courses where we can devote greater and more explicit attention to evaluation, and report cards and parent conferences in particular.

(3) **Employers of First Year Graduates survey of 2004-05 (May 2004 graduates)**

Overall, the four responses support other data in validating the quality of Westmont’s teacher candidates across a broad range of competencies and dispositions (see blank form). Principal comments on this set of responses are as much a function of individuals’ personalities as a reflection on the program. In any case, no one area emerges from this data as cause for concern.
Data for May 2006 graduates:

We are still in the process of receiving employer comments. We have had only one survey returned as of August 2006. No concerns are identified. In five areas the new employee is rated VERY GOOD; in eight areas OUTSTANDING. Principal wrote: “[New employee] was a wonderful addition to our staff. She was extremely well prepared as indicated above. She possessed wonderful communication skills, has rapport with students, parents, and staff, and—overall—reflected in-depth preparation at all levels.”

Action required (procedural point): We have brainstormed for at least two years on how to boost the return rate from principals. From talking with deans and directors at other institutions, it seems this is a problem elsewhere as well, but our return rates still seem to be below average. In 2007 we will try sending the survey in electronic form, as well as our traditional paper version.

(5) Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) test results. As in the past, 100% of our teacher candidates passed the RICA. In all four domains of the exam, candidates averaged between a 3 and a 4 (4 point scale).

Data for May 2006 graduates:

Student teachers are still in the process of receiving results from the RICA (normally taken after graduation), but for the six score-sets available, we have a 100% passing rate. We will calculate averages for each of the four domains when we have a more complete collection of scores.

Concluding thoughts and next steps in the review cycle:

(2004-05)

Department is working toward a regular annual cycle of program review, where faculty can process tabulated results together. Eventually, much of this group processing we hope to do in May and September.

As noted above, we are working to improve our return rates on the two major surveys (2) and (3) discussed above.

We have discussed on several occasions the relationship of professional outcomes articulated by the state, and the College’s Student Learning Outcomes. This semester we will continue this discussion, and at some point before our five year report is completed (June 2009) be prepared to show visually where these two sets of outcomes do and do not overlap.

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(2005-06)

Summary of departmental actions or response, completed or in process:

1. Liberal Studies

   • Notified psychology department, June 2006, about potential concerns about human growth and development, as reflected on student CSET performance.

   • Sent in August 2006 a memo to all professors teaching courses in Liberal Studies major about considering ways to strengthen students’ research skills.

   • Changed advising memo in April of 2006 to include more detailed information on Liberal Studies Seminar, so that students receive an additional regular reminder to save work-samples for subsequent selection and reflection.

2. Credential Program

   • With respect to TPE #1 (e) Visual and Performing Arts (Plans a variety of activities in art, music, theater, and dance, as school schedule and instructional responsibilities permit) we will alert our elementary candidates both orally and in writing (ED 190/195 syllabus supplement) to take more initiative in this area. We will also mention the issue of OPPORTUNITY to teach the arts in our conversations with master teachers.

   • In the secondary classes, we will continue to emphasize the need to adapt to the needs of English Language Learners, particularly in ED 121, ED 171, and the Student Teaching Seminar.

   • With respect to greater and more explicit attention to evaluation—and report cards and parent conferences in particular—we are adding all of these to ED 195, the elementary student teaching seminar. We have also built some of this already into ED 150 and ED 170.

   • In order to boost return rates from first-year employers, we will try in 2007 sending the survey in electronic form, as well as our traditional paper version.

With minor updating, October 2006