

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the college search process. In my twenty-eight years in the admission profession, I can honestly state, "I have never observed more parent – and student – anxiety over the process than in these days. Why is that? Much is due to the obvious turbulence in the current economy (and we have offered some reassurance to you regarding this, (<http://www.westmont.edu/admissions/reassurances.html>)). Anxiety over the college-search process is also due to lack of information, or perhaps too much information to sort through. At Westmont, we hope to provide you with helpful, easy to find, honest information about the search process and eventually making the right choice.

But what is the right choice? That is the question. Obviously, you want a place where your son or daughter can get a high quality education, which will be the foundation for future success in graduate school and their future career. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, Westmont is one of the nation's top-rated liberal arts college's. And, one of only three as members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. One of eight liberal arts colleges in California including Claremont McKenna, Pomona, and Occidental. As you can see, Westmont has had a reputation for high academic standards. And that reputation seems secure.

But is that enough? I don't think so. I'm convinced that you don't get a good education simply because a college offers a variety of courses, or has a great reputation. Learning begins in the heart, and a good education will only occur if students want to learn. First and foremost, therefore, you should seek an environment that encourages learning. Where the residence halls, as well as the chapel program, cultivate a desire to get the most out of one's education. To pursue it. And to love it. That takes faculty who challenge the heart as well as the head, and it takes fellow students and staff who are willing to mentor students one on one. In other words, it requires a community that fosters a particular kind of environment.

But there is another essential quality to be included in the search and it's a place that connects what is learned with how we live. We don't want your son or daughter to simply get smart; we want them to become wise. To live better because of what they have learned. To love the Lord with all their heart, mind, and soul, and their neighbor as themselves. To choose good rather than evil. To love truth rather than error. To appreciate beauty rather than ugliness. In other words, we want their lives to become richer because of what they have learned, and we want them to give generously out of the wealth that God has given them.

The question is, then, where will you find such a school? A school with a highly regarded academic reputation, which nurtures the love of learning as well as the art of living? That's a question you may have to answer this year or in the years to come. But I can tell



you this: I have been at Westmont for twenty-eight years because I know first-hand that is the kind of college we are.

Some are attracted to Westmont because it's in the hills of Santa Barbara, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Some are enticed by a national reputation, and alumni in strategic positions around the world. Others through the strong community involvements and opportunities to study abroad. I remain at Westmont because this is the place where, year after year, I am blessed to witness young people, like your sons and daughters, have the opportunity to become the people that they were created to be in the first place. To that end, we will pray for you. We hope the information contained here will provide you with direction and hope.

Blessings as you proceed.

Sincerely,



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