



Across Cultures

NOTES FROM WESTMONT'S DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

ISSUE 20

FALL 2009

WESTMONT COLLEGE'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

based on excerpts from the Long Range Plan

Westmont's 1995 Long Range Plan included eight priorities. One was "that the Westmont community be creatively and energetically responding to the significant issues related to diversity – including both ethnic and gender diversity." But why? Here are relevant excerpts from the Long Range Plan.

Westmont strives to be a community informed and enriched by thoughtful and intentional study of and interaction with multiple cultures.

As a liberal arts college rooted in Christ,

- we celebrate diversity as an aspect of God's creation;
- we strive to create community out of rich diversity as an aspect of building God's Kingdom in the world;
- we value the range of perspectives on the world that stimulates intellectual and personal growth; and
- we seek for faculty and staff to apprentice students in the art of dealing with diversity in constructive ways.

It is an aim of Westmont to prepare graduates who will function intelligently, effectively and for the good of our increasingly intercultural world.

From Long Range Plan Excerpts

The Educational Challenge

One's view of the world, including one's understanding of the Christian faith, is

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

The Rationale for Greater Diversity

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

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

As an institution that is committed to preparing students to live compassionate lives in the world, and to give leadership both within and outside of the evangelical world, our commitment to diversity is part of creating an environment where students can be helpfully apprenticed in the art of dealing with diversity in constructive ways.

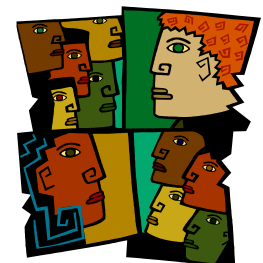
The Aims of a Westmont Education

Our world has increasingly become interconnected and interdependent, despite deep divisions and antagonisms. To prepare people to function intelligently,

effectively and for the good in a world of global politics, global economics, and global communications must be one of the aims of a Westmont education.

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

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



WHAT “DIVERSITY” MEANS TO WESTMONT

At its October meetings, the Board of Trustees approved a statement of key terms and identity. This culminated a lengthy campus effort spearheaded by the Mission and Distinctiveness Task Force and the Strategic Planning Committee to define what Westmont means by “evangelical,” “liberal arts,” and “diversity.”

According to this statement, “To the extent the college becomes more fully evangelical, more steeped in the liberal arts and more richly diverse, it will be more ‘Westmont.’ To understand these terms better, then, is to comprehend the college’s community and task more truly.” Included below is the section on “diversity.”

DIVERSITY

Learning at Westmont is not merely a matter of facts and skills. It also includes practicing the virtues of humility, self-examination and repentance. By committing its students, faculty and constituencies to this hard work, Westmont animates its mission with an eschatological vision of a whole, restored world that draws us forward toward more godly ways of learning, living and loving. Living with and learning from each other is absolutely central to our mission and identity as an evangelical, liberal arts college

Recognizing that evangelical colleges have historically lacked ethnic and racial diversity, increasing such diversity has been an explicit goal at Westmont for the last 20 years. In addition, the college encourages students to develop a greater awareness of and engagement with global diversity. With these priorities, the college expects its graduates to:

☞ *Gain the understanding and skills to engage individuals and groups unlike themselves in ways that affirm others as persons created in God’s image.*

☞ *Approach others respectfully and avoid the natural tendency to deal with differences by vilifying, romanticizing or victimizing.*

In purely educational terms, diversity in curricular offerings, in the student body, and among faculty and staff, is strongly linked to educational effectiveness. Beyond the value of diversity for educational effectiveness, however, Westmont grounds its commitment to diversity in a biblical vision of God’s kingdom. Bearing

witness to this kingdom is in itself an act of restorative justice. Living toward this kingdom in our daily lives requires personal and communal sanctification.

Westmont welcomes all to the table, acknowledging that understanding and celebrating difference is a critical avenue to knowing God and being liberally educated persons. The celebration of difference needs to grow out of a deep understanding of the histories of each individual and ethnicity. It’s not simply a quick and easy enjoyment of food and culture. Rather, it requires individuals to be willing to step outside of their own cultural framework and experience to begin to understand another person. This process happens in relationship and through experience and requires those who grow in understanding to be advocates for those who have been misunderstood. It’s essential that our campus climate empowers and encourages all to contribute their unique voice to the conversation.

At Westmont, we hold in healthy tension the celebration of difference and the bond we share in Christ, believing that it allows us the freedom to fully share our differences. The challenges related to our differences are part of our fallen nature, and we have a God who desires to redeem His people that we might more fully reflect His person, whole and complete, deep and diverse, creative and growing.



A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR DIVERSITY

Acting Provost Rick Pointer is leading an effort to develop a written statement that roots or grounds Westmont’s valuing of diversity in explicit biblical and theological terms. Those working with Dr. Pointer on this project are professors Alister Chapman, Robert Gundry, Maurice Lee, Tremper Longman, Eileen McMahon, Randy VanderMey and Telford Work; Director of Intercultural Programs Elena Yee; President Gayle Beebe; and trustee Roy Goble.

According to Dr. Pointer, this group will “make a biblical and theological ‘case’ for appreciating diversity in the 21st century. Its work will extend to wrestling fully with what scripture suggests about a number of forms of diversity.”

Prayers by French monks reflecting on the birth of Christ

The Victorines

(from the Abbey of St. Victor in Paris during the 12th century)

What is this jewel that is so precious?
I can see it has been quarried not by men,
but by God.

It is you, dear Jesus.
You have been dug from the rocks of heaven itself
to be offered to me as a gift beyond price.

You shine in the darkness.
Every color of the rainbow can be seen within
you.
The whole earth is bathed in your light.

Infant Jesus, by being born as a man
you have taken upon yourself the pain of death.
But such a jewel can never be destroyed.

You are immortal.
And by defying your own death,
you shall deliver me from death.



Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

Let your goodness, Lord, appear to us, that we, made in your image, conform ourselves to it. In our own strength we cannot imitate your majesty, power and wonder; nor is it fitting for us to try. But your mercy reaches from the heavens, through the clouds, to the earth below. You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms, and pierce our hearts with your soft, sweet cries.

ETHNIC/INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT REPORT

FALL SEMESTER

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Native American/Alaskan	25	19	22	21	16	24	20	33	30	33	31
Asian/Pacific Islander	55	48	63	78	77	85	98	91	122	135	121
Black	15	13	8	10	15	23	26	28	30	32	35
Hispanic	108	102	92	77	89	105	127	129	132	143	145
Non-Resident Alien	12	11	6	7	11	13	11	10	9	11	10
TOTAL	215	193	191	193	208	250	282	291	323	354	342
College Enrollment	1391	1334	1381	1330	1347	1376	1379	1337	1340	1347	1312
% of Total Enrollment	15.5%	14.5%	13.8%	14.5%	15.4%	18.2%	20.4%	21.8%	24.1%	26.3%	26.1%

ENROLLMENT BY ETHNICITY AND GENDER

FALL SEMESTER

		2005		2006		2007		2008		2009	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER	Male	24	1.7%	23	1.7%	40	3.0%	48	3.6%	43	3.3%
	Female	74	5.4%	68	5.1%	78	5.8%	87	6.5%	78	5.9%
	Total	98	7.1%	91	6.8%	118	8.8%	135	10.0%	121	9.2%
BLACK	Male	9	0.7%	8	0.6%	8	0.6%	13	1.0%	11	0.8%
	Female	17	1.2%	20	1.5%	22	1.6%	19	1.4%	24	1.8%
	Total	26	1.9%	28	2.1%	30	2.2%	32	2.4%	35	2.7%
HISPANIC	Male	44	3.2%	45	3.4%	49	3.7%	51	3.8%	59	4.5%
	Female	83	6.0%	84	6.3%	83	6.2%	92	6.8%	86	6.6%
	Total	127	9.2%	129	9.6%	132	9.9%	143	10.6%	145	11.1%
NATIVE AMERICAN / ALASKAN	Male	10	0.7%	13	1.0%	9	0.7%	13	1.0%	12	0.9%
	Female	10	0.7%	20	1.5%	21	1.6%	20	1.5%	19	1.4%
	Total	20	1.5%	33	2.5%	30	2.2%	33	2.4%	31	2.4%
NON-RESIDENT ALIEN	Male	3	0.2%	3	0.2%	2	0.1%	4	0.3%	4	0.3%
	Female	8	0.6%	7	0.5%	7	0.5%	7	0.5%	6	0.5%
	Total	11	0.8%	10	0.7%	9	0.7%	11	0.8%	10	0.8%
WHITE	Male	405	29.4%	403	30.1%	370	27.6%	346	25.7%	326	24.8%
	Female	623	45.2%	560	41.9%	561	41.9%	560	41.6%	557	42.5%
	Total	1028	74.5%	963	72.0%	931	69.5%	906	67.3%	883	67.3%
UNKNOWN	Male	33	2.4%	32	2.4%	39	2.9%	34	2.5%	35	2.7%
	Female	36	2.6%	51	3.8%	51	3.8%	53	3.9%	52	4.0%
	Total	69	5.0%	83	6.2%	90	6.7%	87	6.5%	87	6.6%
TOTAL ENROLLMENT	Male	528	38.3%	527	39.4%	517	38.6%	509	37.8%	490	37.3%
	Female	851	61.7%	810	60.6%	823	61.4%	838	62.2%	822	62.7%
	Total	1379		1337		1340		1347		1312	

STUDENT LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

by Intercultural Programs Director Elena Yee

This year we inaugurated a once a semester training summit for student leaders. These summits allow us to delve more deeply into topics that are critical to students' success and impact on campus.

On October 2, student leaders from WCSA, WACC, WSM, Emmaus Road, SBIC, Potter's Clay, Spring Sing, resident assistants, intercultural organizations and racial equality and justice participated in a three hour

session focused on power, privilege and position. The group played a game called "Star Power," which simulates the realities of the use and misuse of power in our society.

StarPower

From http://www.stsintl.com/schools-charities/star_power.html:

During the first two rounds, the atmosphere is very social. People are laughing, talking, exchanging chips, and having a good time. When the announcement is made that "because the squares have worked so hard, they now have the right to make the rules for the game," participants begin to sense that more is going on than the exchange of a few chips. Then, when the Squares pull their chairs in a tight circle and begin whispering conspiratorially about the rules they want to make, the social atmosphere evaporates and the players become very earnest about the game. Without really being aware of it, "winning" the game has become very important. And because it is important, the actions, decisions and behaviors are important.

StarPower helps participants learn many lessons. For example:

- Power can be amazingly seductive.
- To change behavior, it may be necessary to change the system in which that behavior occurs.
- Few people are likely to participate in an endeavor if they feel powerless.
- If rules do not have legitimacy, they will not be obeyed.
- What seems fair to those in power is not likely to seem fair to those who are out of power.
- Persons who are promoted rarely remember those they leave behind.
- Power is like fire, it can be used to help make the world a better place to live or it can be terribly destructive.
- If there are no checks, power will almost certainly be abused.

Since these students have been appointed or voted as leaders for our campus, it was important that they recognize their access to resources, i.e. privilege given them to make choices for their peers, whether planning a dance, addressing a policy issue or organizing a forum about a cross-cultural

concern. During the debriefing it was an opportunity for advisors to bring insight into the experiences from the game to students' current context as leaders at Westmont.

On January 22, student leaders will again gather for a three hour session focusing on

racial and ethnic diversity. From playing a game to having real conversations about how power and privilege has affected relationships across racial and ethnic lines, we hope and trust that students will cultivate better listening skills and learn to ask questions with greater diplomacy, compassion and empathy.

GLOBAL INITIATIVES TASK FORCE

A new task force is charged with developing a vision and a plan for expanding Westmont's current off campus programs to position us better to provide a truly global education for our students. The expanded off-campus programs task force envisions will be focused on general education.

The *Global Initiatives Task Force* is headed by Acting Provost Rick Pointer. Members are professors Mary Docter, Charles Farhadian, Bruce Fisk, Laura Montgomery, and Jeff Schloss; administrators Doug Jones, Joyce Luy, Reed Sheard, and Bill Wright; and trustee Robert Kates.

To date, the group has been developing a set of student learning outcomes for those who participate on study abroad programs, discussing the criteria to be used in selecting a possible site for a new program, and brainstorming about issues that must be addressed as new programs are developed. The task force's work will contribute to expanding programs that enhance student cross-cultural sensibilities and communication skills, as well as greater appreciation for other cultures and their people.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

FALL 2009

Jane Higa, Chair

Scott Anderson	Richard Lopez
Kathryn Stelmach Artuso	Joyce Luy
Chris Call	Michele Mollkoy
Beth Cauwels	Silvia Rodarte
Kelly Connolly	Olympia Tuliaupupu
Toya Cooper	Bill Wright
Phil Ficsor	Elena Yee
Michelle Hardley	Jonathan Young
Ji Yei Kim	

http://www.westmont.edu/_offices/diversity