PROFESSIONAL PEER REVIEW:
Career & Life Planning
Westmont College
Nov, 2000

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On-site Review Conducted, November 2000
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I. INTRODUCTION
The process of program assessment and evaluation is a necessary and ambitious endeavor. Westmont College’s division of Student Life is an exemplary model of this effort. The division is systematically reviewing each of its departments by bringing in a team of collegial consultants from institutions within the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities. This commitment to review and evaluate demonstrates Westmont’s interest in providing relevant services and programs to support the mission of the college and provide students with the best educational experience possible.

During the time spent at Westmont interviewing students, faculty, alumni, administrators and staff, it was clear that Career and Life Planning (CLP) is an important function in the division of Student Life. The college has shown past commitment by providing adequate resources in both staffing and budget. Our goal in coming to Westmont was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the function, report on constituency perceptions, reflect our professional observations and make future recommendations.

II. METHODOLOGY
In early summer 2000, Westmont initiated contact with Deborah Hoffman, Director of Career Development at Messiah College and Jeanne Back, Associate Director of Career Services at Biola University. We agreed to a consultation process, including a two-day on-site visit in November 2000 for the purpose of reviewing Westmont’s CLP function.

A comprehensive set of materials was sent for our review, including Westmont’s catalog and Mission Statement. Our review included office handouts, functional year-end reports and statistics, budgets, organizational charts, resumes and job descriptions of all staff. As we reviewed these, we determined that a functional self-study would be an asset to the evaluation process. We asked Director Dana Alexander, to use the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) Professional Standards for College and University Career Services Evaluation Workbook. We set a three-week time period in which Dana completed an internal review of programs and services as a part of the evaluation process. Dana worked efficiently and met our deadline. Dana indicated that this internal review process in itself was helpful to him in identifying some strengths and weaknesses of his current program.

Our references for doing the review process included several articles from the quarterly NACE Journal of Career Planning and Employment. Two specific articles—“Finding Our Philosophy in the Career Services Field” by Neil Murray, director of career services at UCSD, (Summer 2000) and “Beyond Surveys” by career services professionals Marcy Bullock, of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University and Jennifer Jones of the University of Texas-Austin (Summer 1999) were key resources in forming our consultation approach, both philosophically and practically. Additionally, we referenced an assessment project from the Coalition for Christian Colleges and Universities entitled “Taking Values Seriously: Assessing the Mission of Church Related Higher Education.” The report, entitled The Executive Summary: Report on 1996 Entering CCCU Students, was a helpful source as we approached a review of Westmont’s program. We wanted to have a broader understanding of the trends in Christian higher education to enrich our perspective in approaching Westmont’s institutional culture.
We developed questions for each constituent group we would be interviewing. We would ask both standard questions as well as specific questions of each group. Our itinerary included two days of meetings with the following: CLP director Dana Alexander; CLP staff without the director; a focus group of seven faculty members; director of first-year programs, Julie De Graw; a focus group of five students (three no-shows); a focus group of eight alumni; director of alumni relations, Mary Given; vice president of student life and dean of students, Jane Higa; and Provost Stan Gaede. Each of these meetings was a significant part contributing to the whole of our report reflecting the current status of the CLP function at Westmont.
III. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

To gain a better understanding of the role of Career and Life Planning at Westmont, it was imperative to develop a sense of its context. Several aspects of the institutional culture are noteworthy: emphasis on liberal arts, focus on vocational calling, influence of Santa Barbara, and gender roles.

A. Clear Emphasis on Liberal Arts
In gathering perceptions of the role of CLP in supporting the mission of Westmont, our impression is that the clear emphasis on the classic liberal arts presents some challenge to the CLP function. The strong liberal arts focus emphasized by the mission statement as well as by the faculty and administration is often in tension with the felt needs of students. Both students and alumni perceived that faculty advisors cared mostly about them academically rather than holistically. Students and alumni interviewed felt that if they were pursuing graduate education, faculty disengaged from offering vocational guidance. Dana and the CLP staff seemed to be seen as the resources for dealing with career planning issues, especially in the absence of faculty interest. Repeatedly, students and alumni reported that they had spent quality time with Dana as he counseled them regarding future plans. Students and alumni described the director as “wise” and “caring”—something desired, but often missing in relationships with advisors.

B. Focus on Vocational Calling
Alternatively, a positive way that the liberal arts focus is addressing career-related issues is in Westmont’s intentional focus on the concept of vocational call. Administrators and faculty showed a growing interest in the concept of Christian call as reflected in Westmont’s revised Vision Statement. In the introduction section we read that Westmont’s “single, overriding objective is to launch our students into a lifetime of flourishing, so that they might become the people God created them to be. We prepare our students for life—the whole of it—enabling them to follow God’s call into any career, avenue of service, that is suited to their gifts and abilities.” This theoretical and theological interest in the concept of Christian calling and its natural expression in work will further be enhanced by the hiring of the new Chaplain, Ben Patterson, who has written and studied extensively in this area. This developing interest is an opportunity for synergy among the faculty, the Chaplain’s office and the CLP staff in developing educational strategies for equipping students towards their career lives. It will still be incumbent upon the institution to move from a theoretical and theological understanding of the concept of call to developing some practical approaches for helping students make transitions into the pragmatic world of work. While Westmont’s mission clearly states that it does not offer narrow vocational choices, it was clear that the students and alumni felt ill-equipped to translate their liberal arts education into entry level occupational choices that they needed to make at graduation and in their early years after Westmont.

C. Santa Barbara Influence
Another aspect of the culture that was noted by several Westmont constituents was the desire on the part of students and alumni to remain part of the Westmont community, and more broadly, the Santa Barbara region. Alumni, more than students, expressed their strong desire to remain part of the community of faith that they had established during their Westmont years. They indicated they would be willing to accept "underemployment" (employment beneath their skills) to stay in Santa Barbara. We saw this trend having impact on the choices students are making upon graduation.
D. Gender Roles and Cultural Expectations

Additionally, the issue of gender roles and the culture came up in several of our meetings. There was a sense on the part of faculty and administrators that female students, while academically qualified, were not setting high academic and career goals. We found this sentiment reflected in the comments of the female students that we interviewed. The perceived and often real conflict between family and career choices are having an impact on the aspirations of female students. This is not surprising when one reads the results of the CCCU Executive Summary. In this report, the typical female student entering CCCU institutions is described as coming from a traditional two-parent home, is very strong academically, but is lacking in leadership and self-confidence. Additionally, her most important objective is raising a family (84% see it as essential or very important). Fewer CCCU students than students at Protestant colleges were interested in getting better jobs or becoming authorities in their fields. It appears that the concerns of Westmont faculty and administration regarding their female students are not unique to Westmont, but to the broader culture of Christian higher education.

E. Summary

There was broad expression of support for the function of Career and Life Planning on the part of all the constituencies interviewed. Director Dana Alexander and the CLP function have earned the respect of many. There is a feeling that more could be done to work collaboratively with other administrative offices as well as with academic departments. Our overall impression was that the programs and services CLP has offered over the past decade have been well received; however, it is time for CLP to “step up” towards more collaborative methods of achieving its goals and objectives.
IV. EVIDENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

A. Mission
To gain a better understanding of the role of Career and Life Planning at Westmont, it was imperative to develop a sense of its context. Westmont is a highly respected Christian college, known for its commitment to academic excellence. The mission of Westmont College is to provide a high quality undergraduate liberal arts program in residential campus community that assists college men and women toward a balance of rigorous intellectual competence, health, personal development and strong Christian commitments. Graduates of Westmont College should develop a heightened appreciation of their cultural and religious heritage, the ability to direct their continuing self-development and learning, the competence to function as leaders and servants in society, a foundation for entering or receiving advanced training in a profession or career, confidence in the authority of Scripture, and a desire to follow Jesus Christ in their understanding, behavior and affections. Westmont’s distinctives are summarized by five characteristics: undergraduate, liberal arts, residential, Christian and global. (Westmont Catalog, “What is Westmont?” p.13, 2000-2001)

B. Long-Range Planning Report (Ethos Committee)
The Final Report of the Ethos Committee (1997) stresses the relationship between engagement and integration in developing wholeness. As a result, many recommendations promote self-understanding within the context of faith and intellectual development. This approach is congruent with vocational development theory. Specifically, three Programmatic Strategies relate directly to career development:

1) Senior Transition - We need also to think about ways to link students with the outside world, especially helping seniors to transition into their post-Westmont experience. An extensive senior chapel program might be developed which would involve both faculty and student life staff. An augmented internship program would also encourage such linkages.

2) Departmental Initiatives - Academic departments should be given more responsibility, and take accountability for the development and maturity of their students. In particular, we recommend that departments think through the relationship between their major and other parts of the student’s life, both while at Westmont and in the days to come. This might influence both the advising process as well as the contours of departmental curricula.

3) Faculty Advising - We believe faculty advising is key to the students’ ability to integrate their academic experience with the rest of their Westmont life. For this reason, we recommend a complete re-thinking of the advising process. At the least, faculty need to be trained as whole life advisors, but we also believe the process needs to be coordinated by the director of the freshman year and department chairs. Other ideas to be explored: team advising between faculty and student life staff; student portfolios; and direct links with the career and life office.

C. Irvine Grant Standards
Of the Six Irvine Grant Standards, the Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement Standard offers several direct connections with the CLP function. Specifically, the following three student learning outcomes intersect with the CLP role:

1) Students/graduates possess the interpersonal competence and abilities needed to navigate a quickly changing and demanding workplace including effective communication and group cooperation.
2) Students are equipped with the tools to continue learning throughout their lives, both because learning can become a source of lifelong satisfaction and because of the ever-changing nature of our world.

3) Students/graduates develop a sense of Christian vocation that will inform career goals, marital choices, and other central lifestyle decisions.

D. Institutional Administrative Support
Administratively, the CLP function is viewed favorably. In interviews with the Provost, Vice President for Student Life, Director of Alumni and Parent Relations, and the Director of First-Year Student Program, CLP was recognized as a valuable resource though perhaps less proactive than it could be.

In reviewing Westmont’s staffing and resources, it is evident that CLP is well staffed and budgeted for a college of its size. A growing challenge is staffing for the technical demands of the function, though staff felt that they had immediate access to the Webmaster during the academic year. This access changes in the summer when the staff have more time to update and innovate the webpage content but the Webmaster is unavailable. It would be helpful to have that technical support accessible for at least a portion of the summer.

1. Provost
Provost comments were supportive of both the director and the CLP program. He also mentioned several concerns and suggestions. The Provost recommends that the director of CLP take more initiative in creating links with the academic program and serving as a resource to the faculty. Faculty are expected to include career advising as part of academic advising, but they have limited knowledge. The Provost felt this was an area in which CLP could provide valuable resources and would like the CLP staff to initiate this type of service. Targeting new faculty was recommended as one strategy. It was also recognized that the career development issue needs to be threaded through the curriculum culminating in a senior level capstone class. It did not seem clear to us that the First-Year Class was an imminent issue, and that discussion could continue for a long while. Comments were made referring to the concept of vocation, and the Provost felt that any teaching on this topic would be welcome. The Provost also mentioned the Transitions Council and his hope that it could be sustained by the members of the council even when he is unavailable. It might be helpful to establish a Transitions Council Co-Chair.

2. Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students
As the supervisor of the CLP Director, the Vice President for Student Life/Dean of Students is not only a key stakeholder, but also offers a unique perspective. Throughout our discussion, the Dean conveyed support for the significant role of career development at Westmont. She spoke of the importance of CLP both in terms of mission and vocational calling, as well as preparing men and women for professional roles beyond Westmont. She identified the director as a key CLP strength—referring to him as an excellent resource—one who is well-read, appreciates the liberal arts, an excellent communicator, and respected by faculty.

The Dean spoke of the significant campus-wide conversations that are occurring related to initiatives such as the long-range plan and the Irvine Grant. Timing seems optimal for the director to provide leadership for integrating vocational development into these critical discussions. The Dean also spoke enthusiastically of the opportunities that exist for
strengthening the CLP function by **integrating it more systematically and substantially with the curriculum.** She spoke of the need for intentional partnerships between CLP and related programs, such as alumni relations, internships and the first-year program. The Dean would like to see the director respond to these issues with a strategy that is proactive, broad-based, and long-range. She is confident in the director's ability to move forward with these initiatives.

3. **Alumni & Parent Relations**
   In meetings with other key administrators several themes seemed to prevail. One was the need for more communication channels between departments. Alumni and Parent Relations looked forward to the new Associate Director in their department being the key person to connect with CLP staff. There was an expressed interest in being informed of when alumni are used in programming as well as interest in joint programming, especially in working with young alumni.

4. **Director of First-Year Programs**
   The Director of First-Year Programs described the relationship between the two departments as informal at best. She refers students to the office, but felt inhibited at times by the existing structure of first-year students being assigned to only one counselor. She expressed the desire for students to be able to see the counselor most appropriate to their needs and would prefer to make referrals that way. There is no formal introduction of available career services to first-year students beyond the orientation given to work-study students. More career advisement training for faculty advisors could be included in the training of advisors and CLP would be the best resource for this type of training. Another interest was in seeing a stronger presence of the CLP staff at faculty meetings, and serving on the General Education Committee, particularly during the discussion of a First-Year Liberal Arts course.

5. **Internship Program**
   Another area of concern that emerged was the move of the Internship Program from Student Life into the academic reporting structure. One hundred percent of faculty interviewed were unaware that this change had occurred. Concerns were expressed that this new reporting structure isolates this program from any department and leaves its director without a group of shared colleagues. Additionally, the change from full-time to part-time seems regressive. The institution is willing to fund a full-time position so the choices would be to **staff it with one full-time director, or a co-directorship of two part-time staff.** The internship experience is critical to student career preparation and every resource available should be utilized to engage more students. The sabbatical of a key staff person in this area made it difficult to assess how successful this change has been. The Internship Program definitely needs to be revisited, as the change has not been viewed as very effective up to this point.
6. Chaplain's Office
As mentioned previously, the developing interest in the concept of vocational calling indicates a growing awareness of the role of career planning in the life of a Christian at Westmont. With the hiring of the new Chaplain, Ben Patterson, we believe Career and Life Planning will gain access to a spiritual leader in exploring the area of calling as well as an ally in the effort to raise the visibility of career planning with this generation of students. This will offer beneficial opportunities in joint programming for these two functions as well as the entire Student Life division. Hopefully the broader exposure of students towards the development of a theology of vocation will synergize effectively with the academic mission of Westmont. The outcome of this synergy will produce students who are more theologically, academically and practically prepared “to follow God's call into any career, avenue of service, that is suited to their gifts and abilities.”
V. CAREER AND LIFE PLANNING FUNCTION

A. Mission
Westmont’s career development function is centralized in the Career and Life Planning Office. The mission of the CLP office is articulated clearly, covering 3 primary aspects of vocational development. Our mission is to help students: 1) better understand who God has made them to be, 2) discover the opportunities in our world to live out their uniqueness, and 3) discern the variety of ways those two dimensions can come together through meaningful career and life choices. The mission is supported by 13 objectives.

B. Leadership
The Career and Life Planning function has existed at Westmont since the late 1970's. After a series of four directors in twelve years, Dana Alexander was hired in 1989 to direct the operation. Dana’s long-term leadership has benefitted Westmont in a number of ways. He is widely known and generally well-respected within the Westmont community. Externally, he has represented the institution well by publishing articles and reviews in career planning periodicals, voluntarily serving as a leader in the Consortium of Liberal Arts Schools and Independent Colleges (CLASIC), as well as teaching a graduate level course in career planning for the California State University at Northridge Educational Psychology program. Dana’s credentials as a Nationally Certified Career Counselor, as well as his registry as a Professional Career Counselor with the California Registry of Professional Counselors, through the California Association for Counseling and Development exhibit his commitment to achieving and maintaining his credentials at the highest standards of the profession. A well-qualified and highly credentialed professional leads Westmont’s CLP office. Consequently, the director’s credibility promotes respect for the career planning function within the Westmont community.
VI. STAFF PERCEPTIONS

A. DESCRIPTION OF CONSTITUENT GROUP
The CLP staff met with us to discuss perceptions and recommendations. Participants included: Joan Wimberly, Career Counselor and Recruitment Coordinator; Janna Mori, Student and Alumni Employment Coordinator, and Carrie Rydman, Office Coordinator. As reported by staff, observations are outlined as either strengths or limitations of the program. Our feedback follows each section.

B. POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF CLP GROUP
1. Programs/Services
   • Workshops provide students with helpful information.
   • Senior Transitions program, i.e. interview preparation and etiquette dinner, are successful.
   • Job Direct has been promoted very well by the vendor. It provides more extensive job opportunities for students and grads; may streamline process.
   • Assessments are well-received by students; Myers Briggs and Strong Interest Inventory are popular.
   • Counseling sessions are busier than previous years (some speculation that marketing services to parents via preview days and a direct mail letter has assisted with students “interest”).
   • Resume Doctor engages students “where they are” through informal interaction in the DC; appears to be an effective service.
   • Student employment program is efficient and provides a meaningful service to students.
   • Student participation has increased. Parents seem to be more involved in encouraging students to seek career counseling services.

Feedback from Consultants
   • The cross section of programs and services offered by the CLP seem to be rich, particularly for a small college. Staff seem to be energized by improving and expanding programming which is particularly favorable in the dynamic career planning profession. Even as strong programs were described, staff would mention plans for how that particular service was improving or “should be even more effective next year.”

   • Although staff were initially uncomfortable talking about what they do well, after some coaching from us, they began to describe several of their stronger programs and services. Although modesty is indeed a virtue, we would encourage frequent celebrations of individual and team successes. Perhaps staff meetings could begin with the director recapping recent programs that have gone well or sharing a compliment received about a particular staff member or program. Strategically “sprinkling compliments” equitably throughout the year allows all staff to share in the successes of the team.

2. Leadership
   • High level of trust has been demonstrated by the Director in letting staff set their own hours.
   • Likewise, the Director gives his staff latitude to approach their work and complete it at their discretion.
   • Interpersonal skills of Director were applauded. Staff felt strongly that the Director interacts well with all constituents—faculty, parents, students, administrators. Likewise, he is an effective speaker both one-on-one and in large forums.
• **Weekly staff meetings** are helpful for scheduling and planning events, reviewing day-to-day operations, rapport and team-building. Also, reading *Knowing God's Will* and discussing it as a staff was rated high. Meetings were also identified as a time of “having fun together.”

**Feedback from Consultants**

• We were impressed with the compliments offered by the staff to describe Dana. Through several examples, they expressed admiration for his professional expertise and communication skills (both verbal and written). High praise was also offered for his dedication, compassion and skill with clients.
C. LIMITATIONS PERCEIVED BY CLP GROUP

1. Programs/Services
   • The credential file service should be reviewed. It was developed decades ago to serve students and grads entering a different job application process. Is it still an effective use of resources?
   • Students are unclear about procedural details of work-study positions. Currently, information is found in CLP, financial aid and payroll. Jana has initiated a meeting, but she feels that she “has gone as far as she can go” at her level. More effective logistical procedures are desired.

Feedback from Consultants
   • Because the credential file service was designed to accommodate a dated job search process, it should be reviewed. Is it still an effective use of resources? Is it flexible enough for current graduates? Do graduate programs consider reference letters outside of their own reference forms? Would students and prospective employers prefer a self-managed file (or portfolio) that is tailored to specific positions and organizations? Staff could develop handouts and workshops on self-managed portfolios which would teach students a life-long professional development skill.

   • Concerning work-study procedures, it seems that Dana and Jana should meet with representatives from financial aid and payroll to develop a more streamlined, student-friendly approach.

2. Marketing/Location
   • Student “walk by” traffic is very minimal. Because it is difficult to attract students to the CLP location, promoting programs and services becomes a time-consuming issue.
   • Marketing of programs and services to students appears to be weak. For example, the electronic Intercom seems to be less effective than the former hard copy version. Traditional approaches for promoting services and events include: kiosk in library, voice mail, flyers, and word-of-mouth.
   • Communication could be improved if calendars/schedules were centralized. CLP maintains 4 calendars covering events, workshops, recruiters, appointments, etc. Students are confused and unaware of relevant activities. A streamlined process is desired.

Feedback from Consultants
   • While a change of location is not an easy item to remedy, we recommend that the college consider a more accessible location for the CLP office. A high traffic area would “remind” students of career-related issues and would improve marketing of programs and services.

   • Marketing is a universal problem for most career centers. In order to provide the best assistance to students, Career Centers want to engage them early! We would suggest student input—from all class levels and majors—regarding this issue. Moving the CLP office into a student union, for example, would accomplish two goals: 1) positioning CLP in a high traffic, student-friendly location; and 2) reuniting CLP personnel with their student affairs colleagues.

   • Regarding the marketing of individual programs and services, consider programs that attract students, such as the Resume Doctor. Is it possible to use this as a model for other activities? Is the residence hall another venue for meeting students “where they are”?

   • Is a centralized calendar feasible? Obviously, this would assist with workload and clarity. This process should be reviewed by the CLP team.
3. Structure/Leadership

- Lack of vision for CLP department. Direction seems to be “spontaneous” rather than processed thoughtfully with the group to develop a strategic plan.
- Mission statement was “invisible.” When we asked staff about the CLP mission statement, they were unaware of this document and how it was formulated.
- Staff expressed a desire for professional development—identifying skill areas as well as job-related growth opportunities.
- Annual goals and evaluation—both for individuals and the department—do not seem to be meaningful. (Staff were not quite sure if they routinely set them, for example.) Mid-year feedback to individual staff would also be helpful.
- One-on-one meetings with the Director are not standard. Currently, responsibility for setting appointments rests with the staff, who are reluctant to intrude on the director’s schedule. Standing appointments would assist with consistent communication and goal-setting.
- The office assistant feels stifled in her current role. She would appreciate consideration of options that increase her professional development and contribution to the overall CLP program without requiring enrollment in an advanced degree program. Mutually rewarding responsibilities have included programs such as: Seminary Day, new student orientation, and the internship program.
- Better coordination is desired between CLP and alumni relations. Staff perceive that this is not occurring at the director level.

Feedback from Consultants

- Effective leadership and management are demanding responsibilities in our profession and within higher education. (Trust us—we know!) As staff discussed possible improvements in this area, a need for strategic team planning seemed to emerge. While it is obvious to us that Westmont’s CLP program is comprehensive and growing, we would suggest that a more systematic process of planning would allow all team members to: “own” the program; understand how the CLP mission fits with the mission of the college; engage in annual departmental goals; develop appropriate individual goals; build a group synergy that is stimulating, creative and gratifying.

- Communication between the director and his staff seems to be effective, but there are some minor suggestions which could improve communication: 1) bi-weekly staff meetings (that are protected from other scheduling conflicts) would allow for better dialogue and support; 2) the office assistant is overemployed for a secretarial role. However, due to personal commitments, she does not feel capable of pursuing graduate study in order to advance to more challenging roles. Should she explore this situation with the Director and Vice President for Student Life? Is it possible to re-configure her responsibilities, perhaps exploring part-time, project-oriented work with internships? If her position is “upgraded,” how does this impact compensation? Can the Director and VP of Student Life assist her with “being heard” as well as managing her expectations for work?

- In addition to intraoffice communication, dialogue could be strengthened with campus partners, e.g. Alumni Relations. Both formal meetings and informal lunches are recommended to build rapport as well as programs. Staff should be included in some of these conversations to foster clear communication between departments at all levels.
VII. FOCUS GROUPS

A. DESCRIPTION OF CONSTITUENT GROUP

1. FACULTY
A group of 7 faculty met to discuss perceptions and recommendations with us. The group included: George Ayoub, Associate Professor of Biology; Steve Butler, Assistant Professor of Music; Crystal Jorden, Associate Professor/Associate Athletic Director of Kinesiology & Physical Education; John Murray, Director of Library Services; Rick Pointer, Professor of History; Brenda Smith, Associate Professor of Psychology; Kristyn Thurman, Assistant Director of Library Services.

2. FACULTY PERCEPTIONS: Strengths of CLP Program
a. Counseling
Vocational counseling for identifying gifts and interests is helpful, and faculty are appreciative that students can be referred to CLP for this service.

b. Exploring Occupations
Faculty expect CLP to serve as the centralized office for occupational information such as entry-level employment information, trends, salary expectations, and so forth.

c. Graduate School
Several faculty mentioned the benefit of referring students to CLP for graduate school admissions information and advising.

d. Staff
The CLP Director was identified, specifically, as a colleague who was respected and appreciated.

e. Class Presentations
CLP was complimented for their willingness to offer tailor-made class presentations and for the quality of their work. As one faculty member stated: "They make a presentation to our seniors once a year. It has been practical, stimulating and gives students ‘access’ to services.” Additionally, they “have been very available to students.”

3. FACULTY PERCEPTIONS: Limitations of CLP Program
a. Graduate School Advising
Overall, faculty were complimentary of the Career and Life Planning program. The only criticism that was noteworthy related to graduate study. There were mixed perceptions on graduate school decision-making advice as reported to faculty by their students. A faculty member indicated that the “screening criteria list” shared by CLP as a litmus test for attending graduate school was an invalid tool. Some students reported that the “test” indicated that they were not likely to succeed in graduate school because of their poor fit with the screening criteria.

Although this scenario was not reported by the majority of faculty, it is our recommendation that the list be identified and evaluated for both application and effectiveness. There was some concern that the title of a CLP workshop, Is Grad School for You? may contribute to the negative perception as well. Additionally, we noted that tension may exist between faculty who prefer that
students move directly from Westmont to graduate study and CLP who may present other options for students to explore regarding their “first year out.”

4. FACULTY RECOMMENDATIONS
Several ideas were generated by faculty related to the brainstorming question: “If resources were not an issue, what career-related services would you like to see Westmont provide?” We asked them to think outside of resource limitations like budgetary restrictions and other challenges.

a. Integration of vocational planning with curriculum
The Kinesiology program was cited as a curriculum that intentionally assists students with the relevance and integration of academic and career planning. During the Foundations Course, first-year students conduct informational interviews with professionals in the field and explore internships. Students find this experiential education particularly helpful to their professional and academic development. As seniors, they are well-equipped for senior seminar activities that help them reflect on their undergraduate experience and prepare for the transition from Westmont.

Several ideas emerged for integrating vocational planning more consistently throughout the curriculum. For example, the concept of vocation could be explored in Introduction to Liberal Studies. Pedagogically, students should be engaged in exploring (e.g., panel presentations and informational interviews) and reflecting (e.g., directed journaling and reflection paper) on the personal relevance of vocation. As one faculty member noted: “I would applaud incorporation in second half of First-Year Seminar, an eight-week portion devoted to career pursuits, resources available, some testing on aptitude and interest analysis.” [This would] “acquaint students to services and needs which can be met.”

Some additional considerations, were posed: Could a one-unit “Careers in ...” be developed for some majors? Should a vocational planning component be developed for incorporation into first-year major-specific courses? Perhaps two well-placed units could serve as bookends, one during the first semester, one during the senior year?

b. Increase employers recruiting students
Although Westmont is a small college, additional recruiters seem warranted. Perhaps CLP could increase the quantity of employers who recruit seniors. Additionally, would employers respond favorably to an opportunity to interact with students in the DC, similar to off-campus study representatives? This open forum would provide a dual benefit: 1) students would be encouraged to explore employment options prior to their senior year; and 2) employers could connect with a higher volume of students and explore other employment candidates, such as interns.

c. Employment status of recent graduates
Through written feedback, faculty expressed interest in research statistics and employment information about Westmont graduates during their first three years after graduation.

5. FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTANTS: Observations/Recommendations
a. Increase Awareness of CLP Services
Although the collective group could provide a thumbnail sketch of CLP services, it appeared that few individuals had a grasp of the comprehensive services of the CLP program. For example, several comments began with: “Maybe they already do this—I’m not sure—but it would be helpful if CLP offered...” Furthermore, only one group member was aware that CLP had a home page.
How are faculty informed of CLP services? Are there existing vehicles of communication on which CLP could routinely “hitchhike”? Because the Director is an effective communicator and well-respected, are there forums for him to outline career services to faculty, e.g. new faculty orientation, departmental meetings, and so forth?

b. Increase Faculty Resources & Accessibility
Although some faculty mentioned referring students to CLP, most did not appear to incorporate CLP resources into their advising or teaching. Several ideas emerged from our discussion. For example, discipline-specific materials could be identified on the CLP web page—from opportunities in the field to related employers. The Westmont page is a familiar resource; encouraging faculty to access career and graduate school information via the CLP site would be a convenient method for most faculty and a familiar tool for students. Graduate school information from CLP has been a valuable resource. Could a faculty designate from each department assist with graduate school advising for their respective discipline(s)?

c. Increase Information to Faculty
Faculty expressed interest in being better-equipped to respond to students career-related questions. For example, some faculty would appreciate knowing more about occupational opportunities within their field. (Since many of them pursued academic career tracks, their expertise—is often perceived as their bias—is counseling students on advanced study opportunities.) As advisors, faculty expressed an interest in understanding vocational inventories. Students who have taken CLP assessments often follow-up with faculty who feel ill-equipped to interpret results and offer guidance on “next steps.”

Additional areas of interest related to emerging careers and technological applications within their fields. Also, faculty expressed a lack of confidence about the job hunting process, admitting that it may have changed dramatically since their last job search.

d. Panels and Role Models
Both faculty and students perceived alumni panels as a valuable educational service. Discipline-specific themes provide opportunity for first-year through senior year students to explore options and learn from the advice of their Westmont colleagues. Women, specifically, may benefit from female role models who have integrated family and career interests. Faculty noted that females often struggle with choosing between career and family. Their concerns are further compounded by the evangelical sub-culture and the metasmeme that “truly Christian mothers” should not work outside the home.
B. STUDENTS

1. DESCRIPTION OF CONSTITUENT GROUP
A focus group of five students met to discuss perceptions of the Career and Life Planning Office. Student participants included: Alysia McKee, first year; Lauren Davis, first year; Jeremy Sinclair, senior; Chad Morgan, senior; and Andrea Stuart, senior.

2. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS: Strengths of CLP Program
a. Staff
The staff of CLP received exceptionally high praise from the student participants; referring to them as “unbelievably helpful.” The director, specifically, was praised for his knowledge and devotion to students. Staff were also described as “encouraging” and “supportive.”

b. Vocational Counseling
Several students had participated in some level of counseling or advising. Specifically, the Discover Your Gifts workshops and inventories such as the Strong and Myers-Briggs were cited as helpful.

c. Career and Life Planning Course
Although only one student had enrolled in the course, he rated his experience extremely high. He indicated that he “recommends it to all his friends” and that “more people should take it.” The student said he could not speak highly enough of the incredible instruction offered by the director. He recommended more effective marketing of the CLP course, indicating that he “had just stumbled upon it.”

d. Employment Assistance
Students who had taken advantage of the employment connections offered through CLP were appreciative of this service. It was also an entree into more substantial services such as vocational counseling.

3. STUDENT PERCEPTIONS: Limitations of CLP Program
a. Location
Due to a lack of student traffic “passing by” the CLP office, students do not “drop in” spontaneously. This creates additional challenges for image, awareness, and marketing of the CLP program. We asked them to rate awareness of the CLP office location on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 “difficult” and 5 “highly recognizable”). The average rating was 2, “hard to find.”

b. Marketing
Students recognize that it is difficult to “try to get their attention.” Marketing methods that are somewhat effective include voice mails, signs in the DC, flyers in restrooms and class chapel announcements/speakers. Activity in the DC, e.g. The Resume Doctor, is the most effective attention-grabber.

c. Home Page
Although all students use the internet for personal communication, none of them utilized the CLP website. In fact, little use was reported for electronic career services such as job lists and resume referral services.
4. STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Consider Evening Hours
Students suggested evening hours for workshops, 6:30-7:30. Currently, offering workshops during late afternoon hours eliminates athletes and students participating in off-campus study activities. Additionally, students mentioned offering services in a more visible location, such as the DC, during evening hours. For example, Every Mon, 7-8:00, open for career-related advice...just drop in! might be appealing to students.

b. Improve Faculty Advising Role
Several students cited dissatisfaction with advising, particularly related to career tracks that did not include graduate study. Advisors vary in their interest and knowledge of career-related issues. Students suggested appointing a faculty advisor within each department who is trained and interested in advising students on career issues.

c. Review Connotation of CLP Nomenclature
Students resist the term “Career and Life Planning.” It seems overwhelming and unrealistic to think of planning “the rest of one’s life” while in college. Also, they discussed theological barriers to embracing the term. How could they remain open to God’s leading if they plan the rest of their life? The term seems “too set in stone,” according to one student. Additionally, females may be particularly concerned about the integration of family and career, and therefore, do not want to identify themselves as “career women” which implies a diminished interest in the significance of family and one’s maternal responsibilities.

Although several ideas were tossed about in the brainstorming, better nomenclature was not identified. However, some common themes emerged: 1) focus on post-college years; 2) link to world outside of Westmont; 3) no reference was made to “career, work, occupation or employment.” Some unrefined ideas included: Post-college Center, Center for the Early 20’s, and Post-undergrad Planning Center. Also, streamlining the office to Career Services was more appealing than Career and Life Planning.
C. ALUMNI
1. DESCRIPTION OF CONSTITUENT GROUP
Seven alumni returned to campus to participate in a focus group discussion: Gabe Friley '96, Bob Quakenbush '77, Amanda Searles '97, Keith Severson '92, Tiffany Shoemaker '99, Carrie Steele '97, and Jenise Steverding '97. The amount of interaction with the CLP office varied; approximately half of the group had used CLP as students. However, all participants had pursued alumni career services.

2. ALUMNI: Suggestions for Student Programming
Alumni offer a unique perspective on student programming. We asked them to reflect on their undergraduate experience and comment on: 1) why students may not use career services; and 2) approaches and services that might attract student interest.

The following reasons were cited for a lack of interest in career services among students: too many other distractions; career interests aren't a priority; "career planning" is a vague concept, "job fairs seemed like a joke;" and "faculty did not seem focused on life after college." When asked to offer suggestions for improving services and stimulating more student interest, the following ideas were generated.

a. Improve CLP Facility
The Center was described as "intimidating, cold, 'a corner,' and not inviting." Alumni suggested moving CLP to a more visible, high traffic area, with ample space for student and alumni programming. They mentioned that a "centralized location is more important for CLP than it is for a classroom." Students will find a classroom, but they may not seek a CLP office that is "hidden."

b. Engage First-year Students
Vocational awareness and planning needs to start early! Are there creative ways to capture students' interests at orientation? The first semester? Can the Myers-Briggs or Strong be a mandatory guidance tool administered to all first-year students?

c. Strengthen Faculty Influence
Faculty advisors play a significant role in influencing students' priorities and decision-making. If faculty would refer students to CLP, the majority of students would follow this advice. Some alumni indicated that their advisor never referred them to CLP services—students equated silence with a lack of value for career-related issues and vocational planning.

d. Continue Open Forums
Present topics that cross-over several majors and career interests. Students will not attend a session "outside their major." However, a discussion focused on career opportunities for writers, (which CLP has sponsored) attracts a variety of majors.

e. Increase Occupational Information
Students are typically unaware of occupational opportunities related to their discipline, skill set and interests. In addition to open forums, students could benefit from networking, informational interviews and experiential education opportunities.
f. Expand Program Sponsorship
Programs co-sponsored with other departments, e.g. alumni relations and academic departments, would communicate that "vocation" is not a compartmentalized issue. (When an academic department is the sole sponsor of an event, non-majors do not feel comfortable attending.)

3. ALUMNI: Suggestions for Alumni Programming
Alumni were appreciative of the excellent career service they had received from CLP. The director was consistently praised for his genuine interest, empathy and personal assistance. One alumnum commented: "Dana has spent all the time in the world with me. He has been patient, thorough, and extremely helpful."

However, as we encouraged them to brainstorm on improvements, several ideas emerged:

a. Marketing
Consider sending an annual mailing to alumni alerting them of Westmont’s free career services. A brochure could be included with the Westmont magazine.

b. Clarify Alumni Services
Alumni indicated some confusion about whether career services was for students only, and if not, which services they could request. Specific information such as types of services, point of contact, staff roles, etc., could be communicated near commencement and, routinely, through other marketing efforts.

c. Expanded Hours
Evening hours (one evening per week) would be appealing.

d. Special Programs
Alumni could benefit from forums that offer networking opportunities, as well as topics such as: integrating faith and work, ethical dilemmas in the workplace, translating skills and interests into occupational opportunities.

e. Expand Westmont Connection
Only 10 of 7 alumni were familiar with the Westmont Connection. However, all were interested in this type of service (wanting to serve as a resource and a user). A separate mailing from CLP (not the development office) would be effective—expressing interest in them apart from fund-raising endeavors.

f. Increase Awareness of CLP Home Page
Alumni were not familiar with Westmont’s home page connections or Job Direct, although they were utilizing several electronic lists, and visiting employer sites directly. (The home page would be a convenient, cost-effective approach for communicating with alumni. Are there methods to build connections through this delivery system?)

g. Attraction of Santa Barbara
Alumni commented on the strong connection they felt, not only to Westmont College but also to the Santa Barbara area. However, the cost of living is challenging for recent graduates seeking entry-level positions. Networking opportunities sponsored by CLP would be extremely beneficial for young alumni getting established in career fields. This could provide a key growth opportunity for the Westmont Connection to increase its data base members and student/alumni participants.
VIII. COMMON THEMES

A. Significance of Vocational Planning
Perhaps our contacts were merely polite, but none of them seemed to question the attention we were giving to vocational calling and career-related issues. We observed that career issues are perceived as either essential or related to the mission of Westmont College. Our inference regarding those faculty and administrators who have not interacted significantly with the CLP office is that they considered it a separate, centralized entity that is functioning well. Consequently, it was "one less item to add to their job descriptions." However, their lack of proactivity with career-related issues did not seem to translate as a lack of support for this dimension of college life.

B. Staff Competence and Effective Service
All focus group members and individual interviews related enthusiastic support for the fine work of the CLP staff. Several examples were cited throughout the report which indicated student-oriented service, excellent programming, responsiveness to requests, and commitment to the profession. The director, specifically, was identified as competent, articulate and dedicated to clients.

C. CLP Location
Staff and client groups expressed concern about the location of the facility. None of the students or alumni considered the location "helpful."

D. Continue to Strengthen Integration and Partnerships
Throughout the report, the need to continue to strengthen campus-wide integration of career issues and partnerships was a recurring theme. Several effective programming partnerships have already been established, such as faculty co-sponsorship of alumni panels, e.g. Using Foreign Language in Your Work and Careers in Biotechnology. Although these initiatives may require more start-up time, the pay-off will be significant: a) sharing of logistical responsibility; b) sharing of ownership and "emotional investment;" c) educating another campus advocate for CLP services.

1. Employers
Stronger employer relations was expressed as a programming need as well as an interest area for staff growth. Specifically, alumni could be utilized more effectively for employment connections. Additional site visits would increase Westmont's presence in the employment community. Employers should also be sought for input to help shape the overall CLP program as well as specific initiatives. For example, employer evaluations would provide assessment of the effectiveness of job fairs from their perspective.

2. Alumni
Alumni connections could enhance student services, such as employment opportunities. Additionally, better marketing of services to alumni could strengthen alumni relations, institutional public relations, and fund-raising. For example, taking a Myers-Briggs workshop "on the road" to an Eastmont chapter gathering, would provide a meaningful service to alumni while developing potential employment opportunities for students with Washington, D.C. employers.
3. Students
Several ideas were floated concerning strengthening interaction with students. However, student input is needed to determine needs and interests. Student evaluations would be helpful for both program-specific feedback (i.e., workshops and job fairs) as well as departmental assessment. Focus groups could be explored. A student advisory board might also be considered. Programs which focus on specific classes, such as first-year student needs and senior concerns could be explored.

4. Faculty
Both client groups—students and alumni—stressed the significance of faculty in their personal career development. Specifically, students mentioned the critical role of academic advisors. Unfortunately, advisors who neglected to reference career-related issues were just as influential as the occasional advisor who referred students to CLP services. Students viewed an advisor’s silence as an indication that career issues were not important.

Integrating the CLP program with the curriculum is essential. Faculty feedback regarding CLP sponsored alumni panels has been very positive. Increasing topics to cover a cross section of disciplines would be well-received and beneficial to students. Another helpful connection with faculty could be to introduce CLP services to them during departmental meetings. Also, new faculty could be oriented within their first semester to increase awareness and garner their support.

5. Parents
Interactions with parents have been extremely favorable. A systematic approach should be explored. What are the current communication methods the college uses to connect with parents? How could CLP incorporate their message with these initiatives, e.g. Parents Council, parents newsletter, etc.? An orientation to the process of career planning could be offered during Parents Weekend. This would help parents understand and develop a supportive role of working with their student.
IX. STEPS FOR CONSIDERATION

Based on perceptions from the campus community, the NACE evaluation conducted by the director, our individual professional experiences, and our discussion of appropriate applications for Westmont, we would like to offer the following recommendations for “next steps.”

“TOP 12 LIST”

1. **Implement a working mission statement**
   Build ownership among staff for the CLP mission. If necessary, revise it. Does the CLP mission support the College mission? Promote the mission on publications.

2. **Develop a strategic plan**
   Based on the CLP mission, develop 3-4 program goals. What are the program strategies (services/activities) that meet these goals? Determine specific responsibilities for the team and individuals. Develop annual goals for the department and each team member. Evaluate semi-annually. Meet with staff members bi-weekly for support and accountability. (NACE Leadership Institute offers an excellent strategic planning course.)

3. **Review staff job descriptions**
   Is it possible to upgrade the Office Coordinator position? Are responsibilities distributed appropriately among all team members? Review job titles for parity and salary for equity. Evaluate the hierarchical model; for example, are the three “coordinators” parallel? Would an assistant director role(s) be effective and realistic?

4. **Build in assessment and evaluation methods**
   Consider institutional assessment goals and strategies. How does the CLP function interface with existing goals and strategies? How can it support and enhance them? Develop a systematic assessment plan with input from key constituents—students, faculty, alumni, administrative partners. Phase in over a 3-year period. Use assessment results in program planning.

5. **Target and develop key campus partners**
   Throughout the report, this theme has recurred. However, here is a quick-list of potential partnerships:
   - **Alumni** - Consider evening hours. Offer “Chapter” presentations and networking events; expand Westmont Connection with faculty input to identify key alumni. Initiate monthly meetings with the associate director of alumni relations for collaborative programming; systematically report alumni involvement in CLP services.
   - **Admissions** - Offer orientation of CLP to admissions counselors; consider integration with mailings to prospective students; offer a workshop on *Choosing a Major* at Open Houses.
   - **Development** - Reciprocally, share data bases of external contacts, e.g. employers; “tag team” to Chamber of Commerce meetings and Business Fairs.
   - **Faculty** - Provide with a list of CLP resources for advising and class presentations; update frequently. Orient new faculty within their first semester.
   - **First-Year Programs** - Include a career component in the first-year experience. Collaborate with director to develop an integrated career and academic advising program; orient students and faculty. Document process and resources with an electronic website.
   - **Internships** - Is this program built on vocational theory? In addition to the Myers-Briggs workshop, consider collaborations which will strengthen the overall experiential education of students, e.g. Job and Internship Fairs.
• **Parents** - Routinely communicate CLP initiatives through the parents' newsletter; include them in Westmont Connection; target parents for recruitment initiatives. Offer an *Introduction to Career Planning* workshop during Parents' Weekend to educate them about the career planning process related to the college experience.

• **Residence Life** - Orient/train RA & RD staff; offer programs/workshops in residence halls.

• **Student Leaders** - solicit their input; develop a student advisory committee; build on the work of the Transitions Council to develop programming for first-year and senior students. (Consider the work of John Gardner and his book, *The Senior Year Experience*.)

6. **Integrate vocation throughout the curriculum**
Timing appears to be favorable for this discussion. Explore the tension between the “classic liberal arts” and the vocational interests of students. Work with the provost and chaplain to consider existing mechanisms for creating a campus climate that views vocation as an overarching institutional goal. Specifically, consider curricular enhancements for first-year courses, senior seminars/capstones, and experiential education. Partner with the Kinesiology department to present their integrated model to other departments.

7. **Establish and implement a marketing plan**
Review the decision to use the Student Services on-line newsletter as a primary communication tool. (Students indicated that they did not read it.) Invite student input into developing a marketing plan. Consider first-year through senior needs. Could an artistic student be “hired” to develop a brochure? Is there a class project that relates to this initiative? Also, consider specific services such as marketing the Career Planning Class prior to registration.

8. **Reconsider the CLP office location**
Consider a more centralized, accessible location which is along a main student traffic area rather than a “scheduled destination.” Develop larger, more user-friendly student work spaces and areas for programming with alumni and employers. If possible, work with long-range facility plans to re-align with other functions of the student affairs division.

9. **Develop a systematic plan to reach all students**
Consider the needs of all disciplines. Build on the excellent *Careers In ...* series. Collaborate with faculty and alumni. Invite seniors to Young Alumni networking events.

10. **Review services to special populations**
Are there special career-related needs for “pockets” of the Westmont community? Consider females, international students, American racial and ethnic minorities, non-traditionals, commuters, disabled, and honors students. Enrich Westmont Connection with speakers for special interest groups. Develop resources such as website linkages.

11. **Strengthen internship program**
Hire a full-time Internship Coordinator or create a second half-time co-director position supervised by CLP.

12. **Consider “position” of CLP within the College**
The director is well-respected, articulate and bright. Are there key campus-wide committees on which he should serve (such as his current role on the Transitions Council)? With his understanding of the job-hunting process and the campus culture, should he serve (or consult) with key search committees?
X. CONCLUSIONS
In summary, Westmont's Career and Life Planning function has many strong features. A dedicated and competent professional staff, broad institutional support—both on a philosophical and operational level—strong counseling services, and some effective educational programming were evident from our review. It is our hope that this report, though limited in its scope, will serve to stimulate new strategies for service delivery and collaboration with the academic disciplines. As Westmont seeks to produce graduates equipped to "function as leaders and servants in society," it is crucial that Career and Life Planning seek new partnerships and methods for fulfilling its educational objectives in the next decade. We are confident that this is possible.
MISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF CAREER AND LIFE PLANNING

MISSION

Our mission is to help students (1) better understand who God has made them to be, (2) discover the opportunities in our world to live out their uniqueness, and (3) discern the variety of ways those two dimensions can come together through meaningful career and life choices.

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide students with a Biblical framework for understanding the dimensions of work, career, life planning, and decision-making in their lives.

2. To guide students through a process of self-assessment that helps them clarify their interests, values, personality characteristics and skills.

3. To help students understand and value the importance of a liberal arts education.

4. To equip students with the skills to find a job.

5. To train students in the process of good decision-making.

6. To encourage students in experiential learning opportunities including internships, summer employment, volunteering and service work, etc.

7. To provide students with information to help them in decision-making, and to train them in the information-gathering process.

8. To provide the service of part-time and full-time job listings.

9. To cultivate relationships with the employment community (camps, ministry/service, profit and non-profit) for job development and on-campus recruitment.

10. To develop cooperative strategies with faculty, staff and students to integrate career and life planning into the curricular and co-curricular programs of the college.

11. To provide services to alumni including reference files, and career counseling and assessment.

12. To provide resources, in our office and on our website, to help students and alumni with their career, graduate school, and life planning.

13. To provide programming that focuses on the job search, graduate school, and career exploration process.
In November 2000, the Career and Life Planning program was evaluated over a two day period by Jeanne Back, Associate Director of Career Services at Biola University and Deborah Hoffman, Director of Career Development at Messiah College. Extensive preparation for their visit involved a full internal review by Director Dana Alexander (using the National Association of Colleges and Employers Professional Standards for College and University Career Services Workbook), and a careful reading on the part of the evaluators of all materials, handouts, publicity, etc. from the department. The review took two full days and involved interviews with students, faculty, alumni, administrators and staff.

In March 2001, the Career and Life Planning staff met for a full day to process the Professional Peer Review of our program. The following are areas focused on by the report. Clearly, a process such as this is only as valuable as the significant consideration -- and ultimately change -- which results from it. The Career and Life Planning Staff have determined specific goals resulting from the review.

1. **Planning** – the issue of strategic and systematic planning was pinpointed as a weakness, including a “lack of vision,” and a “spontaneous” rather than a thoughtfully processed style (3). The recommendation was for a “systematic process of planning that will allow all team members to ‘own’ the program” (3), and a broadening of the goal setting and evaluation process (23).

**Comment:** This is and has been an area of perceived weakness for a long time. The main way I hope to address this will be through periodic but consistent meetings with a colleague who will provide input and direction to improve the planning process.

2. **Place** – Probably one of the more surprising results from the review was the perception of students (and alums) of our location and set-up as poorly situated, and at least to some degree, unappealing and uninviting. We were rated as “hard to find” (17), and seen by some as “intimidating,” “hidden,” and “cold” (19). No students or alums reported our location as “helpful” (21). This was very useful for us as we began to see through their “eyes” and understand why they would have this perception, and as we look to address some of the suggestions for improvement in the report (24).

**Comment:** As a staff we are strategizing ways to make improvements here through better signage, and the removal of file cabinets in front of our office, replacing them with comfortable chairs or sofas to provide a more hospitable environment. We are also sending out many more voicemails notifying students
of information we have available (e.g., we had 25 leftover magazines for prospective teachers that were all taken after our announcement) and see our traffic increasing as a result.

3. **Partnering** - The importance of collaboration (especially with faculty, some other administrative offices [i.e., Alumni and Parent Relations] and other student life staff members) was mentioned many times in the report and is one of my main goals. An opportunity here with the new Campus Pastor was suggested since he has written on the subject of discerning God’s will (3, 8). The logical partnering potential with the Director of First Year Programs was also pointed out (7,23). Although collaboration with faculty has been ongoing, it was recommended that C&LP “step up’ towards more collaborative methods” (4). A list of the various “partners” laid out the points of interface and ways to collaborate (23).

**Comment:** As a staff we are continually looking for ways to enhance and increase our collaboration with the varied constituencies of Westmont. The report focused more light on the subject and gives us some new directions to consider. Talks have been initiated with the Director of First Year Programs and plans are underway to increase the Campus Pastor’s role in programming. Increased contact with the alumni office has already begun.

4. **Programming/Services** - While programming has grown and developed in each of the last few years and is a strength of our department (10), one area in the services category came in for attention (12), and that is the credential file service we provide. It is time consuming, requires substantial storage, and seems logistically questionable (would it not make more sense for the teaching program to handle and store teacher files and the biology department, medical school files?).

**Comment:** In the coming year I would like to explore the possibility of shifting the credential file system to the logical departments.

5. **Publicity** – As the report states, “marketing is a universal problem for most career centers” (12), and ours is no exception. While I sense we are making progress with students, the report also mentioned the importance of an “increase of information” to faculty (16). Marketing to faculty may be one of the most effective ways of marketing to students because of their significant influence. The report points to a need for creative materials that students will look at and read and suggests hiring students to develop these. The need for marketing the Career and Life Planning Course was also mentioned (17).

**Comment:** Marketing to faculty is very important and requires some new initiatives (a faculty forum presentation this year was a good beginning).
Specifically, we will seek to meet with faculty at their division meetings to describe what we have to offer both students and them. Using creative students to design publicity is something we have begun with success and intend to continue. We have committed to being a presence in the Dining Commons once a month with materials, publicity, career exercises, etc.

6. **Purpose** – The report pointed to the need for our mission statement to be more visible (13), and perhaps re-visited more often with C&LP staff to “build ownership” (23).

**Comment:** In processing this with staff there was agreement that our mission statement is strong and articulate, but not something we talk about often. Reviewing it periodically would be helpful to address the report’s concerns. Also, in our interactions with the various constituencies, it could be made more explicit.

7. **People** – The report was quite complimentary of the C&LP staff, but also offered encouragement for the director to more frequently celebrate “individual and team success” (10), and have more frequent one-on-one meetings (13). It pointed to some dissatisfaction on the part of the administrative assistant regarding the limitations of her position (13).

**Comment:** The suggestions here are well taken and coincide with some initiatives we are currently taking. We will soon be going through a thorough examination of all the roles and responsibilities that each of has in the department, with an eye toward some possible shifts and changes that will provide both a better “fit” for each person and greater efficiency. This speaks to the recommendation of the report to “review staff job descriptions” (23). More frequent individual meetings will also be scheduled next year.

8. **Performance** – The effective evaluation of staff has been an institutional challenge at Westmont and no less so in Career and Life Planning. Many approaches have been taken over the years, from very specific and proscribed to loose and open-ended. My approach has been to encourage staff to make goals for each year and then evaluate those at the end of the year. The report states that this process “does not seem to be meaningful” (13), and also suggests that mid-year evaluations would be helpful.

**Comment:** Discussion with staff would indicate that the evaluation critique is perhaps an over-statement, though they would concur that more frequent feedback (and praise!) would be appreciated and useful. This is something I will work on.
9. **Proactive Engagement** - The report at several point indicates a need for the director (and staff) to take more initiative in making an impact on the community. This is a perception of several administrators -- including the provost and Vice President for Student Life (6). Although we are seen as effective, there is also the feeling that we could be more active and involved on a wider scale.

**Comment:** I take this very seriously and am seeking ways to have more visibility and impact on the campus. A recent presentation to the faculty was a good beginning, but there are other strategies I would like to pursue, including meeting with departments to discuss ways we can be of assistance to them (and to let them know what we offer). We have made excellent progress in the number of collaborative events we have initiated, and we look to continue in that way. We have reached out to new faculty when they first arrive (with limited success), but need to find more effective ways to engage them. I have begun discussion with some faculty about ways to bring career-related issues to students in the context of their major, and look for that to develop further.

10. **Preparation of Students** - One of the central goals of our program is the preparation of students (especially Seniors), for "life after Westmont." In a real sense, all that we do is toward that end. The report addresses the fact that "students and alumni felt ill-equipped to translate their liberal arts education into entry level occupational choices that they needed to make at graduation and in the early years after Westmont" (3). The challenge remains a big one. Related to this is the reports comment that the "internship program definitely needs to be revisited" (7) based on some the struggles and inadequate staff time this year in that area.

**Comment:** I am encouraged by the increase in educational programs we have initiated this year and by the increase in attendance as well. Interestingly, however, many attendees are not seniors. Students seem to be concerned about their futures earlier than in the past. We are intending to have more involvement with student leaders (especially class presidents) which had some modest success this year, so that we can more effectively reach students at their different levels of need. Transition chapels are an excellent example of how that can work. I am also encouraged by the progress made in the internship program so that the position will involve more hours next year. The current Director made some excellent contributions and laid out a good direction for the program.

**SPECIFIC GOALS AND PLANS OF ACTION**
1. Initiate with a colleague from another school to assist our staff with brainstorming and planning.
2. Completely reconfigure our outer office to make it more usable and appealing.
3. Initiate focus groups with students once a month to better gage their needs and concerns.
4. Be a presence once a month in the dining commons with tables of materials, creative and fun career exercises, resume help, etc.
5. Go to division meetings to present our program to faculty.
6. Utilize the Campus Pastor with Seniors at the beginning of the year with a barbecue focusing on vocation and calling, and at the end of the year with a dessert focusing on a “sending out,” with confidence.
7. Initiate discussion with the Director of First Year Programs on collaboration possibilities.
8. Continue to expand our presence in the residence halls with collaborative programming with Resident Directors.
9. Enlist creative students to enhance our materials and make them more appealing.
Evaluation Expenses  
Career and Life Planning  
November 19-21, 2000

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airfare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deb Hoffman</td>
<td>Deb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Certificates for students &amp; alums in focus groups</td>
<td>C&amp;LP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuneration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanne</td>
<td>Jeanne</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deb</td>
<td>Deb</td>
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**TOTAL** $2363.29