



Westminster College Institutional Self-Study

Prepared for the
Middle States Commission
on Higher Education
2011

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Eligibility Certification Statement	iii
Summary of Supplemental Resources	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction and Mission	1
Chapter 2: Institutional Resources	9
Chapter 3: Institutional Leadership and Integrity	23
Chapter 4: The Student Experience	51
Chapter 5: Faculty	68
Chapter 6: The Westminster Curriculum	79
Chapter 7: Assessment	93
Conclusion	102

Executive Summary

Overview

The Westminster community has anticipated its decennial self-study as a time for reflecting on our past and present so that the College is better prepared to move into a future that is marked by the realities of an uncertain economy and remarkable societal changes. Westminster moves toward this future under the leadership of a new president, Dr. Richard H. Dorman, who replaces Mr. R. Thomas Williamson, the president for 11 years. Concurrent with the self-study process, President Dorman has led a campus initiative to develop a strategic plan that was presented to and approved by the College's Board of Trustees in October 2009. The strategic planning process afforded the College additional opportunities to evaluate its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Ultimately, the goal was to use the self-study as a way to define a Westminster College experience that is distinctive from competitor institutions. That distinctiveness is reflected by the main theme of the College's new and nationally-recognized strategic plan, "[Advantage: Westminster.](#)" This advantage is embodied in the Westminster Way, which emphasizes the values of challenge, compassion, faith, learning, service, success, and tradition.

The scope of this self-study covers July 1, 2006, through October 15, 2010. In the time since Westminster's last special topics review (2001), the College has dedicated considerable attention and effort to addressing the recommendations from the Middle States Team Evaluation. Particular attention has been paid to the most substantial areas of need or weakness that were identified. Those areas included creating a comprehensive assessment plan; diversifying the composition of the Board of Trustees and the faculty; and improving library facilities and storage.

The Self-Study Process and Report

A comprehensive model was selected for this self-study to assess what the College does well and where improvements can be made. This model would identify how effectively the College has addressed concerns from the last self-study, what current strengths can be fostered, what new areas of strength should be developed, and how short- and long-term challenges could be navigated successfully. The comprehensive model complemented the College's new strategic plan, which also offers a broad institutional perspective.

The co-chairs, Jesse Mann (Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and Dean of the College) and Jamie McMinn (Associate Professor of Psychology), in consultation with the faculty and administration, decided that members of the Planning, Budgeting, and Institutional Resources Council (PBIRC) should serve as the [Self-Study Steering Committee](#), along with the chairs of the various working groups. The PBIRC was chosen because of its diverse composition of administrators, faculty members, staff, and students. The Steering Committee convened and received its charge in September 2008.

In consultation with the President, the Steering Committee, and the faculty, the co-chairs elected to use existing standing committees/councils to address the 14 Characteristics of Excellence. Because these committees/councils (hereafter referred to as working groups) have broad representation across campus and they perform the work that is addressed by the self-study standards, it made sense to rely on committees as working groups. This report addresses the Characteristics of Excellence, noting the College's strengths and recommendations for improvement in each.

During the report writing process, constituents at all levels were included in various ways. Working groups and PBIRC were able to review and comment on revisions to group reports throughout the self-study, and seven open meetings were held for broad campus input before the final chapters were assembled. Additionally, each constituent group reviewed and approved the final report before it was submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, reflecting campus engagement in the process and awareness of and commitment to the report's recommendations.

All supporting documents are available electronically via links within the text. Printed versions have also been made available in Miller Board Room (McGill Library) for the convenience of the evaluation team.

Campus Climate Survey

Throughout the self-study report, references are made to a Campus Climate Survey that was conducted in spring 2009. This survey was developed by the working groups to help them to assess different facets of their research questions. In total, 34 trustees, 46 administrators, 47 support staff members, 82 faculty members, and 601 students responded to the survey.

Supplemental Required Documentation

In addition to the self-study report, the College refers readers to the following documents, as required by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education:

- Current [Institutional Profile](#) submitted to the Commission
- [Actual enrollment](#) data for the years covered by the self-study
- [Projected enrollment](#) data
- [2009](#) and [2010](#) audit reports
- 2011-2012 [forecasted budget](#)
- [Operational plan](#) for the current strategic plan
- [Financial information](#) submitted to IPEDS



Middle States Commission on Higher Education

3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2680

Phone: 267-284-5000 Fax: 215-662-5501 www.msche.org

Certification Statement: Compliance with MSCHE Requirements of Affiliation and Federal Title IV Requirements (Effective October 1, 2009)

An institution seeking **initial accreditation** or **reaffirmation of accreditation** must affirm by completing this certification statement that it meets or continues to meet established MSCHE requirements of affiliation and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as those on distance education and transfer of credit.

The signed statement must be attached to the executive summary of the institution's self-study report.

If it is not possible to certify compliance with all such requirements, the institution must attach specific details in a separate memorandum.

Westminster College
(Name of Institution)

is seeking (*Check one*): ☐ Initial Accreditation ☒ Reaffirmation of Accreditation

The undersigned hereby certify that the institution meets all established requirements of affiliation of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and federal requirements relating to Title IV program participation, including relevant requirements under the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 such as those on distance education and transfer of credit, and that it has complied with the MSCHE policy, "Related Entities."

☐ Exceptions are noted in the attached memorandum (*Check if applicable*)


(Chief Executive Officer)

(Date)

1/07/11


(Chair, Board of Trustees or Directors)

(Date)

1/10/11

Summary of Supplemental Resources

(in alphabetical order by chapter; see My.Westminster Handouts portlet in the Middle States Review group to access these documents)

Executive Summary

- Audit reports: 2009, 2010
- Budget, forecasted for 2011-2012
- Enrollment data: Actual, Projected
- Institutional Profile
- IPEDS financial information
- Self-Study Steering Committee
- Strategic Plan, 2010-2020
- Strategic Plan Operational Plan

Chapter 1: Mission and Goals

- Awards and rankings
- College *Viewbook*
- Mission Statement

Chapter 2: Institutional Resources

- College operating results
- Library guidelines for refining its collection
- Mission Statements: Residence Life, Department of Chemistry
- Peer group
- Red flag alert policy
- Statements of financial position
- Strategic Plan, 2003-2008 (goals, shared vision statement)

Chapter 3: Institutional Leadership and Integrity

- Academic freedom policy
- Academic integrity policy
- Board of Trustees committees
- Board of Trustees roster
- Bylaws
- College boards
- College councils
- Employee benefits

- Faculty committees
- *Faculty Handbook*
- Identity and Style Guide
- Institutional research review process
- Institutional structure
- Intellectual property policy
- Performance Appraisal Form
- Professional and Service Profile
- Respect at Westminster
- Responsible Use of Information Resources policy
- *Staff Handbook*
- Standards of Trustee Practice
- *Student Handbook*
- Whistleblower policy

Chapter 4: The Student Experience

- Assessment cycle
- Assessment of a diversity workshop (Residence Life)
- Assessment of the Office of Disability Resources
- Campus tour audit
- Counseling Services
- Diversity Services
- Emergency preparedness plan
- First-year class enrollment
- Graduate admissions policy
- Office of Adult and Graduate Studies
- Minority student enrollment, retention and graduation rates
- Prospective student visits
- Recruiting geomarkets
- Student grievance process
- Student Health Center
- Student Satisfaction Survey
- Student Withdrawal Survey
- Title IX compliance report
- Transfer admissions and credits
- *Undergraduate Catalog*
- Young Presbyterian Scholarship

Chapter 5: Faculty

- Conference/Research award guidelines
- Faculty Development Committee operating procedures
- Faculty Development Officer report
- Faculty development outcomes
- Faculty development workshop topics
- Faires Faculty Forum presentation titles

Chapter 6: The Westminster Curriculum

- Academic Technology Vision Statement
- Campus technology study
- Capstone description
- Certification program eligibility requirements
- Cluster evaluations
- Cluster description
- Evaluation of a Westminster College Intern form
- Experiential learning assessment
- First-year Program description
- Intellectual Perspectives description
- Internship and field experience report
- New course proposal form
- Off-campus study
- Office of Adult and Graduate Studies courses
- Student Evaluation of Internship form

Chapter 7: Assessment

- *All-College Honors Program Coordinator Handbook*
- Assessment audit
- Assessment plan, Department of Mathematics
- *Establishing a Culture of Assessment*
- *Examples of Evidence of Student Learning*
- *Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources* (2nd ed.)

Challenge...



Westminster College's stellar academic reputation comes from dedicated faculty committed to student success. A Westminster liberal arts education prepares students for life's challenges. Students come to college for more than a degree, they come to become educated.

The Westminster Way

Chapter 1: Mission and Goals

Westminster College is an independent, coeducational liberal arts college that is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Since its founding in 1852, Westminster has been dedicated to the mission of *helping men and women develop competencies, commitments, and characteristics which distinguish human beings at their best*. The College's mission guides the liberal arts curriculum as it evolves. Westminster's quest for excellence is recognition that stewardship of life mandates the maximum possible development of each person's capabilities.

Located in western Pennsylvania one hour north of Pittsburgh, the Westminster campus is situated on 300 rural acres, surrounded by active agricultural communities. For 2010-2011, Westminster has 1,519 undergraduate students and 65 graduate students, drawn primarily from within a 200-mile radius of the College. More women are enrolled (60%) than are men (40%), which approximates the gender ratio found nationally at similar types of institutions. The College has 109 full-time faculty members; 91% of them hold the highest terminal degrees in their disciplines. The student-to-faculty ratio is 12.7-to-1, based on the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Westminster offers a bachelor's degree program in 32 majors; many of these fields also offer minors. There are also 8 interdisciplinary majors and 6 graduate programs. Through affiliations with the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP), International Studies Abroad (ISA), and Cultural Experiences Abroad (CEA), Westminster students can extend their learning beyond the local community. Over the last five years our students have studied in more than 28 countries or territories, with most students studying in England, France, Germany, Australia, or Spain.

The Board of Trustees, administration, and faculty remain committed to providing students with a strong liberal arts education. Westminster's liberal arts curriculum, "The Westminster Plan," exposes students to broad perspectives and experiences that inform their more focused work in a major. The broad skills and understandings that Westminster students learn, such as critical evaluation, information literacy, and technology literacy enable them to live productive, successful lives after they graduate—no matter the professional and personal activities they pursue. The education and experiences Westminster students receive have been recognized with a variety of [national awards and rankings](#), affording the College a positive reputation in and beyond its catchment area. The College is particularly proud of its recent recognitions by Forbes.com as the "Best College for Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)", and by Newsweek as fifteenth in the nation for "Most Service-Minded Schools".

Mission Statement

"The mission of Westminster College is *to help men and women develop competencies, commitments, and characteristics which have distinguished human beings at their best*.

The liberal arts tradition is the foundation of the curriculum continually designed to serve this mission in a rapidly changing world.

The College sees the well-educated person as one whose skills are complemented by ever developing values and ideals identified in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Westminster's quest for excellence is recognition that stewardship of life mandates the maximum possible development of each person's capabilities. The College thus realizes its mission in men and women who as students:

- Develop intellectual curiosity and the competencies to reason logically, evaluate critically, communicate effectively, imagine creatively, appreciate and produce aesthetic and creative expressions of humanity;
- Acquire a knowledge and appreciation of self, society, human cultures, and the natural world, and human relationships to God;
- Develop and demonstrate moral and ethical commitments to neighbor, society, and the natural world consistent with the understanding of self;
- Commit themselves to lifelong learning and the acquisition of skills for careers and responsible service as world citizens" (*Undergraduate Catalog, 2010-2011*, pp. 10-11).

The curricular and co-curricular learning programs are designed as a means by which the College endeavors to fulfill its mission.

Perspectives on the Westminster College Mission Statement

Westminster College has always had a keen understanding of its role in higher education. The College's [Mission Statement](#), which dates back to the 1930s, has been subject to a number of iterations and labels. Historically, developing the Mission Statement has been a collaborative process, led by the presidents of the College under the guidance of the Board of Trustees. Although changes have certainly occurred in the last 80 years, responding to external environments and the internal resources and constituencies of the College, the consistent and clear message of the Mission Statement has always been and remains that Westminster exists to educate women and men for enlightened participation and leadership in their world. This stability is ensured by the Board of Trustees, which oversees the mission and approves changes to it. On October 31, 2009, the Board reaffirmed the College's Mission Statement.

The current iteration of the Mission Statement has its origin in a series of meetings and introspection conducted by faculty members and department chairs in the mid- to late 1950s. They generated a list of the "qualities of a liberally educated person." The list included characteristics associated with knowledge, ability, and appreciation; it serves, in modified form, as a bullet-pointed section of today's Mission Statement. It was a *de facto* list of outcomes for the students of Westminster College. The Board of Trustees approved this "Statement of Objectives" on March 4, 1960.

The next significant addition to the College's Mission Statement came in the late 1960s, early in the presidency of Dr. Earland Carlson, when a statement on religious perspectives was inserted in the *Undergraduate Catalog*. Although it was not clearly

linked to the mission, this addition defined more clearly the role of religion in the education of a Westminster student. Additionally, a list of “purposes” replaced a textual presentation of “objectives.” The College's Board of Trustees approved the revised form on March 6, 1970. Near the end of the Carlson presidency the Purposes section was rewritten and retitled “Philosophy and Purposes.” This rewrite reemphasized the Christian faith tradition of the College while maintaining most of the academic purposes and was approved by the Board in October 1979. The presentation of the mission statement was modified again in the mid-1980s and put in its now familiar format by moving the Religious Perspectives section to follow the Philosophy and Purposes immediately, and by moving the Accreditation and Membership section to the end of this section of the *Undergraduate Catalog*. Prior to the 1990 Middle States decennial study, then President Oscar Remick again re-worked the Mission Statement. He significantly expanded the section on religious perspectives to cast Westminster as a more ecumenical institution, reflecting the more ecumenical shift in the American population. The revisions were approved by faculty members—with some dissension (some believed moving away from a stance more aligned with a narrower definition of the reformed tradition to be problematic)—and ratified by the Board in 1990. Since then the only significant change has been the addition of eight “Westminster College Outcomes” – the Mission Statement expressed as statements of student ability-based outcomes. The outcomes, added in response to a growing external call for outcome-based assessment, were approved by the faculty and the Board of Trustees in 2001 and appeared for the first time in the 2004-2005 *Undergraduate Catalog*.

The Structure and Content of the Mission Statement

The process involved in developing and modifying the Mission Statement, while historically directed by the President and overseen by the Board, has typically involved other constituents and has been responsive to the needs and concerns of both internal and external forces, while leaving the core of the mission intact. The Mission Statement indicates explicit, but generic, consideration of the external environment but little about the nature of its service to any particular external constituents. In its second sentence, the Mission Statement notes that it seeks to accomplish its mission in “a rapidly changing world.” Further, it recognizes and places the College and its students explicitly within the context of human society and the natural world. The statement notes both appreciation of others and ethical commitments to them as characteristics that the College wants to foster in its graduates. Although these generic statements are prominent, little in the Mission Statement addresses specific regional/local constituents and their particular needs. Overall, the Mission Statement specifies no particular role for the College in relationship to the changing nature of its local environment. However, the College is deeply involved in the immediate community and the region through a variety of activities that are more fully described in Chapter 6. However, the Mission Statement does not specify this as part of the College’s purposeful intent.

One relatively specific question in the *Characteristics of Excellence* asks about the Mission Statement’s support for creative and scholarly activity. The Mission Statement of Westminster College does indicate some explicit support for creative activity when it

indicates that the mission of the College is realized in men and women who “appreciate and produce aesthetic and creative expressions of humanity.” No similarly explicit statement, however, exists relative to the generation of scholarly output. Seemingly, as with the skill and capability development of College personnel, scholarly activity is seen as part of the College’s “assumed behaviors,” not an activity that should be explicitly identified as a part of the College’s mission. Reflective of the near exclusive focus on student outcomes, no indication of support for creative/innovative/scholarly activity on the part of staff, administration, or faculty members is present in the current Mission Statement or the detailed outcomes and goals associated with it. No indication exists that such activity, especially by faculty members, helps to foster an appropriate academic/aesthetic climate for students on campus. There is no indication of why such aesthetic or scholarly production should be sought or the purposes toward which it should be put. This lack of “direction” is common within the current Mission Statement. Intellectual, moral, spiritual, and relational characteristics and competencies of graduates are clearly identified, but there is no indication of the ends, even conceptually framed ones, toward which the College’s graduates should direct their newly developed attitudes and competencies that “characterize human beings at their best.” The closest the Mission Statement comes to this point is in noting that students should commit themselves to lifelong learning and skill development to enhance their capabilities in “careers and responsible service as world citizens.” However, this phrase comes near the end of a long list of particular goals and it does not reflect that this final goal is the key summative element of the goals. The overall lack of directiveness in the Mission Statement might be viewed as an embrace of the wide vocational choices available to graduates, but it may also reflect a missed opportunity to create a distinctive Westminster culture. In this case, “Advantage: Westminster” is not made evident.

Dissemination and Understanding of the Mission Statement

As part of the Self-Study, the College wanted to evaluate several characteristics of the Mission Statement beyond its history, and this was accomplished with the Campus Climate Survey. First, it was important to know the degree to which constituents are familiar with Westminster’s Mission Statement and related outcomes. Over 90% of respondents from every constituency, except students, reported at least some familiarity with the Mission Statement (see Figure 1.1). Nearly 40% of students responded to the survey and an equivalent percentage of those respondents reported some familiarity with the Mission Statement. In all cases, the proportion of any group expressing familiarity with the goals associated with the Mission Statement was notably lower than that expressing some degree of familiarity with the Mission Statement itself (see Figure 1.2). More detailed analysis revealed that with the exception of students, constituents’ understanding of the mission was most heavily shaped by administrators. Among students reporting some familiarity with the statement, faculty members were noted as the strongest influence on their understanding. This is not surprising, given that faculty members have the most consistent contact with students. Constituents’ familiarity with their respective department or unit’s mission statement and associated goals was somewhat less than familiarity with the College’s mission (see Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.1: How familiar are you with the College's Mission Statement?

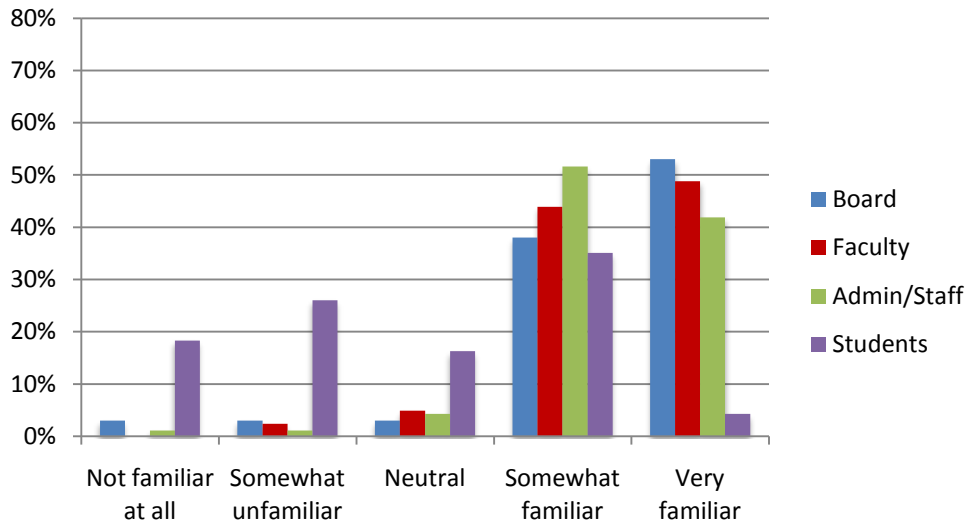
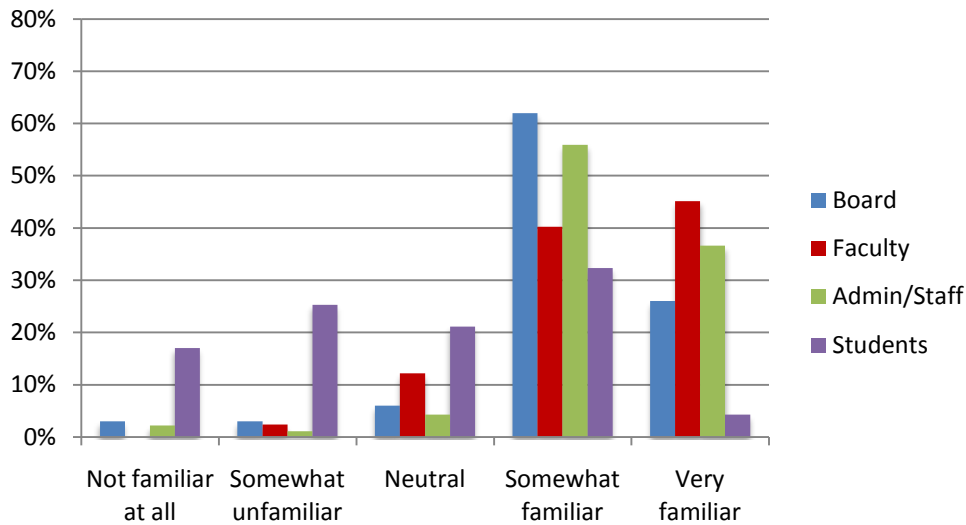
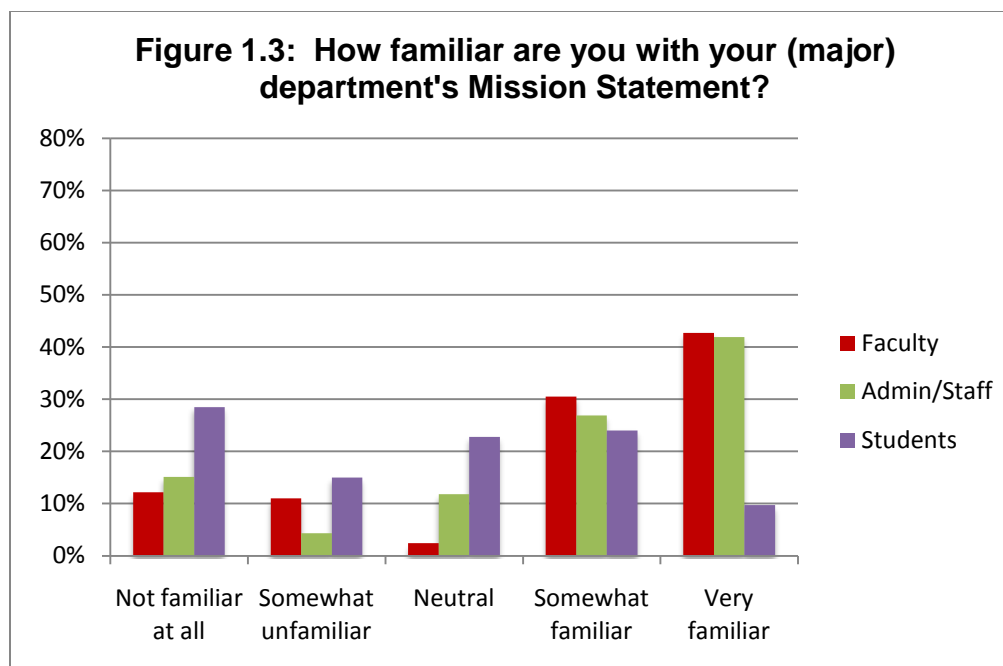


Figure 1.2: How familiar are you with the goals associated with the College's Mission Statement?





The College believes that the broad degree of understanding its Mission Statement is good. However, there is a sense that knowing the mission of the College and knowing the mission of any college might be conflated in the minds of respondents, affecting their responses on the questionnaire. “Everybody knows what the mission of a college is,” was noted repeatedly. However, the campus meetings held by the previous president, R. Thomas Williamson, and the fact that they began with a review of the status of the College, its strategic plan, and an explicit linkage to the mission of the College may have gone a long way in enhancing constituents’ understanding of the mission. President Dorman’s post-Board meeting “Campus Downloads” continue that tradition electronically by describing Board actions and explicitly explaining their connection to the College’s mission. Additionally, even before the self-study was complete, the Mission Statement has been made more prominent in the *Undergraduate Catalog*, been added to the College [Viewbook](#) (a key promotional publication), the Inquiry 111 course reader used by all entering first-year students, and letters sent to first-year students as part of the summer reading program.

Second, the College wanted to assess whether or not its constituents feel that review of the Mission Statement occurs with sufficient frequency. Students and staff did not have strong feelings about the adequacy or inadequacy of how frequently the Mission Statement is evaluated. The majority of both groups indicated that either they “don’t know” or are “neutral” on that question. Administrators generally believed the frequency of revision is adequate, whereas faculty members were split on the issue. More detailed analyses showed that nearly 60% of mid-career faculty members believed that the College’s frequency of mission revision is sufficient. Those with greater or less longevity were less sure this is the case, with only 40% agreeing with the sufficiency of revision frequency.

Third, as the College's commitment to assessment grows, so does its understanding of the need to measure components of the Mission Statement. There seems to be some variability in the extent to which Westminster constituents believe that the mission and goals of the College and its units are measurable. There is particular variability across faculty members. Those with the most (more than 20) and with the fewest (less than 10) years of service indicate that the goals and objectives of the College are measurable, whereas faculty members hired between 10 and 20 years ago disagree to a great extent with that statement. Mid-career faculty members are also most likely to express the belief that the mission does not match what happens at Westminster, and to have the greatest level of concern about how well the mission can be assessed and applied. Although the reason for these differences based on years of service is unclear, the College should work to ensure that all faculty members share an understanding of its Mission Statement, how it is applied on campus, and how it is assessed.

Constituents' perceptions of how well the behavior of trustees, administration and staff, faculty members, and students matches the Mission Statement were measured. College employees of all types and our trustees believed that, for the most part, employees and trustees all act in a manner consistent with the Mission Statement. In other words, the ethos of the College and the behavior of its personnel are generally perceived to be congruent with the Mission Statement. Generally, respondents across all areas believed that the Mission Statement "accurately characterizes the nature of the College." There is, however, a notable minority of faculty, administrators, and staff who were neutral on or disagreed with that statement (just under 20% of each group). This is a consequence of the sizable proportion of administrators and staff members (just under a quarter) who did not believe that faculty members behave in a manner consistent with the College's mission or the slightly smaller proportion of faculty members who held a similar view of administrators and staff. Just a quarter of faculty members and administrators or staff were either neutral or do not believe that students display behavior consistent with the College's mission. Students expressed similar views of themselves. Regarding students' perceptions of other constituents, we believe that they see greater behavior-mission match among constituents with whom they interact most. Thus, they see the greatest match among faculty members—a group they interact with daily—and the least match among trustees—a group they interact with rarely, if at all. In general, then, Westminster's constituencies perceive that the Mission Statement reflects the day-to-day realities of the College.

Recommendations

1. The College should examine the Mission Statement, not with the intent of changing the mission, but with the intent of focusing the statement in strategic ways to specify Westminster's distinctive approach to liberal arts education in the coming decades. While focusing the Mission Statement, constituents should also work to create and use a shortened version of the Mission Statement that is more easily processed than the long statement the College currently has.

2. The College must endeavor to make Westminster College's Mission Statement one that more directly states the expectation that graduates, having benefitted from the educational opportunities afforded by the College, have a responsibility to serve in leadership roles locally, nationally, and globally. A Mission Statement that is much more explicit about the College's expectations for its graduates, and a series of campus-wide initiatives that link to the mission and help to create a campus culture consistent with it, will likely be necessary to differentiate the College from other small, liberal arts institutions in the area and draw students to Westminster in an extremely competitive time.
3. In determining its distinctiveness, the College should clarify and communicate the role of scholarly and aesthetic production in the Westminster experience.

Compassion...

During her college years, Bethany's Westminster blanket comforted her. It was her prized possession.

She traveled to Africa with Westminster students and professors as part of an "African History and Peace Studies" cluster course. Bethany returned with an expanded worldview. The blanket didn't make it back.



It stayed behind as a gift to her Malawian host mother. Her prized Westminster blanket became a shawl that now provides comfort for another.

Those lessons are taught daily at Westminster College – even when the “classrooms” are continents away.

The Westminster Way

Chapter 2: Institutional Resources

Since the creation of the Planning, Budget, and Institutional Resources Council (PBIRC) in the late 1980s, Westminster College has had a tradition of collaborative and purposeful planning. This planning process has also incorporated assessment methodologies that enable the College to evaluate progress and create intentional change. In the last 10 years, Westminster has faced significant changes in administration and faculty. These changes have brought both challenges and opportunities for renewal. Further, recent economic conditions have led the College to re-examine how it budgets and allots its resources. Westminster's focus for the present and the near future is to create planning and governing processes that have transparency of purpose and that are consistent with its mission.

Budgeting and Planning

Soon after his appointment to President of Westminster College in 2008, Dr. Richard H. Dorman collaborated with the campus on the development of a new strategic plan. Because planning and resource allocation at Westminster College follows a "top-down" model, a change in the top leadership means that both the processes and priorities of planning and resource allocation necessarily change. With the installation of President Dorman, these changes included a complete review of campus priorities to address such changing external realities as the profound economic recession and changing local demographics (see Chapter 4).

According to the College's bylaws, the President of the College is the chief planning officer. However, the President does not develop strategic plans in isolation. The President relies heavily on the PBIRC (see Chapter 1) and the Long Range Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees (see Chapter 3). During the planning process, PBIRC's role is to advise the President on the issues and concerns of campus constituents. The President considers these suggestions and concerns as he leads the development of the strategic plan. The strategic plan is then presented to the Long Range Planning Committee of the Board who works with the President to refine the plan further. Finally, the strategic plan is presented to the entire Board of Trustees who must formally approve the plan. By following this procedure, every group of the College has significant input into the planning and future of the College. This process also helps to ensure that the strategic plan is consistent with Westminster's mission. All of the stakeholders in the mission have an opportunity to shape the strategic plan. It also reduces the likelihood that any one group's agenda will drive the process.

While creating any plan that shifts the priorities of the College, the President and his advisors must be mindful of budgetary concerns. Historically, the College's on-going budgets have been created via a system of incremental increases based on inflationary adjustments to prior year budgets. This process assumes that the priorities funded in the previous cycle(s) are consistent with the College's mission. Two strategic plans were put in place from 1997-2003 and 2003-2008, and they were repeatedly and explicitly linked to the College mission by former President Williamson. Over 90% of the

“non-annual fund” fundraising supported elements of the College’s strategic plan. To the extent that strategic plan elements required fund-raising and budgetary planning, they were developed within the context of the Mission Statement and thus emanate from it. So while ongoing budgetary processes did not necessarily involve an explicit review of the College’s Mission Statement, strategic plan elements were derived from it and served as the basis for funding enhancements.

President Dorman called for a zero-based budget for FY 2010-2011 that would create the opportunity to align the budget with planning priorities, both those in the strategic plan and more broadly in the College Mission Statement. In this case the budget proportions that emerge will be based directly on elements of the Mission Statement. Some of the reallocation of funds that result from the zero-based budgeting process is likely to support the strategic initiatives of the plan as defined by the metrics in the Operational Plan. Even more explicit alignment of mission and budget is expected.

Annual Planning

Annual financial planning begins with the President and his Cabinet. The College’s normal budget process is for the College Controller to solicit input from each budget administrator about modifying his/her proposed budget. However, for the past several years the College has not had the financial ability to make increases to departmental operating budgets; therefore, the budget administrators have not been solicited for changes. The College is currently in the process of preparing a zero-based budget that will provide budget administrators with the opportunity to propose changes to their budgets. The Cabinet will then use this information, including the budget requests, to generate the coming year’s budget. The mission and strategic plan are central throughout the annual planning and budgeting process. Budget changes that facilitate meeting the goals of the mission and strategic plan are given the highest priority. In this way, annual planning is synchronized with long-range strategic planning, and both are mission-focused.

Although not as extensive as the college-wide planning processes, planning for individual units (e.g., administrative units, departments, programs) is just as important. Each year, many units submit their mission and goals or objectives to the vice president of their area. The mission and related goals of each unit should flow directly from the mission of the College. In fact, many units link their mission and goals to specific portions of the College’s mission. Examples of these unit-level missions and goals can be found for the [Residence Life](#) division of Student Affairs and the [Department of Chemistry](#). These two examples illustrate the various ways the units of the College do their long-range planning. Some units, like Residence Life, have operational goals that are easily tracked and assessed for completion and impact. Other units, like the Department of Chemistry, have more broad and programmatic goals that do not necessarily change from year to year. It is not as easy to assess the success and impact of these types of goals, but that does not mean that they are less valid or thoughtful. However, it is possible that many of the departments and programs of the College could be more explicit and specific in their annual goals and objectives.

Identifying goals and objectives with their assessment of impact in mind could be an easy way for the units of the College to be more intentional in their planning processes. Reporting assessment of those goals to colleagues during appropriate meetings (e.g., chair meetings) or to the Outcomes Assessment Advisory Council (OAAC) would be another means to ensure that departments are sharing their good practices.

Allocation of Resources

The allocation of resources at Westminster College begins with the strategic planning process. During the past 10 years, the College has completed two five-year plans: from October 1, 1997, through October 1, 2003, and from October 1, 2003, through October 1, 2008. In addition to the specific goals, the [2003-2008 strategic plan](#) also included measurable [goals](#) and a [shared vision statement](#) for Westminster College.

The key initiatives of the strategic plans and the shared vision statement can be categorized into the following areas: improving facilities, resources, and technology to enhance teaching and student life; developing world-class teaching and mentoring; and improving enrollment and retention.

Improving Facilities, Resources, and Technology

During the past 10 years, the College has completed the following facility improvement projects, which were identified in the strategic plans (in thousands):

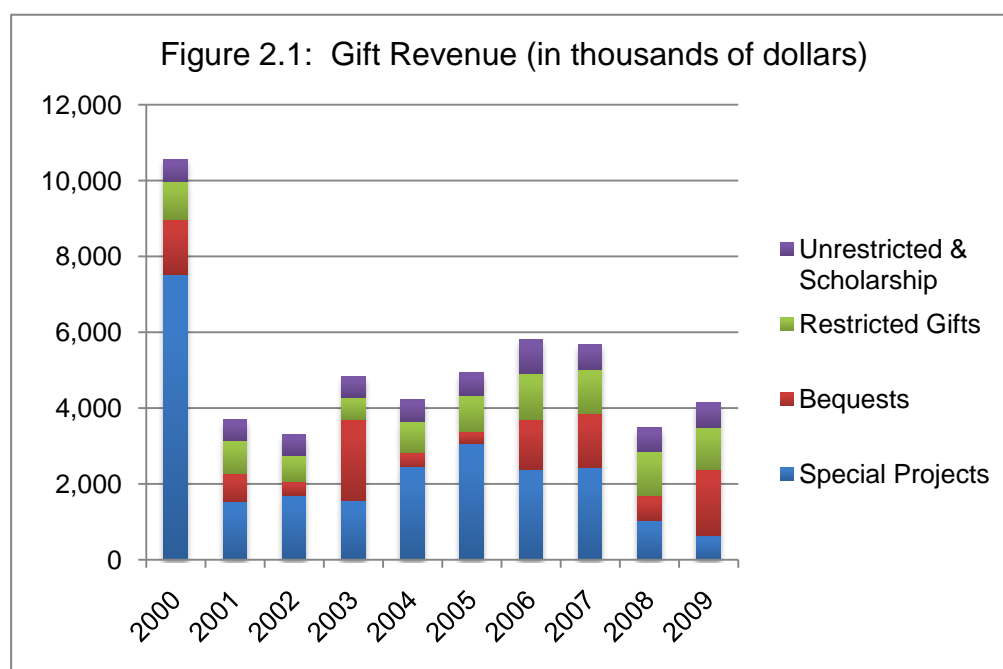
Project	Year	Source of Funds			
		Cost	Fundraising	Debt	Operations
<u>Academic Projects:</u>					
Field House Classrooms	2002	\$1,320	\$1,320	\$-	\$-
Thompson-Clark Hall Renovation	2002	3,036	3,036	-	-
Old Main Renovation	2005	3,300	3,300	-	-
Orr Auditorium/Music Dept Renovations	2005	2049	2049		
McGill Memorial Library Renovations	2009	6,300	6,300	-	-
Academic Equipment Special Project Funding	2003-08	533	-	-	533
Information Technology Special Project Funding	2003-08	1,001	-	-	1,001
Subtotal – Academic Projects		17,539	16,005	-	1,534
<u>Student Life Projects:</u>					
Remick Admissions House	1999	1,156	1,156	-	-
Marge Walker Fitness Center	2003	300	300	-	-
Field House Addition and Track	2004	2,602	2,602	-	-
McKelvey Campus Center	2004	13,386	13,386	-	-
Residence Hall Sprinklers	2004	1,014	-	-	1,014
Berlin Village Townhouses	2006	3,825	1,405	2,420	-
Residence Hall Improvements	2008-09	3,000	-	3,000	-
Subtotal – Student Life Projects		25,283	18,849	5,420	1,014
Total – Projects Identified in Strategic Plans		\$42,822	\$34,854	\$5,420	\$2,548

Such projects as building the McKelvey Campus Center and renovating McGill Library (see next section) further enhanced the academic life on campus by providing classroom and/or computer lab space, meeting facilities, and conference rooms.

In addition to the \$43 million of projects that were specifically identified in our strategic plans, Westminster College also completed the following projects (in thousands):

<u>Description</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>			
		<u>Cost</u>	<u>Fundraising</u>	<u>Debt</u>	<u>Operations</u>
Thompson House Renovation	2006	\$596	\$-	\$596	\$-
Wiley Alumni House Acquisition	2006	400	400	-	-
Memorial Field Improvements	2008	1,873	1,100	773	-
Total		<u>\$2,869</u>	<u>\$1,500</u>	<u>\$1,369</u>	<u>\$-</u>

It is important to note that these projects have been paid primarily by fundraising. The fundraising over the past 10 years has been oriented toward the projects identified in the strategic plans. Funds raised by source are depicted in Figure 2.1. Westminster College enjoys strong support from its alumni, with the annual giving rate exceeding national averages. From 2006-2008, for example, an average of 30% of Westminster's alumni contributed to the College. In the same period, the national average was around 11%, and the average for liberal arts colleges was approximately 25%.



The College's 2003-2008 strategic plan also called for increased resources for technology upgrades and academic equipment (e.g., information technology infrastructure). The College exceeded the goals established in the 2003-2008 strategic plan and allocated \$1.0 million to technology upgrades and \$533,000 for academic equipment. Westminster College has been focusing much of its technology investment

in the classroom particularly for “smart” classrooms. Smart classrooms are equipped with a variety of technology, including media players, computers, and projection and sound systems. Smart carts include much of the same technology but are mobile, allowing professors to bring technology to traditional classrooms. Since the 2001 self-study, the College has added nine smart classrooms, added projection equipment in four rooms, and substantially renovated 24 existing smart classrooms. In total, the College maintains 38 rooms with some type of presentation equipment, representing about 75% of classrooms on campus.

In its 2006 Periodic Review Report, the College noted that most technology upgrades on campus have related to improving classroom technology. That focus has historically been at the exclusion of upgrades to Westminster’s administrative computing system. At the end of the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the College made a decision to replace its administrative software (see also Chapter 6). While the College has been providing updated technology for student learning, its main administrative systems have not been upgraded in nearly 30 years. The total cost of the administrative software replacement is \$1.2 million and the full conversion to the new software continues. As with any major institutional change, the College’s transition to the new administrative software has presented both greater functionality and frustrations with learning how to make the software work for Westminster’s specific needs. The College anticipates substantial benefits as the conversion is completed, and it continues to support and encourage employees during the process.

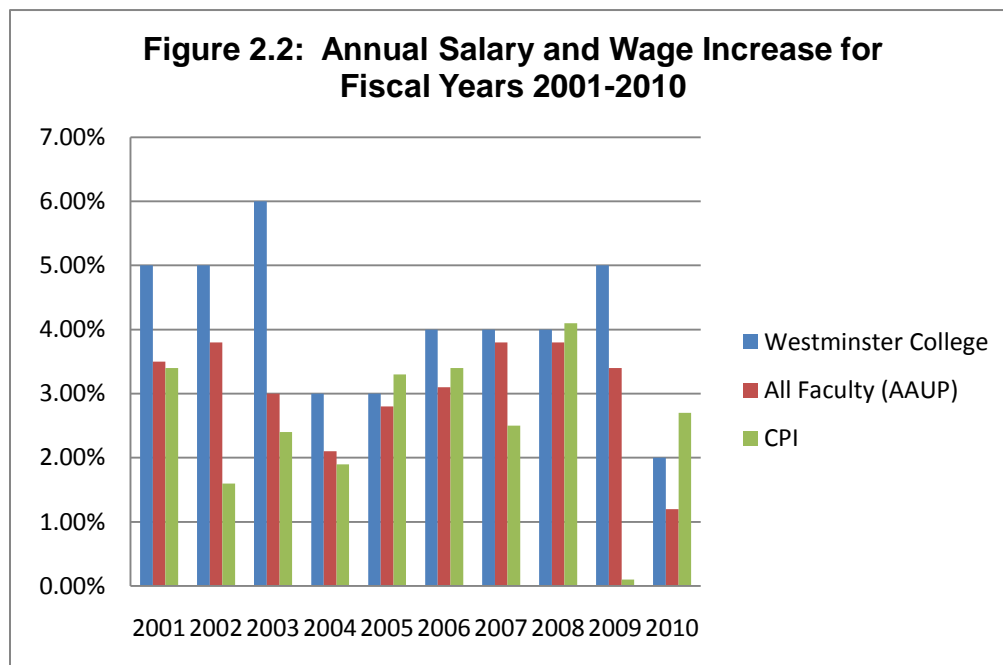
Developing World-Class Teaching and Mentoring

Another significant goal for the Westminster College strategic plans has been to develop the resources that will enable faculty members to deliver world-class teaching and mentoring. Some of the significant specific goals that were designed to improve teaching and mentoring include decreasing the teaching load from seven to six classes per academic year; increasing salaries and wages for all employees to the median pay of Westminster’s comparison institutions; and improving McGill Library.

To deliver world-class teaching and mentoring, the College has implemented a decrease in the teaching load for full-time faculty members from seven courses per academic year to a seven/six course load (alternate years) beginning with the 2004-2005 academic year, and finally to a six-course teaching load on a two-year trial basis beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year. The success and continuation of the six-course teaching load will be evaluated on two dimensions: (1) the relative stability of retention and four-year graduation rates, and (2) our economic viability. The decrease in the teaching load was implemented to support the mission of the College by providing faculty members with more time to work with students on research projects and other experiential education initiatives, and to provide faculty members with more time to pursue professional development opportunities. Undoubtedly, the decrease has influenced the allocation of financial resources and the configuration of course offerings, but in ways that reflect Westminster’s mission. This change provides yet another example of how faculty members and administrators have worked collaboratively to

implement change consistent with the mission of the College and enhance the distinctiveness of the College.

Westminster has also been making efforts to improve the compensation of its employees relative to the College's self-identified [peer group](#). During most of the years covered by the last two strategic plans, the College's average annual salary and wage increase exceeded both the increase in the consumer price index and the average salary and wage increase as reported by the American Association of University Professors (see Figure 2.2).



During the years covered by the last two strategic plans, the College was able to increase the average pay of its employees from 86% of the median of Westminster's peer group in the 1997-1998 fiscal year to 96% of the peer group in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. However, there is still much discussion on campus about salary levels and an appropriate comparison group. In Fall 2009, the President assembled a task force that revised the College's comparison group as a first step to begin a thorough review of salaries for all employees.

Although Westminster College has not achieved its goal of having salaries and wages paid at the median levels of its peer group, the College has devoted significant additional resources to personnel over the past two strategic plans in terms of both salary and wage increases and new positions.

As part of the 2003-2008 strategic plan, the College also sought to improve its resources for delivering world class teaching and mentoring by renovating and expanding the capacity of McGill Memorial Library (see also Chapter 6). The need to renovate McGill Memorial Library was discussed in the College's last accreditation

review with particular emphasis on the need to expand the storage capacity of the library. The College recently completed a \$6.3 million renovation of McGill Memorial Library and this renovation included the addition of compact shelving, which increased the storage capacity of the library by approximately 33%. For the past 10 years, an average of 1790 books was added to the collection per year (this figure varies widely from year depending on the budget from a high of 2298 new titles in 2002-2003 to a low of 1247 in 2007-2008). In addition, the College withdraws an average of 817 books from the collection per year. This means a net addition of 974 items per year; if the current growth rate persists, the newly unified monograph collection in McGill would be at maximum capacity in 17 years.

The College's collection of books and other resources has also grown. In 2000-2001 35 electronic tools were offered, and the budget was \$60,437. These 35 tools included three still in compact disc format, a dictionary, three encyclopedias, and a number of periodical indexes and abstracts. Over the last eight years there has been a significant change in the number, composition, and budget for electronic tools. Of the 35, three have been replaced with links to free sites on the Internet, and five titles have been cancelled. The library no longer has any tools in CD format. These reductions in tools were triggered primarily by changes in how media are now delivered—primarily via the Internet. As libraries look at tools, certainly price is considered; other important considerations are also used, such as the degree to which students are using specific resources, the degree of fit with campus interests and research programs, and the degree to which the tools support changes in the College's curriculum. Nineteen index/abstract tools have been added, and they offer access to over 9100 full text periodical titles. In addition to index/abstract offerings, three reference aggregate tools have been added: Credo Reference, Oxford Reference Online, and SAGE Reference Online. Several individual reference e-book titles and electronic access to several reference series are also new to the collection. All of this puts Westminster's electronic offerings at 57 with expenditures of \$230,540 in 2008-2009.

The significant growth in the College's electronic collection has not been mirrored in its print collection. The discretionary book budget—the amount that is divided among departments and areas in the library—has not grown over the past eight years. In 2000-2001, the discretionary book budget was \$137,904 and fell to \$78,077 in 2008-2009. At the same time that the budget was falling, the cost of books was increasing, so the actual number of titles being added to the collection has fallen from 2,334 per year to 1,581. Because shelf space was such an issue before the renovation project, the librarians initiated a major weeding project of unsuitable print materials, following carefully the library's [guidelines](#) for refining the collection. A formal, systematic weeding of the collection has not been undertaken in recent history (if ever) so this project, which began in 2009, will yield significant growth space. Prior to the relocation of the Mack Science Library materials, the librarians worked with departmental faculty members to remove over 12,000 outdated and otherwise inappropriate monographs from the science and technology collection. This process will continue in the fine arts, humanities, and social sciences collections during the coming years.

Also, the shift of many periodical titles to online formats has allowed the library to save space previously occupied by bound volumes of journals and magazines. The library has adopted two policies to eliminate redundancy and save shelf space in the periodical collection. One, the library subscribes to the online version of a journal if it is available at an equal or reduced cost of the print version. Two, if a title is available in a stable print archive, such as JSTOR, the print version of that title is withdrawn from the collection.

But shelving capacity was not the only change made. In 2000-2002, McGill Library had five group study rooms, four small ones, and a large one. Now we offer three large, one medium, and three small group study rooms. These spaces are used for tutoring sessions, class meetings, committee meetings, Honors Boards, and by groups of students studying together or working on projects. In 2000-2001, McGill Library had two comfortable seating areas in one room on the main floor. Now McGill offers 13 comfortable seating areas located on three floors in seven different rooms.

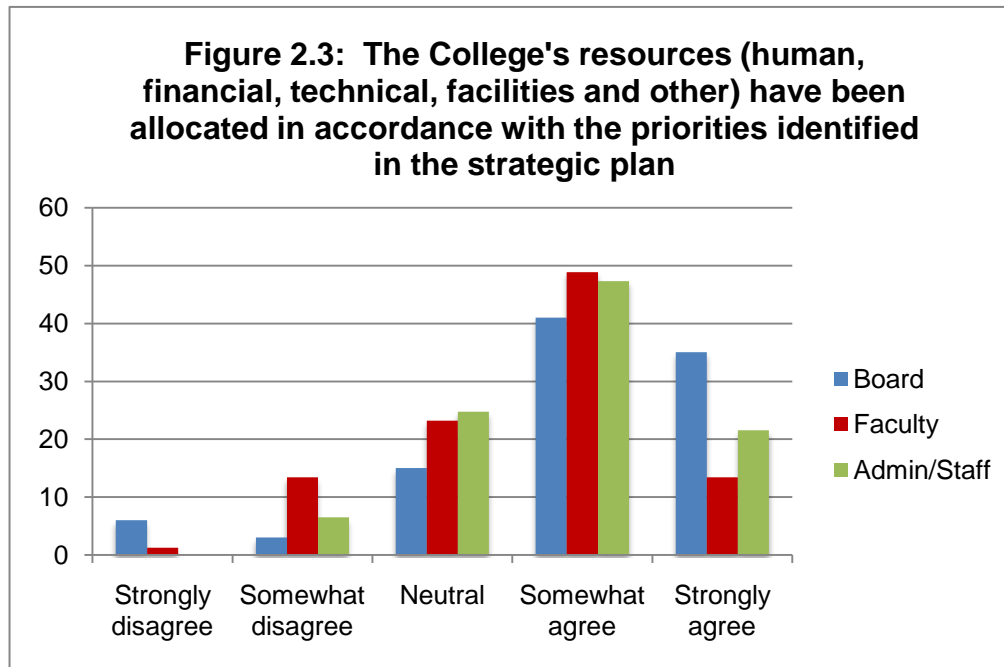
For at least the last 20 years, the librarians have wanted to reunify the monograph and periodical collections in one building. On a campus this size it did not make sense to have a divided collection; it was difficult for students and created management problems for the Library staff. The College determined that separate libraries were no longer desired and that the consolidated library would better serve its users while providing efficiencies to the College. During the summer of 2010, the J. S. Mack Science Library was closed and the collection was relocated to McGill Library.

Assessment of Resource Allocation Process

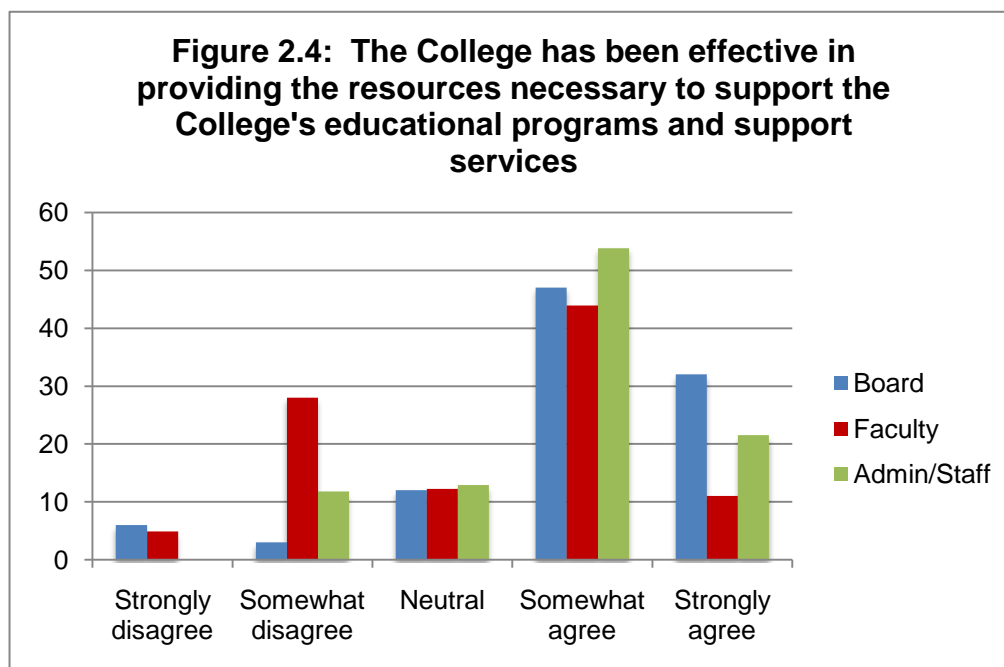
The College begins to prepare its annual operating budget during the fall of each year. The preliminary budget is presented to the Board of Trustees at its February meeting. During the spring, the College modifies the preliminary budget primarily for any anticipated changes in enrollment and financial aid, particularly for incoming first-year students. The College also updates the budget in October, primarily to reflect any significant changes in enrollment or staffing that may have occurred since the May budget was approved.

Although the formal budget process does not start until the fall, the College reviews and approves staffing changes throughout the year. Because salaries and benefits represent approximately 60% of the College's operating budget, this ongoing review of staffing is a key consideration in the budget. The College's Business Office solicits input from other constituents on campus for key budget inputs, such as enrollment and financial aid data. The Business Office also solicits input from budget administrators as to other budget changes that they would like to have considered. Unfortunately, the College has not been able to implement many of the non-personnel budget changes, as there has not been a sufficient budgeted surplus to fund these initiatives. However, it should be noted that the College has given priority in the budget to initiatives that support its mission and strategic plan. Even though the current budgeting process has not provided the College with the ability to grant many of the budget requests from

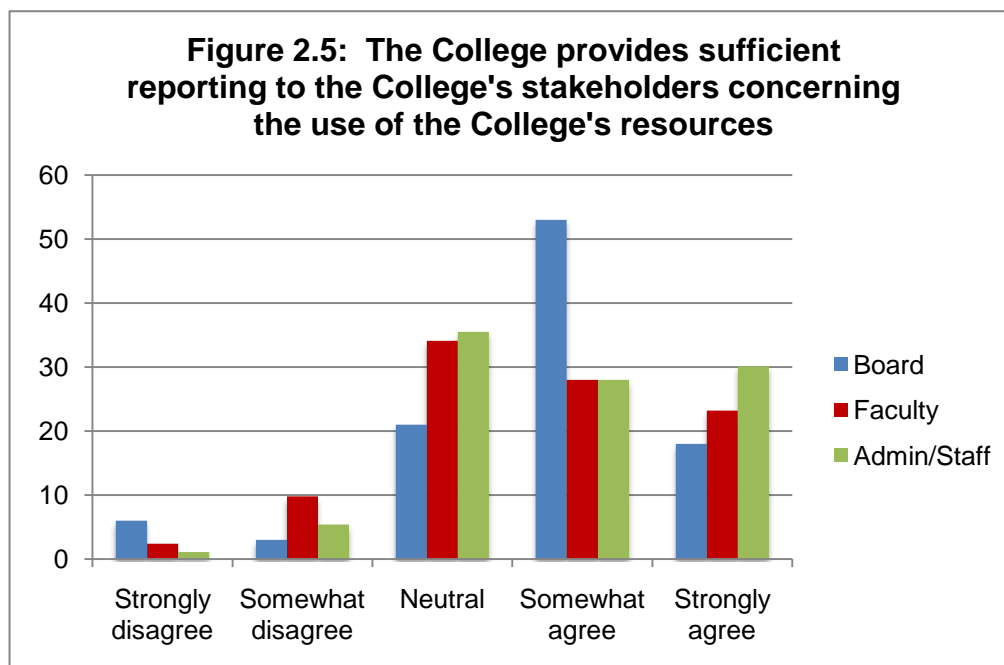
budget administrators, as shown in Figure 2.3 the majority of the College's stakeholders believe that the College's human, technical, facilities and other resources have been allocated in accordance with the College's strategic plans.



In addition, when surveyed about whether or not the College has been effective in providing the resources necessary to support the College's educational programs and support services, the majority of employees either somewhat or strongly agreed that they had sufficient resources (Figure 2.4).



The College reports its financial results using a variety of methods. Before the implementation of the new administrative software, all budget administrators received monthly reports showing the financial results for their areas; those reports are now available immediately. In addition, the College prepares financial reports for the Board of Trustees, and these reports are also shared with the campus community. Based on data presented in Figure 2.5, the campus community responded generally positively that they receive sufficient reporting concerning the use of the College's resources.



Financial Results and Budgets

The College has an annual budget process that works in conjunction with the strategic plan. The College's [operating results](#) for the most recently completed fiscal year (2009-2010) showed an operating surplus of \$2.2 million on gross revenues of \$35.1 million. The operating surplus in the 2009-2010 fiscal year was primarily due to a \$704,000 adjustment to the College's post-retirement benefit liability (this was a noncash reduction in expenses) along with \$404,000 of unrestricted bequests that were later designated for specific uses by the College's Board of Trustees. In addition, unfunded financial aid was lower than budget by \$447,000, and the College's overall utility costs were under budget by \$236,000 primarily due to lower prices for natural gas. Even though the College has experienced net operating surpluses in recent years, it is monitoring current economic conditions very closely and has developed plans to deal with weakened endowment draws and possible student attrition.

The College's total unrestricted revenues have increased at an average annual rate of 4.12% over the past five years. This increase in total revenues was primarily due to increases in undergraduate tuition revenue and room and board revenues. The College's net undergraduate tuition and fees have grown at an average rate of 5.56% over the past five years primarily due to regular tuition increases and also to an increase in enrollment. The College's primary source of revenue is its population of traditional undergraduate students. The College's undergraduate enrollment has increased over the past several years due to larger than usual first-year classes in fiscal year 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. During the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 fiscal years the College's classes of first-year students were significantly below normal and the College reacted to the smaller first-year classes by changing recruiting strategies, including increasing merit aid awards and expanding the pool of prospective students that we recruit (see Chapter 4). This strategy resulted in very positive results for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 first-year classes; however, the College also experienced an increase in its tuition discount rate from 41.6% in 2007-08 to 46.6% in 2009-2010.

The College's net tuition and fee revenue for fiscal year 2010-2011 is budgeted to increase slightly as compared with the 2009-2010 fiscal year as a result of a modest tuition increase (4.0%) and overall enrollment increase being offset by higher tuition discounting, and lower anticipated revenues from the College's graduate studies and adult education programs. Due to shrinking endowment and investment income, along with lower graduate and adult learners, the College has become more dependent on traditional undergraduate revenues with net undergraduate tuition and fees representing 58.2% of total revenues in 2009-2010, up from 55.3% in 2005-2006.

Although the College's unrestricted endowment income has been fairly stable in recent years, the College is anticipating that the endowment draw will decrease over the next three years due to the decrease in the market value of the endowment that the College experienced during the 2008-2009 fiscal year. The College calculates its endowment draw by taking 5% of the three-year average of quarter-end balances of the endowment. Unless the endowment makes a significant recovery in the next year, the College is anticipating that the annual endowment draw will decrease by approximately 30% over the next three years. To counter this, cash reserves amounting to \$1.6 million have been set aside to cover the anticipated loss of endowment draw due to the weakened stock market.

The College's total expenditures and debt service have increased at an average annual rate of 3.16% over the past five years, excluding noncash income and expenses related to postretirement benefit obligations. Most of this increase has been in salaries and wages, which have increased at an average annual rate of 3.79% due to regular salary and wage increases and to growth in the number of faculty and administrative positions. The College's non-personnel expenditures have increased at an average annual rate of 2.79% over the past five years primarily due to higher costs for dining services and utilities.

Personnel expenditures constitute 61.4% of the College's total expenditures with salaries and wages constituting 47.2% of total expenditures.

Certain administrative positions also have been added, primarily in student support areas. The increases in salary and wage costs have been partially offset by numerous faculty and administrator retirements over the past five years. The College has seen a decrease in its fringe benefits expense due to a decrease in the expense for post-retirement benefits. This expense, which is based on an actuarial calculation, decreased from \$1.2 million for the 2005-2006 fiscal year to a budget of \$436,000 for the 2010-2011 fiscal year. Also, the College has experienced some savings in its tuition remission benefit expense due to lower use. Partially offsetting these decreases has been a significant increase in the College's cost to provide medical insurance coverage to employees.

The College's debt service has increased as a result of additional debt that was incurred to fund partially the construction of student townhouses in 2006. This increase in debt service was partially offset by the debt restructuring that occurred in 2007 when the College paid its series of 1998 bonds and other debt, and replaced this debt with new bonds that had a lower effective interest rate.

The College had an operating surplus before transfers to plant fund during the past five years. In 2006-2007, the College had a larger than usual surplus due to unrestricted bequests that were received. The College has been able to transfer \$400,000 to \$500,000 per year from operations to plant fund. These plant fund transfers are intended to fund the College's ongoing capital needs for items that are not being addressed in capital projects or other targeted fundraising. Although these operating transfers to plant fund have been sufficient to supplement the College's other fundraising for capital improvement, the current economic climate may severely limit the College's ability to raise funds for capital projects, which will create more need to fund the capital needs of the College through operations. These trends can be seen in Westminster's statements of [financial position](#) for the most recent two fiscal years.

The College's total assets increased by \$8.2 million from June 30, 2009, to June 30, 2010, primarily due to an increase in the market value of the College's investment 2010. Even though the College's investments increased by \$6.2 million or 8.4% during 2009-2010, the College's investments are still 22.8% below their peak fiscal year-end value of \$102.6 million at June 30, 2007. Although this decrease in the market value of the College's endowment has not had an immediate impact on the College's operating budget, the College is anticipating that there will most likely be significant decreases in the annual endowment draw over the next three years.

During the 2006-2007 fiscal year, the College took advantage of the low interest rate environment that existed at that time and restructured the College's long-term debt. This debt restructuring included the advance refunding of the series of 1998 bonds (\$10.2 million) that could not be retired until March 2008. The College has a fairly

strong balance sheet with a sufficient balance of cash and cash equivalents and a lower than average balance of debt compared to peer schools.

With the recent global economic turmoil, it is imperative for the College to be as forward-looking as possible when preparing our budget and strategic plans. The College's administration is aware of some of the significant changes that will affect the College's future operations, such as the decrease in the market value of the endowment. The College must also prepare for other possible changes resulting from national economic problems, such as a decrease in enrollment, a reduction in students' abilities to afford a Westminster education, changes in state and federal student financial aid programs, and other changes that could affect the College's financial operations. To be as prepared as possible for changes to the economic environment that the College operates in, the College needs to anticipate further into the future as well as constructing financial and strategic plans for various economic scenarios. One way that such planning could occur is by expanding the current incremental budgeting system to one that supports multi-year budgeting. A multi-year budget would allow departments and units more flexibility in how they achieve their goals and those goals associated with the Westminster College Mission Statement. For example, departments would know how much funding they have available to them for a fixed period (e.g., three years), allowing them to make decisions about how to use their resources more effectively and in a timely way. Also, for the administrators who oversee the College's overall budget, such a system may also allow greater predictability in resource needs and distribution. Once the College has completed the zero-based budget to align operations with the Mission Statement and strategic plan, budget administrators will have a better sense of how feasible a multi-year budget would be for the College and how best to implement it (e.g., top-down vs. bottom-up planning).

Financial Safeguards

The Board of Trustees has enacted numerous financial safeguards to ensure that the College's financial resources are adequately protected. The College's by-laws established an Audit and Compliance Committee consisting of non-employee trustees. The Audit and Compliance Committee is responsible for appointing an independent auditor for the College and the committee is responsible for meeting with the independent auditor without the presence of the College's administration. The Audit and Compliance Committee is also charged with conducting periodic reviews of the College's exposure to major operational risks.

During the past two years the College's Board of Trustees also has made several changes to how the College manages its investment portfolio. The Board of Trustees created a new Investment Committee of the Board, and the oversight of the College's investment portfolio has been transferred from the Finance Committee to the new Investment Committee. The Investment Committee has reviewed the College's management of its investment portfolio and has created a revised investment policy statement, along with creating a regular system of reviewing the performance of the

College's investment managers. During 2009-2010, the Investment Committee interviewed investment managers and ultimately decided to hire Commonfund to manage 80% of the College's portfolio and Dimensional Fund Advisors to manage the remaining 20%. The College's investments had been managed by a bank trust department prior to this change in investment managers.

The College's independent auditor is appointed by the Board of Trustees, charged with preparing a report on the College's financial statements and compliance with federal grants annually. The auditor meets with the Audit and Compliance Committee in the fall to review the College's financial statements, and to review any other matters that were discovered during the audit process.

The College has several policies in place to help safeguard the College's assets, including conflict of interests and whistle-blower policies (see Chapter 4), and a [red flag alert policy](#).

This last policy is the College's most recent addition to its financial safeguards, and it responds to the Federal Trade Commission's Red Flags Rule. The policy, approved by the Board in February 2009, establishes protocols for identifying and preventing identity theft. The College has also implemented most of the recommendations made in the National Association of College and University Business Officer's (NACUBO) review of the Sarbanes Oxley Act, and how its best practice recommendations could be applied to colleges and universities. Perhaps the most significant area where the College has not adopted the Sarbanes Oxley best practices concerns internal audit. The College does not currently have an internal audit function. The College's Audit and Compliance Committee reviewed the NACUBO Sarbanes Oxley best practices and was satisfied that the College has implemented the measures that are appropriate for an organization of its size.

Recommendations

The College's Mission Statement and strategic plan drive the planning processes and resource allocation, at both the institutional level and unit level for the College. By making financial and programmatic decisions that meet the goals of the strategic plan, the College can fulfill its mission and experience constant renewal. However, there are aspects of the planning and resource allocation processes that can be improved.

1. Encourage all departments and programs of the College to be more explicit and specific in their annual goals and objectives to ensure that their activities are aligned with the College's mission and that their planning and budgets are mission-driven and aligned with the strategic plan. These goals and objectives should be reviewed annually by the VPAA and the Outcomes Assessment Advisory Council (OAAC).
2. Explore the practicality of multi-year budgeting to allow College constituents to anticipate resource needs and allocation more effectively.

Faith...



Westminster is a Presbyterian-affiliated college, but welcomes all students. Westminster teaches students how to think, not what to think. Students can practice their faith at their comfort level in a respectful environment.

The Westminster Way

Chapter 3: Institutional Leadership and Integrity

Westminster College strives to maintain an atmosphere of honesty and openness, to operate with integrity, and to create a place of learning, scholarship, and work that is open and free of discrimination. Indeed, the College's emphasis on integrity is a theme of its broader organizational story, the "Westminster Way." Central values in the Westminster Way are challenge, compassion, faith, learning, service, success, and tradition. Only to the extent that these values are practiced can there be a community that supports personal growth, interpersonal development, and integrity.

Given the climate of change that was described in the previous chapter and the collaborative nature of the Westminster community, it is important to evaluate campus leadership to promote effective communication and transparent governance. Like most colleges, Westminster follows a fairly standard organizational structure that includes a governing board, known as the Board of Trustees, a President, the President's Cabinet, faculty, administration, and support staff. To ensure that these groups have sufficient autonomy to complete their professional responsibilities and to create an effective learning environment for students, the College must evaluate how successfully it operates with integrity in the pursuit of academic freedom, respectful interactions on campus, scholarship, intellectual property, student conduct, the employment process, and open channels of communication.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the overall governing body of Westminster College; its charge and responsibilities are clearly defined in the [College's bylaws](#), which were revised in May 2010. As described in Article I, "The Board of Trustees...shall have and exercise the corporate powers prescribed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It shall be responsible for overseeing the management of the College and the education of the students of the College by its administrative officers and its faculty." Ultimately, the Board and its 14 standing committees must ensure that Westminster's mission is realized in the College's curriculum, policies, and processes.

The [Board of Trustees](#) consists of no more than 40 members, plus the President of the College serving as an *ex officio* member (Article II). The President does not chair the Board or lead Board meetings – the Chair of the Board assumes these responsibilities to minimize conflicts of interest between the Board and the President in overseeing the operations of the College. There are currently 33 trustees who vote and 6 associate trustees who serve without vote.

Trustees are selected to serve upon the recommendation of the Governance Committee, leading to a vote of the full Board. Potential trustees are identified through several mechanisms: confidential nomination by the President of the College or trustees; confidential nomination by alumni and external publics; and self-nomination sent to the President of the College.

The Governance Committee reviews a list of all nominees, using a matrix outlining Board demographics, professional backgrounds, and expertise needed by the Board and that would be useful to the College. The Governance Committee debates the backgrounds, skills, and attributes of the nominees for their suitability to the Board. Recommendations are made to the full Board based upon available slots.

Once elected to the Board, trustees serve a four-year term, and this term can be renewed once. At the end of a renewed term, trustees must take one year off before they are eligible to be considered again for Board service. The College views the break in service as an opportunity for Board renewal and growth.

Eight Board slots (two per year) are reserved for nominees from the Alumni Association. Currently, the Alumni Association presents a slate of four candidates to the Governance Committee from which two are recommended for a full vote. Additionally, the Board may annually appoint up to six associate trustees—three from the faculty and three from the student body. The faculty annually recommends to the Board that the Chair of the Faculty, the Vice Chair of the Faculty, and one faculty member elected at-large serve as associate trustees. Student associate trustees are the President of the Student Government Association (SGA) and two students elected by the SGA Senate. Associate trustees serve in an advisory capacity to the Board, attending meetings and serving on Board committees, but they cannot introduce or vote on motions. The participation of associate trustees aims to ensure transparency in the Board's process of governance for all constituents and to support the College's collaborative nature of decision making. It also helps to facilitate communication across all levels of the College.

Article III of the bylaws describes the powers and duties of the Board of Trustees. The officers are the Chair, Vice Chair, President of the College (ex-officio member), Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board elects each officer to serve a one-year term, and the Board may appoint other officers as needed. Appointing officers other than the Chair, Vice Chair, or President may be delegated to the President by Board resolution. The Chair and Vice Chair may serve no more than three consecutive terms in that capacity.

To work effectively and to ensure that individual voices are heard, the Board is divided into numerous [committees](#). These committees are responsible for different functions of the College, including review of curricular and personnel decisions, the recommendation and approval of policies, and an evaluation of the College's fiscal health. These committees carry out the Board's corporate responsibilities and oversee implementation of the College's mission.

The Executive Committee is invested with most of the powers of the Board when the full Board is not in session. The Executive Committee is traditionally composed of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board, past Board Chairs who remain as trustees, the President, and the chair of each standing committee. Members of this committee are

elected annually. It has been the practice of the Executive Committee to avoid serving as a surrogate Board, except in rare instances as necessary.

Bylaws of the Board of Trustees state that the Board Chair makes the selection of members to most standing committees. The Chair seeks members' preferences prior to the appointment. Membership on certain specified committees require full board vote at the Annual Meeting. These committees include Governance, Finance, Audit, and Compliance and Investment.

For all committees except the Executive Committee, which is chaired by the Chair of the Board, the full Board elects chairs and vice chairs. Trustees, like all employees, are required to read and sign a Conflict of Interest statement each year. Conflicts are reported to the Chair of the Audit and Compliance Committee of the Board who resolves any issues.

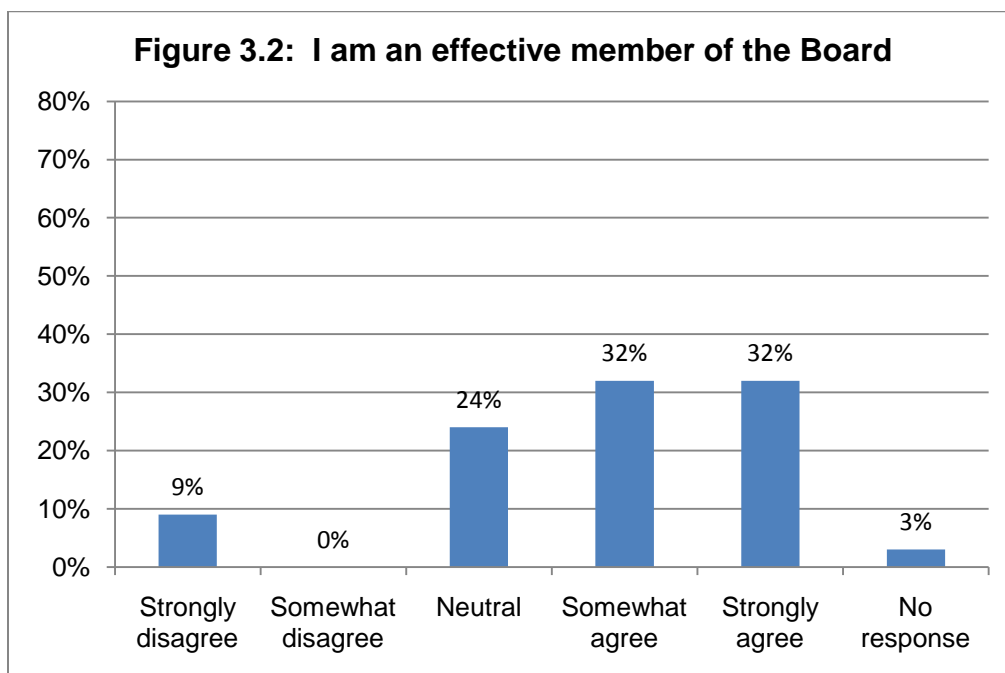
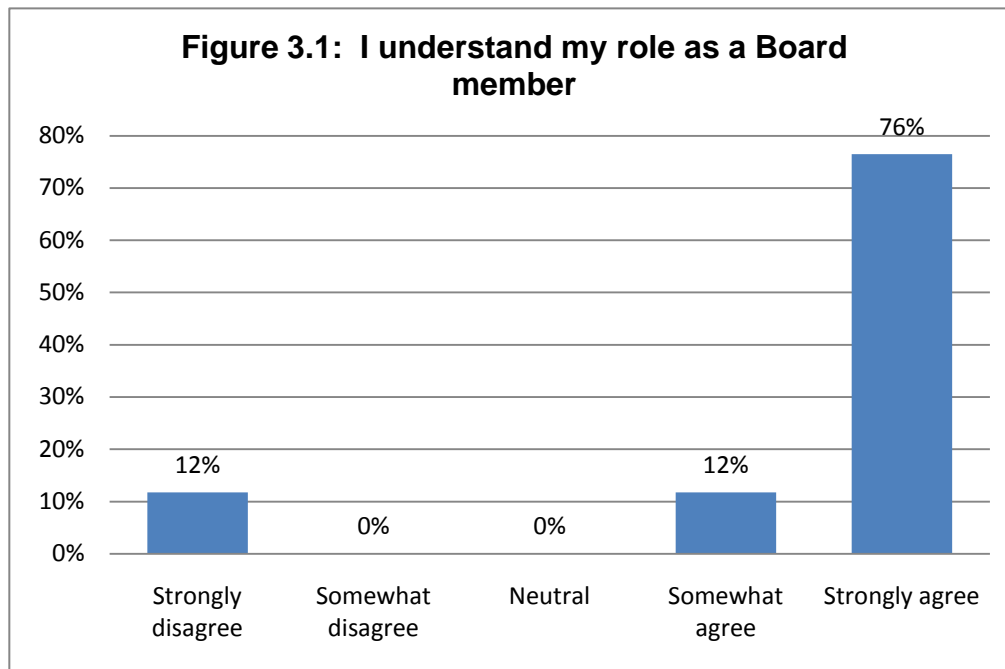
Board Meetings

The Board meets every October, February, and May. Most committees meet when the Board meets as a whole; committees may also meet outside these primary meetings, if necessary. The executive secretary to the President develops a "Board Book" with submissions by Committee Chairs (elected at May meeting) for each meeting and distributes it to trustees approximately two weeks prior to meeting so that they have ample time to consider the business of the meeting. Action items are delineated, and committee reports are included. The Board Book is retained in bound form as an official record of the meeting.

Board meetings may include presentations by various constituents as appropriate for specific committees. For example, recent meetings have included presentations by the Chair of the Investment Committee to the entire Board; administrators from the Office of Diversity Services and students to the Diversity Committee; presentations by a group of students who won a national contest in business entrepreneurship; and the Faculty Development Officer on faculty scholarship. Additionally, the President of the Student Government Association reports student issues and concerns at every Board meeting.

Having such broad participation and shared governance on the Board is of little value, though, if trustees do not understand their role in the life of the College. Generally, Westminster's trustees appear to have a firm grasp of their roles and responsibilities (Figure 3.1). Because of the very strong relationship the College and the Board share and the general understanding trustees have of their roles, it was surprising that only 64% of the trustees believe they are effective (Figure 3.2). This may be due in part to some trustees' perceptions that they lack a depth of understanding in certain topical areas of the organization over which they hold fiduciary authority. This is not uncommon among boards but does suggest the need for enhanced board education opportunities subsequent to the initial orientation when new trustees commence their

service. This is an opportunity to work with trustees to foster characteristics of effectiveness.



Board Orientation and Self-Assessment

All new trustees are expected to attend a one-day orientation program. Orientation includes discussing the Board's role at Westminster and the need not to involve themselves in the College's day-to-day operations, but rather to look more broadly at its general operations. Recently, the orientation has included distribution of two publications from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges: *Securing the Future: A Fund-Raising Guide for Boards of Independent Colleges and Universities* (Worth, 2005), and *Effective Trusteeship: A Guide for Board Members of Independent Colleges and Universities* (Ingram, 1995). These sources will help Westminster to focus on specific aspects of effectiveness, addressing the feeling of ineffectiveness that some trustees share. In Fall 2009, President Dorman reorganized the orientation to include a presentation by each member of his Cabinet to educate new trustees on the functions and objectives of his or her area. The goal of this new format was to help trustees understand how academic organizations differ from other kinds of organizations, and also to understand Westminster's mission, structure, and process.

Overall, trustees are engaged and active, and the College is fortunate to have good working relationships between the Board and other constituents. Trustees are also motivated to serve the College so that its mission is achieved. However, the College's assessment of their ability to do that has been limited, as was noted in the last self-study. No formal system for Board self-assessment has existed historically, with the exception of a 2004 survey that evaluated trustees' perceptions of their meetings and operations. In general, the Board evaluated its role in the College favorably, and trustees valued their work and relationships with each other and with broader constituents. However, in the 2009 Campus Climate Survey, trustees noted the need for more formal, ongoing assessment processes, and their responses echoed the recommendation of the 2001 evaluation team.

As part of changes made in the bylaws in Fall 2009, the President is working with the Governance Committee to develop an assessment process that allows trustees to evaluate their efforts toward meeting their responsibilities and supporting the College's mission. No longer merely charged with selecting new trustees, the Governance Committee (formerly known as the Membership Committee) is now responsible for assessing the College President, individual trustees, and the entire Board; managing membership functions; and overseeing trustee orientation. The Governance Committee recently created a document outlining trustee expectations called the [Standards of Trustee Practice](#); the Board subsequently approved these standards. The Governance Committee is considering a Board self-assessment.

Administration of the College

In addition to the Board of Trustees, the [administrative structure](#) of the College is composed of the President of the College and five Vice Presidents that constitute the President's Cabinet: 1) Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College (VPAA), 2) Vice President for Finance and Management Services (VPFMS), 3) Vice

President for Institutional Advancement (VPIA), 4) Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students (VPSA), and 5) Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions (VPE). The Vice Presidents serve at the pleasure of the President, and their responsibilities to the College are published in the *Faculty Handbook* (Section 1.4).

Since its last review, Westminster College has seen a change in more than 60% of its leadership team. After serving Westminster College for 11 years, President R. Thomas Williamson retired at the end of the 2007-2008 academic year. After a lengthy and thorough process that included input from representatives of all campus constituent groups, the College hired Dr. Richard H. Dorman to be its fourteenth president. The President of the College is its Chief Executive Officer and an *ex officio* member of the Board of Trustees. The President oversees all affairs of the institution, serves as a liaison between the Board and other constituents, and performs all acts and executes all documents to carry out the actions of the Board.

The VPAA is the chief academic officer of the College and leads the Academic Affairs area. The VPAA holds academic rank and is responsible for all faculty personnel matters, the College's curriculum and governance structure, academic program development, and supervision of academic support functions. The VPAA serves as the Acting President of the College under special circumstances. Dr. Jesse Mann, Professor of French, served as the interim VPAA in 2002, and was appointed as acting VPAA and Dean of the College in 2003. Among the VPAA's challenges has been maintaining an excellent and expert faculty. Since the last self-study, approximately 54% of the faculty is new to Westminster College. New faculty members have brought fresh ideas to the College and their impact can be seen in ongoing changes to the curriculum, scholarship, and service; but there are challenges to maintain campus culture in the face of such turnover.

The VPFMS plans, organizes, leads, and manages the financial and business operations of the College; serves as the chief financial and business officer of the College; and serves as the Treasurer of the Board. Mr. Ken Romig has served as the VPFMS since 2004. In recent years, the VPFMS has spent considerable time reviewing best financial practices and leading a number of building improvement projects on campus. The VPFMS has also demonstrated a collaborative style with campus constituents to implement change in Business Office policies.

The VPIA is the chief administrator and advisor to the President in the areas of fundraising and institutional relations, as these areas relate to Westminster's long-range goals and objectives. The VPIA oversees such functions as maintaining positive relationships with the College's alumni and donor base, marketing the College in the community, and supporting strategic initiatives and events through fundraising. Ms. Gloria Cagigas has served as the VPIA since 1999.

The VPSA oversees the offices and programs that pertain to student affairs on campus, including security and safety, career services, student health, residence life, and student judicial matters. Dr. Neal Edman has served as Dean of Students since 1996, and as VPSA since 2009.

The VPE oversees the offices of admissions and financial aid and is responsible for enrollment management. Mr. Brad Tokar has served as the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid since 2007, and as VPE since 2009. Dean Tokar has brought sweeping changes to the College's admissions practices (see Chapter 5). Since 2007, admissions staff members have more than doubled their high school visits. Along with initiatives to make a Westminster education affordable, these admissions efforts contributed to a 300% increase in the number of applications. This is perhaps the surest sign of institutional renewal. More and more prospective students recognize Westminster College as an exciting, high-value option for their college education, and they bring with them perspectives and experiences that further propel the College.

The College strives to hire administrators who can fulfill their job duties competently and work in concert with its mission. Open positions are advertised in appropriate venues. Candidates' portfolios are reviewed and selected candidates are invited to interview. Upon arrival the College provides a *Handbook for Administrators* that outlines the Mission Statement, policies, and related benefits; the handbook is under revision in response to the new administrative software the College has implemented. In addition, the College's Information Systems personnel maintain a Web page for the Office of Human Resources, providing links to policies related to [employee benefits](#). Previously, an association of full-time salaried administrative staff, the Administrative Forum, existed to identify and respond to common issues among administrators. Because of low attendance at meetings and because administrators generally felt sufficiently informed of and involved in decision making, the Administrative Forum disbanded in the late 1990s.

Among members of the administration, a familiarity with their job description and understanding of their role is very high, with 85% reporting that they were very familiar with their job description. Supervisors of administrators reinforce this knowledge, though not consistently (Figure 3.3). The vast majority of administrators also agree that they are effective and are valued members of Westminster College (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.3: How often does your supervisor review your job description with you?

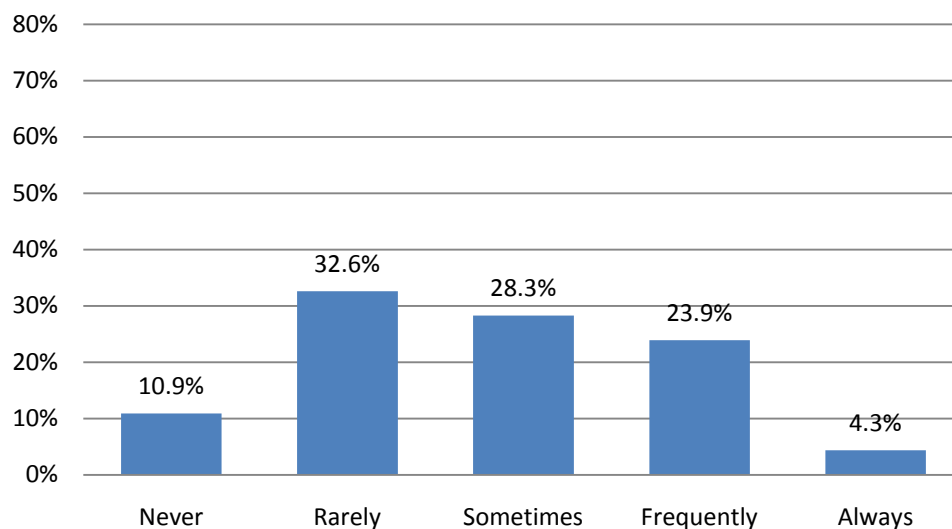
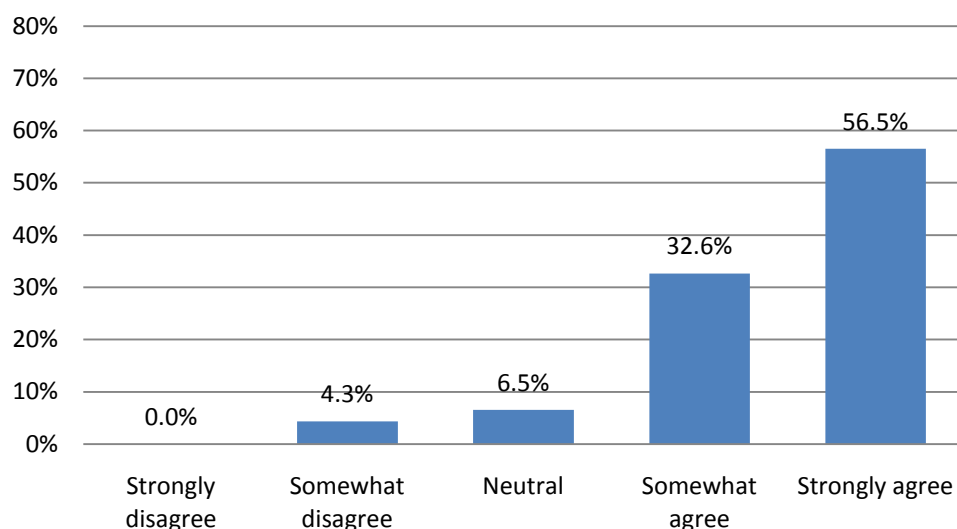


Figure 3.4: I feel like a valued member of Westminster College



In addition, the majority of administrators and support staff agreed that administrators have the appropriate skills to perform their jobs well, and that the level of administrative staffing is adequate (Figures 3.5-6). This is a perception that is shared by trustees, faculty, and students.

Figure 3.5: I believe the College Administration has the appropriate skills to perform their jobs well

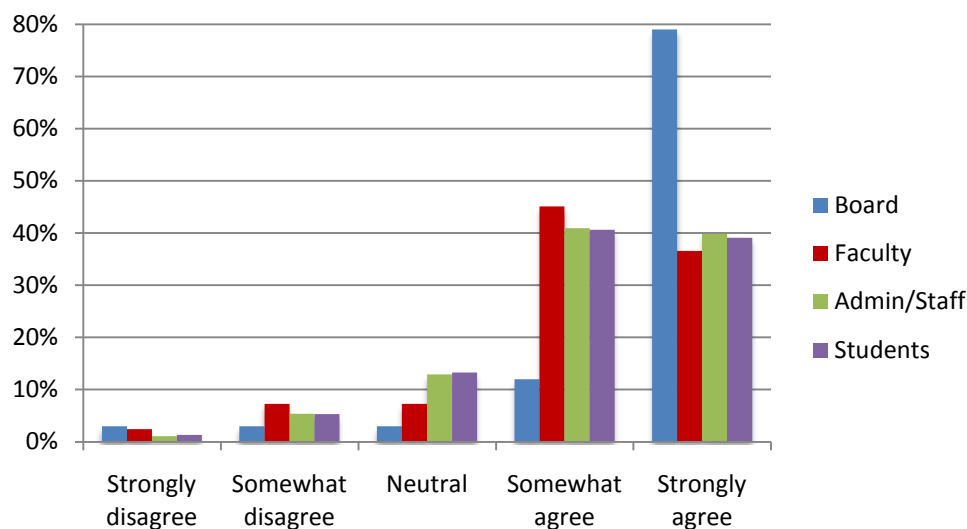
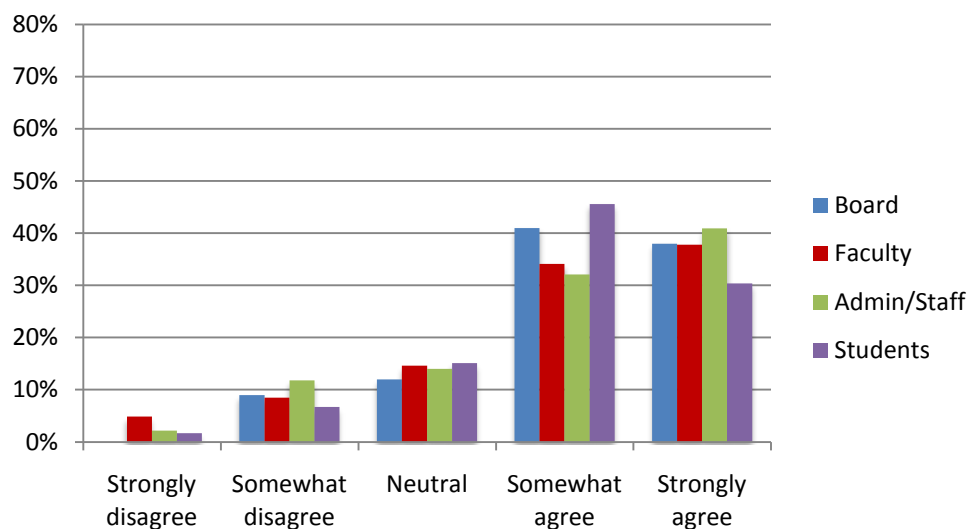


Figure 3.6: I believe that the College has sufficient Administrative staff to be effective

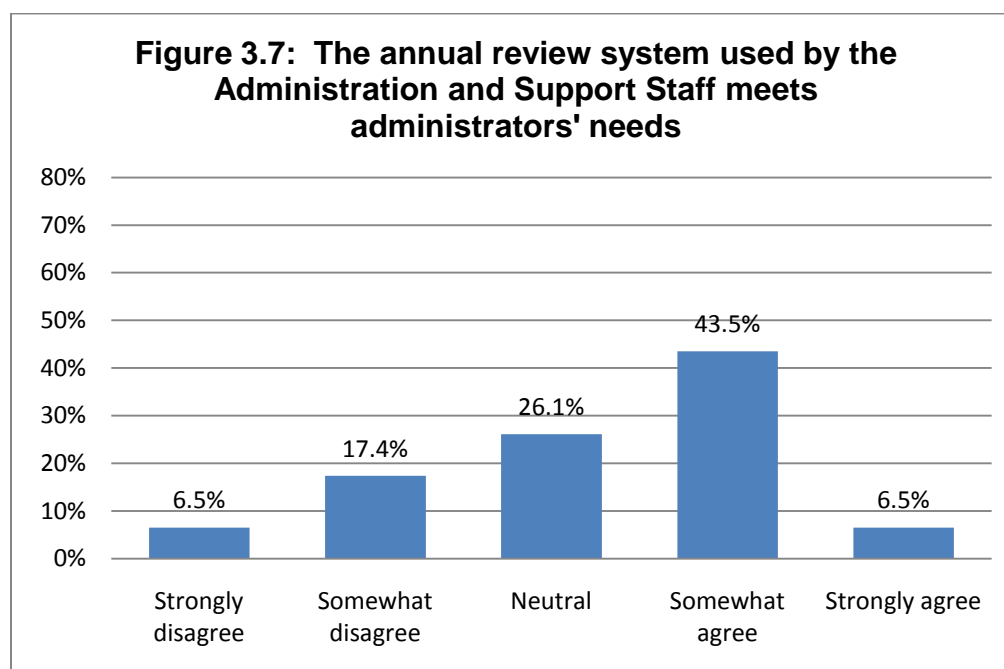


The supervisors of the administration evaluate each member annually. Historically, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees reviewed the President. Following amendments to the bylaws in 2009, the responsibility of evaluating the President now lies with the Governance Committee. Today, annual performance goals are developed by the President and submitted to the Governance Committee for approval. At the conclusion of the academic year, President Dorman submits a self-evaluation to this

committee; he considers the written document to be an opportunity to outline his goals and progress toward attaining them in a more thorough and reflective manner than what is possible in a mere interview.

For other administrators the Director of Human Resources solicits from each supervisor in July a completed Employee Performance Appraisal Form for the previous academic year. The [Performance Appraisal Form](#) guides the supervisor's assessment of an employee's performance in 11 areas considered equally applicable to both administrators and support staff (e.g., productivity, initiative). Additionally, supervisors describe an employee's specific strengths and indicate specific areas where improvement might be needed. The supervisor discusses the appraisal with the administrator and returns it to the Director of Human Resources in November.

According to the Campus Climate Survey, there is some vague dissatisfaction with the system of annual review for administrators (Figure 3.7). This dissatisfaction may reflect a number of issues ranging from the fact that, according to the Director of Human Resources, supervisors do not always conduct the review in a timely manner or at all, and/or to the belief that salary should be linked to performance. There has not been a tradition of providing merit-based salary increases. In any case, the College is working to adopt a new appraisal system that will help supervisors to be intentional in using assessment results to plan and strengthen their staff.



Also, there are few ongoing opportunities for faculty members, staff, and students to assess administrators with whom they have regular interactions. To enhance the collaborative ethos on campus, there may be value in considering broader assessment methods to include input from more constituents than just those who supervise administrators.

Faculty of the College

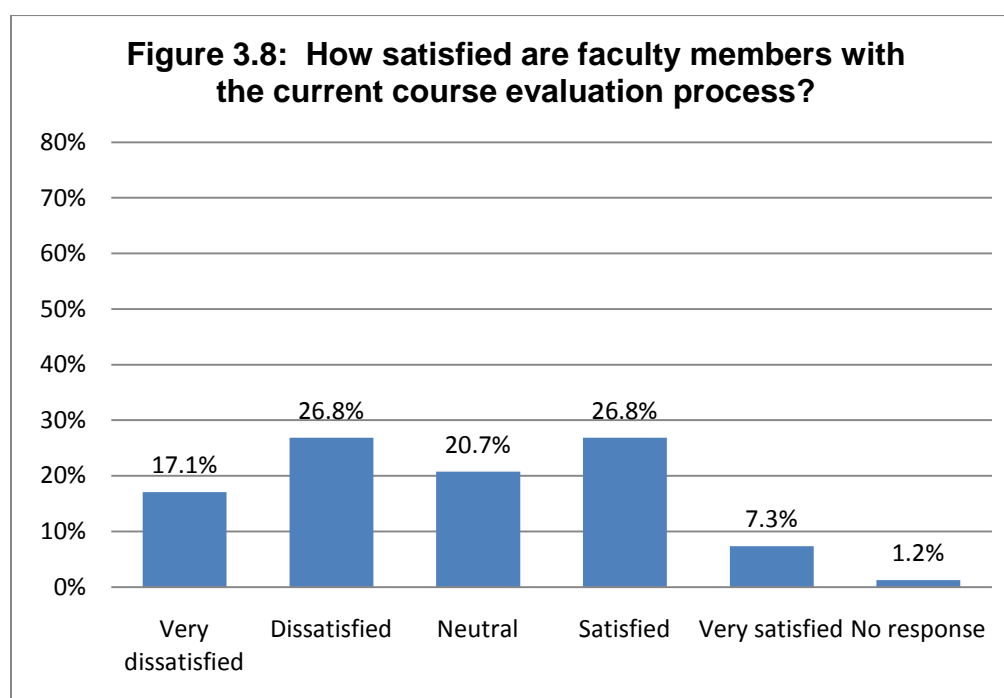
To hire the best faculty, the College publicizes nationally through advertising in appropriate publications, online, and through professional networking. One of the greatest hiring and retention challenges the College faces is its rural location. Because the school's location often makes it difficult for spouses/partners to find work nearby, the College has lost some qualified scholars/teachers to other institutions. Nevertheless, Westminster has attracted strong applicants to fill its faculty ranks.

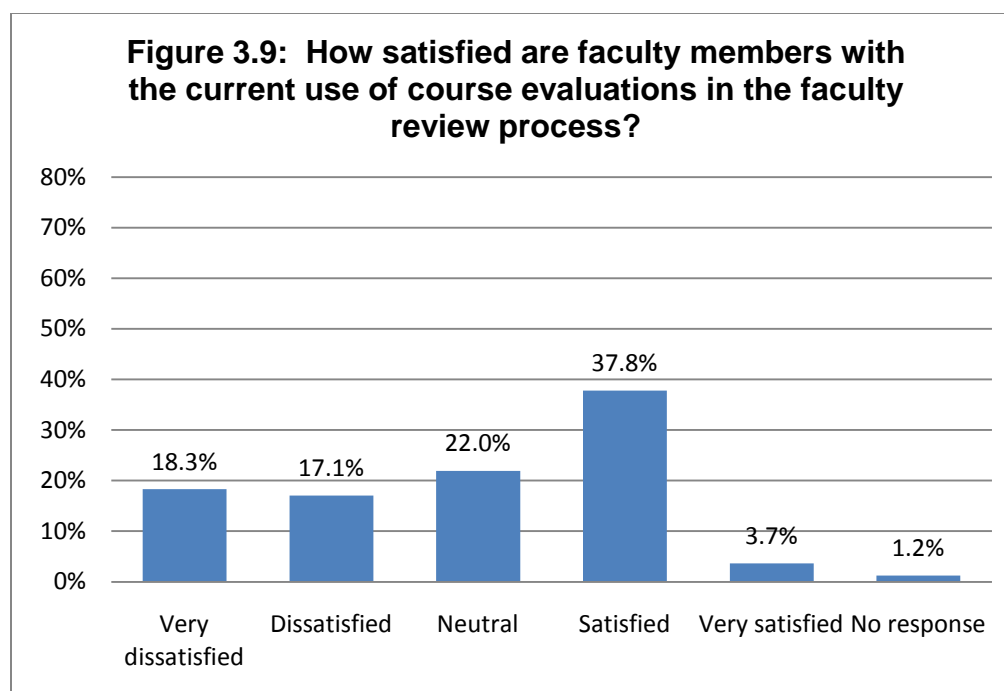
The hiring process for new tenure-track faculty members is rigorous. The basic criteria for recruitment are academic competence, measured by teaching ability or potential, and capacity for scholarly growth; support of the mission and goals of Westminster College; possession of the appropriate academic credentials; and potential to participate fully in the life of the College (*Faculty Handbook* 2.1.1.4).

Section 2 of the *Faculty Handbook* includes published standards and procedures for such actions as appointment, promotion, tenure, grievance, discipline and dismissal, based on principles of fairness with due regard for the rights of all faculty. A standardized review process across ranks ensures consistency in the evaluation process of our faculty. All full-time faculty members are reviewed annually by their chairs, except for adjunct professors who are assessed as soon as practicable. This review is based on faculty members' displayed intellectual vitality through teaching and scholarship; they also are expected to provide service commensurate with their professional competency to the College and external communities. These activities are assessed with the annual [Professional and Service Profile](#). The department chair evaluates faculty performance through student evaluations, analysis of scholarship appropriate for the discipline, and both internal and external service. Teaching is also assessed through direct classroom observation, either by the chair or another colleague. Section 2.3.7.1 of the *Faculty Handbook* states that department chairs must conduct all reviews; in cases where the faculty member under review is a chair, the department should identify a faculty member to conduct the review. This process requires a department chair's written, signed assessment that is accepted by the faculty member under review. The signed assessment is then sent to the VPAA for review and acceptance.

The College requires faculty members to be reviewed according to their contractual appointment to assure the highest standard of instructional competence is upheld, emphasizing that no professional achievement or service can compensate for poor classroom performance and/or the delivery of inadequate instructional services. As a part of the mid-probationary, tenure, and promotion review process, faculty members assemble a portfolio that includes several forms of documentation (see section 2.3.6 of the *Faculty Handbook*). The performance review also provides a means to identify individual areas for improvement. The Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC) uses this documentation to assess the performance of the faculty member under review and to provide the basis for an interview.

Important contributions are made to the portfolio by student input in the form of course evaluations and peer reviews from within and outside the respective academic department. Students have the opportunity to evaluate their courses and instructors at the conclusion of each semester by completing standardized course evaluation forms (see section 2.3.6.1.4 of the *Faculty Handbook*). These evaluations are evaluated on a course-by-course basis by the department chair and the FPC to gauge student satisfaction and to monitor how faculty address concerns that may have arisen in past course evaluations. To ensure the credibility of the student evaluations, grading profiles are also reviewed to monitor whether good evaluations are only a result of inflated grades. The Campus Climate Survey showed that about one third of faculty members are less than satisfied with the current course evaluation process and the manner in which these evaluations are used in faculty reviews (Figures 3.8-9). Consequently, FPC is reviewing the effectiveness of this process.





Additionally, past students who had worked closely with a particular professor may be asked to write letters of support for inclusion in portfolios, outlining how he or she may have influenced their lives and/or careers following graduation. Peer review exists through letters of support from the department chair, departmental colleagues, and faculty members outside the department. A chair can also request individual faculty members within the same department to provide letters of support. The department chair writes a review of the faculty member based on input from all members of the department. The advantage of the chair summarizing this input is that junior faculty can evaluate more senior faculty without fear of retaliation when their own reviews occur. Intradepartmental letters provide evidence that the candidate is serving the department well and is a productive and good colleague. Interdepartmental letters show that the faculty member under review is productive in committee work, is a good member of the community, and is serving the College outside of his or her department.

Results from the Campus Climate Survey revealed mixed faculty opinions on the transparency of employment policies and procedures. For appointment, promotion, and tenure, most faculty members viewed institutional processes as being generally transparent. Conversely, they viewed institutional policies for grievances, faculty discipline and dismissal as less transparent (Figures 3.10-11). This may be due, in part, to perceived ambiguity in how related procedures are described in the *Faculty Handbook*. The College's procedures for dealing with these kinds of faculty issues could be clearer, and the Faculty Personnel and Hearing Committees should work together to improve them. The challenge will be to balance the need for transparent procedures, while also protecting the legal rights and responsibilities that are due the College and the employee.

Figure 3.10: Faculty members' perception of the degree of transparency in faculty appointments and reviews

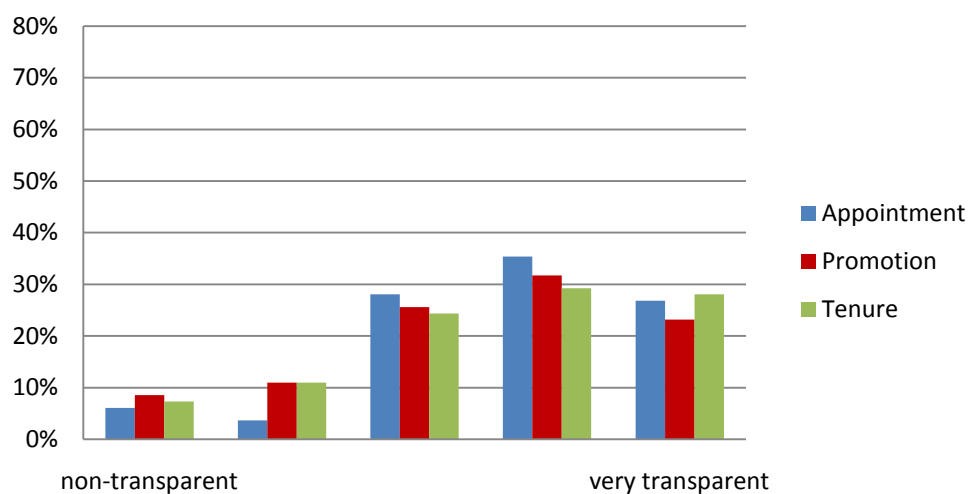
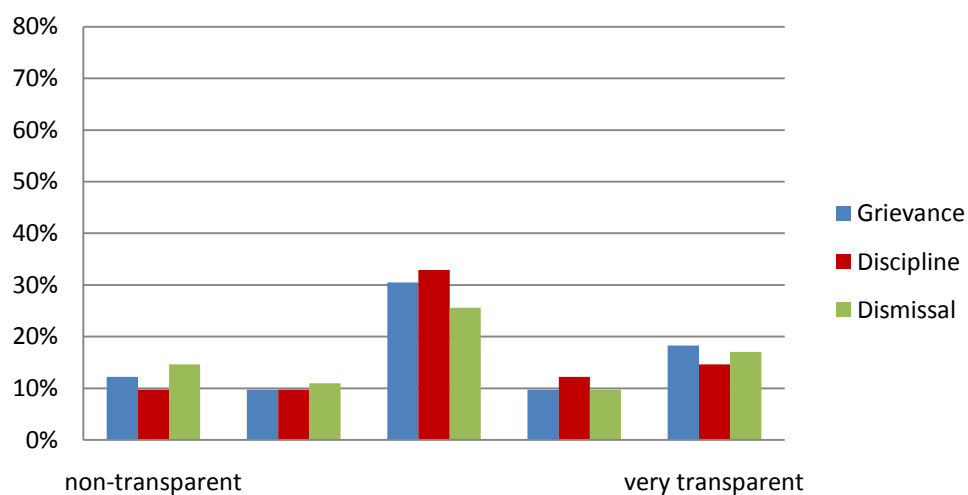


Figure 3.11: Faculty members' perception of the degree of transparency in faculty grievances, discipline, and dismissal



Faculty Participation in College Governance

Along with changes in the College's administration that were described earlier in this chapter, faculty leadership also undergoes regular, planned change. Each year the faculty elects new leadership and committee members. Because of this regular change in leadership, the faculty does not stagnate, and no one agenda is ever at the forefront.

In addition to the elected faculty leaders, each academic department is overseen by an appointed chair. Since taking his position, the VPAA has instituted a five-year rotation policy for department chairs. Rotating department chairs allows most faculty members to lead their department at least once in their career. This is yet another strategy to bring renewal and maintain collegiality to the College. Whenever there are new people in leadership roles, fresh ideas are likely to be brought forward. Moreover, by knowing that they will eventually assume leadership positions, junior faculty members have incentive to participate in College life, ensuring the integrity of the College's history and its mission.

Within the context of the Board's governance, the parameters of faculty participation in the shared governance of the College are primarily described in the *Faculty Handbook* (Section 1.5), which contains the Faculty Constitution. The responsibilities of the faculty are more specifically defined in Articles III, IV, and V of the Faculty Constitution.

Article III defines the role of the faculty in two parts: legislative and advisory. Fulfilling the legislative function, the faculty can enact rules for its own organization and procedures. The faculty can also define the educational philosophy of the College and work to establish the academic requirements for admission, retention, and graduation. Further, the faculty may establish and interpret the College's academic policies and recommend granting appropriate degrees. Regarding the advisory function, faculty members are expected to participate in the definition and implementation of policy concerning their professional status. They also have the opportunity to make recommendations concerning the selection of appropriate administrative officers; matters dealing with the College's long-range educational planning; and policies and decisions concerning co-curricular activities that have a significant effect on academic life. The Chair of the Faculty forwards these recommendations to the appropriate administrative person or body.

This article further stipulates that the exercise of faculty responsibilities may not conflict with the College's bylaws. Also any faculty actions pertaining to changes in the College's faculty employment and educational policies can take effect only after the Board of Trustees has approved them. The President of the College forwards recommendations related to these functions to the Board.

Article IV defines the mechanisms whereby the faculty exercises its legislative responsibilities via [standing committees](#), most of which are composed solely of faculty members. Faculty members are discouraged from serving on more than two committees simultaneously, and prohibited from simultaneous service on some committees (e.g., the Curriculum Development and Curriculum Operations Committees).

Article V defines the mechanisms whereby the faculty exercises its legislative responsibilities via standing committees that are not composed solely of faculty members, but that operate as part of larger [College councils](#) that also include administrators and students.

Section 1.5 of the *Faculty Handbook* describes the primary ways in which faculty members participate in College governance. Section 1.6 describes a group of [College Boards](#) that are composed primarily of administrators and that include faculty members only for the purpose of giving a faculty perspective on issues that are the concern of these Boards, but that do not deal with issues for which faculty members have responsibility. The goal is to bring together administrators with other campus constituents to focus on the organization, planning, and management of concerns and responsibilities that they share. The cross-functional committees, councils, and boards enhance communication across campus and keep all constituents informed and included in campus decision-making.

Officers of the faculty oversee the functions described in these articles, including the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Parliamentarian. Except for the Parliamentarian, who is appointed by the Chair, each officer is elected annually for a one-year term. The Chair may serve no more than two consecutive full terms. Elections for membership on committees, councils, and boards are held annually. Committees and most councils and boards have two-year terms, with half of the members rotating off each year. Faculty may hold a committee position for two successive terms but then must wait a year before serving on that committee again. The faculty has been divided into three groups that loosely approximate the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Humanities and Fine Arts, with faculty members elected for committees and most councils and boards from each of the three groups.

Overall, there is good representation on committees from full, associate, and assistant professor ranks. However, in any given year, there may be committees, councils, or boards with a majority of untenured faculty. There are two aspects of this issue. First, there is some perceived pressure for untenured faculty members to become known and provide service to the College as part of their eventual tenure and promotion reviews. However, the current VPAA has stressed that extensive committee work is not required for successful mid-probationary and tenure reviews. The second consideration relates to the number of positions to be filled and the number of eligible faculty members to fill them. Approximately 85% of full-time faculty members are eligible for elected offices. Some lecturers and instructors are eligible, but most are not. Currently the percent of tenured faculty members is just over 60% and the number of committee, council, and board positions that must be filled is over 100. Faculty members are discouraged from serving in more than two positions; however, the shared governance requires work by a substantial portion of the faculty. In 2010-2011, just over 60% held at least one elected office. On the whole, the College gains significant benefits from including untenured faculty members in its system of shared governance, but the potential stresses associated with their inclusion (e.g., workload balance, productivity, perceived pressure to support senior colleagues' beliefs and behaviors, etc.) must be monitored.

The faculty meets as a whole eight times a year while classes are in session. Most of the work is done in committees, councils, and boards and then brought to the faculty for approval. Committees and their activities are structured to reflect faculty's ongoing and evolving concerns within the context of specific charges and the College's Mission

Statement (see *Faculty Handbook* Article IV B). Ad-hoc committees are occasionally formed to reflect current faculty concerns, but only for a fixed time until their task is complete.

Committees, councils, and boards meet on a regular basis and submit written monthly reports to all faculty members via e-mail and the shared network drive before each faculty meeting. A question-and-answer period is held for committee reports at each faculty meeting. More than 50% of the faculty report that they frequently or always read the reports, with an additional 30% reporting that they sometimes read the reports. Faculty leaders have experimented with various methods of distributing these groups' reports, and there is still room to improve on faculty members reading them before meetings. Annual reports are also required of these groups.

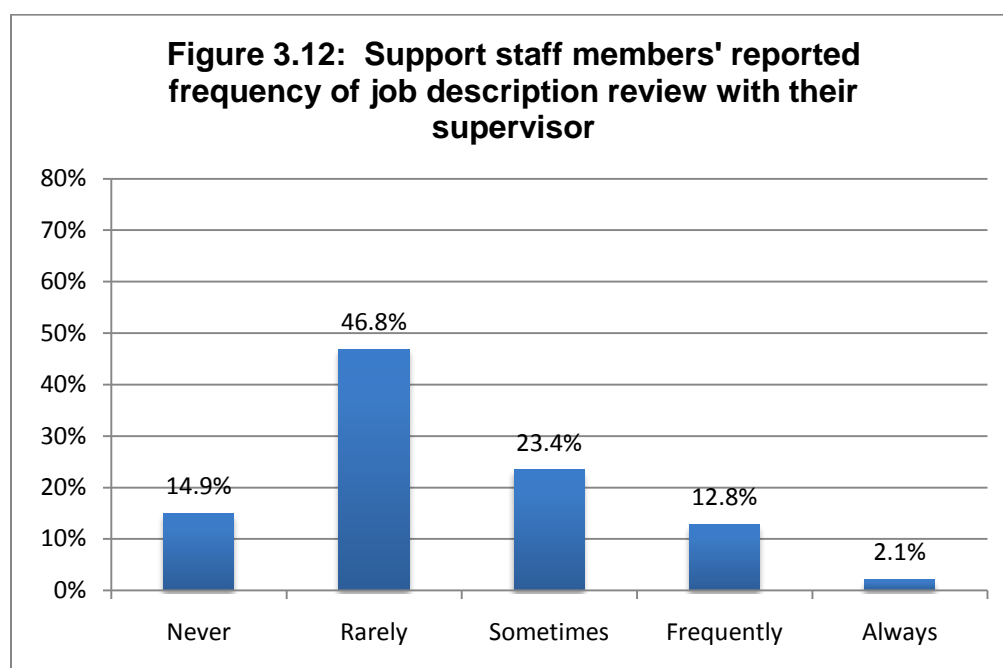
Amendments to the *Faculty Handbook* and Constitution are made as needed, and their adoption requires two readings prior to a formal vote. Faculty members review the *Faculty Handbook* approximately every 10 years to assess whether it reflects current practices. The most recent revision was made in Summer 2008. Suggested revisions were presented, discussed, amended, and approved by faculty members in 2008-2009. Subsequently, the Board of Trustees approved the changes, effective 2009-2010.

Fulfilling the College's mission is a demanding job that requires the combined skills and efforts of our Board, administration, and faculty. These constituents guide students as they develop the characteristics that we believe define humanity at its best. Perhaps not always obvious are the behind-the-scenes efforts that also help students to achieve. Such are the efforts of Westminster College's support staff.

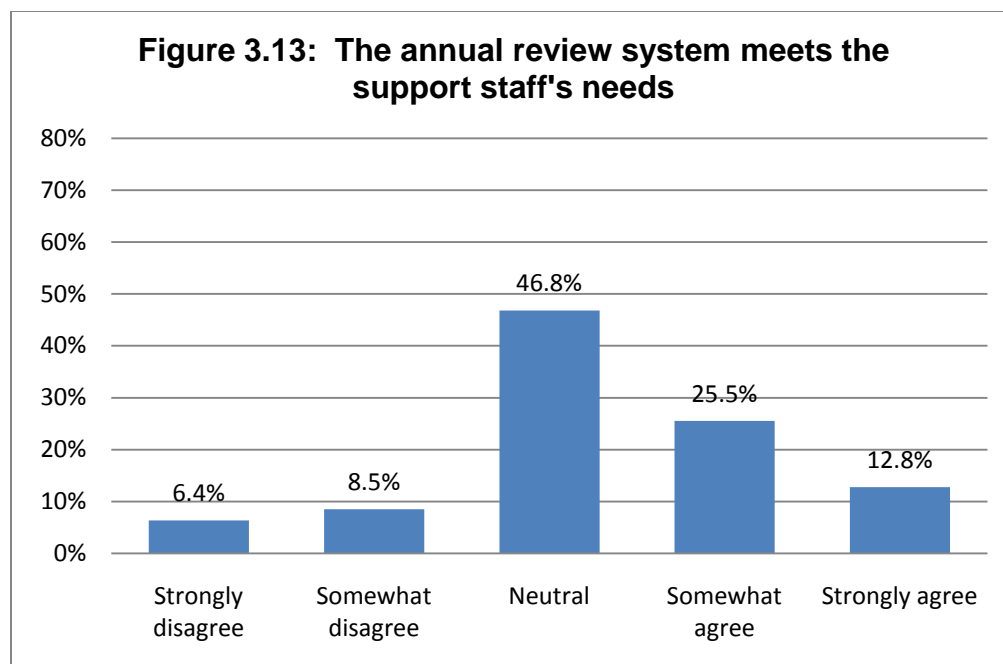
Support Staff of the College

The support staff at Westminster College includes all the non-exempt hourly employees. The major categories are physical plant, secretarial/clerical, and security. When hired, support staff members receive the *Support Staff Information and Benefits Handbook*, which outlines the College Mission Statement, rights, responsibilities, policies and benefits of interest to the staff. Some support staff report that they did not receive a copy of the handbook, so the College needs to be sure that these materials are distributed consistently. The College's Information Systems personnel maintain a Web page for the Office of Human Resources that provides links to policies affecting employee benefits. Further insight and input is afforded support staff through membership in the Westminster College Support Staff Organization (WCSSO), a voluntary association of hourly staff employees who elect officers and conduct monthly meetings. According to its mission statement, the purpose of the WCSSO is to provide a forum for identifying and responding to issues of common concern among its constituents and for initiating and facilitating action on those issues. Additionally, the President and the Vice President of the WCSSO are members of the PBIRC and represent support staff views and experiences.

Responsibility for orienting new support staff falls primarily on the supervisor, with assistance from the Director of Human Resources. The supervisor is responsible for introducing new staff members to the College's functions and facilities, their work area, and to other members of the campus community as needed. Among members of the support staff, familiarity with their job description and understanding of their role is very high, with 85% reporting that they are very familiar with their job description. Support staff supervisors reinforce this knowledge, though not consistently (Figure 3.12). Nearly all respondents agreed that they are effective and valued members of the Westminster community.



The supervisors of the support staff evaluate each member annually. In July, the Director of Human Resources solicits from each supervisor a completed Employee Performance and Appraisal Form for the previous academic year. The Performance Appraisal Form and its implementation mirror the process for administrators. Similar concerns among the support staff also arise about the timeliness of the review and the lack of any perceived linkage to salary increases (Figure 3.13). Once in place, the President's new appraisal system will help to eliminate some of this dissatisfaction once it has been implemented.



Integrity in the Student Life Environment

To support students' development as responsible campus and world citizens, the College strives to create and model an environment of transparency, fairness, honesty, and integrity in its dealings with students. To that end, the Student Code of Conduct is included in the *Student Handbook* that is available to all students in printed and electronic forms, and it includes an outline of the [judicial process](#). This code affirms the school's educational purpose, defines acceptable standards of behavior, enumerates the violations and potential penalties for violations, and describes the policies and procedures for appeals. In addition to the Student Code of Conduct, which applies primarily to individual students and non-Greek organizations, there is a similar judicial process that serves the College's fraternity and sorority system. Additional regulations, rights, and responsibilities of Greek organizations are described in the *Student Handbook*.

Discrimination and Harassment

From its inception Westminster has been committed to non-discrimination. The College's first catalog in 1853 stated that "no person will be refused admission on account of color, caste, or sex." The College recognizes the value of a diverse community and opens its doors to all. Throughout its publications, Westminster affirms its commitment to non-discrimination. The Division of Student Affairs, through its Offices of Diversity Services, Residence Life, and Disability Support Services, conducts ongoing training with students about the legal, moral, and ethical ramifications of discrimination and harassment, beginning in the Fresh Start orientation and continuing through the students' tenure on campus.

All handbooks also include information on addressing allegations of discrimination and harassment. Additionally, employee handbooks include a [Whistleblower Policy](#) that affirms the College's commitment to protecting employees' right to report misconduct without fear of retaliation. To ensure that employees are aware of Westminster's discrimination and harassment policies, the College's legal counsel conducts required annual training sessions.

Grievance Process

Faculty members have a right to grievance that is outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#). In the case of support staff, there is no official grievance policy, though Section I.IV.E of the [Staff Handbook](#) describes the process that a staff member is encouraged to follow in cases where he or she experiences "work-related problems." Basically, the problems and complaints process is an open-door policy; employees are encouraged to bring issues to their supervisors and follow the issue through the chain of command, up to and including the President, until it is resolved. Administrators would follow this same process.

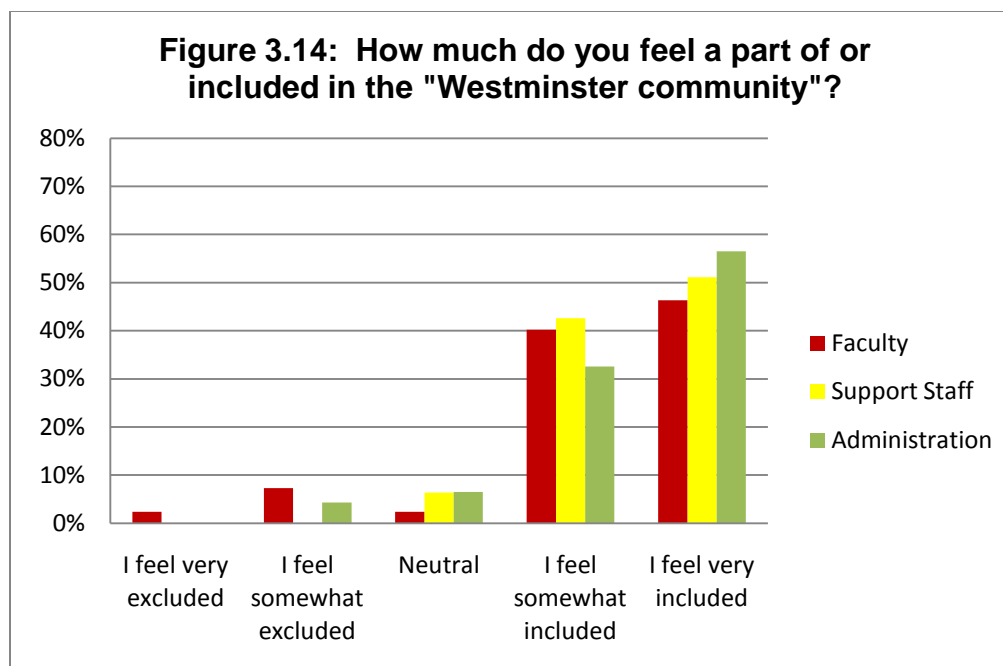
Termination

The College takes its commitment to its employees very seriously, but there are times when an employee's relationship with the College must be terminated. In all such cases the process is subject to detailed review by senior administration. The Director of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that all legal considerations are addressed, particularly in cases of dismissal for cause.

Respect

One of the hallmarks of Westminster's reputation is that it is an institution that cares about the individual. Integral to that caring is treating others with respect. In her readings from the higher education press and through discussions with faculty members and developers from other institutions in 2005, the Faculty Development Officer (FDO) identified respect as a topic that was "on the horizon" in higher learning. She subsequently administered campus-wide surveys and follow-up focus groups to evaluate Westminster's [climate of respect](#). The data showed that Westminster lives up to its commitment regarding respect for others, and those data became the basis for a faculty workshop on respect.

It is significant to note that among all campus constituents, administration, faculty, and support staff, there is a strong perception of the existence of a "Westminster community," of which it is important to feel a part (Figure 3.14). Certainly thanks to strong, mission-oriented administrative leadership and a high degree of transparency of decision-making, and perhaps in spite of some perceived weakness in the assessment processes for these groups, employees respond that they do feel included in the "Westminster community." The College views employees' sense of inclusion as an important component of the Westminster Way and will continue to stress its importance.



Westminster is indeed fortunate to have caring, dedicated, honorable, well-trained, and engaged individuals in all areas. The ability to operate in respectful ways is an important requirement for success on a small college campus, and that respect is strengthened when constituents operate with integrity for their own and others' work.

Academic Freedom and Integrity

For any college to operate with openness, integrity, and respect, its constituents must have reasonable assurances that the ethos of academic freedom is protected. To this end, Westminster College adopted a modified version of the [Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure and Freedom and Responsibility](#), authored by the American Association of University Professors (1940). This policy was adopted by the faculty on October 9, 1969, and approved by the Board of Trustees on October 24, 1969. The policy protects activities related to teaching, research/scholarship, and professional service, and it describes the obligations of a responsible faculty member in the context of academic freedom. Although the policy protects the activities of all faculty members and students, it does not appear in the *Undergraduate Catalog* or the *Student Handbook*; nor does the policy include information on how violations of or threats to academic freedom are handled, except that the process for sanctioning a faculty member should be fair. Academic freedom violations involving sexual harassment or academic integrity have their own policies and adjudication procedures.

In May 2005, the faculty approved Westminster's current [Academic Integrity Policy](#), which was subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees. The policy is included in the *Graduate* and *Undergraduate Catalogs*, the *Student Handbook*, the *First-Year Program Reader*, and in multiple locations online. Additionally, the VPAA and chair of the Academic Standards Committee regularly remind faculty of their obligation to

comply with the policy when student misconduct occurs. The policy was revised slightly in 2007 after the first Academic Integrity Review Board (AIRB) to clarify roles of those participating on the board and to streamline the appeals process. For example, requirements for the student's letter of appeal were specified and the procedures for replacing the VPAA in cases where his/her recusal was necessary were added. Since 2005 when the policy was approved, 132 violations have been reported to the VPAA. Eleven AIRBs have been conducted, and all but one student accepted the board's decisions.

To assist faculty members in teaching students about the importance of working with integrity, the College began its subscription to "Turn It In" in 2005. This online software allows students and faculty members to evaluate the originality of student work by comparing it with a large database of other people's work. Many faculty members now use this software to teach students about plagiarism and the citation norms in their disciplines by allowing students to see Turn It In's originality report and to modify their work before they submit their final papers.

Integrity in Scholarship and Research

Westminster is primarily a teaching institution, but faculty members are expected and encouraged to contribute to their disciplines through scholarship and research. All Westminster researchers and scholars are expected to operate according to the broad principles that define ethical behavior in any research environment. The Institutional Research Review Committee (IRRC) reviews and approves research designs involving human and animal subjects, using formal [processes](#). Various disciplines operate under the specific guidelines of their professional organizations (e.g., The American Psychological Association, The American Chemical Society, and the National Association of Schools of Music). The College remains responsive to changing federal requirements regarding research. Proof of ethics training is now required or encouraged to apply for many grants and to publish in professional journals. Such organizations as the Center on Materials and Devices for Information Technology Research, which is supported by the National Science Foundation, offers tutorials and certification for responsible research. The IRRC should consider ways to incorporate some of the tutorials or the entire certification process into its review of research protocols, when appropriate. This would help to ensure that student and employee researchers are acting in accordance with federal guidelines and the College's expectation for ethical conduct.

Intellectual Property and Acceptable Use

Westminster College's [Intellectual Property policy](#) was approved by the faculty in April 2005 and appeared in the *Faculty Handbook* for the first time in 2009-2010 (Section 3.1.10). Faculty Personnel and Faculty Development Committees are responsible for the Intellectual Property Policy, at least for revisions. Intellectual property is protected as part of the Academic Integrity Policy, such as in cases where students violate

copyright policy. The Library includes a copyright policy on its Course Reserves form that is used by faculty members, in the *Faculty Handbook*, and with the informational materials that are given to new faculty members. The copyright policy will be added to the Library's Web site in its next revision. The Print Shop includes a generic copyright restriction notice for all duplication orders, but there is no additional information on its Web site regarding copyright protections and use. Audio Visual Services (AVS) presents 14 links on general copyright/fair use information. More specifically, AVS denotes copyright issues for each item on its catalog record; thus, anyone searching the collection online will see acceptable use for specific items in our holdings, and this is viewed as a model for informing constituents of acceptable use policies. There is no evidence of an Intellectual Property policy in the *Support Staff Handbook*.

The College's Information Systems department created a [Policy for Responsible Use of Information Resources](#) that specifies the College's expectations of appropriate use of campus information resources. Those expectations cover activities related to the library, audiovisual services, computing, and telephone services, and they focus specifically on using the College's resources with integrity. The policy also describes the College's respect for intellectual labor, academic freedom, and individual privacy for behaviors that conform to legal standards, further supporting Westminster's commitment to these ideals. This policy is available online via the Information Systems Web page and in various handbooks for constituents.

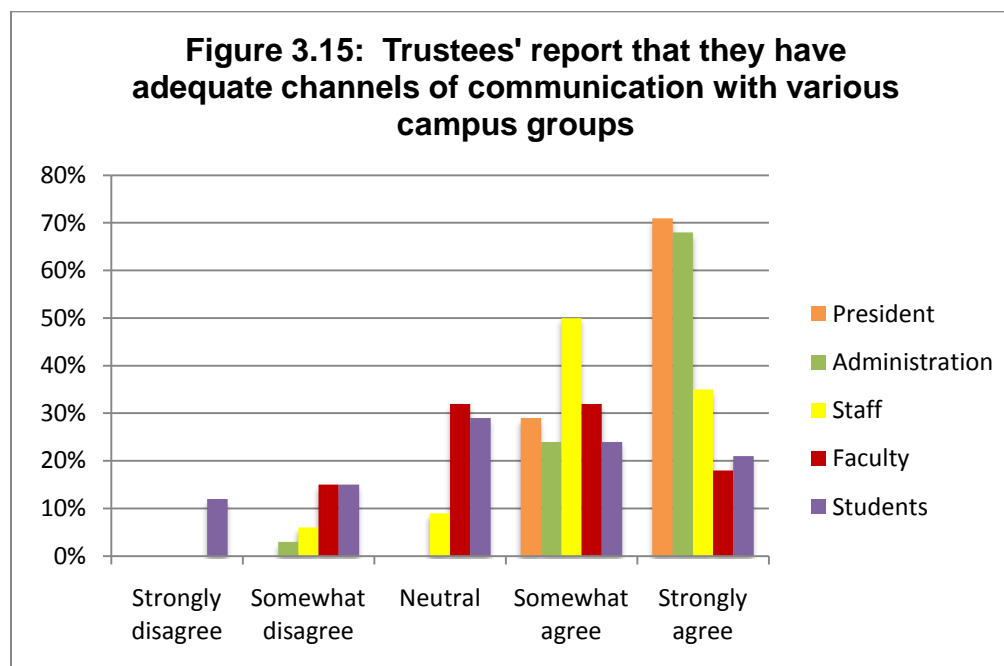
Ensuring Open Communication Among Constituents

The channels of communication among the various constituents of the College and their perceived effectiveness are central for decision making, shared governance, and overall transparency of process. Consequently, it was an important part of the self-study to understand how well information flows among constituents. We were particularly interested in whether or not perceptions of communication effectiveness are congruent across groups on campus and what factors may underlie any discrepancies.

The Board of Trustees communicates with the campus through the President, who routinely disseminates a report of Board actions to all College constituents. The previous president delivered this report during all-campus meetings that took place with the PBIRC following the three Board meetings; nearly 70% of the administration/support staff indicated that they "always" or "frequently" attended these meetings. The current president has elected to provide this summary in a written report that is available electronically to all campus constituents ("Campus Downloads"), ensuring that everyone has ongoing and equal access to information about Board actions. All College employees have a College e-mail account, including the custodial staff through a recently added service; e-mail is now designated as the College's formal means of communication. Printed copies of relevant e-mails are posted for those employees who do not have direct or regular access to a campus computer. Important reiterations of Board actions occur when the President communicates its issues and actions during Cabinet meetings (bi-weekly) and Faculty meetings (monthly). Cabinet members are

then responsible for making sure their staff (administrative staff and department chairs) receives information essential to decision making on other levels.

The Campus Climate Survey addressed the perceived effectiveness of communication channels at the College among all campus constituents. The Board of Trustees' responses reveal that they believe they have adequate channels of communication with all campus groups, especially with the President and administration (Figure 3.15).



In general, all other constituents were less favorable in their ability to communicate with the Board. At Westminster, we are intentional in formalizing communication lines with the Board. That is, each constituent group has representatives (e.g., associate trustees) who communicate its concerns and ideas to the Board. Additionally, chairs of standing faculty committees meet with the Educational Policy Committee of the Board each year to report on matters of governance and leadership at the faculty level. These formalized channels ensure that the Board is not overwhelmed by individual communications, and that issues are being raised and addressed at appropriate levels so that the Board can focus on its broader institutional work and not on administrative matters. Thus it is important to educate various constituents on the appropriate channels for communicating with the Board and that the College does not consider personalized, direct communication with the Board a “best practice”.

In evaluating the communication between administration and support staff, the vast majority of the administration and support staff agreed that they have adequate channels of communication with each other, and that they have adequate channels of communication with the President (Figures 3.16-18).

Figure 3.16: Support staff members' report that they have adequate channels of communication with administration

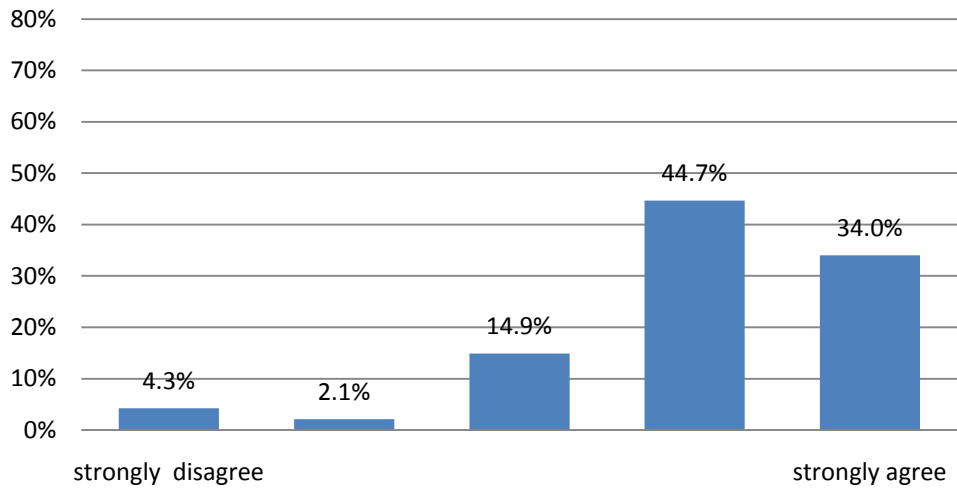
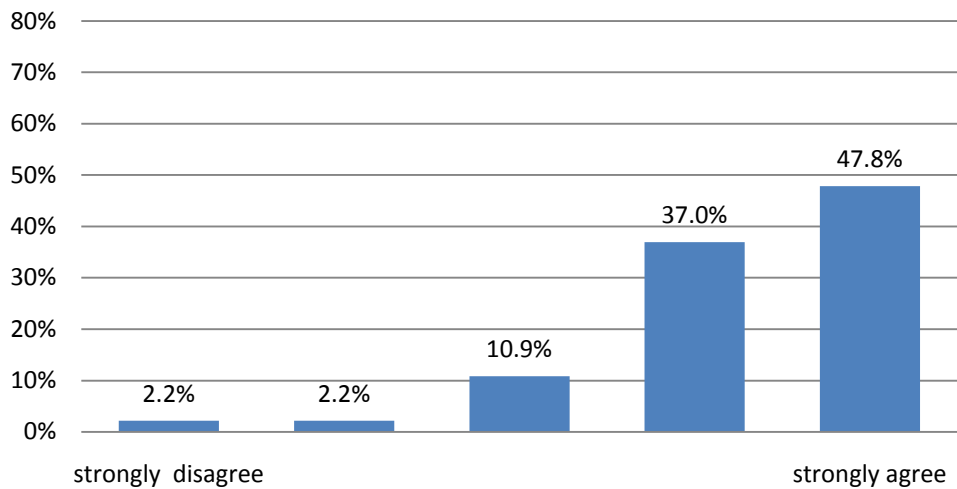
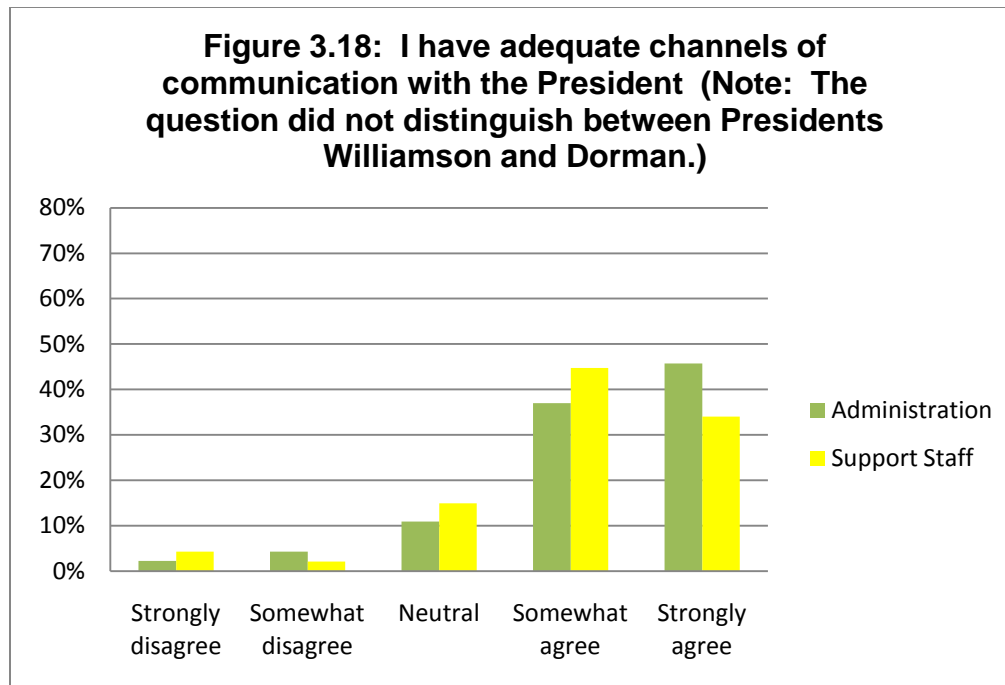


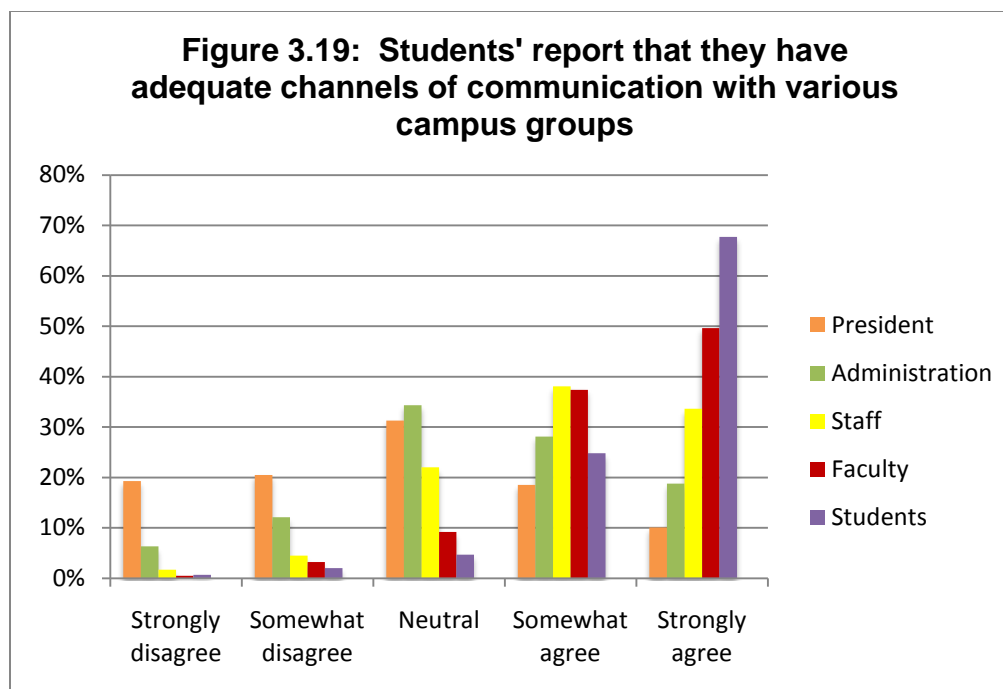
Figure 3.17: Administrators' report that they have adequate channels of communication with staff members





Student Perceptions

A notable proportion of students disagreed that there are adequate communication channels with the President, although no distinction was made between the former and current Presidents. This evaluation is surprising, given the Presidents' regular efforts to meet with students through informal lunches and formal meetings of the Student Government Association. Students indicated that these channels were much stronger with the support staff and somewhat stronger with the administration (Figure 3.19).



Communication with External Constituents

The Communication Services staff and the Office of Admissions work closely to ensure that all information, including photographs, in College publications accurately reflects the College. Institutional data and program descriptions are accessible in various electronic and print media produced by the College. The work of these two departments has contributed greatly to Westminster's increase in applications over the past two years.

Publications tend to be accurate and every effort is made to construct them through an integrated process, but the fast pace of the academic year and the increased availability of publication software sometimes lead to disconnects between academic departments and Communication Services. Departments often find it more convenient and faster to create their own program-specific materials. A sampling of departmental brochures was collected during a Campus Visitation Day in 2007. Over half of the publications were produced by the departments independently of the Admissions or the Communication Services Offices. These independent publications lacked consistency in terms of information presented, and did not follow Westminster's [Identity & Style Guide](#). The College faces similar problems with departments choosing not to use Westminster's somewhat restrictive Web template. This can lead to a diminished brand and problems with Web navigability.

The relatively small Communication Services staff maintains an active schedule, writing and distributing over 400 non-athletics news releases and over 3,000 hometown news releases each year, resulting in an average of 14 million potential readers each month. Sports Information staff members produce an additional 400 releases annually.

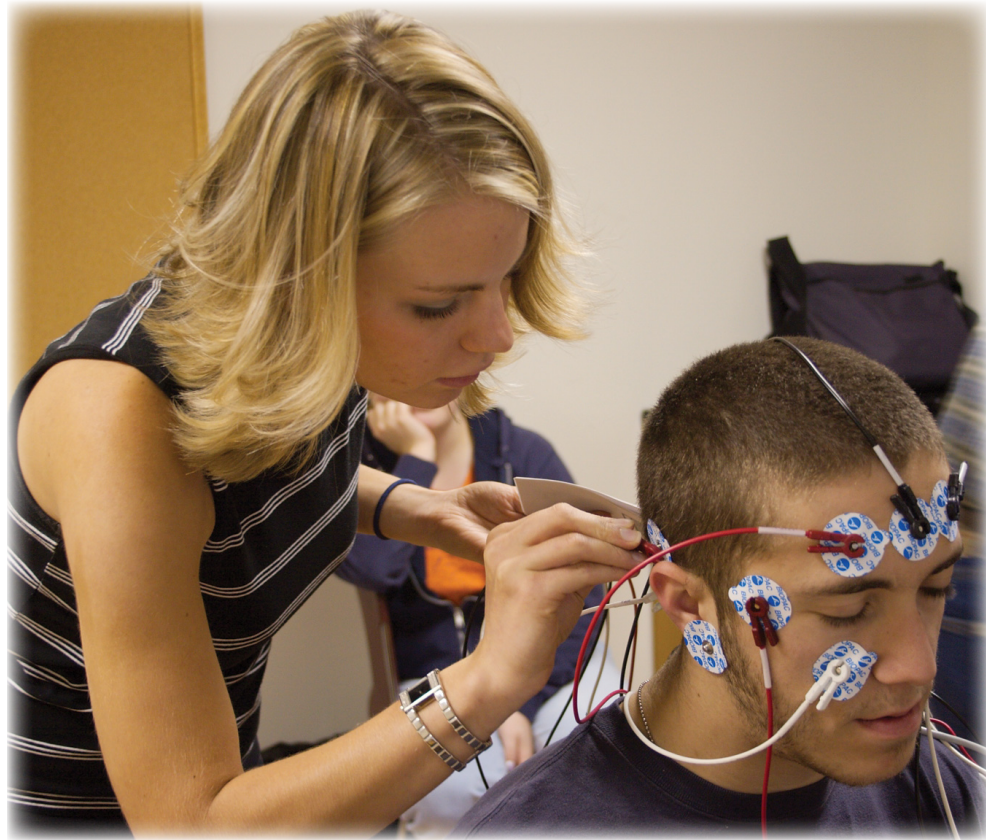
News releases are posted regularly on the College Web site. Three are selected randomly from the past seven days of releases to appear on the home page. Different releases are displayed with each refresh of the page. Exceptional news releases (new president, establishment of a waiting list, etc.) are given a non-rotating spot on the home page for a designated time, and there appears to be an emphasis on the collaborative efforts of Westminster students and faculty in College news releases. Communication Services has a more liberal policy of publicizing accomplishments than any of Westminster's peer institutions.

The success of the College's efforts to achieve its mission depends largely on its constituents' ability to lead effectively, to work cooperatively and with integrity, and to have open communication channels with each other. Generally, results from the Campus Climate Survey suggest that Westminster has fared well in making sure these abilities are present and supported. However, there are areas for improvement.

Recommendations

1. Not all trustees fully understand their role on the Board or believe they are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities to the College. This condition is likely correlated with length of service on the Board. Consequently, the College should identify the key characteristics of Board effectiveness and ensure that they are fostered through orientation and continued education of our trustees. President Dorman has begun initiatives to that end.
2. Supervisors should strive to evaluate their staff more consistently to identify development opportunities. Additionally, the College should consider how to include broader constituent feedback when evaluating the performance of administrators, support staff, and faculty. This broader assessment should be intentional, mission-focused, and ongoing.
3. With the implementation of a new administrative software system, the *Handbook for Administrators* is being revised. The College should also revise the *Support Staff Handbook* and ensure that it is distributed consistently and made available to support staff members.
4. The College should work to develop a more effective system of coordinating Communication Services operations with program-specific materials developed by departments. This will lead to better publicity for individual departments and greater consistency across publications.

Learning...



“For four years as an English major, I heard my professors say this repeatedly; if you can communicate effectively through the written and spoken word, you can do any job in the world. We’ll teach you how. I didn’t necessarily believe them then. I absolutely believe them now. Writing and speaking were the foundation of my liberal arts experience, and they are the tools that I use every day as a professional person.”

-- Richard Dalrymple '82
Dallas Cowboys Public Relations Director

The Westminster Way

Chapter 4: The Student Experience

The development of core ideals and skills that help students achieve their personal goals and those understood to distinguish human beings at their best is at the heart of Westminster's mission. This process begins even before students matriculate and continues throughout their tenure at Westminster. Assessing how the student experience reflects the Mission Statement and enhances Westminster's intellectual community is an important part of understanding the College's identity and where improvements can be made.

Throughout the last decade, Westminster has worked to maintain its strong admissions profile, retention rates, and graduation rates. The success of this work is reflected in the average profile of first-year students over the last 10 years (3.38 recalculated GPA, 23 ACT, 1078 SAT in math and critical reading). These numbers compare well with national averages (21 ACT and 1021 SAT) over the same time span. Westminster's first-year to sophomore retention rate has ranged from 85% – 90%, and our six-year graduation rate is 77%. This graduation rate has Westminster ranked nationally in the top 15, or 4%, of all liberal arts colleges in the United States.

The Office of Admissions provides prospective students with accurate and thorough information about the academic and extracurricular programs that Westminster offers, making admissions processes transparent. The staff is composed of five counselors and the Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions (VPE), who all work closely with academic affairs personnel, faculty, and our communications department to produce literature that informs students well and markets the College effectively. This information is also posted on the College's Web site. Faculty members, current students, administrators, and alumni all participate in admissions programs so that prospective students are well informed and so that the College meets its enrollment goals. From 2001 to 2008, Westminster has averaged 360 first-year students. In 2008 and 2009 the College welcomed two of the largest [first-year classes](#) in over 20 years (450 students) and instituted a waiting list for both classes. In 2010, the College welcomed 403 first-year students.

Student Admissions: Standards, Programs, and Procedures

Westminster seeks students who possess the educational background, academic ability, and motivation that indicate potential for success in a small liberal arts college. Through careful admissions procedures, the College ensures that student capabilities, interests, and needs fit well with its programs and traditions.

Prospective students receive monthly communications beginning in February of their junior year. These include e-mails, mailings, and personal contacts from counselors and faculty. The College's communication pieces contain information about academic programs, financial aid, admissions requirements, and extracurricular activities.

Printed and online copies of the College's [Undergraduate Catalog](#), which includes course descriptions, are available to all first-year students before they begin classes. Once students are admitted to Westminster, they receive an invitation to a private online community. Here they can learn more information about the College and become more engaged with current students, faculty members, and other accepted students. During the recruitment period for the Class of 2012, 210 accepted students joined this community and 70% matriculated. This compares favorably to the 14% yield among accepted students who enrolled in the College but did not participate in the online community. It is likely that accepted students who are most interested in Westminster would join an online community, and this is one explanation for the strong matriculation rate. Nevertheless, this comparison argues for the value of an online community for accepted students. This online community is just one of several examples that Westminster uses technology to improve our recruiting efforts.

The College strongly encourages prospective students to visit campus, and the last two years have produced a [record number of visitors](#). Prospective students and their families meet with an admissions counselor and receive information about academic programs, extracurricular programs, the admissions process and requirements, and financial aid. The family is then taken on a tour of the campus by a trained volunteer student guide; this tour was recently [audited](#) for effectiveness by an external consultant. This audit led to several changes that have improved the campus tour, including focused visits of facilities that are central to the life of the College and visits with representatives from departments that match prospective students' academic and co-curricular interests. Over 100 students apply for tour guide positions each year, and 70 are selected to provide tours, greet families in the Admissions Office, and contact accepted students to answer follow-up questions. The College deeply values these student volunteers because they offer additional perspectives on Westminster that help prospective students evaluate their fit with the College. At the conclusion of the tour, the prospective student can meet with a professor from the area that interests him or her. After this appointment, the student has the option of meeting with a coach and/or having lunch on campus.

The Enrollment Management Council (EMC) guides admissions efforts. The EMC is composed of six elected faculty members, four administrators, and two student representatives chosen by the Student Government Association. This council meets regularly to review current admissions strategies and enrollment numbers, to discuss ways to market the College effectively, and to plan ways to increase faculty involvement in the recruitment process. The council also uses data analyses to choose appropriate recruiting strategies. The Enrollment Planning Service, for example, provides the College with the number of high school students who have their SAT scores sent to Westminster and from where they are coming. The data are categorized into geomarkets and include the 25 high schools that submitted the most scores, helping admissions counselors to plan their travel effectively.

Westminster also uses Accepted Student Questionnaire (ASQ) data provided by The College Board and Student Insights Incorporated to make admissions-related plans.

Accepted students who decide to attend Westminster and accepted students who decide to go elsewhere provide opinions about Westminster and comparative data with the College's five main competitors. These data reveal the key influences on students' decisions, and they shape the College's scholarship and financial aid strategies and marketing focus on graduation and placement rates. The College Board also supplies Enrollment Planning Service, and this tool gives us information about demographics, high schools in our recruitment area, and comparative SAT scores. These data help to plan high school visits and name searches. Summaries of these analyses and the decisions based on them are presented to the President's Cabinet, EMC, and other interested constituents.

Faculty members play an active role in recruiting. Every department has a faculty representative at campus visitation days and receptions held for accepted students. They are also available to meet with prospective/accepted students throughout the academic year to explain programs and answer questions, though some departmental faculty are more available than others. Each year, admissions counselors offer to meet with representatives of all academic departments to share admissions practices and to receive updated information to share with prospective students. This offer is accepted by most departments on a regular basis, and this ensures that the admissions and academic areas are appropriately and mutually informed. Additionally, the VPE addresses the faculty twice annually to provide enrollment data and to inform faculty of opportunities to be involved in admissions programs. The Office of Admissions hopes to increase faculty involvement in other areas of the admissions program. For example, admissions counselors plan to include meeting with faculty members as a part of every visit, so prospective students visit with a department representative of their choice. They also plan to have faculty-led department tours at all individual visits and campus events.

The admissions staff works closely with the Department of Athletics in recruiting qualified student-athletes. The VPE meets annually with this department to update all coaches on any changes in admissions policies and to provide current academic information. They are also provided with updated admissions literature to distribute to prospective student-athletes. The coaches participate in all visitation days and receptions for accepted students. The football coaching staff holds approximately 10 recruit visit days throughout the year, and representatives from the admissions and academic area meet with these groups to discuss the admissions and financial aid process. Other coaches have similar programs, and an admissions counselor is always included to share information.

Three times during the year, the VPE presents strategies and current admission statistics to the Board of Trustees. There is an Enrollment Management Committee of the Board that approves enrollment goals and the strategies to reach them. The trustee chairing this committee receives weekly updates regarding enrollment numbers.

Westminster operates with a non-binding early action program with a deadline of November 15. Beginning in December, the College uses a rolling admissions program. Admissions standards are consistent across students and based on educational

background and academic ability. Consistent with the College's mission and affirmative action statement, admissions decisions are made without regard to financial need, race, color, national origin, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, handicap, or religion. The academic criteria for admissions are based on historic data from successful students. The admissions staff reviews every application individually and considers both the nature of the courses and the quality of the work indicated on the applicant's secondary school transcript. During high school events and campus visits, admissions counselors encourage students to take accelerated or honors courses in high school. During transcript evaluation, a student's grade point average is recalculated based on a minimum of six semesters beginning in ninth grade and includes only college preparatory academic units completed by the student.

The Financial Aid Office is composed of the Director of Financial Aid—who reports to the VPE—the Assistant Director, and a Financial Aid Assistant. In August prior to a prospective student's senior year, the admissions staff sends information, both in the mail and online, to over 100,000 rising high school seniors regarding merit-based scholarships. Also, the parents of all inquiring students receive literature explaining the financial aid process in October of the student's senior year. At every Visitation Day, prospective families attend a financial aid presentation by the Director of Financial Aid to explain the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, expected family contributions, scholarships, grants, loans, and the procedures to apply for them. For both prospective and current students, daily appointments with the Financial Aid staff are also available. Financial aid packages are sent to accepted students beginning in March of their senior year, prior to our May 1 deadline for a matriculation decision.

Westminster carefully monitors its cohort default rate, consistent with amendments to the Higher Education Act. The national average default rate (5.2%) and the default rate in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (3.8%) are larger than the College's default rate from 2004-2008 (1.1%, 1.0%, 1.4%, 2.3%, and 1.3%, respectively).

Students who have attended another accredited institution may apply as transfer students. On average, the College accepts 40 transfer students each year. The acceptable GPA for [transfer admissions and transferrable credits](#) is communicated through a brochure and online. Westminster also participates in a number of cooperative programs that facilitate transfer from local two-year institutions.

Westminster College also has programs that focus on adult learners. The Office of Adult and Graduate Studies provides opportunities for [adults](#) to complete their undergraduate education (see Chapter 6). The enrollment in this program has averaged about 60 full-time equivalent (FTE) students in recent years.

Westminster has six graduate education programs. The [graduate admissions policies](#) are published in the *Graduate Catalog* and online. These policies meet the requirements of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Chapter 354 regulations. Advising handbooks, which include comprehensive information for all certification

programs, are available in printed and electronic form. The enrollment for the graduate program has averaged 155 students over the past decade.

Despite strong enrollment and retention, there are many challenges Westminster must address. The College is located in an economically depressed area, as noted in Chapter 1. First and foremost, the cost of a private education and the discount rate at Westminster remain high (see Chapter 2). The overall discount rate for 2008 was 43%, and 98% of current students receive financial assistance, primarily through merit scholarships. As tuition has increased, the average student need is slightly over \$23,000/year. Shrinking state and federal aid have exacerbated financial and retention concerns. Part of Westminster's long-range plan is to increase the amount of endowment per student. Within the next 10 years, the College will attempt to increase its endowment, which will help to fund many of the scholarships and grants students receive. This would have a positive effect on the discount rate while keeping a Westminster education affordable for our students. There has never been a shortage of qualified students who want to attend Westminster—the College's reputation is favorable—but in some years the ability to afford a Westminster education has been a challenge to some prospective and current students.

A second challenge shared by many colleges is the desire to increase diversity on campus. Westminster offers several scholarships that are targeted toward minority students, and information about those scholarships is publicized only to those students (a standard practice among colleges and universities). Despite such targeted scholarships for minority students, Westminster has had little success in recruiting large cohorts of minorities. The College's self-reported [minority population](#) is approximately 3% – 4%, and this proportion has remained fairly constant in the last 10 years. The current lack of diversity among the student body and faculty is an obstacle, but one that we continue to work to overcome. The Admissions Office purchased more student names, which increased the number of prospective minority students. A counselor was assigned to follow up with these students and target visitation to high schools with large minority populations to ensure they received information about Westminster and the opportunities minority students could have here. This yielded 24 minority students in the first-year class in 2008, an almost 100% increase from 2007. We hope to build on this success in future years. Also, the College's average [retention and graduation rate for minority students](#) (42%) is comparable to national averages (44%).

In addition to racial diversity, the College would like to increase the geographic diversity of its students, including the number of foreign students who study at Westminster. There is no question that Westminster is a regional college, and its [primary market](#) lies within a 200-mile radius. Being located in western Pennsylvania near the Ohio border, 94% of enrolled students are from these two states. This, coupled with the shrinking pool of high school students from this area, may force the College to expand to other markets. One scholarship program that has helped us to achieve this goal is the [Young Presbyterian Scholarship](#). Presbyterian churches across the United States receive information about this program, and this has led students from around the country to

attend Westminster. The College hopes to build on the success of this program and create others like it to compete in other markets.

Student Support Services and Assessment

Once students have matriculated, they experience a strong system to support their academic and co-curricular requirements and interests. Student Support Services advances student learning in the context of Westminster's mission in myriad ways, and our learning outcomes and objectives are made available via our Web site and to students specifically through printed and electronic copies of the *Student Handbook*. Many of the services under the umbrella of Student Support help students to gain personal independence and responsibility. The question of how Student Services (i.e., the Office of Student Affairs) has used assessment results to address the efficacy of its academic and co-curricular offerings will be addressed in this section. First a general outline of how Student Affairs assesses its operations will be provided, and then several examples of how assessment and student input in particular have been used to improve student services in general will be described.

Student Affairs follows the [assessment cycle](#) established by the College's Outcomes Assessment Advisory Council (OAAC). Programs are consciously planned, implemented, assessed, and corrected. The assessment and correction segments of the cycle are the most relevant in the Office of Student Affairs.

Student Affairs uses a variety of assessment tools: traditional surveys that are administered by Student Affairs staff such as Resident Assistants, and student focus groups under the auspices of the Student Government Association. Although Westminster is a relatively small institution, students have access to a wide range of student organizations through which they may pursue their co-curricular interests. Composed of faculty members, administrators, and students, the Student Life and Athletic Council (SLAC) oversees each of these roughly 70 organizations. In the 2009-2010 academic year, 1,687 students participated in student organizations (membership in multiple groups explains why this number is larger than the size of the College's student body). In the same year, 49% of women and 48% of men participated in Westminster's Greek organizations. Student organizations are charged with coming before SLAC every five years to have their official recognition renewed. The organization must show that it makes a contribution to fulfilling the College's mission. In the past 20 years of organization review, only a handful of student organizations have not been approved for continuation as recognized student organizations – primarily for not retaining the requisite minimum of five members. To this end, SLAC has occasionally denied recognition to new student organizations and suggested merging other organizations with similar missions to increase organizational membership numbers. This issue does pose a slight dilemma for the College. Research has shown that student involvement promotes both student satisfaction and retention. However, in light of a finite amount of organizational funding through the Student Government Association, SLAC's goal is to afford recognition to fewer, stronger organizations than to subsidize many similar but financially weak organizations.

Because Student Affairs is heavily committed to assessing its activities, there is a wide range of examples that fit the “act” segment of the assessment cycle. For example, the [Office of Disability Resources](#) director has evaluated student use of relevant services and the efficacy of provided accommodations. The results of this particular study provided clear insights into the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of those accommodations and in-service disability training of faculty members.

Although needs assessment and satisfaction surveys are employed throughout the year, Student Affairs professionals are also intentional in their assessment of the division’s programmatic impact on students’ psychosocial and cognitive development. The Residence Life Program is deeply rooted in the College’s mission by providing not only physical facilities that are intentionally designed to promote student development, but also a multitude of in-house educational, social, and cultural programs aimed at nurturing the multifaceted development of the student residents and staff. Another example of intentional assessment comes from the evaluation of an educational [workshop on diversity](#) for its effects on Resident Assistants’ perceptions of race in comparison to a control group. These are just two of the many outcomes assessments that Student Affairs uses. In fact, all Student Affairs directors are required to implement bi-annual assessments and incorporate the outcomes recommendations into their goals and objectives for programmatic improvement. As a result of this requirement, program designers and facilitators are better able to understand the educational impact of their work and the best way to deploy their resources.

Responding to Student Concerns

In addition to Student Services’ open-door policy for students, the [procedures for filing formal grievances](#) are detailed in the *Handbook for Students*. Printed copies of this handbook are distributed to all first-year students, and electronic copies are available online. Grievance types include, but are not limited to, sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, confidentiality, false allegations, inappropriate sexual relationships, Equal Opportunity, parking tickets, Title IX, and Involuntary Administrative Withdrawal or Suspension. The guidelines and processes are designed not only to adjudicate grievances but to serve as teachable moments for students. To this end, administrators and faculty charged with the oversight of the College’s grievance processes make a conscious effort to guide students through the process while challenging them to negotiate the path of mediation, deliberation, and resolution. In fact, several students participate in the judicial process by serving as members of boards and committees that hear grievances and appeals.

On a broader scale, the College gathers data on student concerns through the bi-annual [Student Satisfaction Survey \(SSS\)](#). This campus-wide survey casts a wide net in gathering student satisfaction data concerning a vast array of College offerings and processes, including dining services, residence halls, administrative departmental offerings, academic services, advising, laboratories, library holdings, safety, and overall satisfaction with the college experience, to name but a few. Results are evaluated by the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students (VPSA), and they are

benchmarked against prior years' responses. Results are shared with the President's Cabinet, the Student Government Association (SGA), and division heads across the institution to improve areas of concern. The inclusion of an "importance" factor in the design of the SSS allows administrators to discern between the perceived quality of a College offering and the necessity to improve that offering further, which could necessitate the unwarranted deployment of resources.

Last, areas of student concern are complemented by more informal channels throughout the institution. Most notably, the inclusion of students as associate trustees at the institution affords student voices to be heard at the highest level of institutional governance (see Chapter 3). Students also find ready access to the administration and faculty through their mutual involvement in committees, councils, and boards.

Athletics

Intercollegiate/Intramural athletics provide opportunities for enhancing personal growth by emphasizing such qualities as cooperation, decision making, time management, work ethic, selflessness, and leadership. The Department of Athletics at Westminster College has developed its philosophy based on the College's Mission Statement, supports the objectives of the mission, and believes that the athletic program is an integral part of the college experience. The department provides arenas of competition for student-athletes so they may use their abilities to compete in team and individual sports. Using reporting guidelines from the NCAA and the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act, approximately 25% of full-time Westminster students participate in intercollegiate sports. The coaches work to develop the whole person, focusing not only on athletic ability, but also on providing guidance in other life skills. The department strives to develop and maintain equal opportunities for participation for both male and female student-athletes. The department abides by the rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Presidents Athletic Conference, and Eastern College Athletic Conference, and strives never to lose sight of the welfare of all student-athletes. The College is a member of the NCAA Division III. Additionally, the Director of Athletics reports directly to the President of the College, so Westminster provides a high level of administrative oversight to the athletic program.

It was understood from the previous Middle States Review that there was a recommendation for more and better assessment of all programs of the College. For that reason, the Department of Athletics evaluated how well it assesses its own mission statement, which applies to intercollegiate varsity sports. Assessment techniques included observation, competition results, periodic and annual review of staff members, and periodic and annual reports to the College, conference, and NCAA. Additionally, the athletics faculty and staff developed the Student-Athlete Evaluation to assess the student-athlete experience at Westminster more effectively, which has been conducted periodically at the end of each sports season. This survey is designed to measure the success of meeting the goals of the department mission statement and to assess the quality of coaching. It is, therefore, used also as a tool in personnel decisions. This survey has been conducted by pencil and paper, but plans are underway for this

evaluation to be done online to permit greater ease for student-athletes to respond to the survey. Despite the variety inherent in 20 varsity sports and 11 different head coaches, the survey results have consistently demonstrated that student-athletes evaluate their student-athlete experience as exceeding their expectations.

Concurrent with the Middle States assessment recommendation, the Department of Athletics became more aware through policy statements from the NCAA, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and the U.S Department of Education of the need for more and better assessment of the athletics abilities and interest of undergraduate students for Title IX compliance. These statements and related recommendations led to the development of the Athletics Abilities and Interests Survey. This survey is conducted biennially, primarily to assess the department's goal of meeting Title IX compliance relative to varsity sports offerings for women. It also assesses the varsity sports offerings for men for informational purposes.

The College has concluded that it is in [compliance with Title IX regulations](#) relative to intercollegiate athletic programs. The results of the Athletics Abilities and Interests survey indicate that there has been some ability and interest among female students (the underrepresented gender with respect to Title IX compliance) primarily in the sports of lacrosse and competitive cheerleading (those sports are currently not offered at Westminster). However, the survey responses also indicate an insufficient number of potential team members to field and/or sustain a full lacrosse team and a decreasing interest in competitive cheerleading.

In addition, the survey results indicate some ability and interest among male students primarily in the sports of wrestling and lacrosse (those sports are currently not offered at Westminster). Again, however, the survey responses also indicate an insufficient number of potential team members to field and/or sustain a full team in either wrestling or lacrosse. It should be noted that with respect to the NCAA, the OCR and the U.S. Department of Education, male participation rates in varsity athletics is not an issue relative to Title IX compliance. However, these data could be viewed as an issue of some importance relative to male student enrollment at Westminster.

The Department of Athletics does not conduct any formal assessment of its intramural and recreational programs or how they relate to the learning outcomes of the College's Mission Statement, but relies on information from annual enrollments to determine continuance/discontinuance or creating new programming. In addition, the department relies on the *Student Satisfaction Survey* conducted by the Office of Student Affairs for additional feedback and information on intramural and recreational programs.

Advisement and Retention

Student Support Services employs several approaches to bolster student retention, with a focus on proactive strategies. For example, upon matriculation, students who may be at-risk for academic, physical, and psychological difficulties are identified via direct

communication with incoming students and families, through an assessment of issues addressed in students' admissions essays, students' required physical exam submissions, and through the evaluation of other health-related forms. Professionals make immediate contact with students perceived to be at-risk to begin the support and advisement process that will endure throughout their tenure at the College.

The Office of Disability Resources, the Registrar's Office, Residence Life, Student Activities, Diversity Services, Judicial Affairs, and the Chaplain's Office subscribe to time-tested theoretical and practical frameworks to enhance student retention. It is also clear that student involvement plays a significant role in student retention and satisfaction. To this end, Student Support Services places a high priority on its co-curricular offerings to the extent that financial resources are generously provided to the Student Government Association to encourage the growth and health of student organizations on campus.

The Students At Risk Team (START program) was created in 1990 to monitor students' academic and emotional performance, and to intervene as necessary to ensure students' success. START's composition purposely reflects the broad spectrum of campus constituents whose work supports student success and enhances retention. They include the Registrar, Athletics, Counseling Services, the Office of Disability Resources, Residence Life, Student Affairs, and faculty members. Although the team's success could have been measured solely by the number of students who might have otherwise failed were it not for the team's intervention, equally beneficial is an assessment approach that considers students who, because of the team's recommendations, left the College temporarily to prepare themselves better for college life or to address personal and/or medical issues.

The College evaluates annually the following retention data on students: (1) Students who were recommended to and received assistance from START, (2) those who remained at Westminster through the academic year, (3) those who took and eventually returned from a recommended Leave of Absence, and (4) those who withdrew from the College, not to return. The most recent two-year data on student withdrawals from the College showed no change in the frequency of withdrawals. More specific data gathered in the 2007-2008 [Student Withdrawal Survey](#) suggested that of 40 possible reasons for leaving the institution, students most often cited leaving Westminster because they decided to attend a different college, wanted to move to a different location, or desired a major not offered at Westminster College. Most students who withdrew were first- and second-year students. In addition to these formal assessment measures, exit interviews between students and the VPSA or his staff are standard practice. Information from these interviews is reviewed every year to learn how we may improve in specific ways. Equally important is ongoing communication with students who have temporarily departed from the College; the goal of this communication is to set expectations prior to and upon their return to the College to increase their chances for success. Retention efforts are measured informally through feedback with the Student Government Association, student representation on the Board of Trustees, and information shared with the President at monthly student lunches.

Students who need additional academic support have access to the Learning Center. The Learning Center functions to assist students in improving their academic performance, developing discipline-specific skills, and fostering reading and writing skills. A staff member coordinates available tutoring to all students during the school year. The tutoring is free and offered by volunteer upper class students (see Chapter 6). Additionally, some departments hire qualified, advanced majors to tutor other students, and that service is free to those students who need tutoring. Faculty members are required to keep office hours, and they are available for additional instruction outside of the classroom. The success of this and other academic support systems is evident in the College's six-year graduation rate of 76%. The retention rate for first-year students has ranged between 85% - 90% during the last 10 years. Retention is also likely enhanced by the maintenance of admissions standards that ensure only students prepared for college-level work are admitted to the College.

Overall, Westminster has been very successful in its retention efforts. The College acknowledges that typically those who leave the institution prior to graduation do so because they wanted a major that was not offered, desired to live closer to home, attend a larger, less rural institution, or could no longer afford the cost of a Westminster education. To address these issues, the College has bolstered its financial assistance to incoming students (see Chapter 2), instituted greater budgetary controls to minimize cost increases to students, and developed articulation agreements with other institutions—particularly pre-professional programs—to enlarge its curricular offerings. Although there is ongoing communication among the Offices of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Admissions, there is no formal program dealing with retention. The College's retention rate has been outstanding, and its monitoring is continuous.

Health Care

Student Support Services provides a comprehensive and holistic health care program designed to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual health care needs of Westminster College students. Key personnel contributing to this program include the Director of the Student Health Center, the College Counselor, the College Chaplain, and the Director of the Office of Disability Resources. They teach self advocacy, support personal development, and assist in the challenges of personal growth so students can take care of basic health needs themselves and become knowledgeable consumers of health care providers and products.

The [Student Health Center \(SHC\)](#) provides a variety of programs and services to achieve its goal of maintaining and restoring the health of students so they can participate in their academic and extracurricular activities. The programming is initiated by requiring a physical examination and health history upon enrollment. Results of the bi-annual [Student Satisfaction Survey](#) point to a steady increase in student approval of the health care they have received at the SHC over the past five years. The mean satisfaction scores were 3.59 in 2004, 3.70 in 2006, 3.87 in 2008, and 3.96 in 2010 (on a 1-5 scale, with larger scores indicating greater satisfaction). It is clear that there is still room for improvement. To this end, the College, effective Fall 2009, increased doctors'

hours at the SHC to meet increasing student demand, and bolstered its student education and self-advocacy program to provide for greater efficiencies at the SHC. Lastly, the SHC, Counseling Services, and the Chaplain's Office continue to address continuity of care issues to better ensure that staff members are well-informed of a patient's status at all points of treatment.

The College [Counseling Services](#) is committed to students' personal, social, emotional, and academic adjustment and development, with a primary goal to provide therapeutic services that will enhance the development and well-being of each student. To evaluate the benefit of counseling services, an assessment measure, the OQ-45.2 Outcomes Questionnaire, is used. The OQ-45.2 assesses common symptoms across a wide range of mental disorders and syndromes and is used widely on college campuses as an outcomes measure. The *Student Satisfaction Survey* also provides insights into students' perceptions of this department's offerings. The mean satisfaction scores were 3.45 in 2008, and 3.51 in 2010. This finding is similar to that at other institutions where, due to funding issues, only one counselor is available to serve the needs of over 1,500 students.

The Office of Disability Resources works closely with faculty and makes sure they are aware of students in their classes who are eligible for academic accommodations. It provides assistance and ensures nondiscriminatory access to Westminster College's buildings, academics, and programs for students with documented physical, emotional or learning disabilities so the students can become contributing members of society. The Office of Disability Resources supports students by providing a multitude of adaptive, accommodative, and ancillary services to maximize the accessibility of academic and social programming on campus for students with disabilities. This program provides all students equitable access to the campus by maintaining compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the ADA Amendments Act, and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as well as providing some supplementary support services. These supplementary support services assist students in bolstering their personal and academic strengths to increase positive outcomes and reduce the impact of functional limitations associated with a student's disabling condition. Programmatic access is assured and defined by federal laws, which are monitored and enforced through the Office for Civil Rights, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Department of Justice. Supplementary support services are research-based, best-practice learning, studying, and time-management strategies that are selected with respect to their applicability and level of student investment, and are maintained or varied in response to performance and student feedback. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, outcomes assessments conducted by the Director of the Office of Disability Resources provide yet another way by which the efficacy of the office is measured.

The College Chaplain maintains open communication with faculty, staff, and students to identify issues where spiritual guidance can be of assistance. The chaplain is an integral part of the overall health care process, working regularly with other support services and referring students to campus and outside professionals as necessary.

Diversity

Part of Westminster's mission is for its students to acquire a knowledge and appreciation of self, society and human cultures, as well as developing and demonstrating moral and ethical commitments to neighbor and society. Westminster College recognizes the importance of exposing students to the diversity that exists among the people of the world, specifically as it relates to differences in race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, nationality and physical or mental ability. Student Support Services provide information and guidance on campus as they relate to issues of diversity through the Student Affairs Office, Diversity Services, and the Office of Disability Resources. As described in its mission, [Diversity Services](#) seeks to provide programming that reaffirms the College's commitment to celebrate diversity, while nurturing a respect for the dignity of all human beings. This office works assiduously to take issues of diversity to the campus community through workshops, educational seminars, facilitated dialogues among and between minority and majority students, and cross-cultural programs. Diversity is also promoted on campus through a variety of events sponsored by various organizations, including ALLIES, Amnesty International, Black Student Union, Help Educate Against Racism, International Cultures Club, College Feminists, and the Japanese Anime Club. These student organizations, each representing about 15 members on average, hold different events each year to bring students of different backgrounds together. The Office of Diversity Services also sponsors and collaborates with various organizations and departments to provide cultural programming to the campus. In recent years, students, faculty, and administrators have invested greater time and effort in bringing a broad array of diversity programming to the campus community, and the number of formal programs has increased steadily from nine in 2001 to 40 in 2009.

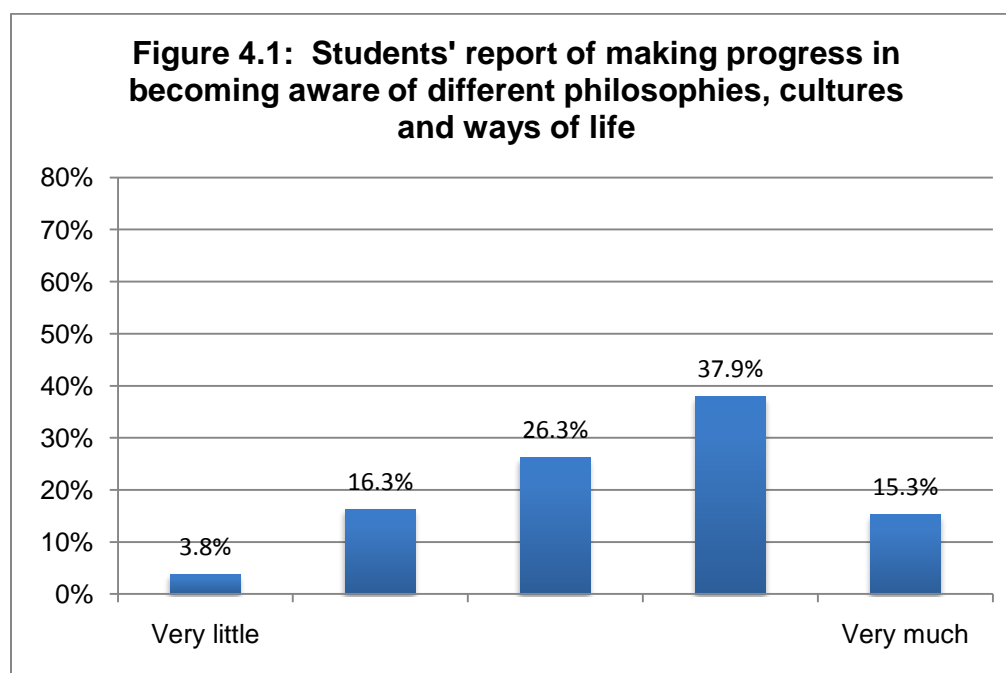
All existing and approved new student organizations are encouraged and supported by the College by way of leadership, budgetary support, assistance with logistics and public relations for events, and access to facilities. With the inception of the Student Government Association's Diversity Chair and Diversity Committee in 2007, more minority and majority students are engaging in intergroup dialogue and support programs designed to foster a climate of inclusiveness and understanding of different cultures and lifestyles.

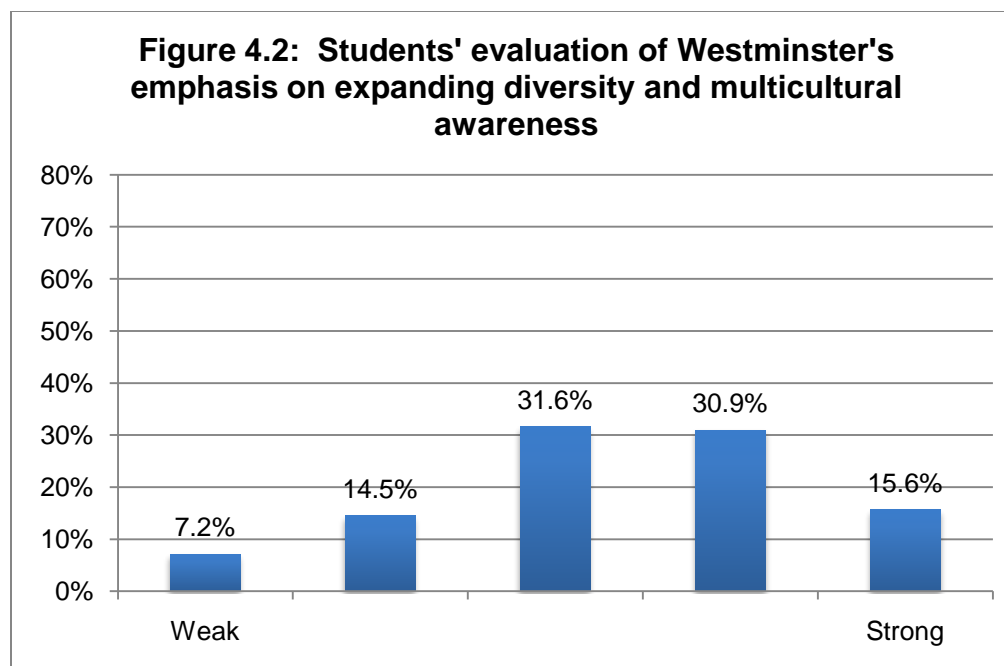
Off-campus activity is also strongly encouraged in the way of service-learning in other communities, off-campus study opportunities, and travel courses, all of which serve the purpose of exposing students to different people and cultures.

Because the majority of our students live on campus, specific programs help residence assistants (RAs) to recognize and deal with any issues of "difference" that may arise in the residences. Westminster students come from different backgrounds and are subsequently in a situation where they must live with others who are different from themselves. The emphasis on residence life is key because this is the first opportunity for students to be away from home and to learn how to be accepting of others who may be different.

Though it is generally recognized that the Westminster campus is lacking in several areas of diversity, it is very encouraging that many student organizations such as BSU and ALLIES continue to educate the campus community through programs highlighting diversity in its many forms. Although many opportunities exist to participate in events promoting diversity, at times the attendance has been disappointing.

Data collected in the Campus Climate Survey show that students made progress over their time at Westminster in gaining knowledge about different people, cultures, and religions (Figure 4.1). Although the [Student Satisfaction Survey](#) indicated many students did not consider issues of diversity particularly important to them, the survey does show a number of respondents stating that the College has tried to create a more caring and hospitable environment. Nevertheless, students still felt that more could be done campus-wide to build greater tolerance for and understanding of a diverse world, as indicated by the percentage of respondents who believed Westminster's emphasis on diversity was at or below the scale's midpoint (see Figure 4.2).





To this end, among other strategies, Diversity Services is increasing its educational outreach on campus by facilitating interracial and intercultural dialogues among majority and minority students. Essential to this effort will be the use of students as co-facilitators, consistent with research that points to the efficacy of programs that provide peer-directed opportunities for self-disclosure and meaningful dialogue in a safe environment.

Communications and Recordkeeping

Westminster takes its responsibility to help students grow and develop outside the classroom as seriously as it does its curricular mission. For example, students are included as members of the Curriculum Development and Operations Committees. Through various formal and informal opportunities, students are informed about learning opportunities and asked to become active participants in their own education. Throughout their tenure, students are given opportunities to take on more and more responsibility as members of the campus community. They can become leaders in various campus organizations or in the Student Government Association (SGA). As noted in Chapter 3 of our self-study, many faculty committees include student representation, and the students elect representatives to the Board of Trustees.

Even before they arrive on campus, students are informed about Westminster's active and engaged educational process. The *Handbook for Students* and *Undergraduate Catalog* both reflect Westminster's mission to produce graduates who are culturally and socially aware and "committed to responsible service." Each publication describes the services available to support their learning and their responsibilities as students.

As students progress through their careers, they are updated about opportunities and events produced by faculty members and Student Affairs through posters, e-mail notifications, residence hall meetings, the online Campus Calendar of Events, Facebook notifications, in-class announcements, SGA advertising and promotion, and through the various organizations, councils, and committees of which students are members. Last, every student is required to meet with their academic advisers for formal advising, and much informal advising takes place throughout the year.

The Office of Student Affairs has very clear record-keeping policies. These policies are explained in the *Handbook for Students* and include the location of student records, the duration they are retained by the College, and the processes by which records may be accessed, reviewed, and disputed by students, parents, and/or other parties.

Emergency notification and ongoing communication with campus constituencies remains one of the highest priorities of the institution in the event of a campus emergency. To this end, Student Services professionals, in collaboration with Information Systems and other departments and outside agencies, have developed and implemented a multifaceted Hostile Act and Natural Disaster response plan as a part of the College's [emergency preparedness](#) to protect the safety and welfare of the campus community. Features of this plan include: emergency announcements broadcasted over wall-mounted speakers in residence halls and most academic buildings, over three bell tower speakers atop the College's main administrative building, all computers that are connected to the campus network, and over IP phones in employee offices; emergency call boxes located throughout campus; and cameras in all smart classrooms that allow public safety officers to monitor classroom activities. The plan is tested on-site annually with the President's Cabinet, designated campus emergency personnel and crisis response teams, local law enforcement agencies, and regional disaster preparedness professionals to ensure campus readiness for a crisis.

Campus Ministry

The Chapel Programs are rooted in the College's heritage and founding and provide faith-based opportunities for personal and faith development for students, staff, and faculty consistent with the College's Mission Statement. Both the mission and religious perspective statements of the College refer to the importance of welcoming and respecting individuals of all faith and non-faith backgrounds while being rooted in the values and ideals identified in the Judeo-Christian tradition. In support of this ecumenical approach, the Chapel Office offers weekly Mass, two non-denominational Chapel services, and Vespers, which although grounded in the Presbyterian tradition strives to be non-denominational in nature. These offerings are reflective of the student body composition (25% of students are Catholic, 22% Presbyterian, and 53% various other religious or non-religious backgrounds).

When students arrive on campus, the Chapel Office works to serve students "from where they are" by providing breakfast and transportation for students interested in attending a worship service in a place of their own denomination or faith. An

ecumenical Ash Wednesday service is likely one of the most well attended services each year. Students may join a number of different fellowship and student organization groups, including Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Orthodox students, Seekers Christian Fellowship, Chapel staff, Newman Club, and Saturday morning chapel for athletes.

Programmatically, the Chapel Office fosters a climate of respect by sponsoring or hosting a diverse repertoire of educational events such as a Passover Seder facilitated by a local rabbi, the Poverty Simulation experience, the VISA (Volunteers in Service and Action) Fair and the Alternative Gift Market featuring fair trade gifts. The Chapel Office also coordinates the Christy Lecture series, which hosts speakers who talk about how they live out their faith. This is an educational opportunity for students to connect their learning with what others are doing in the world.

Finally, service opportunities at Westminster College abound and many are connected with the Chapel Office. Students participate in yearly alternative Spring Break trips to both urban and rural settings, Habitat for Humanity Spring break work trips, travel courses (most recently to Malawi, Africa), Big Brothers/Big Sisters, tutor at local schools, and volunteer in the local community. The values of openness and respect for a wide range of beliefs as well as service-over-self are evident in the daily activities, programs, volunteer opportunities, and worship opportunities the Chapel Office offers.

The Chapel Office provides an array of opportunities for students, and students note general awareness that these opportunities allow them to express and explore their spirituality. The Chapel Office will continue to assess and refine its programmatic offerings to better serve the spiritual and learning needs of its students.

Recommendations

1. Consistent with its mission to educate people of all backgrounds, the College must continue to improve efforts to recruit and retain students with minority status and students outside the typical geographical catchment area. Additionally the College must continue its efforts to promote the value of differences. A diverse student body has clear academic and psychosocial benefits for all Westminster students and it is consistent with the values of the College's mission.
2. The College must expand its recruiting focus beyond our historical target area in response to declining numbers of high school graduates.
3. Both the Department of Athletics and the Chapel Office are strong in presenting opportunities that enrich the personal development of our students. The College needs to be more intentional in these areas to assess how these opportunities enhance students' personal development and academic experiences.

Service...



Students can make a difference at Westminster College. Westminster has earned the nation's highest honor for community service for four straight years. Classroom lessons are put into action to benefit the community.

The Westminster Way

Chapter 5: Faculty

A substantial proportion of the student experience on any college campus will naturally involve the faculty. Westminster is no exception, priding itself on a tradition of close student-faculty relationships and interactions that foster a vibrant intellectual spirit inside and outside the classroom. This chapter addresses issues relevant to the role that faculty play in instruction and research. (Information on the faculty's role in governance and service can be found in Chapter 3.) Following a brief review of the basic structure and composition of the faculty and introduction to relevant faculty issues, each of these areas is addressed.

The Faculty at Westminster

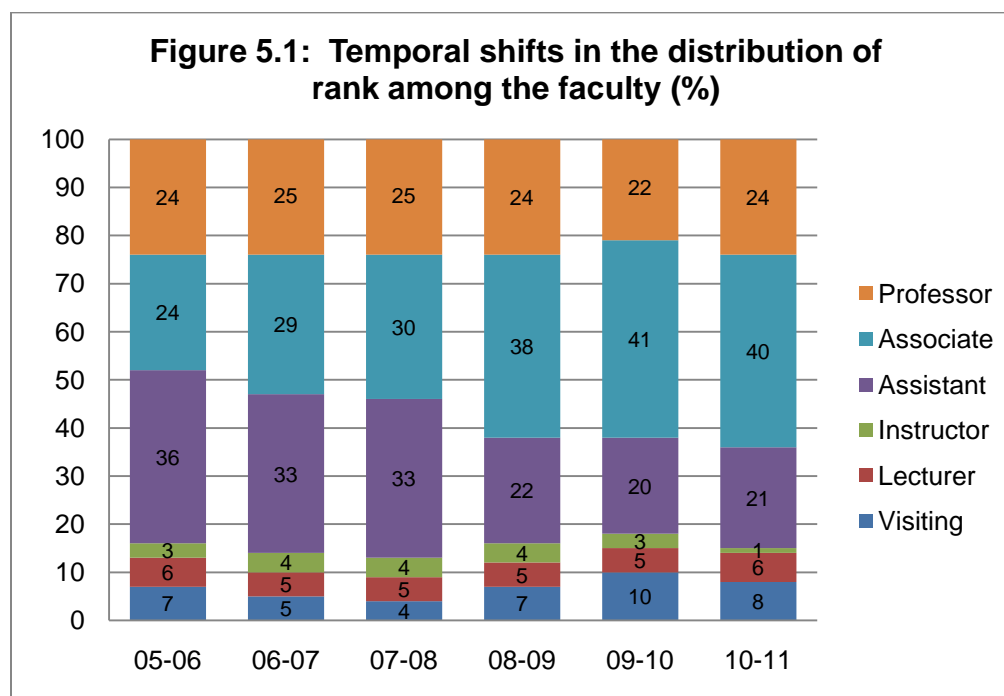
The number of full-time faculty has been relatively stable over the past six years, averaging 107. The relative gender ratio has also stayed the same (see Table 5.1). What has changed is the proportion of tenured to non-tenured faculty members. The proportion of faculty members with tenure increased from 50% in 2005-2006 to 63% in 2010-2011. Most of this increase occurred in tenure decisions that occurred in 2007-2008. Among female faculty members, the proportion having tenure rose from 42% to 58%; and among male faculty members, the proportion holding tenure rose from 56% to 68%. The College is proud of the near-parity in the male to female faculty ratio because it ensures that students have competent gender role models across the curriculum. Such gender parity is particularly valuable in the math and sciences, and contributes to the College's recognition as the "Best College for Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)" by Forbes.com in 2010.

Table 5.1: Analysis of Female and Male Faculty Members Who Are Tenured or Untenured

Academic Year	Women Full-time Faculty Members			Men Full-time Faculty Members			Grand Total
	Untenured	Tenured	Total	Untenured	Tenured	Total	
2005-2006	28	20	48	24	31	55	103
2006-2007	27	22	49	25	33	58	107
2007-2008	22	28	50	23	34	57	107
2008-2009	22	28	50	17	37	54	104
2009-2010	24	29	53	18	39	57	110
2010-2011	22	31	53	18	38	56	109

In 2009-2010, 91% of Westminster's full-time faculty members held the terminal degree in their field. The College defines the appropriate terminal degree for each discipline, and that information is published in the *Faculty Handbook* (Section 2). The distribution across ranks has seen a steady increase in the proportion of associate professors because faculty members have been successfully promoted from assistant to associate

professor. Slightly less than one quarter of the faculty currently hold the rank of professor (Figure 5.1).



In 2010-2011, women comprised just under half of the full-time faculty (49%) and this proportion has remained fairly stable over the past six years. Women are not equally represented in the ranks, comprising over 60% of the lecturer/instructor rank and 44% of the professors. The proportions of women in the associate professor and professor ranks have grown steadily over the past five years as the College has been able to recruit, tenure, and promote women at the same rate as men. Unfortunately, one area where the College has not been able to improve is the percentage of minority faculty, which has remained constant at about 5%. The new strategic plan includes strategies to address this concern.

Academic departments range in size from 3 to 11 full-time faculty members. Each department currently has at least one tenured member (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Distribution of Faculty Members across Departments in 2010-2011, Including Their Tenure Status

Department	Untenured	Tenured
Biology	4	5
Chemistry	2	4
Communications	6	3
Economics and Business	5	3
Education	3	6

English and Public Relations	4	7
Library	1	3
Math and Computer Sciences	4	5
Modern Languages	4	3
Music	2	5
Physical Education	0	3
Physics	2	1
Political Science and Sociology	2	6
Psychology	1	5
Religion, Philosophy, History, and Classics	1	9

It is worth noting that the number of faculty with lecturer rank – non-tenure track -- is kept low by policy (*Faculty Handbook*, Section 2.1.3.3). Normally, not more than 5% of the full-time faculty may be lecturers. The College also employs a number of adjunct faculty members. Adjunct faculty members serve two primary roles at the College. First, they bring specific expertise to the college curriculum; second, they provide flexibility to the College to make adjustments for fluctuations in enrollment. On average, the College employs about 50 adjunct faculty members each year, 50% of whom teach in the music program. Current data from the American Association of University Professors suggests that full-time, tenure track faculty members currently teach only 32% of classes in American colleges and universities. At Westminster, on average, full-time, tenure track faculty members teach 73% of our classes.

Faculty Teaching Load

In Fall 2001, faculty members requested that the College investigate a reduction in the teaching load from seven courses per year to six courses per year to enhance teaching and learning on campus. (Prior to the seven-course load, the teaching load was six and two-thirds courses.) An *ad hoc* teaching load committee was created to study this issue. Working in concert with the VPAA, a plan was implemented in Fall 2004 that led the faculty through a defined progression that resulted in a six-course teaching load, which began in Fall 2008. The College is in the process of a multi-year review of the reduction—tracking a number of assessment criteria, including retention, graduation rates and faculty development reports—before a final decision on the reduction is enacted. However, preliminary data support that the reduction has had a positive effect on retention, graduation rates, teaching and scholarship at the College.

Faculty Development for Teaching and Scholarship

Faculty development is the responsibility of the Faculty Development Committee (FDC), the Faculty Development Officer (FDO), and the VPAA. The FDC is charged with recommending to the VPAA qualified candidates for the FDO position; determining faculty development policies; reviewing applications for various internal grants, including

sabbaticals and reassigned time grants; recommending faculty for external competitive grants; and working with the FDO to coordinate faculty development workshops. The FDO works with the FDC and oversees faculty development programs addressing faculty training and scholarship. Additionally, the FDO consults individually with a majority of the Westminster faculty on such matters as teaching, scholarship, and faculty review (e.g., tenure and promotion). The content of those consultations is confidential (*Faculty Handbook*, Section 1.4.4.3), and the FDO has no formal role or vote in any faculty review processes.

Westminster's faculty development program has been guided by seven [outcome statements](#) targeted for completion by 2010. These outcomes, written in 2004, are based on the integration and support of teaching and scholarship in a faculty community of scholars who strive for excellence at Westminster and in their professional fields. The [FDO's report](#) includes information on assessment of these outcomes.

Teaching

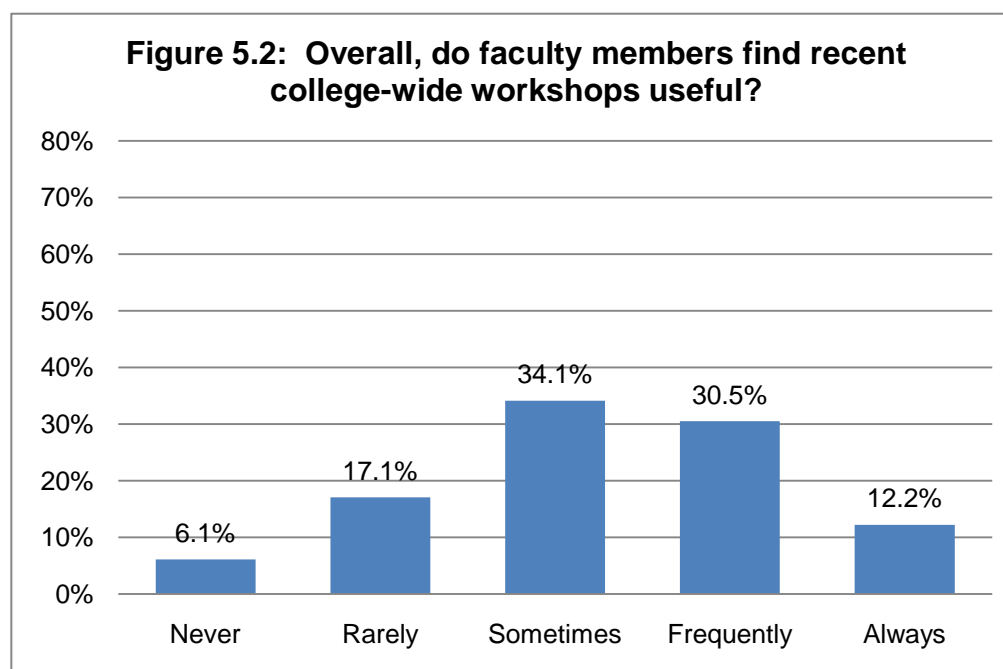
Just as the institution wants students to succeed, it also supports a number of activities to foster and celebrate effective teaching, some of which are described here.

Faculty workshops

Under the direction of the FDO, VPAA, and FDC, four regularly scheduled workshops are conducted each academic year. Two of these workshops are for targeted audiences among the faculty (new department chairs and new faculty), and two workshops generally target the entire faculty. The Department Chairs Workshop is directed by the VPAA and centers on issues of particular importance in departmental leadership; for example, topics have included strategies for managing the multiple demands on a chair's time and developing a productive relationship with the VPAA. Although the primary focus of the workshop is administrative, faculty development is a key chair function and is always highlighted during the workshop. The FDO directs the New Faculty Workshop, providing an initial training for new faculty in the Westminster tradition and values with an emphasis on high impact teaching practices. Both full- and part-time new faculty members are encouraged to attend this workshop.

The Spring and Fall Faculty Workshops are directed by the FDO and FDC, covering various [topics](#) of relevance to the faculty. Most of these workshops are well attended by faculty members across departments and rank (95% in the fall, and by invitation or application in the spring). Faculty members are expected to attend the fall workshop as the first academic event of a new year as a part of their contract. The fall workshop provides an opportunity to introduce new faculty members, build the community of scholars, and focus on a current innovation or challenge. Faculty members who attend the spring workshop receive a \$100/day stipend, and those who lead the spring workshop receive a \$200/day stipend.

From the Campus Climate Survey of the faculty, the majority of faculty members find college-wide workshops, including faculty development workshops, to be useful (see Figure 5.2). The College is satisfied with faculty members' participation in the planning, execution, and evaluation of these events; however, there is also room for improving campus workshops. The collaborative nature of the relationship between FDC and the faculty in planning workshops is a model for all units on campus who sponsor workshops for their employees and students, and it is one that the College encourages.



New faculty mentorship program

During their first week at Westminster, all new faculty members are assigned multiple mentors, including one faculty member within their department, one faculty member from the FDC, and one faculty member from another department/discipline. The current mentoring program evolved from a single mentor model that was first implemented in the 1990s. Originally, mentors were only selected from among sitting FDC members. Feedback from those new to the faculty revealed that although FDC mentors were supportive and informative, they did not necessarily have the discipline- or department-specific information that new faculty desired. Consequently, in the 2004-2005 academic year, the mentoring program was modified to include two additional mentors—one from within the department and one who is fairly new to the institution and can advise on transition issues. The mentors serve as a resource and support for new faculty members as they adjust to the institution.

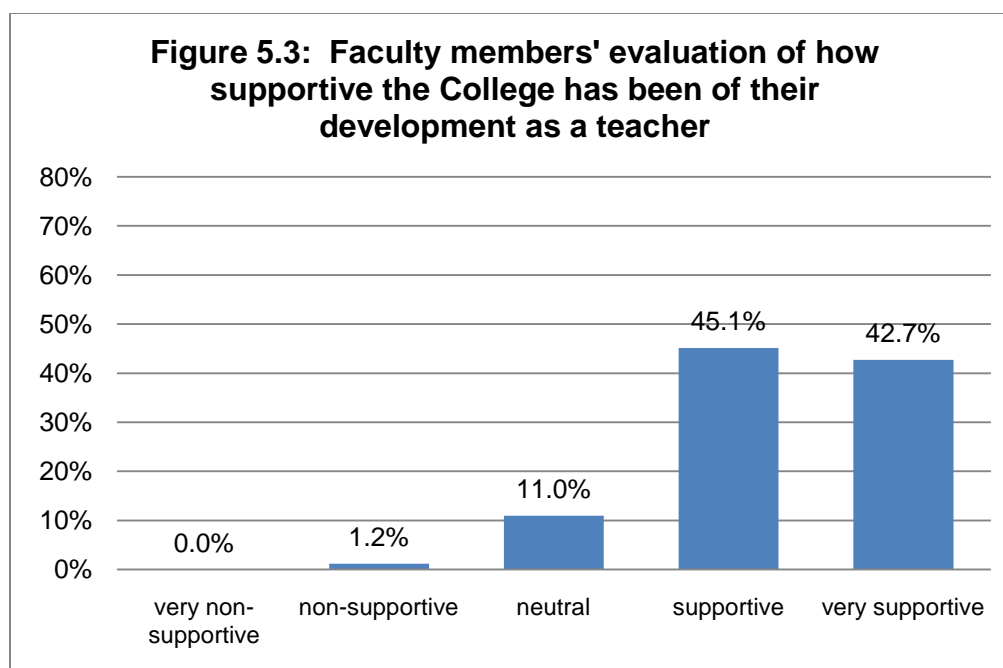
In 2005, the FDO worked with FDC to reformat workshops for new faculty. Rather than trying to cover all possible topics in a half-day session, the FDO and FDC oriented the initial workshop around creating a syllabus, including course objectives and assessment

activities that are mission-consistent, and preparing to meet students on the first day of class. This latter topic includes discussion of how teaching at Westminster is different from teaching at other institutions, what faculty members can expect from Westminster students, and what students expect of their professors. Throughout the year, additional workshops were offered on such topics as instructional technology, advising, and interpreting and learning from students' course evaluations. Although the focus of these later workshops is on new faculty, all faculty members are invited to participate. The College has found this to be useful in the sense that senior faculty members share their experiences and knowledge during these workshops, providing a learning and institutional context for junior professors.

The FDC also hosts a retreat for first-year faculty members. In 2009-2010 topics of the retreat included how to succeed at Westminster, teach the millennial generation, specify the values of liberal arts and civic engagement, locate resources to support undergraduate teaching, and involve themselves in the Westminster community. The President and the VPAA both participated in this off-campus retreat as a visible demonstration to junior faculty members of their importance and the significant role that faculty development plays on campus.

Department chair/peer observation

For probationary faculty members, department chairs and/or department colleagues are expected to observe teaching and provide constructive feedback. Since 2005, the FDO has made herself available to conduct Small Group Instructional Diagnosis sessions. Initiated by faculty request to diagnose learning and teaching processes in a specific class, the FDO meets with the faculty member to discuss the class and his or her perception of its challenges. The FDO then observes the class and surveys/interviews students and uses this information to produce a diagnostic report for the faculty member that can be used to improve teaching. The Campus Climate Survey of faculty regarding institutional support for teaching revealed that almost 90% of the faculty felt that the institution supports their development (Figure 5.3).



Scholarship

The institution also supports faculty scholarship through a number of programs. For example, the College pays for an institutional membership to the Council for Undergraduate Research, which focuses on supporting faculty-student research. Indeed, faculty-student collaborative research is increasing in frequency and organization, and it is spreading across many departments. This is a strength of the Westminster experience, and one the College will continue to support. Also, faculty research and scholarship is supported via funding through a number of sources including conference awards, research awards, endowed development funds, special named awards, and sabbaticals. The College also sponsors a weekly seminar, the Faires Faculty Forum, that provides an opportunity for faculty to report on their individual scholarship.

Conference/research awards

Conference and research awards of \$1,000 are available annually to faculty members. This is in addition to the \$300 that departments budget annually for each faculty member. Unfortunately, \$1300 may not cover all expenses to support an individual faculty member's scholarship. Consequently the new strategic plan has a goal of addressing this concern. These conference/research funds are administered by the FDO who reviews applications and recommends awards to the FPC and VPAA. Proposals are evaluated on the basis of their relevance to scholarly and/or creative activity, professional growth in teaching, curriculum planning, or other service to the College. Specific [guidelines](#) for evaluating this award are published on the Faculty Development Web site. From 2005 to 2009, 116 funded conference awards and 40 research awards were granted.

Endowed development funds

Endowed development funds are used to support eligible applicants in the event that the conference and research funds have been exhausted. They are also used to support faculty who are attending conferences but not giving a presentation or poster. From 2005 to 2009, 175 endowed development awards have been funded.

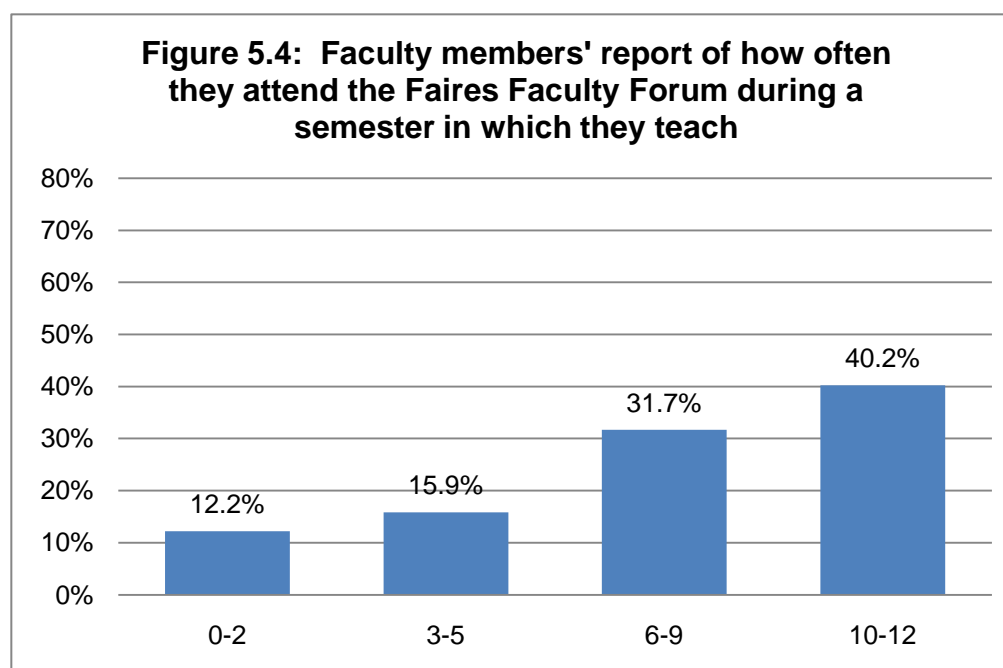
Westminster also has several special “named” faculty awards: the Watto Faculty Research Award (2), the McCandless Scholar Award, the Henderson lectureship, the CIEE International Faculty Development Award, and the 25th and 50th Reunion Endowed Faculty Development Funds awards. Currently, each of the latter two endowed awards contains approximately \$175,000. The majority of these awards are competitive. The criteria that are used to select these recipients are described in the [FDC's operating procedures](#), which are available to all faculty members on a shared network drive.

Sabbaticals

The College continues to support a robust sabbatical program for faculty. The FDO receives sabbatical proposals, which are reviewed by the FDC, who recommends sabbatical applications to the VPAA. The VPAA recommends the sabbatical actions to the President, who then recommends them to the Board of Trustees. The VPAA budget covers the cost of replacing faculty during sabbaticals. The criteria for reviewing sabbatical applications can be found in the FDC's operating procedures. Since 2001, all FDC-recommended proposals for sabbaticals have been funded.

Faires Faculty Forum

Institutional support for faculty scholarship is also evident in the Faires Faculty Forum. The Faires Faculty Forum is a weekly presentation of faculty scholarship, and a majority of the faculty report they attend most of the 10-12 presentations each semester (Figure 5.4). The College provides significant financial resources to support this important program.



The Faires Faculty Forum meets four goals. First, it supports the multidisciplinary nature of the liberal arts by keeping faculty members knowledgeable about scholarship in many areas. Second, it builds the academic community by having a regular meeting place for intellectual discourse. Third, the Faires Faculty Forum fosters interdisciplinary networking by making it possible for faculty members to discover shared areas of interest across disciplinary boundaries. Fourth, attendees have the opportunity to learn about the scholarship of teaching from their colleagues. Over the last four years 93 different faculty members—across ranks and disciplines—have presented their individual and/or collaborative scholarship at the [Faires Faculty Forum](#).

The Campus Climate Survey of faculty showed that the majority of respondents felt the institution supported their development as a scholar (Figure 5.5). However, some follow-up will need to occur to determine exactly the nature of the “neutral” response and how the College can improve its support. The perception of institutional support of scholarship through funding was weaker (Figure 5.6). Again, the new strategic plan calls for increased funding of faculty development activities, and the support of scholarship is an area where those funds could be best used.

Figure 5.5: Faculty members' evaluation of the College's support of their development as a scholar/researcher

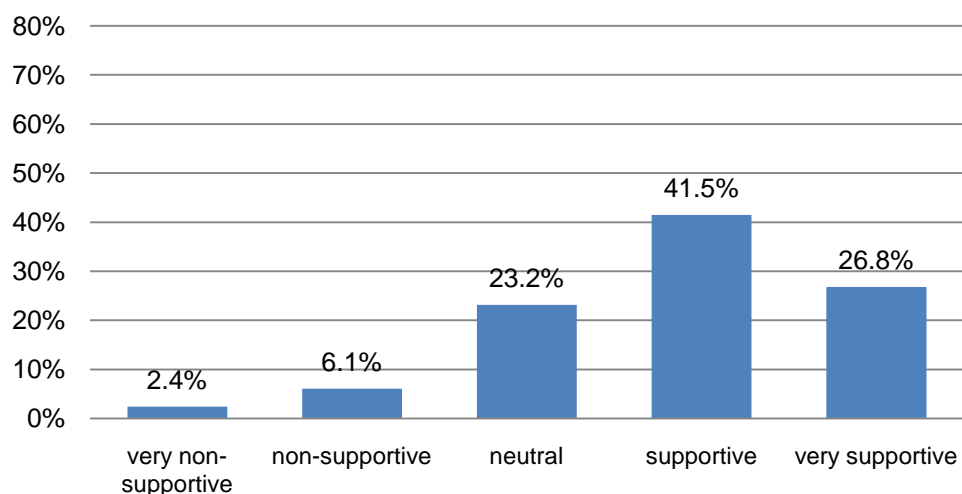
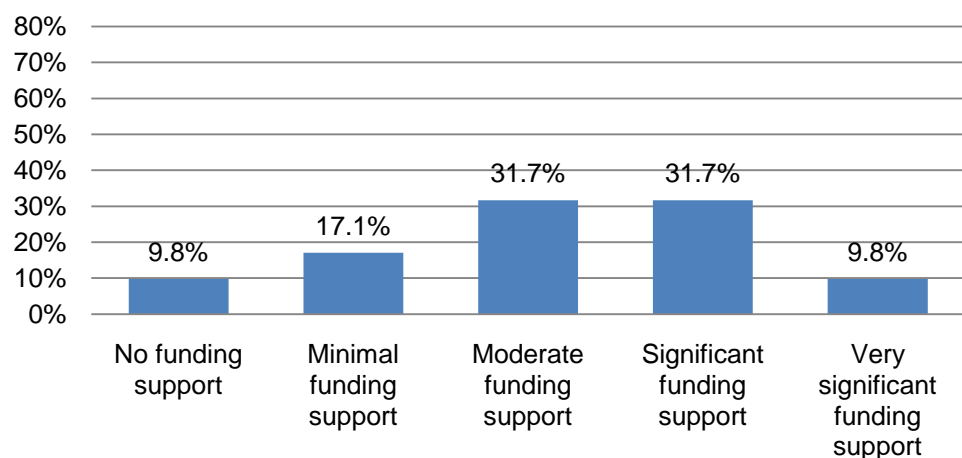


Figure 5.6: Faculty members' evaluation of the College's support--especially through funding--of their individual development and scholarship agenda



The Self-Study offers a formal opportunity to reflect on where the College stands in relation to creative and scholarly activity. However, it should be noted that Westminster faculty have been discussing this issue, both formally and informally, for several years. Given the nature of Westminster's faculty review process (see Chapter 3), it is important that departments be able to define the features of acceptable creative and scholarly

activities in their related disciplines. Such a process builds an understanding within departments about expectations of scholarship, and it also informs review committees how to evaluate the productivity of candidates for tenure and promotion. To foster conversations within and across departments, the FDC hosted a workshop in spring 2009 that focused specifically on defining scholarship and its characteristics within each discipline. The conversations that were stimulated by this workshop continue to inform how we develop faculty and prepare them for an active life of creativity and scholarship at Westminster.

Recommendations

1. The College should continue to provide a high level of support and visibility for faculty development, especially in the area of faculty scholarship. This includes increasing research, conference, and endowed funding. Such support also includes timely workshops that are responsive to the needs of faculty members and that promote their ability to conduct meaningful research in their respective fields.
2. The College should recruit more faculty members who bring diverse perspectives, and establish faculty exchanges with more culturally diverse colleges and universities.
3. The Faculty Development Officer and Committee should continue to assess fall and spring faculty workshops to understand how faculty members use information garnered from workshops. This assessment will allow for the creation of workshops that are responsive to faculty's ever-changing needs.

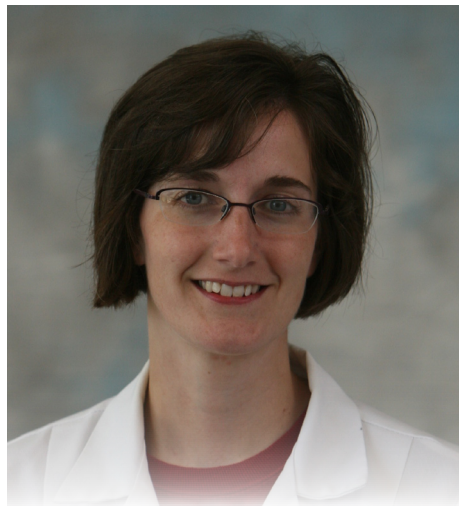
Success...



Denny M. Wolfe '97
Feature Producer, ESPN



Rebecca A. Rickard '98
Group Sales/Audience Development Manager,
Pittsburgh Public Theater



Helen Boylan-Funari '95
Associate Professor of Chemistry,
Westminster College



Jason R. Kalajainen '97
Executive Director,
Ox-Box Summer School of the Arts

The liberal arts *work* at Westminster College.
Westminster graduates have a 96 percent placement rate.
They have developed the skills needed to succeed in any field –
that's what makes the liberal arts so powerful and flexible.

The Westminster Way

Chapter 6: The Westminster Curriculum

Westminster's Mission Statement contains a specific set of educational outcomes that all offerings at the College strive to maintain (see Chapter 1). Course offerings at Westminster College deliberately align with these outcomes and with departmental missions, which are discipline-specific reflections of the College's mission. As an entry into a discussion of Westminster's curriculum, it is notable that courses are scrutinized first by the faculty Curriculum Operations Committee (COC) and then by the faculty before they are approved. For approval, departments must demonstrate that their major and minor courses dovetail with the departmental program, and instructors of courses related to general education requirements must demonstrate fulfillment and assessment of specific outcomes from the College's Mission Statement. This evaluation helps to ensure that courses are firmly grounded in both College and departmental missions.

The Westminster Plan

Westminster College, through its general education curriculum, consistently exposes students to opportunities to use the skills that define a true liberal arts education. The general education curriculum at Westminster College is known as the Westminster Plan, and it has existed since 1997. (The "Westminster Plan" will be used throughout this chapter to refer to the general education curriculum.) At its center are the four complementary parts of a liberal studies curriculum: the First-Year Program (including information literacy instruction), Intellectual Perspectives, Cluster Courses, and Capstone. The Westminster Plan entails approximately 52 semester hours of work. These courses focus on the acquisition of skills that faculty members have determined are necessary for collegiate success, including critical thinking, effective communication, and collaborative learning skills.

The [First-Year Program](#) lays the groundwork for all subsequent academic work, with foundational courses in three areas: liberal learning ("Inquiry"), writing, and oral communication (12 semester hours). Within these areas, instructors work to help their students achieve a common set of skills and objectives. Additionally, instructors try to integrate experiences from one area across the curriculum. For example, writing instructors often base assignments on students' experiences in other first-year courses. The skills that students develop in the First-Year Program are further enhanced by information literacy instruction. All first-year students spend three sessions in the library as part of their Inquiry classes. The librarians and the Inquiry faculty work together to create assignments that introduce the concept of information literacy and allow students to acquire the technological competencies to find information effectively and efficiently.

The First-Year Program is followed by a set of courses that add breadth to students' liberal arts education. The [Intellectual Perspectives](#) portion of the curriculum (28-36 semester hours) is designed to ensure that all Westminster College graduates are exposed to a broad range of human intellectual endeavors and creativity. The requirements of this component of liberal studies are subject-based and provide opportunities to explore seven significant areas of knowledge: (1) foreign language; (2)

humanity and culture; (3) quantitative reasoning; (4) religious and philosophical thought and tradition; (5) scientific discovery; (6) social thought and tradition; and (7) visual and performing arts.

One of the most innovative ways that Westminster enhances the liberal arts experience for students and for faculty members is through the [cluster](#). Westminster's cluster consists of two interlinked, integrated, four-credit courses (8 semester hours) that students are required to take in the same semester. Each course is taught by a faculty member from a different discipline. These clusters offer exciting opportunities for students to make interdisciplinary connections, integrate knowledge, and develop community.

These foundational courses culminate in the [capstone](#) experience (4-8 semester hours) in the junior and/or senior year. All Westminster students must complete the capstone requirement, and it is capstone that allows students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled departmental objectives to receive their degree. The capstone generally involves in-depth scholarship and reflection on the student's field; it also serves as an excellent assessment of students in a program and the program itself.

The two major resources that describe the requirements of the Westminster Plan are the *Undergraduate Catalog* and the College Web site. Through the Westminster Plan, the College focuses its emphasis on students' intellectual growth. This growth is best exemplified by such outcomes as the ability to reason logically and evaluate critically, communicate effectively, think creatively, appreciate aesthetic expressions, demonstrate intellectual curiosity, and commit to lifelong learning. These outcomes are further emphasized in the major.

Assessment of the Westminster Plan

The First-Year Program. The CDC reviews and revises the criteria for First-Year Program goals and assessment outcomes as part of its Scheduled Sequence of Curriculum Reviews.

- Inquiry 111. Faculty members who teach the introductory course to liberal arts study have devised a student course evaluation to investigate student receptiveness to the course, their appraisal of the materials and methodology, and their own performance and work habits. Inquiry instructors review and discuss these data at workshops twice a year (May/August) to consider course modifications (e.g., the assigned summer reading, the common core texts from the Reader, assessment, and co-curricular activities). Librarians also conduct an assessment of information literacy instruction in the Inquiry course.
- Writing/Speech. Both the writing and speech courses culminate in student evaluations for individual instructors to review. Both teams of instructors try to meet yearly to discuss changes to textbook selections and

assignments, and to share informally their impressions of the impact of their course designs.

- **Intellectual Perspectives (IPs).** The COC inspects and evaluates proposed new course designs as worthy of receiving IP credit, based on the instructors' stated goals and assessment outcomes. The CDC also reviews and revises the criteria for IP goals and assessment outcomes as part of its Scheduled Sequence of Curriculum Reviews. Recently, the CDC revised the system of IPs so that the student outcomes associated with Westminster's mission were distributed across the primary IP categories. The idea was that any single IP course would focus on a few of the outcomes, rather than all of them, and that students would have experiences related to all the outcomes once they completed their seven IP courses. CDC hosted a faculty workshop related to this redesign.
- **Cluster.** New cluster-related courses and new courses are reviewed by the COC when they are proposed. An ongoing problem the College faces, especially as the size of the student population grows, is the insufficient supply of clusters to meet demand. One part of the formal assessment of the cluster requirement should include strategies for offering an appropriate number of clustered courses each semester. The supply of cluster courses notwithstanding, the College has received [positive reviews](#) of its cluster offerings. For example, several articles and chapters have been published about different cluster courses, and some faculty members have also received national grants to develop these courses.
- **Capstone.** The CDC reviews the capstone design and procedures of each department to ensure compliance with the mission and philosophy of the Westminster Plan. Because capstone is a major requirement, departments also regularly evaluate their capstone curriculum. Capstone students end their semesters with course and instructor evaluations. The CDC reviews and revises the criteria for capstone goals and assessment outcomes as part of its Scheduled Sequence of Curriculum Reviews.
- **Other Graduation Requirements.** All students must successfully complete the wellness course, an aquatics course (or show proficiency), and two additional physical education activity courses, or participate in two seasons of a varsity sport. Students may waive the swimming requirement for medical or health reasons, but they must replace swimming with an additional physical education activity course. Instructors for these courses meet to brainstorm ideas for bettering wellness courses, and they administer end-of-course student evaluations. Such assessment has led to changes in bringing wellness issues (e.g., alcohol and eating disorders) to the maximum number of students early in the academic year.

Finally, the Westminster Plan originally included a community service component (in place since 1996) that has recently been reviewed, revised, and replaced with the

broader term “civic engagement.” The history of this change begins in 2003 when the community service support course (Inquiry 102) was eliminated and the Civic Engagement Task Force (CETF) was formed to create a more integrated approach to community service. The CETF’s early work indicated that the term “community service” should be replaced by the broader and more appropriate term “civic engagement.” In addition, internal research on other civic engagement programs showed that successful programs include community representation at all stages, especially during planning. The final recommendations of the CETF included establishment of a permanent council, the Civic Engagement Council, with representatives from faculty, staff, Chapel, Career Center, students, and the local community. The members of the CETF believed that a true commitment to civic engagement at Westminster College should not be focused on the “involuntary volunteering” of a community service requirement, but in deliberate actions at all levels of campus life.

To support the service-learning culture, the College established a Service-Learning Faculty Fellows program. In the past four years, this program has been successful in supporting faculty as they develop and implement service-learning courses. However, funding for this program has been limited, making it difficult to support all faculty members who want to develop service-learning courses and students who serve the Westminster community. Many of these efforts are now supported by the Drinko Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (described more fully later in this chapter). The College has made experiential learning central to its strategic plan. Consequently, it is expected that more resources will be focused on such activities as service-learning opportunities as a part of the experiential learning framework.

Cultural and Global Awareness and Sensitivity

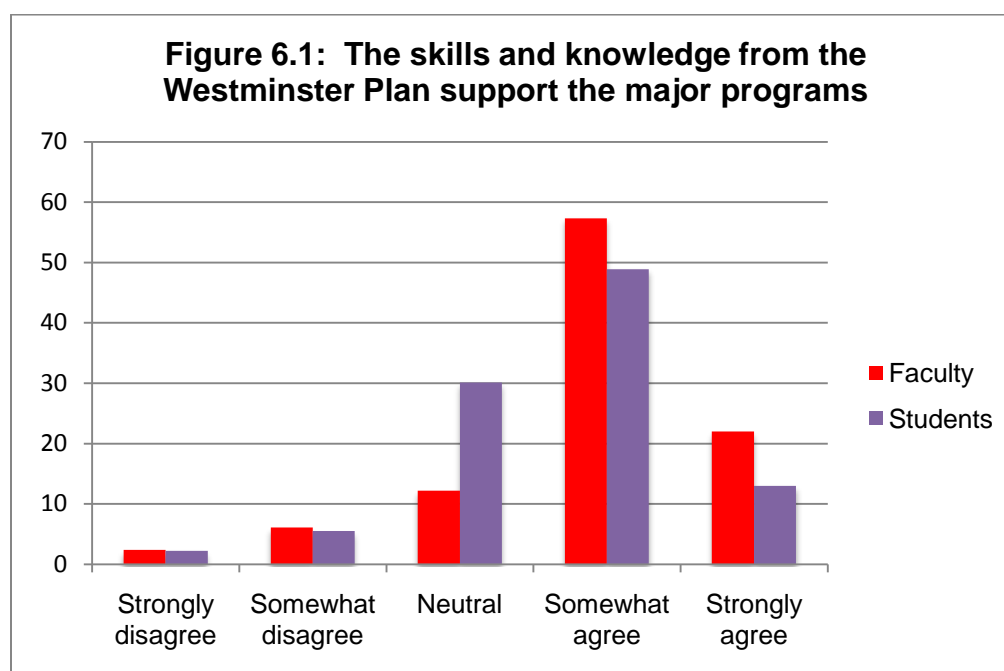
One of the outcomes related to the College’s mission is for students to acquire knowledge of society and human cultures; thus both local and global awareness are important aspects of the Westminster Plan. Such awareness is fostered throughout the Westminster Plan by incorporating class material and experiences that focus on issues and people beyond campus. The College is intentional in helping students to think about how issues that seem disconnected from them—often because they occur in other cultures—have the potential to affect them.

Questions relating to issues of diversity consistently fared lowest in the Campus Climate Survey (see also Chapter 4). Students reported that they discuss different lifestyles and customs fairly often in their classes. Similarly, students indicated that the College’s emphasis on creating a climate of respect and emphasis on understanding human diversity was acceptable, but their progress in becoming aware of different philosophies, cultures, and parts of the world was lower. Indeed, they ranked Westminster’s emphasis on expanding diversity and multicultural awareness low, highlighting some of the challenges the College faces in promoting diversity. Challenges in recruiting students and staff who have diverse characteristics and experiences have been noted in this report (see Chapters 4 and 5). Nevertheless, the College offers many opportunities for students to learn about other cultures and peoples, including a foreign language requirement. Some of the more significant recent opportunities include the

Westminster in London Program, Habitat for Humanity work trips to New Orleans and the Bahamas, Capstone students forging international collaborations in their research, and students in a gender studies course developing an electronic connection with a girls school in Kenya to learn more about women's roles in a culture different from their own. Westminster is also forging teaching, research, and learning collaborations with Western Galilee College in Israel. The College can always improve in the area of diversity, and it continues to pursue that goal.

Courses in the Major

Departmental requirements for degrees must also be examined to obtain a full picture of Westminster's educational offerings. The *Undergraduate Catalog* indicates that majors integrate outcomes that are at the core of the Westminster Plan: critical analysis, collaborative and creative problem solving, integration of ethics, effective communication, analytical thinking extended to all areas of human thought and exploration, and the ability to evaluate ideas. Based on responses to the Campus Climate Survey, the majority of faculty members believe that skills and knowledge from the Westminster Plan support the major programs. A similar pattern of results was found among students (Figure 6.1).



Departmental mission statements that are consistent with Westminster's Mission Statement are one way for departments to organize the courses within their major(s). Several departments, but not all, document their mission statements on their Web pages and/or in the *Undergraduate Catalog*. Departmental mission statements

generally are stated in terms of student ability-based outcomes, and educational offerings within the majors are tailored to fulfill these goals. Although this is the case, improvement could be made in both the availability and the visibility of departmental mission statements, and the ways in which they express assessable student outcomes.

Goals, Outcomes and Assessment at the Course, Program, and College Levels

Since the last Middle States evaluation, Westminster College has taken great strides in ensuring that both expected learning outcomes and assessment plans are incorporated in course syllabi. In Spring 2001 the COC modified the [New Course Proposal Form](#) to require that syllabi for new courses include outcomes as a necessary component. This cover form was further modified in Fall 2008 to require a course outcomes assessment plan. Since Fall 2002, 173 courses with course numbers lower than 500 have been examined by the COC either as new courses, for IP credit, or as part of a cluster or travel course. This represents about 20% of current course offerings, and over 25% of the sections offered in the Fall 2009 semester (excluding courses in Music and physical education).

Assessment of Departmental Programs

There are many ways that departments assess their programs, and one of the simplest tools is the capstone course. Capstone is a means to assess students' abilities through research-oriented projects. These projects ideally require skills that students have learned across the four years of the curriculum, and success or failure in the course is a clear indicator of how much students have learned while at Westminster. On a larger scale, however, departments use the results from capstones over time as indicators of what is or is not working well in their program offerings. This is demonstrated in the following selections taken from proposals sent to the CDC:

- Quantitative Economics (2006): "The study of economics has become a heavily quantitative discipline. To attain a respectable degree of competency in the field, students need a background in [several math and computer science courses]...Though not all graduate programs require this type of preparation, having this option for our students would give them a significant advantage in competing for spots in top tier economics Ph.D. programs."
- Mathematics (2007): "In our assessment plans for the mathematics major, we have listed learning objectives and the courses in which we seek to directly address those objectives...we have recognized over the last five years that students are not able to meet our objectives at the level expected in the courses we have listed...While we have tried to adjust the material in our first- and second-year courses, we believe it is time for more expansive revision."
- Chemistry (2009): "In response to changes in the curriculum guidelines by the American Chemical Society, the Department of Chemistry proposes a new

curriculum for chemistry majors and biochemistry majors. The new curriculum provides greater flexibility for students, enabling them to tailor their course selection to meet their career goals, and the new curriculum also enables every chemistry and biochemistry graduate to obtain an American Chemical Society approved degree.”

All program changes approved by the CDC are grounded in Westminster’s core identity as defined in the Mission Statement; these excerpts highlight that many programs at Westminster are constantly assessed in response to both internal and external needs. Although course outcomes are now stressed for all, the College continues to improve ongoing assessment of program-based outcomes.

External Accreditation

Four units of the College enjoy external accreditation. The Department of Chemistry is accredited by the American Chemical Society Committee on Professional Training every five years. The next report is due in 2011. Programs in the Education Department of the College are accredited by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through the state Department of Education. The College’s programs were last reviewed in 2004. New programs are reviewed as proposed. The Department of Music is accredited by the National Association of the Schools of Music. Since the last accreditation visit the department has received permission for new major programs. The next scheduled review will occur in Spring 2012. And finally the College’s Preschool Lab, operated by the Department of Psychology, is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The next full NAEYC review will occur in 2012.

Branch Campuses, Additional Locations, and Other Instructional Sites

Westminster College does not have branch campuses or other permanent locations where Westminster courses are delivered. Westminster has offered and continues to offer many travel courses, however. These courses are treated as a regular part of the curriculum.

Westminster has off-site instruction opportunities through study abroad and other off-campus study programs in the USA. These enable students to take university-level study for a semester or year. Students majoring in language, international business, and international politics are required to study abroad, and their financial aid “follows them” abroad to support their off-campus studies. Since the 2001-2002 academic year, 335 students have spent a semester participating in [off-campus study programs](#), an average of about 30/year. The Office of Off-Campus Study coordinates these programs. Westminster College guarantees comparable quality of teaching/learning, academic rigor, and educational effectiveness by partnering only with other accredited institutions that provide comparable courses and educational activities. Eligibility requirements for studying off-campus are described in the *Undergraduate Catalog*.

Formal standardized evaluations that are typical for Westminster's course evaluation process are not practicable for off-campus study in foreign countries. Some sort of evaluation of our students and their study programs may be obtained by special request, but generally the Director of Off-Campus Study and other administrators check on student progress through e-mails to students during the semester/year they are gone. The College views this assessment-in-action as an important feature of off-campus study because problems can be identified and corrected quickly—not after the off-campus experience has ended and the student has returned to Westminster. The Director of Off-Campus Study attempts to contact students when they return to campus to learn what Westminster needs to know about the program they are using. This allows the director to plan more successfully for future students studying off campus.

In the non-credit area, there are classes occasionally taught off campus. The [Office of Adult and Graduate Studies](#) can arrange for non-credit continuing education classes to be taught on a business site for the convenience of the employees. This option is by request and done on an *ad hoc* basis. In 2009-2010, five classes were provided for management employees of Bruce & Merrilees, a local electrical contracting firm.

All-College Honors Program

The new All-College Honors Program was initiated in 2008-2009 in response to criticisms of our former two-year honors program in our 2001 self-study. The committee responsible for building the new program has already created evaluation forms for instructors of All-College Honors courses and their effectiveness with the Honors scholars. The All-College Honors Committee has also approved an Honors Scholar Survey, both a student and a committee assessment of the Honors Coordinator, and a survey of eligible students who chose not to participate in the All-College Honors Program (see Chapter 7).

Instructional Resources

The College's mission is supported by the Ralph Gibson McGill Memorial Library, the Music Library, Audio Visual Services, and the Information Systems Department (see Chapter 2). The mission of the libraries is to support students in their pursuit of information literacy through book and journal collections, electronic resources, musical scores and recordings, audio-visual materials, interlibrary loan services, and support services for students, faculty, and administrators. The increased shelving space that resulted from the renovation of McGill Library allowed for the consolidation of materials from Mack Library in summer 2010. This consolidation will allow library staff members to offer resources and support in a more centralized manner.

One of the library's goals is the intentional and explicit integration of information literacy objectives into every major. In an effort to reach departments and faculty members who are not currently taking advantage of library services in a formal manner, the information literacy librarian began an outreach project in 2008-2009. She invited individual

departments to come to the library for sessions designed to highlight the research tools in their specific fields. She also meets with all new faculty members at the beginning of each year to discuss library instruction and resources. This outreach project is still in its infancy, as is the assessment of its success. However, the information literacy librarian is closely evaluating the efficacy of this project in terms of the number of students served and their mastery of information resource use.

Beyond the library, Westminster's primary educational support resource is the Information Systems Department (ISD). Westminster's ISD oversees computing and telephone resources for the campus community, and it supports students, staff, and faculty in their use of information resources. At one time, Westminster was at the forefront of our peers in bringing network services and technology to our students. However, with a shift in strategic focus that did not emphasize educational technology, the College has fallen behind in the kinds of technology it supports. Predominantly, instructors rely on fairly common software in their courses (e.g., Microsoft Office), and the College provides updated versions of those programs. However, there is a sense that instructors—especially those in communications, media arts, and education—need more specialized tools to train their students. As one example, education majors often student-teach in classrooms that offer SmartBoards or Promethean active boards. Education faculty members need to be able to model best practices with the technology Westminster graduates will use. In September 2010, the campus went wireless, which should provide a strong foundation for future educational technology.

Additionally, Westminster students are matriculating with very strong expectations about their technology skills and needs (see a [technology study](#) compiled by Dr. Terri Lenox and her Systems Analysis class in Fall 2008). This contributes to a need to manage our constituents' understanding of academic versus personal computing needs. Our mission focuses on the former and cannot be disrupted by the latter.

Currently, the size of the ISD staff is adequate to meet the College's computing needs following an increase to support the growing number of technologies offered and the support provided to students. Based on informal conversations with the IS directors at peer institutions, we are at the median in terms of staffing. However, the budget for the ISD has not increased—in part because the price of computers has fallen and more students are bringing computers with them—and the College does not adequately support replacement plans for technology (see Chapter 2). This is a primary issue for the College's ability to support its mission with technological resources.

Although positions have been added in the ISD and AV areas, no positions have been added in McGill Library. As instructional needs continue to change dramatically, the College must monitor carefully the responsibilities of the professional informational staff.

Graduate Education

The general purpose of the Graduate Program in Education is to increase the competence of teachers and to develop those competencies appropriate for school

administrators, reading specialists, and school counselors. This will prepare them to assume greater responsibility and more vigorous leadership in their profession. The competencies include the spirit of scientific inquiry, stimulating original and independent thought, enlarging understanding of the processes involved in human development, deepening perceptions of social and cultural phenomena, building a sound educational philosophy, and identifying and responding to major educational issues.

To assess that Westminster graduate students develop these competencies, a comprehensive examination (written and/or oral) is required of all certification and degree candidates. This examination, created by the graduate faculty, addresses the area in which the student has specialized. Some programs require a portfolio and oral defense as part of the comprehensive examination. A student must make application for and successfully complete the examination prior to receiving the master's degree and recommendation for certification. Assessments of student progress are made through practica, internships, and regular interviews with the graduate faculty. Additional assessment within the Graduate Program includes course assessments, Praxis exams for certification, clinical internship experiences, student feedback, and professional feedback.

Supplementing the services and curriculum provided to “traditional” undergraduate students—the largest group of the student body—the College also provides related educational activities that support the learning of both traditional and nontraditional students. These activities include certificate programs, basic skills development, experiential learning, non-credit offerings, off-campus study, and distance/distributed learning.

Certificate Programs

Westminster offers one certificate program: a post-baccalaureate teaching certificate program (see Chapter 2). This program is available to students holding a baccalaureate degree who want to be certified to teach in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and who meet [eligibility requirements](#). It is a small program that has an average of 11 students enrolled per academic year, and it is administered through the Office of Adult and Graduate Studies in partnership with the Education Department. The program's smaller size allows careful investigation of each student's preparedness for certification. Of the students who have been admitted to and have pursued post-baccalaureate teaching certificates, 100% have completed our program successfully.

Basic Skills

Westminster does not offer in its curriculum pre-college level or remedial courses. However, at times there are students who need academic support with particular classes. For these students, Westminster provides the Learning Center (see also Chapter 4). Guided by a part-time director, 16-18 upperclass students serve as teaching assistants. These students represent all disciplines and are prepared to help students identify strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing skills, to develop strategies for improving these skills, and to provide specific assistance in most classes.

Additional assistance is available from Westminster writing faculty. Over the course of a typical year, more than 140 students are served in the Learning Center across more than 400 sessions. A majority of students who use the Learning Center rate their experience with the Learning Center as good or excellent. When students suggest how to improve their experiences, they frequently mention increasing the number of hours the Center is open and expanding the content area covered by the tutors. Beyond impressionistic data from students, it would help to have more objective measures to assess the effectiveness of the services provided by the Learning Center. Such measures could include tracking students' academic progress after they seek tutoring.

Experiential Learning

Learning by doing in real-world situations directly affects student learners by giving them experience and knowledge of contemporary issues, commitments to others and society, and a sense of career and service as citizens of the world. The most substantial change in the College's emphasis on experiential learning came with the expansion of the Drinko Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (DCETL) in 2006 to enrich undergraduate education at the College. To support undergraduate research, the DCETL formed the Undergraduate Research Advisory Council (URAC), an *ad hoc* group of faculty who are focused on engaging students in research and in encouraging their faculty colleagues to include students in their research as appropriate.

Every spring semester, URAC hosts a research and arts celebration for all Westminster students, which is a continuation of an earlier undergraduate symposium focused on the students in the sciences. In 2009 and 2010, the celebration successfully expanded to two half-day sessions with approximately 95 student participants from every department on campus participating each year. In 2011, the celebration will be a full day in the middle of the week when no classes are scheduled. This is an experimental change to the College calendar to have a campus-wide focus on student achievements. The challenge has been to encourage faculty and non-presenting students to attend this event, and URAC members have been communicating with colleagues at other institutions to learn their strategies for encouraging broad participation.

Students can apply to the DCETL for \$300 awards to travel to a conference to present research, or to purchase research materials. In the past four years, the DCETL has granted 200 travel awards and 52 research awards and has sponsored travel for 32 students and 10 faculty members to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research where our students presented their work. Although students are grateful for the travel awards, many comment that \$300 does not cover their costs to participate.

In 2006, the DCETL began a program to support and encourage faculty to incorporate service-learning into their academic courses through a Service-Learning Faculty Fellows program. Service-learning is "... a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an

enhanced sense of civic responsibility” (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). In the past four years, over 20 faculty members have offered over 25 service-learning courses with over 400 students enrolled.

For the fourth year in a row, the College has been named to the Presidential Community Service Higher Education Honor Roll. Nearly 65% of Westminster students volunteered last year, over twice the national average (26.4% of the U.S. population) and more than 50% higher than the national average for college students (42.5%). Recently, *Newsweek Magazine* named Westminster as one of the top 15 service-minded colleges and universities in America. The DCETL, Chapel Office, and Student Affairs provide community service opportunities for students, as do fraternities, sororities, honor societies, athletic departments, and academic departments. For example, the DCETL administers an AmeriCorps program called Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania with 20 Westminster students serving a total of 6,000 hours in a year at organizations such as Lawrence County Community Partnership, Head Start, Walker Neighborhood House, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Special Olympics, and Habitat for Humanity. In 2008-2009, the College assessed [experiential learning](#) at Westminster, measuring eight ways in which students are engaged in experiential education: internships, service-learning courses, courses with laboratory components and/or research components, capstone courses, travel courses, practicum and student teaching, and community service.

Since 2005, almost 1,300 students have participated in [internship/field experiences](#) at hundreds of locations. Internships/field experiences can be arranged both during the academic year around students’ class schedules and during the summer. Westminster’s Career Center provides support for formal, credit-bearing internship opportunities. In addition, many students complete internships that are not registered through the Career Center because they do not earn academic credit, or because they are in-house field experiences that are part of an academic program (e.g., education field experiences). As part of the College’s 2003-2007 strategic plan, the number of internship opportunities for students was increased. Departments usually assess the effectiveness of student internships based on the host employer’s/on-site supervisor’s completed [Evaluation of a Westminster College Intern](#) form; the student’s completed [Student Evaluation of Internship](#) form, along with a journal and/or essay; and the faculty advisor’s evaluation of the student’s success at satisfying the requirement.

Non-Traditional Programming

Westminster College fully supports the needs of adult learners through our Office of Adult and Graduate Studies. All students working toward a degree through the adult education program have the same academic requirements that residential students have, and they pursue the same degrees but often at an accelerated pace or in the evenings. These courses are taught by the same faculty who teach the traditional version of the course. The College believes that this is the best way to support local adult learners without compromising its mission.

Just as with its credit/degree programs, Westminster is dedicated to developing a lifelong culture of curiosity in all students. As part of its extended educational mission and part of community service and outreach, Westminster offers non-credit classes. This program is designed and managed by the Office of Adult and Graduate Studies. Although the [roster of specific classes](#) changes each year, courses are generally offered in several areas: health and fitness, computer skills, special interest, and personal enrichment. Classes are regionally publicized by mail and local news media and are open to the public. Classes vary in length from a single presentation to multiple weeks. Because Continuing Education classes vary in length and hours, they are priced individually to be widely affordable.

Students are invited to suggest topics for future courses and to evaluate courses. These are reviewed each term as a way of tracking the classes' success or identifying possible weaknesses. In the future, when the College fully migrates to the integrated administrative software for non-credit classes there will be a better facility for tracking data about students, their preferences, and their overall feedback about these classes.

Distance or Distributed Learning

Distance learning at Westminster is an issue that has evolved in thinking and action over the years. For over 10 years before 2008-2009, some faculty members at Westminster College used distance learning in an *ad hoc* way, such as when they were unable to meet their class face-to-face. However, for the most part, Westminster had no formal institutionalized program for the use of distance learning during this time. During 2008-2009 the College began to explore more formally the growing opportunities and expectations for distance/online learning options. Westminster participated in a learning management solutions opportunity sponsored by the National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education (NITLE). At about that time, the College also upgraded its administrative software system to Jenzabar EX (implemented in February 2010). One component of this system is an integrated Learning Management System (e-Racer). The need to broaden faculty and student understanding of learning/classroom management online tools has been the focus of several recent development workshops. Changes in technology have also led to campus discussions on integrating distance learning into traditional undergraduate, adult undergraduate, and graduate programs. These discussions also focused on how an integrated administrative software system would benefit marketing, program innovation, and ability to meet student and faculty expectations about technology and learning. Central to the discussion was maintaining the quality of a Westminster education—which was founded on face-to-face, personal interaction—without becoming outdated in the world of pedagogy and learning tools.

Historically, Westminster College has offered mostly traditional classroom courses. However, in response to growing demand and in effort to stay technologically relevant, the College has begun to increase online and online/classroom hybrid course offerings. The courses that have been taught online, or as hybrids, are previously-approved, standing courses and have only been taught in this way during the summer sessions.

The College guarantees the comparable quality of these courses to the traditional course. The faculty member who teaches the course most often is generally responsible for converting the traditional course to the online or hybrid format. Westminster's online and hybrid courses carry the same academic credit as any traditional course.

The College continues to work on its plan to comply with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)—Section 495. In terms of verifying the identity of students who enroll in online or hybrid courses, the College requires students to (1) meet face-to-face with the instructor before or at the first meeting of the course, and (2) use password-secured access to the campus network that supports the course. The latter requirement also helps to protect students' privacy. Although not considered distance education under HEOA guidelines, hybrid courses enhance the College's ability to verify student identity because some sessions are held in face-to-face settings, especially examinations. The College will continue to formulate procedures that ensure compliance with HEOA standards, including formal policies on examinations and technology in online courses. One outcome of these conversations on technology and related issues was a draft [Westminster College Academic Technology Vision Statement](#). The vision statement asserts the value of technology in a Westminster education and the need to support faculty instruction with the most current, updated technology software and hardware.

Recommendations

1. Departments/Units should improve the availability and visibility of their mission statements, and the ways in which they express assessable student outcomes.
2. The College should complete the initial review of all general education components by examining the cluster requirement. The review of clusters was delayed when the VPAA charged members of CDC with helping to design the new All-College Honors Program. This initial evaluation should consider the design and integration of clusters and the alignment with institutional objectives.
3. The College must find a balance between the strong momentum of interest in using online learning options and the realities of costs and the current economic climate. The College risks becoming further outdated and competitively disadvantaged without improved technological support of student learning and scholarship, including support from an instructional technology staff member.
4. The College should bolster its support of experiential learning. Such support includes more financial resources for undergraduate research and conference travel, student-faculty research collaborations, service learning courses and opportunities, and competitive internships. This increased support is a primary initiative of the College's new strategic plan.

Tradition...



Westminster was founded in 1852 as one of the nation's earliest coeducational colleges. Our timeless mission of developing individuals – intellectually, spiritually, and socially – has helped Westminster become one of the country's top liberal arts colleges.

The Westminster Way

Chapter 7: Assessment

One goal of this self-study has been to demonstrate how the College continually assesses the match between its mission and day-to-day activities, and makes subsequent programmatic adjustments based on these assessments. Using both direct and indirect data, the College evaluates the adequacy of its curriculum to meet objectives of the mission; the ability of student support services to enroll, support, and retain students; and the intentional relationships among Westminster's mission, strategic planning, institutional resource management, and staff development. Since the 2001 self-study evaluation, Westminster College has understood and embraced the call for a culture of assessment and has worked to establish such a culture.

One goal of the first six chapters was to demonstrate assessment at the micro level (e.g., course, program). In this final chapter of the report, a broader, more macro view of assessment at Westminster is offered to contextualize both the College's achievements and needs in its assessment plan. The content is organized around three publications: MSCHE's (2007) publication, [*Student Learning Assessment: Options and Resources \(2nd ed.\)*](#), Suskie's (2009) [*Examples of Evidence of Student Learning*](#), and Weiner's (2009) article published in AAUP's *Academe*, "[Establishing a Culture of Assessment](#)." The content of the first publication is important for evaluating the broad institutional, programmatic, and course-level assessment practices at Westminster. Information in the second publication helps the College to identify specific practices that are used to measure student learning. The third publication is useful for describing Westminster in terms of the characteristics of a healthy assessment culture.

Prior Assessment Evaluations

Westminster has submitted two formal evaluations of assessment to Middle States since the 2001 self-study report. As part of a major recommendation made by the visiting team, the College was directed to prepare a follow-up report on assessment in 2003. The 2006 Periodic Review Report also addressed assessment activities. The current state of assessment at Westminster can be understood within the context of these prior evaluations.

To prepare for the 2001 accreditation review, the Office of Academic Affairs established an *ad hoc* Outcomes Assessment Advisory Council (OAAC) and required departments to develop assessment plans. In its report, the visiting team directed Westminster to increase assessment literacy on campus and to create a comprehensive assessment plan. It also noted that an organizational structure was not yet in place to translate assessment findings into changes beyond the course or major level. In other words, a formal culture of assessment was only beginning to grow at Westminster.

The 2003 follow-up report identified several steps taken to develop and implement a comprehensive outcomes assessment plan. The report detailed significant results of these activities, including links between all assessment activities and the College Mission Statement. Importantly, the College used the 2001 recommendations as it

created the 2003-2008 strategic plan. For example, the College carefully constructed measureable goals to evaluate the plan's effectiveness (see Chapter 2). Other activities included the development of comprehensive department and co-curricular assessment plans, and an array of initiatives designed to increase campus awareness and understanding of assessment practices. The resulting comprehensive outcomes assessment plan articulates eight student outcomes derived from the Mission Statement (see Chapter 1), which have since been used as the foundation for developing program assessment plans and practices. These activities also improved assessment literacy by giving faculty members a common framework to understand assessment and by encouraging them to see the assessment of student learning as a process that they own (see Weiner, 2009).

The 2006 Periodic Review Report indicated that all academic majors have stated outcomes associated with their programs and that the outcomes are linked to departmental mission statements that reflect the College's mission and goals. Westminster's academic departments have created a wide variety of regimens for assessing their major programs' outcomes, as described in Chapter 6. At one end of the spectrum are majors like education and music that are heavily driven by outside accrediting agencies and standardized national exams. Some majors such as chemistry and psychology have actively embraced the concept of outcomes assessment, using the suggested outcomes and assessment techniques of their professional associations. For example, the Psychology Department evaluates the adequacy of its curriculum through majors' performance on a standardized achievement exam (ACAT) in their senior year. Psychology faculty members are also comparing the strength of their curriculum against a core psychology curriculum that was recently endorsed by the American Psychological Association. Many departments have chosen to evaluate the performance of their programs through an assessment of capstone projects, student portfolios, student participation in scholarship and local or national conferences, internship evaluations, and anecdotal encounters with their alumni. Additionally, members of the Westminster faculty participate in Advanced Placement grading opportunities and regional, national, or international competitions that provide awareness of both curricular and assessment trends in their disciplines. A recent [assessment audit](#) completed by department chairs reveals the diversity of methods that are used to measure student learning outcomes.

The report also evaluated assessment of other academic programs. The First-Year Program has goals and objectives related directly to mission-derived outcomes. As reported in Chapter 6, assessment results are analyzed at annual faculty workshops and are the basis for program revision. Other notable efforts toward strengthening the assessment-planning link have occurred in the Mathematics and Computer Science Department and in the new four-year All-College Honors Program, and these leading examples are described below.

Faculty members from the mathematics department were concerned that their majors graduate with a core set of desired knowledge and skills in addition to the content taught in each of the courses. In 1997, the mathematics faculty members began a

formal discussion of what their majors should know and be able to accomplish upon graduating, and this led to the creation of a departmental mission statement, a related set of seven major outcomes and 14 developmentally-appropriate but challenging learning objectives, and substantial curricular changes to meet those outcomes/objectives. Additionally, the department identified the course(s) that would address each outcome and the ways in which the outcomes would be measured. Computer science faculty members created similar outcomes/objectives and a plan for their assessment.

During the 2003-2004 review by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the mathematics faculty members learned that their curriculum did not meet changing state requirements, and this feedback led to further curricular changes. (Similar changes were made in many programs that are related to education.) These changes were guided, in part, by a comparison of the then-current curriculum with the *Curriculum Guide* prepared by the Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics. The department continues to assess the success of the mathematics and computer science curricula, its delivery, and the interaction of the course material to produce graduates with desired knowledge and skills; the [mathematics assessment plan](#) was updated in 2010.

The Honors Program has also undergone extensive analysis and revision, motivated by the visiting team recommendations in 2001 and based to some extent on assessment of the Honors Colloquium and of the final projects completed by students in the two-year Honors program. Through the careful work of the Academic Standards and Curriculum Development Committees, the framework for a new four-year All-College Honors Program was created. The *ad hoc* Honors Committee began creating features of the new program, including curriculum objectives, eligibility requirements and application procedures, and the curriculum. This committee also created a thorough system for assessing the program's success in meeting its objectives. For example, the committee created five outcomes that align well with the College's mission, and it created rubrics for evaluating candidates' eligibility and the quality of their interview and essay when applying to the program. Program outcomes are regularly assessed once scholars join the program. Scholars must maintain a portfolio of their written work, co-curricular activities, and collaborative activities (e.g., formal peer reviews, team projects) across their tenure, and this portfolio is assessed against the objectives annually. Additionally, the committee proposed to monitor graduating scholars' acceptance to professional schools, graduate schools, or professional employment over time as a way to measure the program's long-term effectiveness. The *ad hoc* Honors Committee also created assessment measures for the program coordinator that are completed by scholars and members of the *ad hoc* Honors Committee. Finally, the Honors Committee created a survey for eligible students who chose not to apply to or join the new program as a way of understanding their decision and improving the program's appeal. These assessment data are used to measure effectiveness and to inform changes in the All-College Honors Program. Detailed information on the assessment measures can be found in the [Program Coordinator's Handbook](#).

The 2006 report also evaluated other institutional assessment practices. The Division of Student Affairs has established an ongoing outcomes assessment plan that is comprehensive and consistent across most of the 12 departments within the division (see Chapter 4). The Department of Athletics assesses the athletic interests and abilities of full-time, undergraduate students. Results help the department to determine if it is accommodating the athletic interests and abilities of full-time, undergraduate students and facilitates monitoring *Title IX* compliance. The Board of Trustees has also conducted formal evaluations and will begin more systematic, ongoing self-assessments (see Chapter 3). In 2005 the College participated in the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania Baccalaureate Outcomes Survey. Survey data have provided information on the activities and attitudes of Westminster alumni and enabled the College to compare its alumni responses with peer institutions. According to Weiner (2009), these activities are important signals of a healthy assessment culture. The College values assessing not only its academic programs, but also its co-curricular activities and broad institutional effectiveness.

Activities summarized by these two reports indicate that Westminster has made substantial progress addressing needs arising from our 2001 review. The College increased assessment literacy, and it continues to shape perceptions of assessment as an advantage and not as a burden. The College also developed a comprehensive assessment plan and began to take steps toward establishing an organizational structure to translate assessment findings into changes beyond the course level or major. This effort has taken the form of a multi-year, sequenced evaluation of general education conducted by the College curriculum committees. This process has examined several components of the Westminster Plan Curriculum, including Inquiry and the First-Year Program, Capstone, and the Intellectual Perspectives (IP) requirement. Assessment related to these components has been described in detail in Chapter 6. As Weiner (2009) noted, ongoing assessment of the general education program is one of the most important features of an assessment culture, and it is now a central element of Westminster's assessment plan.

Evaluation of Periodic Review Report

On July 31, 2006, Middle States' reviewers indicated that Westminster had demonstrated progress in responding to the recommendations of the visiting team. Reviewers noted the specific steps taken to improve assessment since the previous self-study report, and accreditation was reaffirmed.

At the same time, though, reviewers agreed with Westminster's own conclusion that efforts to strengthen a culture of assessment were ongoing. For example, they indicated that program-level assessment should be more closely and consistently linked to institutional goals, and that standardized assessment practices across the institution would forge such a link. The reviewers strongly encouraged faculty members to include both college-wide and discipline-specific learning outcomes in their syllabi, along with metrics to evaluate the achievement of those outcomes.

Generally, the reviewers' comments identified two broad areas for improving assessment of learning outcomes at Westminster.

- (1) Noting that most of the assessment data provided were anecdotal or descriptive, the report stressed the need to improve the validity and reliability of assessment data. To be useful, assessment data must be linked to important student learning outcomes, evaluated by multiple means, and gathered over time and across situations (MSCHE, 2007).
- (2) Referring to recommendations earlier in the report, reviewers noted that the College must find ways to encourage departments to feel ownership over the assessment process and to make stronger connections between institutional and department outcomes. They suggested that syllabi should list those outcomes in the context of specific courses, and that the College should create standard criteria that could be used to measure students' success.

Subsequent Assessment Activities

Since the Periodic Review Report, Westminster has continued to develop a culture of assessment. Looking at how the institution is evaluated, a variety of strategies are in place. For example, the College continues to measure student satisfaction biannually, to monitor retention and graduation rates, and to support programmatic reviews. Also, the College is exploring ways to improve how best to evaluate courses that relate to specific components of the Westminster Plan (e.g., courses with IP designation, cluster courses). Additionally, students' information literacy has been assessed more carefully in recent years, and those assessments have been used to improve information literacy instruction and its integration in the curriculum (see Chapter 6). Both Presidents Williamson and Dorman were careful to specify outcomes and the metrics by which they would be assessed in their respective strategic plans, and evidence-based processes remain an important component of the current administration. In that sense, there is growing administrative understanding of why assessing College operations is necessary, and also support for assessment efforts (e.g., funding departmental retreats for curricular review, providing staff support to allow program directors the time to review goals and objectives, etc.).

Responding to the recommendations of the Periodic Review Report reviewers, the Curriculum Operations Committee revised all new course proposal forms to require that all instructors include outcomes and outcome assessment plans in their proposed-course syllabi. This requirement has been strongly enforced, and courses have not been approved without the faculty's attention to assessment. The result of this change has been increased awareness of assessment and how objectives at the course-level should be measureable and connected to Westminster's mission. This change has also produced ongoing conversations among the faculty about student learning objectives, how course activities are aligned with those objectives, and how those objectives can be measured.

Westminster also has taken steps to respond to the call for better linkage between institutional and departmental goals and for greater standardization and consistency in assessment criteria. This effort has centered on establishing the eight outcomes derived from the College Mission Statement as the foundation for broader program assessment. These outcomes provided the framework for revising the goals and objectives of the IP requirement during the 2007 calendar year (see Chapter 6). This revision has strengthened the College's ability to assess institutional goals and to do so at the departmental level.

In addition to strengthening the assessment of institutional goals at the departmental level, the College has also worked to improve the quality of assessment data collected. This effort has focused on improving implementation of outcomes-based learning at every level of the curriculum.

To help faculty members respond to the greater emphasis on assessment and outcomes-based learning, the College sponsored several workshops. In spring 2003, the Outcomes Assessment Advisory Council hosted a workshop on assessment. In fall 2006, the Faculty Development Officer, supported by the VPAA, organized a workshop entitled, "Designing Courses for More Significant Learning." Dr. L. Dee Fink was the invited speaker, and he guided faculty members through a series of activities designed to help them develop or revise a course by using learning objectives as the starting point of all other course-related decisions, including text selection, topic coverage, and—most importantly—assignment design. Over 90% of Westminster faculty members attended this workshop. Assessment continues to be a popular topic at roundtable discussions and workshops hosted by the Faculty Development Committee. For example, the FDC sponsored "The Bottom Line: One Course, One Change" in spring 2007. The workshop was led by 11 Westminster faculty members, and was attended by 33 faculty members. The goal of the workshop was for faculty members to make one change in the syllabus or structure of one course and to assess the student learning benefits of this change. Weiner (2009) suggested that promoting assessment through ongoing professional development reflects a healthy assessment culture. The College sees value in making members of the faculty and administration more aware of, and available for, national conferences and workshops that focus on assessment in higher education. These activities should extend the institution's knowledge and use of good assessment techniques.

As a follow up to this emphasis, the Outcomes Assessment Advisory Council began a multi-year process of revising the Westminster Assessment Web site. Whereas the previous version of this site addressed the need for improving general assessment literacy, the revision provided faculty hands-on guidance in developing assignments, courses, and programs that are guided by outcomes-based learning. The revised site, which was made available in spring 2009, includes instruction, models, and illustrations designed to improve the ability to generate meaningful data as a basis for assessment and revision.

The Westminster Assessment Web site describes effective assessment in terms of a cycle:

Good assessment follows an intentional and reflective process of design, implementation, evaluation, and revision. The Assessment Cycle relies on four simple but dynamic words to represent this process: Plan—Do—Check—Act. The cycle is built on these four distinct but interrelated actions. Results at one stage guide activity at the following stage. Clearly articulated outcome statements guide course design, course activities yield data that measure student learning, and evaluation of this data informs course and program revision.

In the years since the previous self-study, the College has directed considerable resources toward improving the planning stage of the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. Faculty members have been provided tools and encouragement to conceptualize and deliver outcomes-based education. Each academic program has been directed to develop an outcomes assessment plan. Some academic programs with components shared by all departments (most general education requirements and capstone) have undergone formal review and been revised to integrate mission-derived outcomes in their design.

The emphasis on effective planning has helped to advance the cycle of assessment at Westminster by providing a foundation for effective doing, the next stage of activity. As the College's assessment Web site indicates, "effective teachers implement program outcomes at the course level in ways that facilitate student learning. That is, they design learning activities that help students achieve what is developed in the Plan stage."

An important piece of the Act stage is sharing. Consistent with the expectation that assessment results must be shared to have value (MSCHE, 2007; Weiner, 2009), the College believes that the assessment practices and outcomes of one department or unit should be shared with all departments or units. In the faculty area, participants in development workshops may be expected to submit follow-up reports to the Faculty Development Officer to show how they have made changes in their teaching, scholarship, or service. For example, participants in a grant-writing workshop were expected to create and submit an external grant, and one metric of workshop effectiveness was the number of grants that were submitted and the number of grants that were funded. Faculty members who request funds to participate in conferences and other developmental activities must submit a report that describes how the activity enhanced scholarship and teaching. This report is required before expenses are reimbursed, and it is submitted to the VPAA, the FDO, and often the department chair and colleagues.

Another example of sharing was when departments participated in a faculty development workshop on defining appropriate scholarship. Within the recent past, there has been concern at Westminster that junior faculty members experience some anxiety because they are unsure that their scholarship will be recognized as appropriate for tenure and promotion decisions. This created an opportunity for members of the

faculty to spend time formalizing departmental expectations of appropriate scholarship for probationary, tenure, and promotion review. After departments met individually, they came together to share key issues and concerns that arose and their scholarship outcomes. There was broad consensus that these expectations and outcomes should be shared within departments and be used as a resource for chairs when their department members are reviewed for tenure and/or promotion.

Although the College can point to success in the many areas of assessment, the current report reveals that more can be done to ensure assessment is functioning fully and effectively at each stage of the assessment cycle. Clearly, creating, maintaining, and sustaining a culture of assessment must continue to be an important goal of the College. The College will continue to strengthen the link between departmental assessment and institutional goals, and to improve the validity and reliability of assessment across all programs.

The revision to the Intellectual Perspectives requirement took a further step toward improving assessment of institutional goals at the departmental level. However, the majority of discipline-based courses included in this component are not major requirements, primarily because courses within the same major/minor often carry the same IP designation. Major and minor programs were thus largely unaffected by the review of the IP requirement; nor were they a part of the other formal reviews, with the exception of the capstone. As new courses are added to the major/minor, though, these programs are reviewed. Although all academic programs have developed assessment plans, no systematic evaluation of departmental assessment has taken place since the Periodic Review.

The emphasis on assessment planning has not been universally accompanied by attention to the final two stages of the assessment cycle: Check and Act. The current report reflects this omission in that the assessment data presented for some academic programs remain largely anecdotal and descriptive. The report refers to the results of campus-wide and program or course surveys; it includes comments by department chairs. The College also values such indirect measures of student learning as course grades, placement rates, and surveys to assess student and alumni attitudes toward Westminster. This information is encouraging, but the College recognizes the need to bolster its focus on objective and direct sources of data (cf. Suskie, 2009). For example, the College recognizes the importance of direct measures like standardized supervisor ratings of student internships, portfolios across a student's tenure, reflective exercises to help a student discern his or her values, cumulative subject tests, and capstone experiences that allow a student to demonstrate mission-derived objectives (see the assessment audit). Additional measures and activities can be used to strengthen the College's assessment plan.

Although substantially improved since the last self-study, the College's current approach to assessment lacks an overall structure and purpose sufficient to address needs clearly identified by previous reviews. To this point, committees and councils have succeeded

in developing various assessment components. However, none of these groups has the authority or the purview to orchestrate effective, institution-wide assessment.

Recommendations

1. As the chief academic officer of the College, the VPAA must assume responsibility for initiating and monitoring comprehensive assessment of academic programs. The authoritative leadership of this office must ensure that ongoing assessment activity is taking place, that it is accountable to external requirements, and that it is useful to the College. These responsibilities should not be delegated to multiple participants and groups, even though such participants will be actively involved in assessment. To promote compliance and increase awareness of assessment, the VPAA should provide annual assessment reports to the President's Cabinet for eventual distribution to the campus community.
2. The College should direct attention to the assessment of major and minor programs. All stages of the assessment cycle should receive emphasis.
 - a. Departments should be trained and encouraged to evaluate their current assessment plans and revise them as needed.
 - b. Assessment plans should include outcomes reflecting departmental and institutional learning objectives.
 - c. Outcomes should be clearly identified on all syllabi—not just those for proposed courses—and included in a departmental mission statement.
 - d. Assessment plans should indicate how outcomes will be measured at the departmental and/or the course levels.
 - e. Assessment data should be evaluated at the program and the institutional levels to improve student learning and institutional effectiveness.
 - f. Departmental assessment plans and procedures (items a-e) should be evaluated at the institutional level. Departments should be given feedback on their assessment efforts, and the results of assessment should be reported to the VPAA. This institutional review should occur on a regular basis (frequency to be determined by the institution).
 - g. Departmental mission statements should be published on department Web sites and in the *Undergraduate Catalog*.
3. Assessment of academic support services and of non-academic areas should be ongoing and comprehensive. The chief administrators with responsibility for these areas should ensure that such activity is taking place and should provide annual assessment reports to the President's Cabinet for eventual distribution to the campus community.
4. The College has increased its support of assessment activities. Such support should continue at even greater levels so that employees are encouraged to participate in national conferences and workshops on assessment.

Conclusion

This decennial study demonstrates clearly that Westminster College is an institution that has undergone remarkable change in the last 10 years – two-thirds of the President's Cabinet is new; 54% of the faculty are new; and other campus constituents including the Board of Trustees and campus governance committees follow strict rotation plans to ensure broad participation in representative bodies. Embracing these changes and recognizing the current economic uncertainties, the College understands that it faces some difficult challenges. Through the sense of community that the campus refers to as "The Westminster Way," the College has worked together under the leadership of President Dorman to devise a strategic plan that will guide the College for the next decade. The nationally-recognized "Advantage: Westminster" – planning for which included representation from all campus constituents – identifies key areas where the College can improve and specific assessable strategies to achieve these goals.

The next decade promises to be as exciting and challenging as the previous. This self-study, written in conjunction with the strategic plan and with input from all campus constituents, has helped the College to identify a number of areas that need improvement. Many recommendations included in this report have already been returned to standing college committees and councils so they might devise plans to implement the recommendations. Also, many smaller issues that came to light as the College assembled this report, but did not rise to the level of recommendation, are also being examined or have already been resolved. Perhaps the most significant outcome of this report, however, is an increasingly shared understanding across campus of who the College is, what the mission is, and the distinctive role that Westminster can play in the future of the western Pennsylvania/Eastern Ohio region, of American higher education, and of the nation itself. It is a mission the faculty, staff, administrators, and students of Westminster are eager to embrace.