



Hello New Students,

The words pivot, lean in, and adapt get used a lot these days. It makes me think of a dancer doing a pirouette. When it's done gracefully by a seasoned ballet dancer, it's beautiful. When a non-dancer tries the same thing, we see all kinds of awkwardness. I suspect that most of the time when you and we have had to pivot in the recent past, it has felt like we're the non-dancer, trying something new, a pirouette we've never done. We're beginners at doing life in a global pandemic or starting college with COVID adaptations. It's hard, awkward and frustrating. But sometimes, every once in a while, we do the turn a little better. We may not like it, but we're developing adaptability and a tolerance for ambiguity. These are good life skills that will serve us well now as well as later.

This year's Orientation verse is Zechariah 4:6: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord Almighty." What a fitting verse for this global season we're in. God will strengthen us in this season of adaptability and we'll grow as a people of God, not by our own prowess, power or might but by the Spirit of God - in every move, every pivot, at every turn. May that be true for Westmont as a community and for each of us individually.

We're SO impressed by your patience and resilience in this season of change that has required much adaptation. You're already demonstrating that you're Westmont Strong. We're most grateful.

We want to share more detail on your New Student Orientation this fall. This year's Orientation has 4 components:

- 1. Virtual Platforms:** These platforms provide key information about college resources and people. These include the Orientation Canvas Course, the [Lunch and Learn Series](#), and your virtual academic advising appointment. You can expect to hear from your academic advisor by Aug. 18 regarding the date and time of your advising meeting.
- 2. Virtual Orientation:** This program will take place August 27-30 and is designed to help welcome you to Westmont and meet new students, faculty, and staff. The program will begin with a Welcome Session on Thursday, August 27th at 3pm and will also include small group meetings, the kickoff to your first year seminar, student organization breakout sessions and much more. For the full schedule visit the [Westmont Community Guide App](#) and check back regularly as new sessions may be added.
- 3. First Year Seminar:** Every new student will be signed up for a first year seminar course with a small group of fellow students. The theme of these seminars is STORY. We each have a story and we're part of a larger story - one that shapes the course of our lives. Explore your story – learn the stories of those in your new community – and accept the challenge of welcoming God's story in your life in new ways. These small seminars build clusters of community with engaging faculty members and students from your residence hall. Together, you'll begin to chart the course of your Westmont experience and walk together through this unique transition period. All new students will participate in the first four seminar gatherings and have the option of continuing on for three additional course sessions to earn a unit of academic credit.
- 4. In Person Orientation:** Once the county approves Westmont to open for in person instruction new students will be invited to participate in an on-campus Orientation weekend including dessert with President Beebe, Soul Stations, and plenty of opportunities to become acquainted with the campus, people and key resources. These in person sessions are tentatively scheduled for September 11-13, September 18-20, & September 25-27, however registration will not begin until county approval is confirmed. If county

approval is delayed we may offer one in person Orientation session to all new students prior to the start of classes on the weekend of September 25-27.

Thanks to those of you who have tuned into the call-ins with President Beebe and the Executive Team and who continue to check the website for updates. For those who missed the call, be sure to read through our FAQ below that addresses many of the topics covered on the call. We value that you're keeping in touch and seeking out the opportunities to stay up to date. The Orientation Team is eager to welcome you in both the virtual and in person orientation sessions. We're praying for you and your transition to Westmont. Don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Angela D'Amour '01

Dean of Student Engagement & Director of the 2020 Orientation Team

NEW STUDENTS FAQs

COVID-19 THOUGHT IT WAS STRONG, BUT IT HAS UNDERESTIMATED THE WILL OF THE WARRIOR.

COVID-19

1. When can Westmont have in-person learning so we can return to campus?

Westmont is planning to repopulate and provide in-person learning on Monday, September 28. Remote learning begins on Monday, August 31.

2. Will Westmont require COVID-19 testing in the fall?

Yes, testing will be conducted, and you'll receive more information prior to repopulating as we learn about all the options that meet county guidelines.

3. How will Westmont enforce wearing face coverings or masks, social distancing and avoiding large groups of students when we're on campus?

We urge and encourage everyone to practice all the safety protocols required by the state and county to keep every member of our community safe and healthy. We want to be responsible citizens as we engage with local Santa Barbara residents and our neighbors.

4. Do students have to wear a mask at all times?

Yes. Please review the Student Life safety information on the COVID-19 website. You'll have some flexibility within your pod, which includes your residence hall room and roommate.

5. Whom can I contact with questions about my Covid-19 concerns?

Please contact Jason Tavarez, our director of institutional resilience, at jtavarez@westmont.edu. View a [special video message](#) from him addressing safety protocols and concerns related to the pandemic.

ORIENTATION

6. What does orientation look like for fall?

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Continue to check the website for updates. We value that you are keeping in touch and seeking out the opportunities to stay up to date.

7. Will the academic workload be lightened during Orientation weekends?

Faculty are aware that disruptions and interruptions will occur as we shift from remote learning to in-person instruction. Each course will navigate differently, so please communicate with your professor.

8. Where do we sign up or request a specific weekend?

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You can expect to hear more about this soon. Please reach out to stulife@westmont.edu for more information.

Can we be assigned the third weekend since we live out of state and would like to only fly out once?

Please reach out to stulife@westmont.edu to request the third weekend.

9. Will there be activities for parents on orientation weekends?

Yes. Orientation for parents begins virtually and in-person for various activities in late August. Please connect with Parent Relations at parents@westmont.edu for specific programming and events.

What if I’m not comfortable coming back to campus?

Please connect with the Provost’s Office at provost@westmont.edu to learn about your options related to remote learning that can be extended through the fall semester.

RESIDENCE LIFE

10. When can we ship our personal belongings to campus from out of state for our residence rooms?

You'll receive more information about shipping your belongings in the coming days.

11. If we had plane tickets and are still planning to come August 27, can we meet the academic advisor?

Yes! You can meet with an advisor and your professors. Please email visit@westmont.edu to set up a concierge-style visit and you will also be able to see your residence hall room!

12. Can we only see the room or can we also store things there (out of state)?

At this time, you're not allowed to leave belongings in the residence halls, but we are glad you can see your room and start to scope it out for what you may want to bring with you.

ACADEMICS

13. How will labs work?

Since lab content and learning outcomes are so different between classes, you will need to reach out to your individual instructors about their plans for the online portion of their lab. Some will be using online lab simulations and videos. Others will be conducting experiments themselves and students will be doing a lot of experimental design and data analysis. Still others will be analyzing and interpreting large data-sets generated by students from previous semesters.

14. How will online classes work for those in other time zones (non-PDT)?

Faculty will certainly be aware that students in different time zones will face some challenges engaging in classes remotely during sessions that occur synchronously, and they will work with you to support you through those challenges. It won't always be possible to adjust lesson plans to accommodate your time zone, but stay in close communication with each of your professors about issues you're facing.

15. Can I do pass/no pass for my online classes?

The curriculum committee will review the pass/no credit option this fall once we know how long the period of remote learning will be.

16. How can I get my textbooks?

The bookstore will be shipping textbooks and packets of readings to all students at their homes. Students can also request to pick-up their books in person at the bookstore with pre-arranged requests. Please contact the bookstore for more information.

17. What will student academic support (tutoring, academic advising) look like this fall?

Throughout the semester, we'll continue to provide all the key academic support services. Our student success efforts will continue, and we've hired some student success coaches. The Office of Disability Services and the Writers' Corner have arranged for remote appointments, the tutoring program will continue, and some remote tutoring sessions will occur. We've tried to align our tutoring opportunities with particular courses, especially in the general education program, but there'll be other opportunities for students who seek that assistance to get it. We're preparing for a remote beginning, but we want to make sure the first month is distinguished by a positive Westmont experience, and we look forward to serving you in this way.

FALL EXPENSES AND COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID ADJUSTMENTS

18. Will Westmont provide discounted tuition for online classes?

Students will not be charged room and board for the weeks in which the college is unable to populate campus. To reflect this change on the student bills, the full semester's room and board charges will still be shown, and then a credit will be applied to reduce those charges for the number of weeks of remote education. The initial credit will reflect the four weeks between the start of the semester on August 31 and the intended repopulation date of September 28.

19. How will my financial aid reflect the change of going remote for four weeks?

Financial aid to students is awarded based on the total cost of attendance. With the cost of the fall semester now less than expected due to lower room and board charges, financial aid will also be adjusted to the extent that a student's costs are covered with gift aid. In no instance will financial aid be reduced more than the amount of the reduction in the room and board charges, and in nearly every case, students will pay less for the fall semester. The adjustments to the room and board charges and financial aid will be complete and available for you to see on your bill online by the end of the day on Tuesday, August 18.

20. Will the meal plan be prorated for the time that we are not on campus?

Yes, room and board costs will be adjusted for the weeks remote learning will take place. Students should check their student account for specific adjustments and reach out to Financial Aid with any questions.