In Fall 2011, Westmont Student Life embarked upon an ambitious undertaking. The division examined afresh the Student Life’s contribution to the educational mission of the college. Specifically, the goal was to: 1) create a clear link between Student Life developmental programming areas and Westmont’s Institutional Learning Goals; 2) develop better clarity on outcomes related to each goal; 3) identify current programing interventions related to each goal; and 4) explore other interventions (prayer, physical space, policies, services, social arrangements, role models/staffing, planned gatherings).

In addition to gaining a better understanding regarding learning goals for the division, this process revealed a need for better clarity regarding: 1) the role of the Dean’s Council in providing leadership for the division, 2) the decision-making process related to shared goals and utilization of resources, and 3) the coordination of our departments to effectively utilize resources, address gaps in our efforts, and eliminate unwanted redundancy.

The review completed in Fall 2011 revealed that Student Life was making significant contributions to the learning goals. The challenge seemed to be how to develop sustainable ways to maintain that good work while simultaneously finding ways to develop new initiatives. One step was to develop clarity regarding our process for developing, implementing, and improving our initiatives. As we examined the nature of our initiatives, they seemed to fall into one of three categories: departmental initiatives, inter-departmental initiatives, and divisional initiatives.

**Departmental Initiatives**
Each department in Student Life is expected to carry out its mission in ways that are current, relevant, effective, efficient, and based on “best practices.” These initiatives happen within the context each department’s staff’s annual planning.

**Inter-Departmental Initiatives**
In some cases, there may be initiatives developed by one department, but the initiative itself is large enough that it may require support from other departments, and therefore should be proposed and approved by the Dean’s Council prior to implementation. A New Initiative Proposal Template was created to facilitate the approval process.

**Educational Learning Goals**
Three of Student Life’s primary learning goals relate directly to the College’s Institutional Learning Goals and the fourth goal is a Student Life Division Learning Goal. These goals are listed below:

Institutional Learning Goals
1. Christian Understanding, Practices and Affections
2. Diversity and Global Awareness
3. Physical and Emotional Health

Division Learning Goal
4. Serving and Leading Society

While Student Life will execute departmental, inter-departmental, and educational goals yearly, it will also employ a 4-year cycle wherein each of the four goals listed above will receive particular emphasis and attention over the course of one year (See Appendix A).

**Learning Goal Task Force and White Paper**
During the fall of 2011, subgroups of Student Life staff developed initial white papers to help inform Student Life work with respect to the four goals. One white paper will be reviewed and updated as appropriate the year prior to the educational emphasis, and will be used to initiate the planning process. The most recent version of the white papers are available on the Student Life webpage.

**Implementing the Plan: Departmental Initiative with Divisional Approval & Coordination**
As part of the planning cycle (see Appendix A), each fall, departments will propose and, upon approval from Dean’s Council, execute a few specific initiatives for the following year’s emphasis. Proposals are vetted and funded through the Dean’s Council.
Greater Emphasis on Professional Development
One finding that emerged from this effort was the need for a greater emphasis on professional development. While Student Life expects its professionals to be current in their fields and contribute that expertise in/through the execution of their departmental goals, it assumes additional responsibility to develop its professionals with respect to the learning goals.

A Task Force will be formed to act as a think-tank for the upcoming learning goal. The Task Force will convene, read the current iteration of the white paper, identify ways to enhance their understanding of the subject (e.g. books or articles to read, research, review assessments from past initiatives, etc.). Ultimately, the Task Force will edit the white paper to keep it current, and they will develop an appropriate professional development “event” designed for the entire division. The event could include inviting an expert in the goal area to address current trends and/or ideas. A member of the Dean’s Council will chair the Task Force, and membership will be representative from a variety of Student Life Departments.

Role of Dean’s Council, Dean’s Council Plus, and All Student Life Staff (ASLS)
The Dean’s Council consists of the direct reports to the Vice-President for Student Life and Dean of Students. The council meets on a weekly basis and provides leadership for the Student Life Division. The Dean’s Council Plus includes the professional staff within the Division. All Student Life Staff includes all full and part-time staff members.

Some of the Dean’s Council decision-making responsibilities include:
1. Insuring clarity and priority of program goals and outcomes/indicators;
2. Periodic review of organizational structure to meet priorities;
3. Aligning staffing and resources with established priorities;
4. Targeting professional development toward program goals;
5. Defining purpose of Dean’s Council meetings; Dean’s Council Plus meetings; and ASLS meetings
6. Improving the effectiveness of the Dean’s Council in leading the division;
Appendix A
Planning and Implementation Four Year Cycle

**Diversity and Global Awareness (2013-14)**

**Physical & Emotional Health (2014-15)**

**Serving and Leading Society (2015-16)**

**Christian Understanding Practices & Affections (2016-17)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
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| - Implementation of Interventions  
- Assessment of Interventions  
- Intervention Planning and Development  
- Physical & Emotional Health Task Force*:  
  - Review current “best practices” & literature  
  - Review current White Paper, edit & update as appropriate  
  - Develop professional development activity for SL staff (Fall 2013) | - Implementation of Interventions  
- Implement SL Professional Dev. activity  
- Review current developmental interventions (a.k.a. Educational Programming)  
- Departmental Intervention Proposals to Dean’s Council  
- Proposal decisions by Dean’s Council (Submit budget items for college budget process as appropriate) | - Implementation of Interventions  
- Assessment of Interventions  
- Intervention Planning and Development  
- Serving and Leading Society Task Force:  
  - Review current “best practices” & literature  
  - Review current White Paper, edit & update as appropriate  
  - Develop professional development activity for SL staff (Fall 2014) | - Implementation of Interventions  
- Implement SL Professional Dev. activity  
- Review current developmental interventions (a.k.a. Educational Programming)  
- Departmental Intervention Proposals to Dean’s Council  
- Proposal decisions by Dean’s Council (Submit budget items for college budget process as appropriate) | - Implementation of Interventions  
- Assessment of Interventions  
- Intervention Planning and Development  
- Christian Understandings Practices & Affections Task Force:  
  - Review current “best practices” & literature  
  - Review current White Paper, edit & update as appropriate  
  - Develop professional development activity for SL staff (Fall 2015) |

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| - Implementation of Interventions  
- Implement SL Professional Dev. activity  
- Review current developmental interventions (a.k.a. Educational Programming)  
- Departmental Intervention Proposals to Dean’s Council  
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- Intervention Planning and Development  
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  - Review current “best practices” & literature  
  - Review current White Paper, edit & update as appropriate  
  - Develop professional development activity for SL staff (Fall 2016) | - Departmental Intervention Proposals to Dean’s Council  
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