



To: Academic Senate  
From: Global Education Office and Off-Campus Programs Committee  
RE: Updates on Global Education 2020-21  
Date: April 9, 2021

As a result of the COVID pandemic, all *Westmont in* programs abroad have been cancelled through the academic year 2021-22. We do anticipate resuming programs in Mayterm 2022 and on a limited basis in 2022-23.

During this time, the Global Education Office and the Off-Campus Programs (OCP) Committee have been making plans for the resumption of programs, enhancing faculty development opportunities, refining policies and procedures, and beginning some program review and assessment projects. Some details are provided below.

- **Upcoming Programs**

- ***Mayterm 2022***

- The OCP Committee reviewed the proposals for programs that had been approved for Mayterm 2020 and 2021 and recommends that they be approved to run in Mayterm 2022 as their enrollment allows.

- Research in Exercise Science & Advanced Anatomy (Afman)
    - International Business, Singapore (Bradford)
    - London Theater (Delaney)
    - Peace and Conflict, Northern Ireland (Dunn)
    - India (Farhadian)
    - Jerusalem University College (Richter)

- ***Academic Year 2022-23***

- The decision was made in spring 2020 that Westmont semester programs would resume in Fall 2022, assuming conditions related to the pandemic allow this. As we determine what programs to run when we return to normal operations, we are considering a number of factors, including: overall campus enrollment, the availability of program leaders, and the impact that cancellations in 2020-21 and 2021-22 had on students' curricular options.

Programs recommended for 2022-23 by the OCP Committee and the Director of Global Education are:

**Fall:** England Semester, Westmont in Mexico, Global Health Uganda  
**Spring:** Westmont in Cairo

- **Faculty development opportunities;**

For a range of reasons, including the need for increased attention to safety and security, the changing needs of today's students, and greater awareness of the importance of attending to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, we are working to enhance the professional development we provide to faculty who will be leading our programs. Some key topics include:

- Students' mental health needs;
- Serving students with disabilities;
- Safety and security;
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Budget training for new leaders.

We are partnering with staff in Student Life, CAPS, and Risk Management, and drawing on resources from some of the national study abroad professional organizations, including the Forum on Education Abroad.

- **Reviewing and refreshing key policies and procedures;**

Even in ordinary times, we in the Global Education Office are always reviewing and refining policies related to our study-abroad programs. The pause in programs is giving us an opportunity to invest additional time in that process this year.

### **Program Staffing**

***History and Background*** Westmont's approach to semester-long programs is unusual in the world of higher education. For our programs outside the U.S., we have a long history of small teams of faculty taking a semester away from their campus responsibilities to lead programs. Many schools that run a particular program every year have faculty whose sole assignment for the institution is directing the program. Some programs have permanent staff on site and bring campus faculty for a few weeks of a term to offer an intensive course or to teach as a guest instructor for a few weeks of a semester-long course.

Our approach to staffing (relying primarily on campus faculty to take a semester away to direct a program) brings some distinctive strengths to our programs. It fosters continuity between campus and global programs; it allows program directors to connect with their students before and after the semester to extend the learning and the relationships; and it has allowed many faculty to contribute to our global programs and enhance their own professional and personal development.

Our approach also brings some challenges. It takes faculty away from their departments for a semester, requiring adjunct replacements and additional work by the faculty remaining on campus. It requires regular training of new program directors. Additionally, our approach creates some complexities in managing the needs of a faculty director's family.

As one strategy for responding to those needs, as well as for managing costs of programs, we have often structured our leadership teams to include a spouse of a faculty member who could play a role in the program—either as support staff or as an instructor.

A number of aspects of the changing world of higher education and global travel are causing us to review some of our leadership selection and training policies and protocols, particularly for semester-long programs. Spending 15 weeks, 24/7 with students in unfamiliar, often stressful contexts has become more complicated than it was 30 years ago when our current practices initially took shape. Some of the factors contributing to that complexity include the increasing mental health needs of students, the changing expectations of families, and the increasing intensity of managing travel and regulatory risk.

***Refinements to Leadership Teams*** A number of incidents on programs over the past five years have highlighted the value of having leadership teams comprised of several faculty or professional staff who can complement one another and bring a range of skills and perspectives to the team. In particular, we have seen the value of teams that include leaders who don't all come from the same family. Such teams give students the benefit of multiple perspectives in their coursework and their spiritual and social needs, and create a network of supportive adults with different strengths.

Leadership teams with this kind of diversity also provide support for the leaders that goes beyond what a spouse can provide. Non-family members can step in when families have medical or other personal burdens. They can help one another see a challenge or a crisis with a range of perspectives.

We have decided that going forward, the College's new policy is that semester programs run by married couples or family members will need to have a non-family member on the leadership team as an equal partner, in either a faculty role or a professional staff role.

This refinement will expand opportunities for students to speak with program leaders about concerns without having to worry about the leaders' marital or family ties. It will also provide a third party observer or witness in case concerns are raised by students, providing more protection for the leaders. The additional leader will ensure that there are adequate personnel to manage crises (such as leaders' health, students' health, etc.). The additional team member can share the load, provide a couple or family members some occasional relief, and offer valuable perspective and counsel.

The additional leader should be an equal partner, but the nature of his or her duties can vary depending on the program and the need. That person can be a Westmont employee, former Westmont staff or faculty member, or an employee of another college or organization. The individual may be someone who resides on site where the program occurs (if it is based in a single location) or someone who travels with the program over the semester.

- **Some Program Review and Assessment Projects**

***Racial Climate on Programs*** As we continue to have conversations about racial equity and climate in the academic program generally, we will be taking this pause in our programming to turn our attention to those topics on global programs specifically.

***Assessment of Student Learning*** Westmont will be submitting an interim report to the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) on November 1. One item the letter must address is Westmont's "global awareness goals including plans for realizing each goal within the context of the college's mission and plans to ensure that students achieve these goals at our near graduation."

The OCP Committee and several past and future program directors will be helping to create a plan for assessing students' learning on our study-abroad programs.

### **Looking Ahead in Global Education**

In August 2016, Cynthia Toms, who had been serving as Director of Global Education, moved into a full-time faculty position in Kinesiology. Mark Sargent and I stepped in to act as co-directors of Global Education on an interim basis while we conducted a search in 2016-17 for a permanent director. When that search failed and we faced some budget challenges the following year, we made the decision to continue as interim co-directors, keeping those responsibilities on top of our other work.

Five years later, I continue to serve as the interim director. Westmont's global programs are a key feature of our curriculum, one that strengthens our ability to attract students to the college. To continue Westmont's tradition of strong, educationally rich study abroad opportunities that are closely integrated with the rest of our liberal arts curriculum, it would be in our best interests to hire a full-time director with expertise in this area. I encourage the Academic Senate and the next provost to pursue the goal of hiring someone to take on the role permanently and in a full-time capacity.

Patti Hunter  
Interim Director of Global Education

### ***Off-Campus Programs Committee 2020-21:***

Gregg Afman  
Dinora Cardoso  
Michelle Hardley  
Patti Hunter (chair)  
Rebecca McNamara  
Kim Notehelfer (Assistant Director of Global Education)