Case Statement for The Center for Applied Technology at Westmont College

Mission
Westmont College's Center for Applied Technology is dedicated to enhancing relationships within and outside the Westmont community through the innovative use of technology. This mission is actualized, in large part, through the Center's core program: CATLab.

What is the Center for Applied Technology?
The Center for Applied Technology at Westmont College is a student-centric, pioneering program dedicated to improving the business infrastructure of Westmont College through technological innovation. At the core of this program sits CATLab, a 15-week summer program composed of a diverse team of undergraduate student developers, designers, artists, and thinkers from Westmont College, as well as supporting staff members, who work in tandem to improve the technological tools supporting Westmont's business infrastructure. This is accomplished through the use of modern platforms, such as Salesforce, and computer science skills. During their time with CATLab, students not only complete Salesforce training that allows them to develop key technical skills, such as learning new coding languages, but they also hone interpersonal and business presentation skills, learn team and project management skills, and receive real-world experience key to thriving in their future careers.

The CATLab was officially piloted during Summer 2018, when 7 student developers were hired to create software aimed at dramatically improving Westmont College's Advancement Services' systems for donor relations, donor tracking, fundraising, and gift processing. Since the enormous success of its pilot year, the CATLab has expanded to include 19 students of various backgrounds, major, and experience levels. It is hoped that through the continued expansion of the CATLab, the innovative solutions they develop will be utilized by Westmont to allow us to run more efficiently and to better meet the needs of our constituency in a way that serves our commitment to community.

Our Program
The CATLab is a professional development program that helps liberal-arts undergraduates be market-ready, certified Salesforce professionals by the time they graduate. Students who participate in this 15-week summer program represent a large variety of majors and backgrounds, including Data Analytics, Computer Science, Psychology, Art, English, Economics & Business, and Spanish. Three days a week, students, who are first certified as administrators and developers on the Salesforce platform, build Salesforce solutions that directly serve the business needs of Westmont. The remaining two days, students work on site as interns for innovative companies that align with their professional interests, seeking to deliver a tangible win over the duration of their stay. Throughout the entire duration of the summer, students are trained and certified as Salesforce administrators.

In recent years, Westmont College has faced difficulties with its existing software solutions. As a Christian liberal arts college committed to wide impact, the previously-disjointed nature of our business technological infrastructure hampered our ability to personally connect with not only donors interested in supporting Westmont's mission, but also with bright prospective students

seeking an education that could allow them to confidently engage the world around them. In short, we needed a tool that will respond to and realize Westmont's dreams and visions. Due to Westmont's small size and liberal arts nature, we realized our greatest resource is our students, particularly when it comes to developing an enterprise software system that will allow us to assist our community. As such, the dedication of the Center for Applied Technology in 2019 opened the door for Westmont to pursue its visions through the work of our students.

As a unique, student-driven professional development program, the CATLab does not solely provide training and certification in a classroom setting. Rather, students are invited into the core business operations of the college, pushing them to think deeply in order to create meaningful solutions to larger problems. The CATLab relies on its student developers to drive transformation by building a technological infrastructure that will help to fulfill the college's quest for innovation.

To date, the CATLab has made great strides towards realizing our goal of creating a single, integrated customer relationship management (CRM) system capable of transforming the way technology shapes the Westmont experience. In its first summer of operation, CATLab members created software for the college's advancement services that dramatically improved donor relations, donor tracking, fundraising, and gift processing systems. The following summer, student developers crafted software that allowed Westmont's admissions team to manage data efficiently in order to provide consistent, personalized interactions with prospective students. Currently, students are finalizing the web interface that will allow Westmont staff to process applications quickly and also completing a software package that will allow high school students around the globe to apply to Westmont through an intuitive, custom-built, web interface.

Program Components
The Center for Applied Technology consists of the previously-described summer program, the CATLab, and an end-of-summer event, the Enabling Impact Conference. This conference, which is co-hosted by Westmont and Salesforce, is centered on bringing together Salesforce senior leadership, Santa Barbara community leaders, and higher education administrators from around the country in order to provide a space in which higher education executives can engage with tech industry leaders on urgently relevant industry topics. This year, the conference will explore how business, education, and nonprofits can lead change by using technology to build stronger community connections.

Program Benefits
The novel structure of the CATLab program offers students numerous unique benefits. Tangibly, students receive Salesforce Administrator and Salesforce Developer certificates after completing courses through the online training program, Trailhead Academy. Additionally, participation in the CATLab program provides experience that is critical for landing their first internship or job, a piece that many young professionals lack. Through the CATLab experience, students develop team and project management skills, learn how to work within existing structures, are encouraged to problem solve and train peers, and develop the soft skills that are critical to students' professional development. The Enabling Impact Conference provides students with a platform to show off their work to the professional community. As a secondary benefit, the

Center for Applied Technology makes college more affordable for its participants, as students are paid and offered housing stipends for the duration of the program.

In addition to expanding the skillsets of its students, the CATLab is committed to cultivating the minds of students. Throughout the duration of the summer, a diverse range of faculty and outside speakers are invited to share their experiences, advice, and knowledge about aspects of both the technology and business industries. This type of engagement with both the Santa Barbara and wider community pushes students to see the world through the perspectives of others and to reflect on the information shared in a way that allows them to craft a well-informed and well-rounded worldview.

The CATLab also has far-reaching impact both locally and in the wider community. Local employers benefit from having a talented pool of student developers that they can draw from in order to develop solutions to real-world problems within their respective industries. Furthermore, CATLab serves local junior high and high school students through the Be a Multiplier Coding Day. This event, which is run by the CATLab's student developers, teaches students the basics of programming in Salesforce and allows them to create their own app. Ultimately, this unique event empowers local students to innovate within their own community, and invites them to become a part of the future CATLab community. Westmont's CATLab has served as a model for other colleges seeking to develop a student internship program aimed at benefiting their students and future employers, such as the University of California Santa Barbara.

How You Can Help
Currently, funding for the Center for Applied Technology is obtained by delaying full-time staff hires, delaying needed technology projects, or pooling student worker resources from multiple departments. This is an unsustainable model, and having to match our program budget to the amount of funds available forces us to turn away many highly-qualified students each summer. Please consider investing in Westmont College's Center for Applied Technology. Your contribution will provide the funds necessary for establishing a solid financial base for the continued expansion and existence of the CATLab and its commitment to serving both its students and the wider community, and will help to cover expenses related to the acquisition of a physical space out of which the program can be run. Ultimately, your support will allow for the realization of the greater goal, providing undergraduate students with the skills and training they'll need to become market-ready professionals who are capable of creating impactful change within their industry.