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**PRESIDENT**  
Mary Ellen Petrisko

July 18, 2016

Dr. Gayle Beebe  
President  
Westmont College  
955 La Paz Rd  
Santa Barbara, CA 93108-1089

Dear President Beebe:

This letter serves as formal notification and official record of action taken concerning Westmont College (Westmont) by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) at its meeting June 22-24, 2016. This action was taken after consideration of the report of the review team that conducted the Accreditation Visit to Westmont March 1-2, 2016. The Commission also reviewed the institutional report and exhibits submitted by the university prior to the Offsite Review (OSR), the supplemental materials requested by the team following the OSR, and the institution's May 11, 2016 response to the team report. The Commission appreciated the opportunity to discuss the review with you and your colleagues: Mark Sargent, Provost, Chris Call, Vice President for Administration and Planning, and William Wright, Associate Provost and Director of Institutional Research and Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Your comments were very helpful in informing the Commission's deliberations. The date of this action constitutes the effective date of the institution's reaffirmation with WSCUC.

### Actions

1. Receive the Accreditation Visit team report
2. Reaffirm accreditation for a period of ten years
3. Schedule the next reaffirmation review with the Offsite Review in fall 2025 and the Accreditation Visit in spring 2026
4. Schedule the Mid-Cycle Review in spring 2021
5. Schedule an Interim Report to be submitted by November 1, 2021 to address:
  - a. Westmont College'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 or near graduation.
  - b. Westmont College's diversity efforts including exploration, dialogue and reflection among members of the college's different constituencies; hiring; ongoing faculty and staff training, and a supportive learning environment.
  - c. Assessment of General Education (GE) and technology resources to support assessment and program review; disaggregation of student data; and, the connection between program review and strategic planning.
  - d. The ramifications of the enrollment cap, increasing diversity, a growing student population from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and a high cost base and price of attendance.

## **Commendations**

The Commission commends Westmont College in particular for the following:

1. The amount of time and effort it invested in the accreditation process and the openness with which it responded to questions and requests for additional materials.
2. The Westmont College mission, which is widely understood and foundational to the college's work, and the five planks—undergraduate, residential, Christian, liberal arts, and global—that define the meaning of the college's degrees and help shape the institution's learning outcomes (ILOs) and focus strategic planning.
3. A system of assessment and program review characterized by faculty ownership and engagement, collaboration, and resources and support.
4. Continually strengthening the articulation and collaboration between the faculty and student life personnel in addressing ILOs and assessment.
5. A highly qualified, committed and well-resourced faculty.
6. Financial stability reflected in balanced operating budgets, increased assets, and effective fundraising efforts.
7. The multi-constituency Futures Group that will survey the landscape of American Christian higher education in order to consider changes currently taking place and anticipated to occur. Westmont College's institutional leadership, Board of Trustees and Strategic Planning Committee will use this information to inform planning, program development and resource allocation.

## **Recommendations**

The Commission identifies the following areas for further development:

1. Work on the "Global Awareness and Diversity" ILO to more clearly define and delineate the two terms, providing clear descriptions of how each is to be realized within the context of the institutional mission. The requirements and expectations for the Global Awareness ILO should be systematically addressed to ensure this is an outcome for students graduating with a Westmont degree (CFR 1.4, 2.3).
2. Demonstration of an appropriate response to the increasing diversity in society through further exploration, open dialogue and reflection; ongoing faculty and staff training; attention to diversity in hiring; and, sustained attention to the development of a supportive learning environment. Specifically, the institution is encouraged to further enhance the competencies of the faculty and staff in working with students who are diverse in race, culture, beliefs, class, and political perspectives (CFR 1.4).
3. Continued implementation of the GE assessment program, which has just begun but has not yet fully matured. Westmont College should ensure the sustainability of assessment by committing resources to technology for collecting, storing, analyzing and managing assessment and program review data; disaggregating data by race, ethnicity, gender, and risk factors in order to track and improve student success; and facilitating the connection between program review and strategic planning (CFR 2.4, 4.4, 2.7, 4.2, 4.6).



4. Continued aggressive exploration of the ramifications involved in remaining true to mission while charting a course for a sustainable future in the context of: 1) an on-campus enrollment cap imposed by Santa Barbara County; 2) increasing socio-economic diversity in California; 3) a growing lower income population in California; and 4) a relatively high cost base and price of attendance. In addition, the college should continue to explore multiple strategies to address student need for financial aid and not solely rely on a fundraising/endowment solution (CFR 3.4).

In taking this action to reaffirm accreditation, the Commission confirms that Westmont College has addressed the three Core Commitments and has successfully completed the two-stage institutional review process conducted under the 2013 Standards of Accreditation. Between this action and the time of the next review for reaffirmation, the institution is encouraged to continue its progress, particularly with respect to student learning and success.

In accordance with Commission policy, a copy of this letter will be sent to the chair of the Westmont College Board of Trustees in one week. The Commission expects that the team report and this action letter will be posted in a readily accessible location on the Westmont website and widely disseminated throughout the institution to promote further engagement and improvement and to support the institution's response to the specific issues identified in these documents. The team report and the Commission's action letter will also be posted on the WSCUC website. If the institution wishes to respond to the Commission action on its own website, WSCUC will post a link to that response on the WSCUC website.

Finally, the Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the extensive work that Westmont College undertook in preparing for and supporting this accreditation review. WSCUC is committed to an accreditation process that adds value to institutions while contributing to public accountability, and we thank you for your continued support of this process. Please contact me if you have any questions about this letter or the action of the Commission.

Sincerely,



Mary Ellen Petrisko  
President

CC: William Ladusaw, Commission Chair  
William Wright, ALO  
Peter Thorrington, Board Chair  
Members of the Accreditation Visit team  
Maureen Maloney, WSCUC Staff Liaison