



# WESTMONT

## Faculty Position Request Form

(Used for requesting a new faculty position or filling a vacant position)

Department: **Sociology & Anthropology**

Submitted by: **Felicia Song, Interim Department Chair**

Date: **April 26, 2022**

Nature of request:

This is a request for a new faculty position (addition) in the department.

This is a request to fill a vacancy.

Who is the faculty member leaving or retiring? **Dr. Serah Shani left August 2021**

Rationale: On a separate page, please briefly describe the curricular need for this faculty position, including benefit to the department if the position is filled and the negative impact if it is not.

Additional documents needed:

- (a) Please complete the table on the next page listing courses the person will teach and the enrollment in these courses for the past 3 years. Also, identify any new courses the department hopes to offer if this position is filled.
- (b) Position job description

Please submit materials to the Provost's Office.

## **Rationale for Faculty Position Request**

**Background:** Late last summer August 2021, Dr. Serah Shani announced her intention to move and take a position in New York City allowing her greater proximity to her research subjects and collaborators. Dr. Shani had been the sole anthropologist in our department and the college. She had been hired to begin teaching in the Fall of 2016 and during her years of teaching here had successfully *increased* the enrollment in three key courses in our department's curriculum:

- AN001- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- AN115 - Peoples & Cultures
- AN145 - Culture Theory

Each of these courses functions as a *required course* within the Cross-Cultural Track of the department's curriculum (one of the three existing tracks for Sociology majors) AND helps to fulfill the college's GE requirements as follows:

- AN001 - Introduction to Cultural Anthropology fulfills Understanding Society GE
- AN115 - Peoples & Cultures fulfills Thinking Globally GE
- AN145 - Culture Theory fulfills Writing/Speech Intensive GE

Dr. Shani not only shared the benefits of an anthropological perspective with students in our department, but also shared her knowledge, research expertise and lived experience as a female scholar from Kenya to the wider college community.

Her departure was an unexpected and significant loss to the department. As a Sociology and Anthropology department, we have spent this academic year completing a multi-year process of significant curriculum revision which has been approved by the Academic Senate.

*In our discussion and completion of this curriculum revision, we renewed our commitment to valuing and keeping the discipline of Anthropology as a distinctive feature of our department. We are excited to pursue the hiring of an anthropologist to not only serve our department's needs, but also to contribute an important voice and beneficial source of expertise to Westmont. This is especially important given our college's current strategic priorities in innovative and interdisciplinary programming that prepares students for meaningful engagement of local-global connections and informed cross-cultural and transnational participation.*

**Existing Departmental / College Curricular Needs:** The replacement tenure-track faculty position we request is necessary in order to cover the following departmental and college needs:

(1) The Cross-Cultural Track for Sociology majors consists of a core set of courses which include three required anthropology courses to be taught by this faculty member:

- AN001- Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
- AN115 - Peoples & Cultures
- AN145 - Culture Theory

If this position is filled, we will be able to maintain the integrity of an important track that *approximately one-quarter* of our majors commit to pursuing and continue offering these three required courses, each of which have had very healthy enrollments in the past four years (please see supplemental table for data).

(2) Also, as mentioned in the “Background” section, each of these courses fulfills a significant General Education requirement for our majors and other students in the college.

Furthermore, students *outside* of the department who have an interest in the global area of specialization that our anthropologist possesses often find their way to taking AN115 Peoples & Cultures which is a course that allows the faculty member to focus on their specific area of expertise (for example, past anthropology faculty members taught this course with a focus on Latin America. Dr. Shani taught this course with a focus on Africa). The presence of a faculty member with cross-cultural training and/or global experience has consistently drawn interested students to our department and our courses.

(3) Elective offerings: in past years, topical courses such as cross-cultural communication, global inequality and development, anthropology of immigration, and anthropology of education have also served not only our department, but also drawn non-majors – especially those who have experienced the off-campus programs and/or have their own lived experiences related to these topical courses.

*If this position is filled*, majors and non-majors alike will benefit from a scholar who can wisely prepare them for the cross-cultural and global dynamics students increasingly face, including courses available in the GE curriculum as well as relevant topical electives that activate students’ awareness of how they are situated in the world.

*If this position is not filled*, we will no longer be able to maintain the cross-cultural track or offer any courses with an anthropological perspective. This will impact not only our department’s majors, but also prove to be detrimental to the breadth of courses available for students seeking to fulfill general education requirements.

**Proposed Contribution to strategic priorities and interdisciplinary frontiers of the college:**

The department is very excited to envision this replacement position as an opportunity to help contribute to (1) the college’s new accelerated BS program in Nursing, (2) prospective community-based service-learning opportunities in the new Westmont Downtown space, and (3) the design of the potential Medical Humanities program.

For these reasons, we intend to pursue a candidate trained in Medical Anthropology, a thriving area in the discipline of Anthropology that is inherently set in conversation with public health, global health, and other applied fields in health services. We envision a tenure-track line that would be a  $\frac{2}{3}$  position dedicated to the Sociology and Anthropology Department, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  position dedicated to the college’s existing and prospective programs related to nursing, medical humanities, and/or community-based health services. We have already begun promising conversations with Rick Ostrander and Eileen McMahon-McQuade about the prospects of hiring

someone capable of contributing to areas they are each pursuing. Both have expressed support in this search.

Furthermore, in our investigation into what Westmont's key peer institutions (both in California and in the CCCU) offer by way of anthropology, we have found that *no other department* houses a medical anthropologist. We believe that hiring someone with this training could become a distinctive feature that draws prospective students to our college.

***In all, the faculty of the Sociology and Anthropology Department are very excited about pursuing a medical anthropologist capable of making two key contributions: first, supporting existing departmental and college-wide curricular needs, and second, providing substantive expertise in building out new programs and/or initiatives that serve the strategic priorities of the college.***

## Faculty Position Supporting Documentation

### Enrollment in key courses during the past 4 years (During Dr. Serah Shani's tenure here at Westmont)

| Dept/Cr<br>Num.   |  | Fall<br>2017              | Spring<br>2018 | Fall<br>2018 | Spring<br>2019          | Fall<br>2019 | Spring<br>2020 |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| AN001             | Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (max 30) | 12 / 30<br>(two sections) | 25             | 19           | 13/21<br>(two sections) | 24           | 28             |
| AN115             | Peoples & Cultures                             | 11                        |                | 15           |                         | 15           |                |
| AN145             | Culture Theory                                 |                           | 12             |              | 11                      |              | 13             |
|                   |  |                           |                |              |                         |              |                |
|                   |  | Fall<br>2020              | Spring<br>2021 |              |                         |              |                |
| AN001             | Introduction to Cultural Anthropology          | 29                        | 31             |              |                         |              |                |
| AN115             | Peoples & Cultures                             | 22                        |                |              |                         |              |                |
| AN145             | Culture Theory                                 |                           | 18             |              |                         |              |                |
|                   |  |                           |                |              |                         |              |                |
| <b>New Course</b> | Medical Anthropology                           |                           |                |              |                         |              |                |
|                   |  |                           |                |              |                         |              |                |