

## Rationale for Inclusion of Librarians on Curriculum Committees

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“If we want to make learning happen in libraries, then understanding learning processes and applying that understanding systematically to our planning and design work are the keys to further advance. To do this [librarians] must think more like educators and less like service providers.” (Bennett 2009)

Both Westmont College and the librarians will benefit by the inclusion of librarians as members of curriculum committees such as the General Education and Program Review Committees. As members of these committees they will have the same responsibilities as teaching faculty members. Librarians can provide input based on their knowledge of the library resources available and their knowledge of information literacy instruction methods and issues. In turn the library program will benefit as the librarians become familiar with the pedagogical issues addressed in the committee.

As a part of accreditation, Westmont College must be able to show that its students are competent in the area of information literacy. Standard 2.2 of the WASC Accreditation Handbook (2008) states: Baccalaureate programs engage students in an integrated course of study of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare them for work, citizenship, and a fulfilling life. These programs also ensure the development of core learning abilities and competencies including, but not limited to, college-level written and oral communication, college-level quantitative skills, information literacy, and the habit of critical analysis of data and argument (14).

The standards set forth by the Association for College and Research Libraries (a division of the American Library Association) state that people who achieve competency in information literacy will be able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into their knowledge base and value system
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand many of the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and use information ethically and legally (2001).

Information literacy is increasingly being recognized by accreditation agencies, policy makers and stakeholders as an essential skill (Saunders 2008) and the research shows that these skills are linked to student success and retention (Moore et al. 2005). Librarians will be an asset to the General Education Committee and Program Review Committee because it will give librarians the opportunity to collaborate with the other faculty members to integrate information literacy in the overarching curriculum of the college.

Including librarians on the General Education Committee and the Program Review Committee will ensure that the college will meet the accreditation standards set forth by WASC in the areas

of Teaching and Learning. By including librarians on these committees, Westmont College will be able to better link library outcomes to institutional outcomes such as student success, faculty productivity and retention (ACRL 2010).

Librarian participation on these committees will also place Westmont College in the company of several peer institutions. Voskuyl Library queried several libraries about their institution's policy on faculty status for librarians. Wheaton, Biola, Pepperdine and Azusa Pacific all have non-tenure faculty status for their librarians including membership on curriculum committees and participation in faculty governance.

## References

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