

April 20, 2009

Dear Student,

As you are in the process of making one of the most important and life-changing decisions you will ever make, I want to share some thoughts with you.

Throughout our history — and recently during the Tea Fire — we have witnessed God’s faithfulness to Westmont and his ongoing provision. We’re thankful that we put our trust in God and not in Wall Street. In many ways, we’re well situated to weather the current economic storm, and we feel confident about our future. Since we’re still building our endowment, we don’t depend on it heavily, so the decline hasn’t made a big impact on our budget.

With the difficult and uncertain financial climate, we’ve decided not to increase tuition for the 2009-2010 academic year. We’re also allocating an additional \$1 million for institutional financial aid. To accomplish this, we’ve cut spending in other areas, instituted a freeze on salaries and hiring, and deferred some capital improvement projects.

In my conversations with parents of current and prospective students, I’ve heard many of the same questions and concerns, and I want to address some of them. I hope my comments are helpful. Feel free to contact Joyce Luy, dean of admission, if you have additional questions.

1. How can spending \$40,000 a year on my undergraduate experience be justified philosophically?

We believe a Westmont education has great value for many reasons.

First, there are factors that make Westmont more affordable than you may think. Most of our students graduate in four years or less. Our four-year graduation rate is an impressive 73 percent; the national average *six-year* graduation rate is only 57 percent. Tuition at public universities costs less because of state subsidies, but students there rarely complete their studies in four years because they can’t get the classes they need in a timely fashion. As their education drags on, the costs add up, and they run the risk of losing their financial aid.

Second, Westmont students receive a distinctive and valuable education available at few other institutions. We create an atmosphere totally committed to the liberal arts. Our students study with world-class professors in warm, intimate settings and pursue interaction and integration of great ideas with the Christian faith. Learning directly from leading scholars helps our students train their minds in compelling ways. In addition, relationships between professors and students extend beyond the classroom, with faculty mentoring students in all areas of their lives.

Third, Westmont provides an incomparable Christian community where students form lifelong friendships and develop their character and their faith as well as their minds. Between the ages of 18-22, young people make important decisions that shape their lives, choosing careers, spouses and values. Westmont provides an ideal environment for this critical time. Students benefit from the guidance of mature Christian scholars and caring staff members, and they live with some of the finest young people in the country who are committed to learning and to serving Jesus Christ. Two books explain the critical importance of the undergraduate experience: “Making the Most of College: Students Speak Their Minds” by Richard Light, and “The New Case for the Liberal Arts.” It’s important to choose a college wisely because it will make a significant impact in the direction of a student’s life.

Fourth, I encourage you to find out more about Westmont. If you haven’t visited or have and questions remaining, I invite you to call or e-mail any of our professors for more specific information about opportunities in their departments. Education at Westmont is rich and complex and can’t be explained in a brochure or an e-



mail message. I think you'll share our passion for our mission when you hear more from our students and faculty.

2. Will Westmont prepare students for careers?

The best thing we can do for students is prepare their minds for whatever career they want to pursue. Our graduates will likely change jobs between 14-18 times during their lives. Given the complexity of life in the 21st century and the global economy, workers need to have the capacity intellectually and emotionally to adjust to new fields, environments and cultures.

Executives with major corporations tell me they need graduates who are computer literate, teachable and willing to learn the systems companies already have in place. They also want to hire people with morals because employee theft is such a big expense. A liberal arts graduate can go right into a company that will train them, they can go to graduate school in a specialized area, or, like many of our students, enroll in one of the professional degree programs like medicine, dentistry, optometry and law. Our alumni are very successful in gaining admittance to graduate school.

Yes, a liberal arts education is excellent preparation for a career — the very best because it teaches students how to learn, how to think critically and how to communicate well. Our students can enter any graduate or professional school in any field and succeed because of the skills they've acquired.

3. Why are you still building when many other colleges have postponed construction?

I'm happy to say that we have all the funding we need for the buildings now under construction, which we raised through donations. **We're not spending tuition revenue on these projects.**

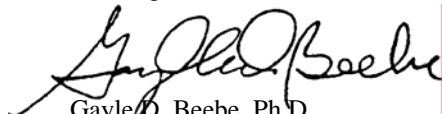
We've waited more than 20 years to add academic facilities to our campus to fully serve our 1,200 students and our faculty. In 2008, we finally completed a lengthy process to update our Campus Master Plan, which includes many restrictions on construction. We can only build a certain number of buildings at a time (at present, we're allowed to complete Adams Center for the Visual Arts, Winter Hall for Science and Mathematics, a chapel, a residence hall and a new observatory). Once we pull a building permit for one of these facilities — which we did Nov. 12, 2008 — we must pull all the others within an 18-month period. Otherwise, we must wait at least five years after all the current construction is done before building again. So the provisions of our Conditional Use Permit mean that we can't simply postpone construction for a year or two.

In addition, the new buildings provide much-needed space for classrooms, laboratories, art studios and faculty offices. Our outstanding professors deserve sufficient space for their teaching and research, and they've worked too long with crowded and inadequate facilities. The Tea Fire, which destroyed the physics and psychology buildings, makes the completion of Winter Hall even more urgent as both these departments will find a new home there.

We are providing you with this opportunity to apply for admission to the Westmont Class of 2009 because we're convinced you're the type of student who will contribute to Westmont in many ways and work alongside us as we continue to strengthen our legacy. I pray you will join us this fall.

My prayers are with you as you continue to seek God's wisdom for your college choice.

Blessings,



Gayle D. Beebe, Ph.D.
President

Questions? Contact the Office of Admission at 1-800-777-9011 / admission@westmont.edu

