

**Assurance Argument**  
**Westminster College - MO**

12/17/2014

# 1 - Mission

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

## 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

## Argument

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### Development of the Mission Statement

Westminster College's current [mission and vision statement](#) was [developed in 2002-2003](#) (as detailed in the 2005 HLC Self-Study) in a process led by "The Mission Task Force," which was charged by then-President Lamkin to review the then-current mission and vision statements and to make recommendations about how the statement might "emphasize the pursuit of life-long learning" and about "how the mission statement and educational goals might be more explicitly connected to one another." A revised mission statement emerged from the deliberations of the task force that preserved most of the original language but addressed the concerns raised as part of the charge given by President Lamkin. The statement was endorsed by the Faculty Executive Committee on April 23, 2003, and, with some modifications, by the entire faculty on that same day. At their respective meetings, staff and the Student Government Association subsequently discussed and approved this statement, as did the Board of Trustees at their May, 2003 meeting.

### Alignment with the Mission

The Westminster College community's commitment to the values and purpose articulated in the mission statement assures that Westminster College's academic programs and student support services, as well as its enrollment profile, are consistent with the mission. The commitment to the College's mission that is described in this first section of the Assurance Argument consistently guides the planning and budgeting processes and priorities.

**Academic Programs.** The mission statement affirms College commitment to a liberal arts education, and academic [mission statements and goals](#) support the institutional mission. Westminster describes itself as a liberal arts institution based on the fact that students devote almost half of their study to a broad and interdisciplinary general education program (*New Foundations*), and the majority of Westminster's graduates [major](#) in the arts and sciences. After much [discussion](#) about alignment with the mission and about the need for additional revenue, in 2011 Westminster began to offer [online courses](#) (largely in Winter and Summer terms with some online courses offered in Fall, 2014) but

does not offer online degree programs. Westminster has followed the [C-RAC guidelines](#) in [cautiously developing](#) the online program. Westminster strives to make students' education distinctive by incorporating practical application, leader-development, experiential learning, and/or a global focus into each major, and [2013 NSSE](#) and [2014 NSSE](#) reports show that students report that they are actively engaged in their educations. Westminster has [aspirational, transitional, and current comparison groups](#) and compares well with these institutions.

**Student Support Services.** Westminster's student code of conduct is directly linked to the core values of the [mission](#). Likewise, all Student Life programs are designed and assessed based on our [Concept for Student Development](#). In addition, support for students in the [Learning Opportunities Center](#) and the Library are grounded in creating life-long learners and on developing leadership skills. Finally, the mission is the guiding force for our [Student Government Association](#).

**Enrollment Profile.** Westminster College's [enrollment profile](#), its [graduation rates](#), and [alumni surveys](#) provide evidence that Westminster College attracts students who align with the mission and that significant majorities of students and alumni value their Westminster College education. Alignment with the mission starts as early as the application process.

**Strategic Planning and Budget Alignment.** The mission and vision of the college are clearly articulated in [Westminster 2020](#), with specific plans for implementation. Goal 2 of the strategic plan identifies strategies that leverage the College's traditional business models and management practices in order to realize the mission and vision of the College. However, progress on many of the goals has been difficult due to budget restraints. Based on the revenue generated by tuition and the endowment, it has become clear that continuing to achieve the mission and vision set forth for Westminster will be difficult without the addition of increased revenue streams. The lack of resources has begun to affect numerous areas, most notably faculty and staff compensation, classroom technology, deferred maintenance, and campus facilities. Throughout the development of *Westminster 2020*, and, to the present, several plans for increasing revenue have been established, such as a [pricing study](#), [2012](#) and [2014](#) enrollment plans, and the [Leading the Way Capital Campaign](#).

The allocation of resources at Westminster College is done collaboratively between all areas of the institution to maximize utilization and to ensure that its educational purpose is not adversely affected. Annual budgeting is done in each area of the College, with Cabinet members working with the CFO. Each Cabinet member considers the mission and vision of the College in making decisions about the budget, and many key budget decision have been made in light of *Westminster 2020*. In order to ensure a continued connection between mission and resource allocation, the Cabinet adopted [a new process for budgeting](#) during FY 2015 that was intended to help educate campus constituents and build stronger consensus for budget decisions. For more details on the connection between institution guiding documents, resource allocation and the budgeting process, please see the assurance argument in Section 5.C.

## Sources

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- Budget Advisory Committee

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- Concept for Student Development
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- Majors at Graduation
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- OnlineReport12.14
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- StrategicPlanWestminster2020
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## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Argument

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The mission statement is publicized broadly in campus publications (e.g. the catalog, *Westminster 2020*, the Concept for Student Development, the Board of Trustees [meeting books](#), [business cards](#)) and is displayed in several locations across campus.

#### Articulation of the Mission

The most visible and readily available public portrayal of Westminster College is on the institutional website, which features the mission statement prominently in many ways. The "About Us" navigation link on the home page introduces the College via the "Mission & Values" link, which features the mission, the strategic vision, and the College's educational goals. This introduction to Westminster College also contains links to other guiding documents of the College, such as the [Concept for Student Development](#) and the *New Foundations* general education program. The mission statement can also be found in key documents: *Westminster 2020*, the Concept for Student Development, the [Catalog](#), the [Faculty Handbook](#), the [Employee Handbook](#), and the [Board of Trustees manual](#).

#### Articulation of Key Aspects of the Mission

Over the past ten years, several documents have been developed that articulate the mission and demonstrate how it is emphasized through current programs, policies, and priorities. The [Columns Concept](#), which articulates what happens "between the columns" (first-year convocation and commencement), was fleshed out through the creation of the Concept for Student Development (CSD). The CSD articulates for the Westminster community a shared understanding of how programs are organized. It encompasses the College's first principles for student development in all areas of campus life, including the classroom, the sports field, an experiential learning environment, a student organization, or a work-study position.

At the heart of the Concept for Student Development is a statement of purpose – Developing Leaders In A Global Community. This statement weaves together a focus on the liberal arts, leader development, and global engagement, within the context of a highly diverse campus community. The result is an integrated plan that lays the foundation for the change that takes place from first year student convocation through graduation.

The CSD touches students in all aspects of personal growth, including intellectual, ethical,

professional, social, and wellness. At the same time, the College recognizes that it is important to offer experiences in these areas that mature as students mature, which is why students are first offered foundational skills, followed by an exposure to a broad base of knowledge. As a result, Westminster students are prepared to make the most of their experiences, are inspired to excel within a highly supportive environment, are given the guidance they need to understand their development, and most importantly are encouraged to become lifelong learners. The CSD has served as a guide for all educational programs (academic and co-curricular) and is now the basis for a one-hour leadership course for all incoming freshmen, [The Leader Within](#), which provides the foundations for growth in all areas of development. The CSD challenges students to understand what it means to develop as leaders of character within a global community and for the global community.

Likewise, *Westminster 2020* itself articulates a vision for strengthening academic and co-curricular programs, for maintaining financial stability, and for developing new ventures that reinforce the mission. In essence, it reaffirms the value of a liberal arts education that develops students as leaders within a global environment, but it also calls for a thoughtful plan for expanding and sustaining this education.

The mission statement itself clearly articulates that the nature and scope of a Westminster College education is "to educate and inspire all its students through a distinctive liberal arts curriculum and a dynamic developmental experience." As a four-year, residential college dedicated to undergraduate education, it is also "committed to the values of integrity, fairness, respect and responsibility;" and to preparing students "for lives of success, significance and service." Although the majority of new students are freshmen, an [increase in the transfer population](#) have led to efforts to ensure that they also receive a thorough grounding in the mission, primarily through the requirement for transfer students to complete WSM 102 (Westminster Transfer Seminar). Also, although not opposed to developing graduate programs or programs for new student populations, the primary constituents at this time are traditional college-aged students seeking a baccalaureate degree.

## Sources

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- Enrollment History
- ExecutiveSummary
- LST 101 Syllabus Fall 2014 Final
- Strategic Plan Annexes
- StrategicPlanWestminster2020
- The Columns ConceptFinal

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Argument

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#### The College's Role in a Multicultural Society

Although "diversity" is not specifically mentioned in the mission statement, Westminster claims to offer a distinctive liberal arts education and a dynamic developmental experience to all students. Over the past ten years, the College has made diversifying the campus community a priority, with a particular focus on gender and ethnic diversity. During the 2005-2006 academic year, the Senior Vice President/Dean of Faculty initiated a series of discussions regarding the expansion of diversity among students, both domestic and international. A key document emerged from those discussions, [The Columns Concept](#), which stressed the importance of developing students as leaders *in* a global community and thus committing the College to making international recruitment a priority. Since 2005-2006, Westminster's international student population has grown from 9.9% to over 17.7% (with 75 countries represented), and Westminster's [domestic minority population](#) has grown from [10.9% to 17.3%](#). Concerns expressed by African-American students were studied last year. Ethnic diversity among faculty and staff remains limited. Finally, although the College believes that continued progress with [gender balance](#) is important, the College wishes to [recruit and retain](#) more women. A task force on women issued a [report](#) in 2013. Likewise, diversity has increased among the faculty, with female faculty growing from 29% in 2003-2004 to 48% in 2013-2014, and [non-White faculty](#) currently at 12%. Finally, the Cabinet has seen significant growth in [women entering senior leadership](#), with women currently holding the positions of Senior Vice President of the College/Dean of Faculty, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Associate Vice-President for Business and Controller. 2014 represents the 35th anniversary of Westminster co-education, with a year-long celebration of the women of Westminster (WOW).

The College's mission documents reflect the need to adapt to a multicultural society. This value is manifested in a residential college community that strives to be inclusive and respectful of others, to embrace and celebrate differences, and to develop leaders in a global community. [Westminster 2020](#) emphasizes enhancing the racial, ethnic and geographic diversity of the college community; creating a student development plan that includes exposure to diversity and intercultural experiences on campus; and student access to intercultural learning opportunities, both domestic and global, in which students encounter and learn about other cultures.

Finally, the Board of Trustees [manual](#) offers Board support for College commitment to diversity, stating that "While it was founded by the Presbyterian Church, the College recruits and welcomes students, faculty, staff and Board members from all backgrounds with divergent beliefs and ideas who embrace the College's mission and approach to education."

#### Attention to Diversity in Processes and Activities

Evidence of Westminster's commitment to diversity is found in college-wide initiatives, academic programming, and community life activities. Attention to human diversity is integral to the educational program. The [general education requirements](#) taken by all degree-seeking students include two foreign language courses and one course with a significant non-Western component. Numerous [major, minor, and concentration programs](#) emphasize diversity, including International Business, International Studies, Transnational Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies. Students may elect to study off-campus in a domestic or international program and can also participate in off-campus [travel courses](#) led by faculty. In order to encourage deep friendships among domestic and international students and foster cultural immersion, the College established the [Take-a-Friend-Home program](#) in 2007, which pays for [pairs of students](#) (one domestic; one international) to travel home together in order to experience life and culture in both students' homes.

Inclusivity is also emphasized in community life through numerous campus [organizations](#) and offices, including Westminster's Diversity Center (which includes the Office of International Student Services and the Office of Intercultural Engagement), 6 multicultural student organizations, 2 religious student organizations and The Alliance (GLBT student association).

The Office of Intercultural Engagement provides services to support multicultural and international students. Some of the other diversity education initiatives include monthly "diversity dialogues" events for students, a Diversity Week each spring, an International Showcase each fall, etc. The [Remley Women's Center](#) is a student residential house with the mission to "to educate the campus on women's and gender issues by providing an alternative space for students of all races, creeds, gender, class, ethnicity, political affiliation, and sexual orientation to discuss, learn, and share knowledge." Finally, special [services](#) for [veteran students](#) have been recently developed in addition to a "[college transition program](#)" for students on the autism spectrum. Due to these initiatives, students [report](#) an increased tolerance and awareness of other cultures.

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- Task Force on Women report
- The Columns ConceptFinal
- Westminster Travel Courses 2009-2014
- Westminster\_Club\_Book\_2014-2015

## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

## Argument

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### Commitment to Public Good

Westminster College's mission statement emphasizes that the high-quality education provided to students is intended not only for their own individual benefit but also to equip them to be "life-long learners and leaders of character" and to "prepare them for lives of success, significance and service." Commitment to the public good is an element of the current mission statement and is further formalized in [Westminster 2020](#):

"Founded in 1851 to prepare citizens 'for useful service to the community,' Westminster College is today a private, selective, coeducational, residential undergraduate institution. The original purpose--preparation of citizens for service--remains the hallmark of the Westminster education and is embodied in the College's mission statement."

Likewise, the current [institutional vision statement](#) for students claims that, through the Westminster experience, students will be challenged "to appreciate and internalize the values of integrity, fairness, respect for others and their property, and responsibility" in order to become "prepared, motivated, and inspired to live lives of leadership, service, and professional fulfillment in a global community." The College believes that a liberal arts education provides the best preparation for leader-development, with its emphasis on critical thinking, lifelong learning, diversity of perspectives, communication skills, and interdisciplinary problem-solving; therefore, it has maintained a strong liberal arts curriculum.

At the same time, the College recognizes the importance of applying knowledge for the good of society, and therefore established the Emerson Center for Leadership and Service in 2003 in order to set high expectations for student participation in community service. [The Emerson Center](#) provides a wide variety of programs and activities that foster students' civic engagement, leadership, and social impact, including a service day for all first-year students. Westminster College has been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the past four years. The yearly goal for institution community service is 10,000 documented service hours, in which all members of the Westminster community are encouraged to participate, a goal which has been [realized](#) over the last several years. Additionally, the faculty provide numerous opportunities for [service learning](#). [NSSE results](#) document student civic engagement.

### Commitment to Educational Mission

Concern for the public good is integrated throughout the Westminster College experience, but the educational mission always remains at the forefront. As a not-for-profit institution, Westminster is not responsible to investors or a parent organization. Instead, oversight of the College is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees, which [claims](#) that its “primary role and responsibility is to ensure the health, quality, mission, sustainability and growth of Westminster College.” At the same time, recognizing the unique mission of an institution of higher education, the Board affirms that “Colleges and universities were founded upon and flourish under open, collaborative and values-centered leadership that can often appear to be chaotic to those accustomed to other industries. The free flow of ideas and debate, however, is a hallmark of higher education. The College itself has always cherished these ideals.” Given this support from the Board, the College is able to maintain its focus on providing a quality education for its students.

### **Response to External Constituencies**

Identified external constituencies and communities of interest for Westminster College include the following:

- Alumni and parents
- Current and prospective employers and graduate schools of its graduates
- The City of Fulton and the larger Fulton metropolitan area
- Groups and organizations seeking to use campus facilities

Alumni and parents are served by an [Office of Alumni Relations](#), which "exists to promote the mission, success and future of Westminster College and to build and maintain connections between alumni and the Westminster community." In addition to the numerous alumni events planned and hosted by this office, Alumni Relations works with the [Alumni Council](#) and the [Alumni Association](#) and also advises the Parents Association; this organization's goals are “improving communication and cooperation between Westminster College staff and students and their families” and “encouraging parents to support the programs and activities of the College.” The Office of Alumni Relations also maintains the Alumni Directory and collaborates with the Center for Career Development to help current students and alumni searching for employment, as well as assisting alumni searching for new employees.

Current and prospective employers of Westminster College graduates are served by the well-prepared alumni the college produces - and, arguably, by the robust assessment program the College supports to ensure that our students actually are [well-prepared](#). Employers are also served by the numerous programs and services of the [Center for Career Development](#), which is "committed to engaging, preparing, and empowering students to succeed in today's highly competitive and ever-changing global community." The Center maintains a website specifically for employers that enable them to post internship and employment opportunities, and the Center hosts numerous on-campus recruitment events each year. The same site also includes information on graduate school placement and internship opportunities.

The [Churchill Institute](#) and [National Churchill Museum](#) are two institutional entities at Westminster College that encompass the values of global awareness and leadership and promote those values to the general public. The Institute simultaneously projects the Westminster experience beyond, and brings the wider world to, central Missouri in a unique and dynamic fashion. Building on the inspiration of the past and on the leadership qualities of Winston Churchill himself, the Institute weaves together international education and leadership development. In essence, the Institute provides both the intellectual substance and real world experience to carry out the Westminster mission of creating

leaders in a global community. The Churchill Institute offers several educational opportunities each year, beginning with the [Hancock Symposium](#) each September and culminating in the Kemper Lecture and Churchill Weekend each March. All programs are free and open to the public.

The National Churchill Museum serves the campus and the larger community. The institutional vision statement for the campus states that “The Churchill Memorial and National Churchill Museum will be an integral part of the campus scene and will symbolize the leadership and selfless service of Churchill himself.” The Churchill Museum offers several educational exhibits each year and provides tours daily, and in doing so provides the Fulton community with a major cultural center that attracts visitors from around the country and around the world. The facilities are made available to the public for use for such purposes as weddings, special events, camps, and conferences.

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- Mission and Vision
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- Our Mission
- StrategicPlanWestminster2020

## 1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### Summary

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations through the institution's guiding documents, and Westminster College will continue to ensure that the centrality of the mission in institutional operations. Westminster College will, in addition, further develop and strengthen initiatives that foster lively engagement with and renewed dedication to the values and purpose set forth in the mission statement. While keeping its educational mission always at the forefront, Westminster recognizes its obligation to serve the local community, our state, nation, and world—and to developing young people for service in the local and global communities.

Although evidence has been identified to demonstrate that we are meeting Criterion One, we recognize the need for improvements in the following areas:

- **Mission-Driven Budgeting Processes.** The College strives to be guided by its mission documents in its budgeting but has not had a formal process for doing so. A budget process that upholds the mission and strategic plan, while also being aware of financial constraints, is currently being developed.
- **Diversity.** Although great strides have been made in diversifying the student body, the College must continue to recruit a more diverse faculty, staff, and administration.
- **Sustainability.** We must remain committed to expanding and diversifying our educational reach without sacrificing the core educational mission.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

### Argument

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#### Integrity in Financial & Auxiliary Functions

Westminster has established ethical policies and processes for the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff. These policies are grounded in national standards for best practices, most notably AAUP guidelines for Academic Affairs, the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators and the Association for Student Judicial Administrators (among others) for Student Life, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) for Westminster's Board of Trustees. Westminster's policies and processes are communicated through the College's [Faculty](#), [Employee](#), and [Student](#) handbooks, and the [Board Manual](#). Adherence to national best practices and compliance with the policies and procedures set forth in the handbooks ensure the integrity of the College.

#### Role of the Board of Trustees

The role of the [Board of Trustees](#) of Westminster College is to uphold the health, quality, mission, sustainability and growth of Westminster College. Section I of the [Board manual](#) addresses Board governance and responsibilities, which outlines the ethical responsibility of Board members. [The Westminster College Bylaws](#) also discuss Board responsibilities and processes. The Board manual distinctly states the [fiduciary expectation](#) of Board members, indicating that all decisions made in the course of their responsibilities as Board members are to be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interests of the College. All Trustees are required to acknowledge and [sign a conflict of interest statement](#) (senior administration members have also signed conflict of interest statements). They are to refrain from conflicts of interest or disclose any known or possible conflicts of interests. All known or possible conflicts of interest are reviewed by the Executive Committee and may possibly result in the removal of the Board member.

The Board's [Financial Affairs Committee](#) is responsible on behalf of the College for the oversight of policies and practices related to the College's financial management, operating performance, and financial well-being. The Committee reviews the annual budget, monitors the College's financial solvency and long-term viability, management disciplines, regulatory compliance, risk management and financial policies and procedures. They also, along with the Investment Committee, recommend the annual endowment draw rate. The Committee reviews the performance of external auditors, and, with their assistance, determines if accurate and complete financial records are being maintained and there are proper internal controls in effect.

The Financial Affairs Committee works closely with the Business Office staff. The Vice President for Business and CFO, along with Business Office staff, utilize generally accepted accounting principles to ensure accurate and [reliable financial processes](#). The College's financial statements are [audited](#) annually by an independent certified public accounting firm to ensure compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. The College receives an unqualified audit opinion, indicating that the financial statements are presented fairly and conform with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. The College also has an [A-133 audit](#) (p. 38) prepared by the auditors which reports on compliance with requirements for the distribution of federal funds and the Department of Education requirements. The independent auditors report the results of the audits to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis. Results of the audits are included with all other financial discussions in the [Board meeting minutes](#).

#### Administration, Faculty, and Staff

The College has established financial policies, such as [accounts receivable](#), [travel](#), and [meal](#) expenses to help faculty and staff manage costs. Cabinet members are expected to oversee all budgets in their areas. Department heads, directors, faculty division chairs, program directors and program coordinators are expected to manage their individual budgets. Faculty expenditures are approved by the appropriate division chair and the Dean of Faculty. Staff expenditures are approved by the department head and the appropriate Cabinet member. Student tuition, fees charges, and the College's payment and refund policies are outlined in the [Academic Catalog](#).

The College's auxiliary functions include management of the residential facilities, the dining services, and the Bookstore. The Student Handbook contains [extensive policies](#) regarding residential life. Dining services and the Bookstore are outsourced. The Associate Vice President for Institutional Operations is responsible for providing oversight of both outsourced dining services and bookstore operations for compliance with respective contracts as well as ensuring institutional service expectations are being maintained on a sustained basis and routinely meets with the Bookstore Manager and Director of Food Services and periodically with their respective regional managers at their respective service locations.

#### **Integrity with Personnel**

Integrity in personnel matters and in fulfilling Westminster's educational mission is ensured through fair and clearly-articulated policies, in particular policies regarding hiring, ethical conduct, and harassment and discrimination.

Westminster College strives for fairness and transparency in its hiring practices. The College is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and makes this clear in every employment posting. The College utilizes search committees to ensure fair and ethical hiring practices are enforced when filling vacant [staff](#) and [faculty](#) positions. A new faculty [orientation](#) is held at the beginning of each academic year that includes a review of key academic policies and procedures with the Dean of Faculty and the distribution of the Faculty Handbook; likewise, the Director of Human Resources meets with new staff and faculty to review HR policies. Human Resources has an open door policy and is committed to providing outstanding customer service and support for all employees by developing trust and maintaining confidentiality and meeting the needs of all employees. Staff and faculty are encouraged to contact the Personnel Committee with any issues they would like the committee to review.

Student privacy is protected by Westminster's adherence to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)). All employees are expected to handle employee and student records with

confidentiality. The Registrar regularly sends information to faculty and staff regarding FERPA regulations. At the same time, student workers are required to sign a statement of confidentiality before they begin to work for a campus office, and all students are informed on a regular basis of the FERPA guidelines.

Extensive policies are in place for addressing ethics in the workplace, particularly issues related to sexual harassment and discrimination. These policies are found in the [Employee, Faculty, and Student Handbooks](#). The College conducts training sessions on these issues on an annual basis. In addition, faculty are required to include information about these policies in their course [syllabi](#).

Grievance Procedures are outlined in the [Employee, Faculty, and Student Handbooks](#). The Grievance Procedures for both faculty and staff articulates processes by which employees can initiate timely response from supervisors and management regarding issues, complaints, suggestions, or questions. At the same time, the [Professional Standards Committee](#) is charged with investigating complaints against faculty and/or administrators that have not been resolved through these other channels.

### **Academic Integrity**

Guidance on the ethical use of academic resources is provided by the faculty as well as by the library and library staff. Faculty are required to include a statement about the Honor Code on every [syllabus](#). All students are instructed about the ethical uses of sources in ENG 103 (Academic Writing). At the same time, Reeves Library strives to adhere to the [Association of Research Libraries \(ARL\) Best Practices](#) regarding copyright. The Library procedures and copyright laws are discussed during faculty orientation period, in-service presentations during the faculty development days, and as part of faculty mentoring programs. Faculty are encouraged to utilize a copyright service such as the Copyright Clearance Center or to go through the bookstore for the permissions required for course packs, etc. The [Library](#) also directs faculty to the copyright primer from the Copyright Clearance Center for general background and guidance.

### **Sources**

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- 2.2 Allowable Meals and Food Expenses Policy
- 2.3 Students Accounts Receivable Policy
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- FY13 FINAL FINANCIAL AUDIT
- Student Life Handbook
- Student Life Handbook (page number 2)
- Student Life Handbook (page number 20)
- Student Life Handbook (page number 40)
- Student Life Handbook (page number 45)
- Student Life Handbook (page number 90)
- Westminster College Bylaws
- Winter2014

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Argument

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Westminster College seeks to maintain accurate, accessible, direct communication with its students, faculty, and staff, as well as with the public. Multiple media and documents are utilized: the academic catalog, two Westminster websites (main institutional website and news website), the Employee, Faculty, and Student Life handbooks, Westminster's college magazine (*Leadership Magazine*), as well as materials produced by the Marketing, Institutional Advancement, Enrollment Management, and Media and Public Relations departments. All of the aforementioned materials are created with Westminster's mission as their foundation and are regularly updated. To ensure accuracy, materials are reviewed by specific departments prior to each printing.

### Catalog

The Westminster academic [catalog](#) is the primary medium for communicating academic policies, costs, program requirements, and course descriptions to current students. In addition to stating the Westminster mission, goals, and vision, it also provides up-to-date information regarding academic and college-wide policies, admissions criteria and procedures, tuition and fees, financial aid, academic programs, major and minor programs, their requirements, and information about the faculty, as well as honors, awards, and degree requirements. The catalog undergoes an extensive review process annually, at all institutional levels. When significant academic changes to the Catalog (e.g., academic policies, a new major/minor, addition of a new course) are necessary, the [Curriculum Committee](#) first examines the proposed change, and the proposed policy is then vetted by the Executive Committee. If approved, the faculty then votes whether or not to approve the catalog revision. Only after faculty approval are changes then introduced into the Catalog. The Associate Dean of Faculty, assisted by the Administrative Assistant to the Associate Dean, oversees the process of updating the Catalog. The catalog is published annually and is available in [electronic form on the Westminster website](#).

### Employee, Faculty, and Student Life Handbooks

Westminster handbooks are updated yearly through the Offices of Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and Student Life. Possible changes to the Faculty Handbook are discussed first by the appropriate faculty committee (e.g. Faculty Personnel Committee) and then by the Faculty Executive Committee. Such changes are not incorporated into the Faculty Handbook unless approved by the faculty as a whole. Corresponding departments review information annually to review for accuracy. The Director of Human Resources ensures that all new staff are familiarized with the Employee Handbook during new staff orientation; likewise, new faculty are introduced to the Faculty Handbook during their orientation. Students receive information about Student Life policies through the [LST 101 course](#) during their first semester on campus. All three handbooks can be accessed through the Westminster website. A [policy on policy development](#) was adopted to address the process for developing, issuing and maintaining all Westminster College policies and applies to all college departments, faculty, staff and students with further guidelines offered by the [Faculty Handbook](#). All of Westminster's policies will be posted online in the human resources section of the website.

## **Website, Magazine, Marketing, and Social Media**

Westminster's websites and social media tools serve as its primary medium for communication with external audiences. The websites seek to be comprehensive sources of information, including links to all publicly accessible documents (e.g., handbooks, the catalog, required forms), offering clear and concise information regarding college policies and procedures. The current version of Westminster College's primary website launched in 2010 and was created by Westminster's Graphic Designer in collaboration with the Director of Information Technology and the Director of Marketing. The design was ultimately selected and approved by the Board of Trustees. Once approved, website content was written by each department, ensuring that information was up-to-date and accurate. In partnership with the Marketing Department and Graphic Designer, this material was then integrated into the website. Westminster's Digital Marketing Manager has the responsibility of managing website material. Content is reviewed annually on a campus-wide basis by key faculty and staff, who assist the Digital Marketing Manager to ensure that content is accurate, detailed, and thorough. A new version of the webpage is planned for January 2015.

Westminster's second website, Westminster College News, launched as a blog-style site in 2013 and is updated daily. Content is created in partnership with an extensive web of campus partners but is checked for accuracy and updated solely by members of the Marketing Department.

[Policies and procedures](#) in place to guide accurate telling of the Westminster story can be found on the website.

### **Magazine**

*Leadership Magazine* is published twice a year in print form with two supplemental digital issues and mailed to over 11,000 alumni and community members. The Marketing Department ensures its quality, and it is produced with input from the Academic, Alumni and Development departments. Through this collaboration, two Cabinet members are involved in the development and help to provide oversight regarding quality. A CASE readership survey was conducted in 2009 to assess readers' needs and the quality of the magazine. Another CASE survey will be implemented in 2015.

Ideas for content in the magazine are generated through a collaborative process, directed by Editorial Staff and supported by those in the Department of Institutional Advancement and in Academic Affairs. Content is primarily created by the Marketing Department, which includes student interns, with some columns submitted from faculty and alumni. Finally, members of the Institutional Advancement staff proof *Leadership Magazine*, with primary responsibility falling to the Marketing Department.

### **Marketing**

Westminster strives to produce marketing materials based upon the College's mission and core values and following the [marketing plan](#). All materials are drafted in collaboration with corresponding offices and departments to ensure their accuracy. Westminster enrollment representatives share materials containing clear information concerning costs and financial aid with prospective students, and that same information is available on the College's web site – as is a net price calculator. Student enrollment in online courses is solicited through materials [prepared by the Registrar's Office](#).

Information regarding academic programs and major and minor requirements is also made available to prospective students through the Office of Enrollment Services, and prospective students may access this information on the main Westminster website.

Westminster's Office of Admissions staff members have membership in the National Association for Admissions Counseling and subscribe to NACAC's *Statement of Principles of Good Practice*. The statement is required reading for all new Admissions Representatives and remains a part of each staff members' continuing education process. Admissions marketing materials are revised and updated each year prior to the start of the new recruitment season to ensure accuracy of information and to incorporate any new programs or information. This effort is coordinated by the Enrollment Services Office in conjunction with the Office of Marketing and Strategic Communications to ensure that the messaging is consistent and effective for the constituent market. The review process typically begins in March as new budgets and college planning are being reviewed or revised. For example, the basic [Westminster brochure](#), offered to prospective students during visits and shared at college fairs, was created through this collaborative process, with regular reviews from Westminster's Director of Institutional Research.

The Marketing Department also manages social media communication. The College utilizes several media to ensure easy access to accurate information including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+, and YouTube accounts. The primary Westminster Facebook page celebrates campus accomplishments, interacts with fans and community members, and communicates weather-related and other emergency information. Over twenty additional Facebook pages are managed by campus departments and organizations. These pages list policies, programs, and information specific to various offices and organizations throughout the campus. To ensure that information provided on each page is accurate and updated regularly, all pages must adhere to established [social media guidelines](#). A Westminster logo on each page assures compliance with the guidelines; the Marketing Department reaches out to campus social media managers to correct any misinformation.

### **Institutional Research**

Westminster seeks to represent itself completely and accurately. This goal is supported by the Office of Institutional Research (IR) with a central responsibility focusing on a variety of federally mandated and state reporting processes, i.e., for IPEDS and the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE). A second category of external reporting includes data provided annually to publishers, i.e., U.S. News and Princeton Review, and higher education associations such as NAICU and AAUP. Summaries of information are prepared and are available through the campus website or by other means. These include annual common data sets, [Factbook](#), Assessment Survey and Summary Data, and an institutional snapshot of vital statistics.

In summary, [the importance of IR](#) is reflected by significant increases in both volume and complexity of tasks performed. There has been a 7.8% average annual increases across the past decade or 93.8% overall when comparing AY2004 and AY2013.

### **Institutional Characteristics**

Westminster is chartered by the state of Missouri. Westminster's education major programs are approved by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Westminster's business program has recently (November, 2014) been approved for accreditation with the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). The college's accreditation status with the Higher Learning Commission is listed on the website and in the [catalog](#).

Tuition and Fees are also reported in the Catalog. They can be found on the Westminster website and are also listed in the financial aid brochure provided to any inquiries, prospective students and applicants. This tuition and fee information is reiterated with the financial aid award letters sent to accepted applicants and given annually to all current students. A Net Price Calculator is also provided

on our website to help students determine their eligibility for aid and other forms of available assistance.

## Sources

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- 2013-2014 IR Activity Summary
- 2014-15\_Academic\_Catalog
- 2014-15\_Academic\_Catalog (page number 3)
- Admissions Information
- Curriculum Committee Actions 2013-2014 actions
- Factbook20132014
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 35)
- LST 101 Syllabus Fall 2014 Final
- Policy on Policies
- Screenshot 2014-12-06 18.27.07
- Social\_Media\_Guidelines\_Final[2]
- Westminster Marketing Plan Fall 2014
- Winter on the Web

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Argument

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The Board of Trustees has a long history of faithful oversight and service to Westminster College. The [Board of Trustees \(BOT\) Manual](#) represents a collection of BOT policies, an expression of BOT philosophy, and a summary of BOT operations. Revisions since 2012 made BOT policies and procedures much clearer and set the conditions for the BOT to function more effectively and efficiently. The Manual is designed to serve as a key component for [new Trustee orientation](#), a quick reference guide for Trustees and administrators, and a central and updated repository of BOT policy and organization. It is the result of thoughtful contributions from Trustees, administrators, and a study of best practices of other boards and associations, most notably the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. The Westminster College [BOT](#) has 37 active members, ranging in time in service from one to 28 years, with an average of 8.6 years. The Board also has 19 [Honorary Trustees and Trustees Emeriti](#), ranging in total time in service from 12 to 40 years, with an average of 23.3 years.

### Governing Board Deliberations Reflect Priorities

[Section I, Board Governance](#), of The Manual, clearly states the Westminster College Board of Trustees' primary role and responsibility is to ensure the health, quality, mission, sustainability and growth of Westminster College. The Board has ultimate authority and responsibility to manage and operate the College, but it delegates much of it through the President and faculty. The Board retains fiduciary duty for oversight of the College, including its academic, financial, reputational, legal, and other general well-being. It also retains authority for the College's endowment. The Board approved the [Mission and Vision](#) of the College on May 18, 2003. The Mission and Vision are periodically reviewed by the Board for currency and relevance. Also, the Board reviews and approves any of the College's Strategic Planning efforts. These reviews and approvals are conducted at the three BOT meetings that are held in February, May and October. It is the responsibility of the College leadership to share the details of the strategic plan with the College community, i.e., faculty, staff and students. The Board approved the College's Strategic Plan, known as "[Westminster 2020: the Strategic Framework for the Future](#)." The Plan became effective October 1, 2011 and is being implemented. Revisions are being made, as appropriate, to account for dramatic changes in the higher education environment and the deterioration of the College's financial situation. At the May 2012 Board meeting, the Board passed a motion to approve the [Leading the Way Campaign](#).

An example of the Board of Trustees exercising its decision making processes in an effort to enhance the sustainability of the College occurred at its May 2012 meeting. On that occasion the Board voted to [establish a campus of Westminster in Mesa, AZ](#). The [campus](#) opened for full operations in August 2013. However, due to low enrollment and low enrollment projection for the Fall 2014, based on a recommendation by the President, the [Executive Committee voted to close](#) the campus at the end of the Spring 2014 Semester.

### **Governing Board Decision-Making Process**

In order to facilitate the efficient operation of the Board and the College, the Board has designated [several committees](#) to oversee specific areas of the College. The committee's roles are to understand, advise, and consult on issues within the committee's charge. In some situations, a committee may be delegated authority to take certain actions on behalf of the full Board. The Executive and Investment Committees are regularly delegated such authority.

The committees are designed to reach a level of detail that the full Board cannot, work with College faculty and staff beyond the President, and discuss issues at greater length than full Board meetings allow. While committees will generally meet at least three times per year coinciding with scheduled Board meetings, committee chairs are encouraged to hold meetings as needed to ensure that topics requiring committee awareness/action are fully discussed and recommendations are prepared prior to Executive Committee meetings.

In their roles as representatives of Westminster College, Trustees interact with key external constituencies such as employers, alumni, donors, politicians, and other professional organizations. These relationships provide well-needed insight into educational needs, career development and coming trends that help inform Board deliberations, best posturing Westminster to take advantage of opportunities and avoid threats to its viability. Board meetings are attended by faculty, student and alumni representatives.

### **Governing Board Preserves Independence**

The Board Manual provides a clear explanation of independence imparted upon Trustees. Trustees hold governance responsibilities over all elements of the College, and thus must be sure not to become involved in potential conflicts of interest. Likewise, the Board and individual Trustees are prohibited from retaliation under the College's [Whistleblower policy](#). Also on an annual basis, each Trustee is required to complete a family and business questionnaire indicating any family or business relationships, according to IRS definitions. The College, in coordination with the Board, establishes task forces to research, coordinate, and make recommendations on various issues affecting the College. Some of the issues are fraternity housing, adjustments to the College business model, and new sources of revenue.

### **Governing Board Delegation of Management**

[The Westminster College Bylaws](#) stated that the President shall be the chief executive and administrative officer (the "Chief Executive Officer") of the College and, within policies, budgets and expenditures approved by the Board, shall administer the educational program, business operations and affairs of the College, but shall have no authority with respect to the investment of College funds. The President shall appoint or cause to be appointed such members of the faculty, academic personnel, and other non-academic employees as are required to carry out the program and operations of the College. The Academic Affairs Committee reviews and brings forward for a vote of the full Board faculty members who have been nominated for tenure or whose appointments as tenured

faculty are recommended to be canceled. The full Board shall have sole authority to grant tenure or cancel appointments of faculty members having tenure. The Manual also identifies [administrative associations](#) with standing committees of the College.

The Board expects the faculty to oversee all academic matters. Specifically, the faculty has responsibility for developing, implementing, and revising curricula and educational policies; determining credits for courses; and deciding requirements for graduation. The Board expects that the faculty will be first-class educators and scholars, who blend outstanding academic credentials with excellence in teaching and a focus on the welfare of the students, both individually and collectively.

### **Presidential Search**

It was announced in May 2014 that Westminster College will undergo a Presidential transition in mid-2015. The Board will plan, coordinate and execute the [Presidential search](#), [selection](#) and transition to ensure continuity of College leadership.

### **Sources**

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- Administrative Associations with Standing BOT Committees
- April182014
- Board List 2014-2015
- Board of Trustees Committees
- BoardManual
- BoardManual (page number 6)
- BoardManual (page number 80)
- BoardManual (page number 119)
- CEV Report for Mesa Campus - Final Version
- Leading the Way Campaign Information
- Mesa Branch Campus Application - 092512
- Mission and Vision
- New Trustee Orientation Schedule 2013
- PresidentialAdvisorySearchCommitteeCharter
- Presidential-Search-Profile
- StrategicPlanWestminster2020
- Westminster College Bylaws
- Westminster College Bylaws (page number 6)

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### Argument

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Westminster College is dedicated to providing a distinctive liberal arts experience that will promote life-long learners who are leaders within a global community. Freedom of expression is an integral part of this process given its importance in developing broad, integrative awareness of diverse and distinctive viewpoints. Westminster College promotes freedom of expression both inside and outside of the classroom to help achieve its distinctive liberal arts education and explicitly expresses this as a key component of its [vision](#) for the campus. The Board of Trustees, in their [Manual](#), acknowledges that the free flow of ideas and debate is essential for higher education. Indeed, at Westminster, the expression and investigation of diverse and distinctive viewpoints is a fundamental path through which the pursuit of learning and truth is achieved. Diverse and distinctive viewpoints are encouraged in order to focus on broader learning; nonetheless, the College recognizes that there is a corresponding duty of Westminster constituents to utilize best practices and resources to ensure that the pursuit of truth and learning is obtained.

### Commitment to Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is protected and encouraged at Westminster College for all of its constituents. Faculty members are encouraged to [express themselves](#) on any topic of their own interests, including critiques of campus policies, without fear of reprisal. The discussion of ideas, even those that are contentious, is encouraged, including those of invited guests. The Westminster community, including students, faculty and staff, have the right to protest and debate such ideas, though they also have a corresponding duty to [allow interested parties to be heard](#) so that true free expression and learning may be obtained. Speech that constitutes [harassment](#) is prohibited, but even within the harassment policy Westminster is careful to distinguish protections for all speech, even that which is offensive to others, when articulated for a clear academic purpose.

Students' freedom of expression is protected at Westminster. Per the Student Handbook, professors are instructed to "encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students" and to protect students' academic freedom. Faculty members are expressly directed to "[permit critical examination of available knowledge and support the expression of conflicting viewpoints and student views.](#)" Freedom of expression and inquiry applies equally to distance education as it does to on campus learning, and a "[netiquette](#)" statement is in each online course syllabus. Additionally, *The Columns* (the student newspaper) and *Janus* (a student magazine) provide outlets for free expression by students through news-stories, editorials, and creative works.

### Commitment to the Pursuit of Truth

At the same time that freedom of expression is encouraged at Westminster, the broader goal is ultimately that such freedom of expression will be an integral part of the mission of creating life-long learners prepared to be leaders within a global community. Toward this goal Westminster is focused on learning in the pursuit of truth.

Faculty and students are both encouraged to work on their scholarly development per topics of their choice. Faculty tenure and promotion policies emphasize scholarship and teaching which, taken together, comprise 80% of their evaluation (20% for the former and 60% for the latter). Clear guidelines are articulated in the [Faculty Handbook](#) which include annual evaluations of faculty and recommendations on tenure and promotion decisions by the Faculty Personnel Committee. Clear guidelines are also in place for grievances should these arise ([FH 2.6.2.4](#), [2.7.2.4](#), and [Appendix G](#)).

## Sources

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- BoardManual
- BoardManual (page number 6)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 5)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 100)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 101)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 103)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 125)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 170)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 192)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 193)
- HonestyNetiquette
- Student Life Handbook
- Student Life Handbook (page number 20)

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

## Argument

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### Ethics in Research

Westminster College Ethics in Research Committee's (EIRC) policies and procedures ensure integrity of the community's research and scholarly practice. The [EIRC](#) "exists primarily to protect the rights of humans and other mammalian subjects in research conducted on or off campus by members of the Westminster College community – students, faculty and/or staff." Guidance in delineating the rights of research participants is taken from publications of professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association. The EIRC chair notifies and reminds faculty and staff of the committee's roles and responsibilities at the start of each school year.

Specific responsibilities of the Committee are to assess the appropriateness of data collection techniques given the objectives of the research, to minimize any potential harm to participants, to justify potential risks in light of potential benefits of research and to protect the privacy of research participants. An initial description of Human and Animal Research is provided in the [Faculty Handbook](#), with specific [details](#) about research criteria, EIRC policies and processes also available in the Handbook.

The EIRC members review and approve studies ranging from those that are simple psychological surveys to physiological studies using student volunteers. If data collection serves exclusively instructional purposes (e.g., a survey is executed in class and the data are used for learning how to transform or analyze scores) or if the data are for the purpose of college-wide assessment, EIRC approval is not necessary. On the other hand, if a survey or experiment is planned that involves a unique combination of variables and intends to advance knowledge in a discipline, the researchers would need EIRC approval.

Since surveys are frequently used tools for academic and institutional research, the College instituted a policy in 2006 for effectively collecting and analyzing academic and institutional data. The policy includes [assurances](#) protecting the rights of those providing data through review by EIRC, the Assessment Committee, and/or the Institutional Research officer.

An explanation of the roles and responsibilities of EIRC, a Sample Consent form, a proposal form with final checklist, and instructions on how to submit research proposals to EIRC are available in the WC Moodle online course management system.

### Ethics in Use of Copyright Materials

The College is committed to ethical use of copyright material, guided primarily by our library staff. The library strives to adhere to the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Best Practices regarding copyright. Faculty members are provided information regarding the [use of copyright materials](#) for research and instruction through instructional brochures, [electronic reserve advisory](#) at point of submission, and through personal instruction. In addition, a Course Reserves brochure, created by Reeves Library staff, explains limits of fair use for physical library reserves and electronic/scanned materials. New faculty members are advised of library procedures and copyright laws at faculty orientation at the beginning of the academic year.

Faculty members are encouraged to utilize a copyright service such as the Copyright Clearance Center or to go through the bookstore for the permissions required for course packs, etc. The library also directs faculty to the copyright primer from the Copyright Clearance Center for general background and guidance.

### **Ethics in Practice**

Each year in [self-reports](#), faculty members reflect and report on the ways they apply knowledge responsibly in research, teaching, and service. By explaining how their work contributes to the mission, vision, and goals of the department and College, faculty demonstrate not only how they uphold Westminster's liberal arts mission, but also how they adhere to the core values of the College.

In 2013-2014, the College initiated the [Price Leadership Program](#), which includes an e-portfolio system in which students similarly reflect on their college experience and their personal development during their years at Westminster. Freshmen receive initial training as part of [LST 101](#), which is linked with Westminster Seminar (WSM 101; transfer students receive training in WSM 102 - Westminster Seminar for Transfer Students). Students describe their progress in each of the five domains of Westminster's Concept for Student Development, one of which is the Ethical Domain.

The [Center for Leadership and Service](#) offers students opportunities for responsible civic involvement with community-based (often service-oriented) projects, ranging from BlueJay Builders/Habitat for Humanity, to the local Soup Kitchen, to BlueJay Buddies (tutoring) program, as well as numerous international projects. These activities often require a deeper understanding of the ethics of humanitarian service.

### **Ethical Use of Information Resources**

Westminster freshmen and transfer students receive instruction in ethical use of information resources as soon as they start classes through WSM 101, given that the learning objectives include research and citation of sources. Students may also receive instruction through taking the Academic Writing and Library Research courses, both of which include instruction on the ethical use of information. Citation tools available on the Library website help provide guidance to encourage compliance and to facilitate implementation of this instruction.

Faculty and students are encouraged to use the Turnitin electronic plagiarism tool as a way to assess the integrity of student writing. Also, the Writing Center tutors assist students with citations and provides the relevant handbooks (MLA, APA etc.) for referencing and citing scholarly work in the lab. Finally, with the recent addition of online course delivery at the campus, The Director of Online Learning provides a training document that advises faculty teaching online courses to place the honesty statement in their syllabi.

### **Policies on Academic Honesty and Integrity**

The College is “committed to the values of integrity, fairness, respect and responsibility,” as stated in the Mission of the College. To that end, all [course syllabi](#) include the Honor Code. The Honor Code, also found in the [Catalog](#), the [Student Life Handbook](#), and the [Faculty Handbook](#), states that students shall not act dishonestly to advance their academic progress or impede others' progress. It is the role of the Honor Commission to uphold the provisions of their Constitution by educating students, communicating with faculty, and cooperating with faculty to conduct hearings in cases where necessary. Additionally, the responsibilities of the community to report suspected violations are set forward. The [Honor Commission](#) keeps files on all students with Honor Code infractions and communicates clearly to students that two violations will result in immediate suspension or expulsion from the College.

In addition, the [Academic Review Board](#) (ARB) “meets with students who have not acted with integrity for their academic responsibilities, such as failures in class attendance or follow-through on course assignments.” The Board acts preemptively, not punitively, to communicate concern about student’s academic success. The Academic Review Board develops a plan of action and contract that students are required to sign and to follow. Failure to comply with the ARB contract may result in the decision to administratively withdraw students from the College.

Clearly the philosophical basis for student conduct issues at the College is to direct students toward learning self-discipline, responsibility, and consequences for actions. Faculty members take responsibility for educating students and reporting incidents of academic dishonesty. Honor Commission members are also available to speak to these policies and reinforce the importance to new students at the request of Westminster Seminar instructors. Faculty are introduced to the Honor Code during New Faculty Orientation, and the Honor Commission regularly communicates with faculty with instructions on how to report violations of the Honor Code.

## Sources

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- 2014-15\_Academic\_Catalog
- 2014-15\_Academic\_Catalog (page number 29)
- 2014-15\_Academic\_Catalog (page number 43)
- Concept for Student Development
- Copyright information
- Faculty and Student ethical use of info responses from KGB-AG
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 154)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 182)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 190)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 220)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 222)
- FacultyHandbookAugust2014 (page number 223)
- LST 101 Syllabus Fall 2014 Final
- Mission - Center for Leadership and Service
- Moodle Reserve
- Price Leadership Program Revised Draft 10-12-2012

- Student Life Handbook
- Student Life Handbook (page number 22)

## 2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### Summary

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Collectively, the evidence indicates that the College has developed appropriate committees and policies that assure ongoing awareness and implementation of ethical conduct. The relevant committees and their policies are described in readily available Handbooks and are fully operational. Moreover, the College represents itself to the public through Admissions and Marketing messages that are current and accurate. The notion of open discourse is valued and protected by all constituencies of the College, and numerous practices ensure integrity in scholarly practice.

While we believe we have met the requirements of this criterion, we are committed to addressing the following concerns:

- While the Department of Human Resources has made solid progress on updating personnel policies, it is critical that we maintain a current Employee Handbook and clear HR policies.
- Clarifying the conditions under which research proposals should be reviewed by the EIRC. Over the years, the EIRC had drifted toward “presentation potential” as the criteria for review. More recently, action research by Education students is exempt from EIRC approval. The membership of the EIRC and its criteria for review should be evaluated with consideration given to the federal IRB guidelines.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## **3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support**

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### **3.A - Core Component 3.A**

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The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

## **Argument**

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### **Courses and Programs Appropriate for Degree Awarded**

Westminster College prides itself on maintaining rigorous, relevant, and current programs and courses at the undergraduate level. To ensure this high standard, controls are put in at the course, program, departmental, and institutional levels. As one of the three major faculty committees, the [Curriculum Committee](#) establishes and enforces these controls by examining, approving, and reviewing all courses within the general education program; the Committee evaluates each course in light of our faculty-approved standards, collected in [New Foundations](#), the guiding document for Westminster's general education program. The Committee also reviews and approves all other new courses (those not in the general education program) for inclusion in the college catalog. Through the work of the Curriculum Committee, all individual courses are reviewed at least once, with general education courses reviewed on a three or five-year cycle.

Based on ongoing assessment of major programs, evidence suggests that the programs at Westminster maintain rigor appropriate for the Bachelor of Arts degree that it awards. [Course syllabi](#), which are reviewed each semester by department chairs, include articulation of the learning objectives and methods of assessment and must adhere to college-wide standards. Each program (e.g. [Education](#), [English](#), [Psychology](#), [Sociology/Anthropology](#)) at Westminster annually undergoes a reflective review process in which it outlines its mission, its curriculum, its learning goals or objectives, its methods of assessment, and an analysis of how assessment results are used. By completing annual assessment reports, department members work together to ensure that majors and minors are thorough and cohesive, and that they prepare students well for careers or further academic study. At least once every ten years, all academic departments complete [program reviews](#), in which departments examine their curricula, staffing, financial and other resources, and achievements over the past several years in light of national standards, receiving a visit and report from an outside consultant in the process. [FLL](#), [HIS](#), and [PSY](#) program reviews are representative of the review documents recently produced by academic departments.

Finally, Westminster's graduate placement rate, alumni success, and [alumni surveys](#) all affirm that courses and programs are current and taught at the appropriate level for an undergraduate degree. Westminster's [placement rate](#) has remained between 93% and 99% for the past seven years, and students are being admitted to excellent graduate programs and getting jobs with competitive employers. The Westminster alumni survey demonstrates that, in general, alumni feel that they were well-prepared for their further education or for employment.

### **Articulation and Differentiation of Learning Goals**

Westminster College awards Bachelor of Arts degrees in 35 [major programs](#) as well as in three dual-degree programs (in addition to 43 [minors](#)). Each of these programs articulates learning goals and outcomes that are found in course syllabi and in annual assessment reports that are all related to [college learning goals](#). Additionally, all requirements for each major program can be found in the Westminster College [catalog](#). Westminster does not offer any degrees or certificates except for the Bachelor of Arts. At the same time, while Westminster offers some courses [online](#) and some in [hybrid](#) form, the College does not offer any online degree programs. The College does not currently offer any dual credit courses through local high schools; it does offer [dual enrollment](#) possibilities for high school students to take courses on campus. Westminster does not currently offer certificate programs but is exploring the possibility of doing so.

### **Consistency of Quality and Learning Goals**

Not only does Westminster offer a single degree through a traditional delivery system, but it also operates in only one location. Therefore, few challenges exist in maintaining consistency of quality and learning goals. Learning goals and credit hour expectations for courses are consistent regardless of modality of delivery, as shown in course syllabi. The College sets standards for all syllabi that faculty must follow, which encourages consistent policies across courses. Department Chairs are expected to review syllabi to verify adherence to these standards, regardless of modality.

The majority of Westminster courses are taught by full-time faculty who are directly supervised by department and division chairs. Part-time faculty are closely supervised, as well, by department chairs and are included in all faculty-development opportunities on campus.. All new faculty attend an orientation for new faculty at the beginning of the academic year which introduces them to the mission and values of the College, with a particular emphasis on instruction. Department chairs are expected to [assist](#) all faculty with the creation of syllabi, and they are expected to [visit](#) the classes of new faculty within the first eight weeks of the semester. Most online courses are taught by regular WC faculty; other online faculty have a connection with the College.

As Westminster has expanded its delivery mode to include online courses, it has tried to do so in a way that maintains the expectations of its faculty and students. To that end, [parameters](#) were created to ensure that online courses contain the same expectations that would be found in traditional onsite courses. No course that is required for general education or for a major can be offered exclusively online, and the learning goals of the online version of a course must match those of the traditional course. The Director of Online Learning instructs faculty in the [creation of online courses](#); department chairs are responsible for ensuring the consistency of courses within their departments.

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## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

## Argument

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### Appropriateness of the General Education Program

The mission of Westminster College commits the faculty to offering a distinctive liberal arts curriculum at the undergraduate level, which begins with the [mission and vision](#). The purpose of the liberal arts, as reflected in our mission, is to educate, inspire, challenge, and prepare thoughtful leaders of character who will lead lives not only of success, but also of service. As [Westminster 2020](#) states, "all programs at Westminster are designed to develop people of character, ideas, and action who will be able to compete effectively for positions in all walks of life and serve as tomorrow's leaders. A broad general education in the arts and the sciences, coupled with depth of study and integrated experiential learning opportunities, nurtures the enduring characteristics and habits so essential for success as new graduates or experienced alumni who occupy positions of leadership and service in society: creativity, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, decision making, life-long learning, openness, valuing, moral reasoning, and the ability to apply knowledge productively." [New Foundations](#) embodies these ideals through its overall mission and through the presentation of ten college-wide learning goals. In doing so, the program lays the foundation for success in all of Westminster's majors and minors.

### Scope of the General Education Program

*New Foundations* was first designed in the mid-1990's and adopted by the faculty in 1996; it has been reviewed three times by the faculty since its inception. *New Foundations* is a wide-ranging program that incorporates breadth and depth of knowledge and inquiry. Drawing on Westminster's ten college-wide [educational goals](#), the general education structure is divided into three "tiers." Tier I, called the Foundational Tier, consists of courses designed to foster such abilities as communication, quantitative, and critical thinking skills. The [Westminster Seminar](#) course is a first-semester course for incoming freshman or transfer students that helps them adjust to the intellectual rigor of the College.

Tier I is the foundation upon which Tiers II and III are established. Using the skills gained in the seminar, and the quantitative and communications skills courses, students then embark on studies in the natural sciences, historical perspectives, fundamental questions and values, literature and the arts, the social sciences, and Western and non-Western cultures. Finally, *New Foundations* culminates in a single interdisciplinary course that serves as a capstone to the general education program (Tier III). At this level, students use the skills and knowledge acquired from various courses in Tiers I and II and bring them together in a multifaceted, interdisciplinary course. Criteria for Tier III courses can be found in the [New Foundations](#) document.

*New Foundations* was first reviewed in 2003. Faculty reaffirmed the strength of the program at that time and made a few minor adjustments; the most significant change was to move the second language/culture course into Tier II and to give students the option of FLG 102, a culture course, or a study abroad experience to fulfill the requirement. In 2011, a faculty task force was charged with reviewing *New Foundations* again. [Several minor changes](#) to *New Foundations* resulted; however, based on a survey of several college general education programs, the faculty reaffirmed the strength of the program once again and requested that no major changes be made. A third faculty task force, the Curriculum Review Task Force, was charged with reviewing *New Foundations* in 2013-2014, as part of a larger effort to study college offerings in light of changes in higher education and to find ways to improve enrollment of new students. Although the task force made substantial [progress](#) in its first semester of work, their work was put on hold during the 2014-2015 academic year in order to allow the faculty to focus on discussion of major programs as well as the re-accreditation process. While some aspects of the report of this committee will be used in discussions of curricular changes, no major changes will be made until the task force has time to reassemble.

In addition, during the past several years the Assessment Committee has conducted a very thorough review of the learning goals in order to gain faculty consensus around these goals, resulting in the consolidation of two goals from the 11 goals adopted by the faculty in the 1990's and the adoption of the [current list and descriptions](#) of the 10 college-wide learning goals. Finally, during the 2009-2010 academic year, the Westminster Experience Task Force was charged with developing a series of recommendations for specific developmental experiences that all Westminster students should have during their Westminster careers. That [report](#) led directly to the development of a new required course for freshmen in Tier I, "The Leader Within," and the Price Leadership Program.

An assessment of the design and impact of the *New Foundations* general education program at Westminster can be found in the Criterion 4 assurance argument.

### **Strength of Degree Programs**

All major programs are [reviewed](#) at least every 10 years to ensure that they are meeting nationwide expectations for programs at the undergraduate level, and annual assessment reports require all departments to review learning goals for each major and to ensure that they are being met. Majors typically include an introductory course or courses that engage students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information about the disciplines; see, for example, introductory courses in [Religious Studies](#), [Political Science](#), and [Environmental Science](#). These courses also introduce students to modes of inquiry in the discipline; at the same time, several majors build on these introductory courses by requiring either a theory course, a methods course, or both, while others incorporate inquiry into a range of required courses. Examples of theory and methods courses include those in English ([Critical Practicum](#)), Sociology/Anthropology ([Fieldwork](#)), and Math ([Mathematics Seminar](#)). Capstone courses ensure that students master skills needed in the discipline; examples include the capstone course in Business Communication ([Business and Professional Communication](#)), the

capstone course for Business ([Business Policy](#)), and the seminar and thesis projects for [Psychology](#) and [Transnational Studies](#). While not all majors require a capstone course, many fulfill the same goals through a capstone experience, such as the Project Showcase in Computer Science/Information Technology, paper presentations at the Undergraduate Scholars Forum (USF), and poster presentations both at the USF and at the Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society in Chemistry. For some majors, an internship fulfills the goals of the capstone, most notably in Health and Exercise Science, Environmental Science/Studies, and Sports Management.

Finally, many major programs have mapped their learning goals onto the college-wide educational goals, many of which are designed to give students the skills that allow them to adapt easily to a changing environment. Most notably, learning goals that address critical thinking skills, communication skills, and an understanding of technology prepare students well for adapting to expectations in graduate or professional programs as well as to the changing needs of the workforce. At the same time, major programs are complemented by the [Concept for Student Development](#), which expects all students to pursue actively opportunities to develop in intellectual, professional, and ethical growth, all of which are served by major sequences of courses, particularly those that include a thesis or capstone project or an internship. [The Westminster Compass e-portfolio](#), though still in its early stage of development, is the mechanism through which students record and reflect upon their progress with the learning goals, including both curricular and co-curricular activities.

### **Educational Programs and Diversity**

In 2006 Westminster adopted the [Columns Concept](#), that reflects a shared sense of our historical traditions, embodies the essence of the mission statement, and acknowledges the global nature of the community in which Westminster graduates will live and serve. The adoption of the Columns Concept committed the College to making diversity a priority. Indeed, diversity has become part of our core, as the Columns Concept commits us to "developing leaders in a global community," based on the belief that students must understand the significance of global diversity in order to be successful. Therefore, Westminster has incorporated cultures and global diversity as one of its institutional learning goals and has included this goal in *New Foundations*. All students must engage in a foreign language and complete at least one course with a non-Western component in order to graduate; at the same time, all departments are encouraged to address global focus in the design of their majors.

Co-curricular programs reinforce the importance of diversity to the educational mission, most notably programs delivered by the Emerson Center for Leadership and Service and numerous clubs and organizations devoted to diversity. The deliberate creation of a global community on campus has provided numerous benefits to our [students' understanding of diversity](#). The International Club sponsors bi-weekly lunch programs that focus on specific countries around the world, and the Interfaith Advisory Board sponsors events that celebrate the holidays of several major religions each year. During International Education Week each November, educational events are held on campus, culminating in the International Show, which has become one of the most popular events on campus.

Housed in the [Emerson Center](#) is the Multicultural Student Development Program, which supports students in understanding and celebrating differences as they develop as future leaders who are prepared to enter and serve Westminster's diverse communities. At the same time, there are numerous [clubs](#) (e.g., African Union Organization, Alliance Fighting Towards Equal Rights, Amnesty International, Black Student Association, Civicus, International Club, French Club, Model UN, and Spanish Club) that register through the Emerson Center to promote diversity and awareness. A recently-formed Veterans Organization has been established to offer support for our student-veterans.

Westminster's [Learning Opportunities Center](#), while providing academic assistance for all students, includes [special programs](#) for students with learning differences. Of particular note are the Learning Disabilities Program and the College Transition Program (for students on the autism spectrum). Because we rely on students to serve as note-takers and peer-tutors, many learn to work closely with fellow students with learning differences. Serving students with learning differences is an integral part of the mission, and for that reason, the College has maintained a commitment to the Learning Disabilities Program since its inception in the 1970's.

Finally, Westminster College believes in the value of study abroad for exposing students to diversity. The Office of Off-Campus and International Programs offers several [study abroad opportunities](#) around the world, and faculty members also offer a variety of travel courses for students. Of particular note is the ["Take-a-Friend-Home" Program competition](#), which requires an international and a domestic student to partner together to write a proposal for how they could learn about each others' cultures through an immersion experience. Student pairs who are selected for the program are given financial support to travel to each others' home for several weeks during the summer. This [program](#) demonstrates the College's commitment to forming solid friendships between students of various backgrounds, and therefore to help them gain a deep understanding of diversity.

### **Appropriateness of Scholarship, Creative Work, and Discovery of Knowledge**

Westminster faculty members excel in production of scholarly work. The Faculty Personnel Committee reviews base 20% of a faculty member's review on professional development, and faculty are required to complete peer-reviewed publications or presentations in order to be considered for [promotion](#) and [tenure](#). In addition, all faculty should be engaged in ongoing professional development in some form. The result has been a [highly productive faculty](#), the majority of whom either publish or present their work on an annual basis. In the years under review, faculty published nine books and over 450 articles and book chapters; nearly 550 presentations were made by faculty during the same time. Faculty also annually contribute to the [Hancock Symposium](#).

Because we believe in creating a community of learners, through which teaching and research truly complement each other, the Faculty Handbook allows faculty [a broad range of activities](#) that are considered professional development. For example, several faculty members regularly engage in the scholarship of teaching and of service-learning; for sample papers/presentations, see the lists of professional activities by Elise Bartley, Cinnamon Brown, Bob Hansen, and/or Therese Miller. At the same time, several faculty members regularly engage in creative work, both through publications and presentations; for examples, see the work of Deb Brenegan, Bob Cowles, and Wayne Zade.

Westminster faculty are committed to conducting research, making presentations, and publishing with students. During the period under review, nearly 100 faculty and student [collaborations](#) resulted in 58 presentations and 36 publications. [Student research](#) is presented both at the annual [USF](#) and at off-campus conferences.

Students are supported in pursuing research through the [Academic Dean's Research and Presentation Awards](#), which have been awarded each semester over the past ten years in order to encourage sophisticated research among our students. These grants have supported 196 student projects over the past ten years, sending students to such conferences as the Missouri Academy of Science, the American Association of Anatomists, and the National [Alpha Chi](#) convention. Many of these research and creative projects are presented at the USF each spring.

Finally, in 2011-2012, the faculty approved a proposal to launch an [honors program](#) on campus. The program is designed to give high-achieving students additional opportunities for engagement in

critical thinking, integrated learning, experiential learning, research and writing, and preparing for graduate study or professional careers. Students who are admitted to the program (either as incoming freshmen or sophomores) are given the opportunity to take advanced courses early in their college career, as well as to design their own off-campus experiences and thesis projects.

All efforts to support scholarship, creative work, and discovery of knowledge are in-keeping with our college mission to “educate and inspire” our students to significant achievement. At the same time, they reinforce the importance of faculty to remain engaged in their fields both for their own professional development and for the benefit of students. Because the Faculty Handbook defines professional development broadly, faculty have the freedom to tailor their scholarly pursuits to best complement their teaching. For that reason, faculty are able to make student learning a priority, whether by engaging in the scholarship of teaching or in scholarship focused on experiential learning; likewise, faculty prioritize professional development of students by supporting their independent research or by engaging in research with them. Because the scholarly efforts of faculty so clearly complement student learning, it is appropriate for undergraduate education and highly supportive of the mission.

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## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

## Argument

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### Faculty Size and Continuity

For the Fall 2014 semester, Westminster College employs 58 [tenured or tenure-track faculty and two full-time temporary faculty members](#) for approximately 950 full-time students, which meets the institutional goal for the student/faculty ratio (16:1). Over the past several years, the [percentage of courses](#) taught by full-time faculty has remained fairly consistent, at approximately 85%. Many [part-time faculty](#) are Professional Academic Staff (PAS), Professional Staff (PS) or long-term adjuncts. As a small, liberal-arts college, Westminster strives to maintain small class sizes that ensure interactive classes and substantial one-on-one mentoring of students. [Full-time instructors](#) at Westminster are required to teach 23-25 credit hours per academic year, which typically means a 4/4 [teaching load](#) (four 3-credit courses in both the fall and the spring), but there is flexibility with schedules given that some courses are worth 1, 2, 4 or 5 credit hours. Part of engaging students also means that professors are available and willing to meet with students [outside of class](#), to be available for student inquiry. Due to financial constraints and declining enrollment, some tenure-track positions which have become vacant over the past two years (e.g. accounting, mathematics, psychology, and Spanish) have been filled with part-time, adjunct faculty, which increases the workload of department chairs to maintain academic quality. While overall workload is demanding, it approximates the practices of [Westminster's peer institutions](#), and it provides enough time for instructors to become involved with the governance of the College through committee work, to devote time and effort to assess student learning, and to engage in professional development.

The curriculum at Westminster, by right, is [overseen and administered by Westminster College faculty](#). The departments, in conjunction with the Curriculum Committee and the Executive Committee, and upon the ultimate approval of the faculty, establish the curriculum of the degrees that the college grants. While the departments and the administration are most actively involved in the

hiring of new faculty members, the Faculty Personnel Committee, comprised of faculty members elected by their colleagues in addition to the Dean of Faculty, is charged with [advising the administration on the renewal, the granting of tenure, the promotion, or the dismissal of a faculty member](#). The expectations at Westminster are that faculty are able to effectively manage their coursework and participate in these areas of college governance, most importantly with overseeing the curriculum and faculty.

### **Faculty Credentials**

All tenure-track faculty are expected to hold the highest degree in their discipline; for that reason, 95% of our full-time faculty hold [terminal degrees](#). Visiting instructors and part-time, per-course faculty (including those teaching online courses) may teach with the appropriate master's degree. Occasionally, a person in one of these positions may possess only a bachelor's degree but be well-qualified based on experience; in these situations, an appropriate department member co-teaches the course, providing whatever supervision is necessary. The Faculty Personnel Committee, working with department chairs, division chairs, and the Dean of Faculty, ensures that all instructors are appropriately credentialed, including instructors who work with Westminster's online program; of those faculty teaching regularly in our online program, between 65% and 75% hold terminal degrees. See also the Criterion 4 assurance argument.

Westminster relies on [Professional Staff](#) and Professional Academic Staff (PAS) to assist with student education. Most significant are those staff members in the Learning Opportunities Center, Reeves Library, Student Life, the Athletic Department, and the Career Development Center, as staff in these areas regularly engage in teaching. In addition, staff in Financial Aid and the Business Office assist with financial education and offering students advice on managing their finances. PAS and PS members must hold a master's degree in order to teach. Should a PS member be called on to teach, due to specialized experience, a regular faculty member co-teaches with him/her.

Because the College believes in providing opportunities for staff to participate directly in our academic mission, [Professional Academic Staff](#) status is available to all Professional Staff members with the appropriate academic credentials. Those staff members who want teaching and ongoing professional development to be part of their job descriptions may apply for PAS status. Doing so gives them greater access to teaching, to professional development funding, and to professional leaves, in addition to academic rank. Typically, staff with masters' degrees are awarded the rank of Instructor; those with Ph.D.'s are given the rank of Assistant Professor. All PAS are eligible for [promotion](#). During the 2014-2015 academic year, there are seven members of the Professional Academic Staff (three members of the LOC, two librarians, and two members of Student Life). Each PAS member goes through a thorough review by the Dean of Faculty, including classroom visitations (by their supervisors), self-reports, student evaluations, individual meetings with the Dean, and a written report by the Dean, verifying that they are meeting the standards for PAS status.

Several members of the Professional Staff also teach classes, primarily those in Student Life (coaches, Career Development staff, Residential Life staff, and Student Activities staff). Staff at the National Churchill Museum also teach classes in the Museum Studies minor. All staff members who teach must submit a professional C.V. to verify their credentials, and all are evaluated by their supervisors and by students.

All staff members are [evaluated](#) annually by their appropriate supervisor. Professional development is strongly encouraged for employees in these positions, and when the College budget allows there are [funds](#) available to pay for travel to conferences or workshops. On-campus seminars and workshops for faculty are open to all members of the Professional Staff and Professional Academic

Staff.

## **Faculty Evaluation**

The Faculty Handbook specifies clear expectation for all faculty, as well as a rigorous [evaluation process](#) for all tenure-track and supplemental faculty (i.e. part-time per-course faculty, adjunct faculty, special appointment faculty, and lecturers). Department chairs or their delegates must [visit](#) at least one class per year for supplemental faculty. The visit should take place, if at all possible, within the first eight weeks of class; reports on classroom visits, as well as overall evaluations, are included in supplemental faculty files.

All tenure-track and tenured faculty write annual self-reports. Tenure-track faculty are reviewed annually by their department chairs and by their division chairs; they are reviewed by the Faculty Personnel Committee in their second, fourth, and sixth year of service. Tenured faculty are reviewed by the FPC every three years; however, in years when no salary adjustments are being made, they may elect to forgo a review by the FPC, unless a review is requested by the FPC, a department or division chair, or the Dean of Faculty. Tenure-track and tenured faculty are evaluated on teaching effectiveness (60%), professional development (20%), and service to the College (20%).

## **Support for Faculty Development**

Support for faculty development at Westminster comes in the form of on-campus workshops and seminars and off-campus conferences. In order to assist faculty with the development of their teaching, Westminster created The Center for Teaching Excellence in 2002 (the title was changed to The Center for Teaching and Learning [CTL] in 2010 to focus more directly on student achievement). The primary objectives of the Center are to oversee the [faculty mentoring program](#), to offer guidance to faculty on how to improve teaching, and to help faculty obtain the technological and pedagogical resources they need to be successful. The mentoring program offers new faculty the opportunity to partner with an experienced faculty member in order to receive one-on-one mentoring. Mentors are generally chosen from outside the division of the new faculty member as they are meant to offer a perspective that supplements that provided by the departmental colleagues; mentors are not allowed to participate in the evaluation of their mentees, and all conversations are considered confidential.

The CTL also conducts the Master Teacher Program for new faculty, which consists of two years of monthly training sessions, covering topics such as using student evaluations, writing self-reports, understanding shared governance, and developing interactive classroom techniques. In addition to training new faculty, the CTL also offers workshops for all faculty members on a range of topics on teaching effectiveness, and each year it sponsors at least one “book club” for faculty interested in learning about a topic together, as well as one all-faculty workshop. Due to the number of recent faculty hires, nearly half of our faculty have been through this program in the past six years.

Funding is also available for faculty to travel to professional conferences and funds to subscribe to scholarly journals or purchase scholarly texts. Unfortunately, these funds have not increased over the past twelve years. Over the past few years, only faculty who presented at professional conferences have been supported with a maximum of \$600, and faculty who only attended a conference received \$500, provided funds were available. When the College budget allows, [Faculty Summer Research Stipends](#) are also awarded to encourage scholarly development throughout the summer months. Additionally, faculty are eligible for [sabbatical leaves](#) every seven years, and they may apply for travel funds to aid in their sabbatical research. Because the College recognizes that the annual funding of faculty research is inadequate, it has pursued additional avenues to support faculty development.

For example, an endowment gift of \$100,000 from alumni Travis Traylor is currently being established to increase annual funding of faculty research. Also, in FY14, two new faculty research awards were instituted. The [Winney Awards](#) were established for faculty research; four are given each year to faculty who can prove that their research or scholarly pursuits will directly benefit students and/or the College. In addition, the [Tyler Award](#) is given to a faculty member who contributes significantly to the global mission of the College. At the same time, faculty are encouraged to engage in writing grant proposals to support their research; in Spring, 2014, a trustee offered stipends to faculty willing to commit their time to grant-writing, and in FY15 the College created a [Special Assistant to the President](#) who will focus in large part on grant-writing. While these new efforts are helpful, funding for faculty development will remain high on the list of priorities for funding in the future.

### **Faculty and Student Inquiry**

The College has set specific [office hour requirements](#) for full-time and part-time faculty, and department chairs are expected to work with faculty to ensure that they are available for students who need assistance. Faculty members also routinely work with students electronically, both through the Moodle course management system and through email. It should be noted, however, that most faculty have an "open door" policy, which means that the professor is usually available for students well beyond the required minimum of three hours per week. This includes tutoring, advising, and mentoring students, as well as actively participating in research with students and guiding them through the investigative process in laboratories, theses, or academic presentations.

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## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

## Argument

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### Student Support Services

Westminster College seeks to provide outstanding support services that relate to all aspects of the learning experience of its students. The primary resource for academic support is the [Tomnitz Family Learning Opportunities Center \(LOC\)](#). The [LOC](#) offers academic support to students through a variety of programs. The [LOC](#) also coordinates alternate testing for students who qualify for accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act, and it participates in all of the College's student success initiatives.

The Learning Disabilities Program (LDP) provides comprehensive and personalized academic support services to students with professionally diagnosed learning disabilities. The College Transition Program (CTP) was established at Westminster College in 2007 to provide the support that students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder need to be successful learners in the academic environment they share with regularly admitted students.

The Academic Enrichment Program (AEP), offered through the Learning Opportunity Center, is a two-semester program offered during the freshman year to give special attention during the first year in college to incoming freshmen who are conditionally admitted, as their preparation for college is, in certain respects, inadequate.

In order to assist students with specific content areas, the staff of the [LOC](#) offers a number of supplemental courses (e.g., Supplemental Writing and Supplemental Statistics) to all Westminster College students. These courses are designed as companion to a select number of general education classes with the goal of assisting students in developing study skills to be successful in the general education program.

Students who are placed on or continued on academic probation are required to participate in the Academic Assistance Program (AAP). The AAP helps students in an individualized program and learning environment discover how to be academically successful at Westminster College. These students meet weekly with the Academic Assistance Coordinator, who assists them with the

completion of the [probation packet](#). [Retention and graduation rates](#) for these students has remained consistent, ranging from 75-80% over the past five years.

Westminster College's Peer Tutoring Program offers academic support to students enrolled in a variety of courses, targeting courses found in the general education requirements.

Although the LOC addresses many academic needs, it is important to note that academic support for students is also provided through our faculty, who are expected to be the first point of contact for students in need of extra support.

In response to the needs of our high-achieving students, the College recently established the Westminster [Honors Program](#). The program invites incoming students to participate in a 4-year honors experience; students who do not qualify as first-year students may spend their freshman year building their academic record in order to apply to begin in their sophomore year. The program consists of an introductory seminar, critical thinking seminars, off-campus experiences, and the completion of a master's level thesis during the senior year. At the same time, the honors students engage in frequent leader-development activities that prepare them to grow professionally as well as academically. Approximately 60 students are currently engaged in the program, from freshmen to seniors.

### **Addressing Individual Students' Needs**

Throughout the application and admittance process, the Admissions staff identify those students who have the potential but not the academic background to meet the challenges of college-level work and therefore will need extra assistance to be successful at Westminster. These students' files are reviewed by the Admissions Committee and '[flagged](#)' for special help in one or more areas. The "flags" are placed in student advising files so that advisors are aware of deficiencies identified by the Admissions Committee and can direct students toward appropriate courses and college services as necessary. Students whose files are reviewed by the Admissions Committee are admitted conditionally and given an individualized plan for success in their first year at Westminster.

Another manner in which Westminster helps to support all of its students are two courses taken by all first-year students: the [Westminster Seminar](#) (WSM 101 for freshmen and 102 for transfers) and [The Leader Within](#) (LST 101); all freshmen take both courses during their first semester on campus.

If faculty, Student Life staff, or work supervisors notice any particular problems that students are encountering (e.g. attendance, problems with academic work, psychological or physical issues), those individuals report their concerns through the college's [retention management system](#) (RMS). The Student Response Team meets weekly to discuss each individual student concern, triangulate information, and to plan courses of action in each individual student case.

One special population at Westminster is the international student group, which annually ranges from 15-18% of the student body. The Office of International Student Services provides a thorough orientation as well as [coursework](#) to help international students make the transition to Westminster. The course focuses on a general orientation to American and to Westminster College campus cultures and covers subjects such as communication styles, making healthy decisions, developing a successful financial plan, workplace/classroom etiquette, and navigating the American health system.

### **Individualized Advising**

Faculty members also serve as academic advisors for all students. New students are paired with an

academic advisor during their Westminster Seminar course, and, when they declare a major or majors, they receive an academic advisor in the discipline in which they have declared their major. Faculty advisors typically work closely with the staff of the Learning Opportunities Center in order to advise learning disabled and/or at-risk students as carefully as possible. All advisors are provided with opportunities for annual training on advising so that they can best assist their students.

Faculty are provided with support through advising workshops and the [Advising Handbook](#), which contains critical curricular information, guidelines for placing students in courses, and recommendations for conducting advising sessions.

To supplement the advising program, the [Price Leadership Program](#) was created; it provides opportunities for advising from both faculty advisors and from alumni mentors at various points in Westminster student careers. Specifically, the program engages students in creating a personal e-portfolio to collect their best work, helps them set goals for academic and personal development, gives students opportunities to reflect on their learning, and assists students with creating an electronic resume. As part of the program, students meet with faculty advisors to discuss their progress on the Concept for Student Development during their freshmen and junior years and with alumni mentors in their sophomore and senior years.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, the Associate Dean of Faculty led a task force devoted to improving academic advising. The Advising Task Force released a [report](#) with a series of recommendations for improvement to the advising system in Fall 2014, including expectations for advisors as well as students. To act on the report, as of Fall 2014, juniors and seniors who have not declared majors will not be allowed to register until doing so. An advising system for these students has been put into place, so that they have assistance from their advisors, other faculty, and the Career Development Office to help them choose a major and get on-track for graduating. Several other recommendations are currently being implemented.

### **Infrastructure that Supports Effective Teaching**

Several structures are in place at Westminster to ensure student success and effective teaching. The Learning Opportunities Center, Reeves Library, the Emerson Center for Leadership and Service, the Wellness Center, the Coulter Science Center, Champ Auditorium, and the [National Churchill Museum](#) all aid in student learning. [Classrooms](#) range in size from accommodating 12-40 students, are equipped with technology, and are designed to be flexible learning spaces; a complete description of facilities and [classrooms](#) is available through the Registrar's Office. Likewise, Champ Auditorium provides space for both musical and dramatic performances. The Coulter Science Center also houses biology, chemistry, computer science, environmental science, physics, and psychology laboratories and is equipped with a wide variety of scientific instruments for teaching and faculty/student research. As these instruments become older the science departments will experience costly repairs and upgrades, and therefore attention not only to deferred maintenance of buildings, but also of equipment, must be a priority.

At the same time, although resources are stretched thin, the College's technological infrastructure provides solid resources for teaching and learning, particularly through the Moodle classroom management system, through technology in our classrooms, and through the support of online learning. Faculty members rely on IT to support computer labs and software to operate instruments needed for a variety of classes. It has been challenging over the past years to get all the IT needs addressed mainly due to limited IT staffing capacities and expertise; therefore, attention to improving IT infrastructure and staffing is another critical priority.

Reeves Library has worked within a [limited budget](#) to provide solid [resources](#) for both faculty and students. The library currently holds 104,327 physical books, and an additional 156,300 electronic books, for a total of 260,627. It holds 200 periodicals, with electronic access to 34,330 additional ones, 2040 media resources, and 58 database subscriptions. Electronic resources and databases allows the Reeves Library resources to be highly cost effective. Databases available through the library such as JSTOR, Academic Search Premier and PsychInfo account for higher percentage of traffic than their percentage of the library's [budget](#). Through memberships in MOBIUS and the Colorado Research Alliance, access to an additional 55 million resources is available. The library staff does its best to [support the curriculum](#) with the resources it has. Online resources which are always available from anywhere are valued more than in-house resources.

Several Student Life offices also provide support for student learning, in particular the Offices of Residential Life, Student Activities, Intercultural Engagement, [Service Learning](#), and [Career Development](#), primarily by providing instructors for the LST 133 Leadership Labs. Examples include labs for fraternity officers and for students living in “theme houses” (e.g., the [Remley Women’s Center](#), the Interfaith House, and Ecohouse).

Finally, the National Churchill Museum contributes to the education of students both directly and indirectly. In order to be introduced to the leadership of Winston Churchill, all new students are given a thorough tour of the museum during their first week on campus, as part of the New Student Days activities. At the same time, the Museum staff teach courses in support of the Museum Studies minor, and they support several interns each year.

Westminster recognizes that instructional expenses [lag behind](#) other peer institutions.

### **Resources for Student Research**

The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources. Although student research is conducted across campus and in every discipline, the renovated Coulter Science Center opened in 2003 and has proven to be one of the most important buildings on campus. A variety of subjects, not just science, are taught in their technologically enhanced classrooms, and the laboratories for physics, chemistry, and biology have allowed our students to engage in sophisticated research. Additionally, the cadaver laboratory is one of the most unique features in the Coulter Science Center, allowing anatomy students access to dissection at least once during their academic career, and potentially two or three times. Although these labs are closely supervised, select upper-level students engaged in research are allowed access to the labs during the evenings and weekends. The layout of the building has made it ideal for hosting statewide and regional academic conferences, and conferences such as the Missouri Undergraduate Psychology Conference, the Missouri Consortium for Computing in College Conference, the Midwestern Association of Chemistry Teachers in Liberal Arts Colleges Conference, as well as our annual Undergraduate Scholars Forum have been held in the Coulter Science Center. At the same time, the Coulter atrium has become a popular site for theatrical and musical performances.

The classrooms of this building have served as a model for the rest of the campus, and now all of the classrooms are equipped with SMART systems, that is, with projectors, computers, video and DVD players, as well as access for laptops or other portable electronic devices. One of the most recent additions to Westminster has been that of a distance-learning SMART classroom in the library (HAZ 311) that can connect with another such classroom via video-conferencing and be used to deliver quality teaching even though thousands of miles may separated the classrooms. Such a classroom can record lectures, discussions, or experiments, so that students could then view them at a later date.

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## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

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The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

## Argument

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### Co-Curricular Programs and the College Mission

The College's mission states that the College is committed to educating and inspiring all students "through a distinctive liberal arts curriculum and a dynamic developmental experience;" in making this claim, the College places great trust in its co-curricular programs to enhance the academic mission of the College with excellent developmental experiences. Therefore, all of Westminster's co-curricular programs are guided by the Concept for Student Development. This document speaks to our commitment to the holistic development of all students, focusing specifically on the intellectual, social, professional, ethical, and wellness domains.

The Center for Career Development provides an individualized, integrated approach to students' professional development. The Center seeks to foster and guide students in career planning and development, build strong internship opportunities, provide opportunities for students to explore careers, assist students with the process of applying to graduate and professional programs, and teach students professional skills and competencies. The [Internship Program](#) is a critical aspect of this office because it combines career development and academic achievement.

As a member of the NCAA Division III athletic program, Westminster College embraces and celebrates the student-athlete experience. The "Division III Experience" is a holistic development program which develops students as competitive athletes as well as life-long leaders on and off the field. In 2013, Westminster was awarded a three-year, \$30000 [NCAA CHOICES grant](#). This grant is specifically designated to assist with leadership development, and alcohol education for our student-athlete population. In addition, the 2013-14 women's basketball team received recognition for the highest Division III team grade point average, earning a 3.642 combined GPA.

Westminster College is a residential college with a three year residency requirement. As a result, almost all Westminster students live in campus housing for four years. Through the campus residency program, students are taught how to be good citizens and community leaders with the mentorship, guidance and support of 24 Resident Advisors. Students also participate in campus programs sponsored by the Office of Residential & Greek Life, covering an array of topics and addressing all five domains within the College's Concept for Student Development. Residential Life provides their own programming, and collaborates with other campus departments to create an enriching and educational residential community and also provides advising and programming support for the nine Inter/National Greek letter organizations. One way which the College recognizes the achievements of the Greek community and hold chapters accountable is through the implementation of the "[Standards for Greek Excellence](#)," a relationship document between the College and the Greek community which

identifies benchmarks of success for [individual chapters](#).

The [Wellness Center](#) is comprised of The Student Health Clinic, Counseling Services, Nutrition Services, and Wellness Programming. The Wellness Center strives to influence the positive development of students' social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical, and vocational lives, thus promoting a whole-person approach to well-being and fulfilling the college's mission of developing global leaders.

The [Office of Student Involvement](#) plays an integral role in developing student leaders, and is responsible for fostering a more vibrant campus community. The Director of Student Involvement provides training and resources to over 60 active clubs and organizations. The Director advises student leaders in Student Government Association (SGA), helping exercise their voice to represent the welfare of the student body and practice true self-governance. SGA is also responsible for [allocating college funds](#), including \$80,000 distributed by the [Finance Committee](#) to student clubs, organizations or individual programming initiatives on an annual basis. The majority of the programs offered, with support from the SGA budget, are all provided free of cost to all Westminster students. The Campus Activities Board creates opportunities for students to engage with visiting lecturers, perform service projects within the community, attend concerts, and collaborate with faculty and staff outside of traditional classroom means.

The Diversity Center and the [Office of Spiritual Life](#) work together to support and celebrate the diverse student population, and to educate the campus community on diversity-related topics. Some hallmark programs sponsored by the Diversity Center include a monthly "Diversity Dialogues" lunch series where all members of campus community come together for discourse on different facets of diversity and its impact on our campus and our world, and an annual, "Colors of Westminster," a two-day retreat for a select group of sophomore student leaders. In addition, the Office of Spiritual Life provides daily opportunities for personal or large community worship and reflection, including a Prayer Team, a Praise and Worship Team, the Interfaith Advisory Board (IAB), and Evensong (a musical worship experience).

The Office of Community Engagement & Service-Learning coordinates service opportunities on and off-campus, providing students, faculty and staff ample opportunities to give back. Each year, Westminster's community pledges to complete 10,000 service hours among faculty, staff and students. Since the pledge began in 2007, the campus has been able to [reach that goal](#) every year, except 2008-2009. There are numerous events which are sponsored by the Office of Community Engagement & Service learning on an annual basis, such as New Student Service Day, Into the Streets, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. Westminster students even have an opportunity to submit a proposal for a \$10,000 to perform humanitarian service anywhere in the world, a program sponsored by the United World College (UWC) Davis Scholars Program called "[Projects for Peace](#)." Since the program's inception in 2007, Westminster has had 12 [projects](#) selected for implementation all around the world, from Nepal to the Western Sahara Desert. Faculty members can also create service-learning components to their [courses](#) which allow students to learn about particular groups, organizations, or businesses in the area and perform service as part of their curricular responsibilities. Westminster offers approximately 10 service learning courses each semester [across all departments and major programs](#) at the College.

Together, all areas of the Emerson Center for Leadership & Service provide basic leadership programming for all Westminster students, regardless of their participation in a specific club or organization. For over 10 years, the Emerson Center has sponsored an annual campus leadership conference, including a major keynote speaker and numerous breakout sessions attendees can choose from. The conference provides a significant leader development opportunity for students, and allows

them to explore leadership concepts and their own interpersonal leadership characteristics which ultimately, help shape their ability to lead themselves and the greater community.

### **Claims About Contributions to the Educational Experience**

The first part of Westminster's mission addresses the importance of liberal arts education. To that end Westminster has a robust general education program which challenges students in subjects from art to history to language to math to science. In addition, Westminster also has a 40-hour limit that prohibits students from taking more than 40 hours in any one subject. Westminster's mission is tied to liberal arts education because it fundamentally believes in and lives out a liberal arts lifestyle.

The second part of Westminster's mission, however, speaks to a dynamic developmental experience. As part of this dynamism, academics cannot be the sole foundation. Students should be involved in co-curricular opportunities in order to make them well-rounded people, not just well-rounded scholars. For that reason, Student Life programming ensures that opportunities are available for personal development for all students, from 65 clubs to opportunities to practice leadership skills and critical thinking, whether at a clinic in Rwanda or as an intern in Washington, D.C. or Jefferson City, or at the "What if..." Conference, a series of presentations inspired by TED Talks, which Westminster hosted in 2012 and 2013.

Additionally, Westminster's mission challenges students to live with the characteristics of integrity, fairness, respect, and responsibility. These characteristics are found in and out of the classroom at Westminster. It may mean that a student does their homework on their own, with integrity, without plagiarism. Or it may mean that they call an opponent's ball in on the tennis court during a point that they so dearly wanted to win. It may mean hours of studying to ace a final exam, or it may mean hours of rehearsal to perform in tune with the rest of the Wren choir. All of these examples are learning experiences that can serve as a foundation for their moral character for the rest of their lives.

Finally, Westminster's mission speaks to the student's life after graduation. The campus is a preparation for their adult lives, and it is our hope that students will carry out these lives with success, significance, and service. The success will be achieved when they have lived with the characteristics mentioned above; the 96% placement rate is one measure of this success. "Significance" will be achieved when they master the challenges of critical thinking, life-long learning, and leading. Service is additional, as service is something that one can do at any age, with any amount of resources. True success and significance often take years to reach, for they are not only professional goals, but personal ones as well, but service can begin on day one. For that reason there is the emphasis at Westminster on beginning service during one's college years, both through service-learning courses and the challenge to complete 10,000 hours of service each year.

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## 3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### Summary

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Westminster College provides a rigorous and thorough educational experience for its students in every manner in which education is delivered. From the classroom to the Internet, the biology laboratory to the football field, the fraternity houses to study abroad, Westminster prides itself in offering the same high-quality experience to its students to provide an education that goes beyond the classroom. Focusing on the courses and the programs, one can easily find the high standards, objectives, and learning outcomes set forth at every level, in every course syllabus, with every departmental or program (including co-curricular programs) review, and at the institutional level alongside the mission of Westminster College. These standards, objectives, and learning outcomes are then assessed on a regular basis through various evaluations in a reflective manner. Westminster College is consistently trying to improve the high quality education it provides, and the evidence from this criterion supports this statement.

We believe the College has met the standards of Criterion Three. However, we believe the following areas require additional attention:

1. Faculty. Maintaining a robust faculty must remain highest priority, in order to ensure the quality of our education. While we are generally satisfied with the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty, and we are maintaining high-quality adjuncts, the College must begin tenure-track hires in the near future, particularly if enrollment begins to grow. Funding for faculty development must also be made a higher priority.
2. Concept for Student Development. While faculty and staff are generally aware of the Concept for Student Development and support it, we need additional mechanisms for ensuring that it is woven into our students' education. In particular, we need to give greater attention to the coordination of curricular and co-curricular programs, the enhancement of our advising program, and the adoption of the Price Leadership Program as part of the curriculum.
3. Assessment. We must continue to find efficient and effective ways to ensure that all programs, both curricular and co-curricular, are assessed on a regular basis. In particular, we need additional data regarding the effectiveness of Student Life programs.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Argument

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Since the HLC review in 2005, the College has implemented an assessment model that guides our processes and has improved assessment practices. The assessment model, included in our [Concept for Student Development](#), is designed to regularly evaluate how Westminster is fulfilling the [mission](#) to provide a distinctive liberal arts education along with dynamic developmental experiences. The mission provides the foundation for the learning model; learning objectives for every program and course flow naturally from that mission. The curriculum is developed in light of the learning model that the mission presupposes, and the implementation of our programs is assessed regularly. Finally, we are committed to assessing both the implementation of programs and their outcomes. Analysis of outcomes, then, loops discussions back to an assessment of mission, learning objectives, and the structure/implementation of programs.

#### **The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.**

Westminster College has conducted periodic program reviews for the past 20 years, with reviews occurring approximately once every ten years. In the past three years, every academic department and

program, except computer science, has undergone a formal program review. This process involves an extensive self-study of existing practices in conjunction with a self-assessment that identifies strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement. The program review [guidelines](#) require that each program/department describe or assess its: mission and objectives, demographics of students (including first destinations of graduates), role in the college's General Education curriculum, high-impact practices, comparison to peer institutions, recent curricular revisions, resources (physical, instructional, technological), faculty, and its financial status. The review is complemented by the on-site assessment of an external reviewer who is selected by the department under review, in consultation with the Senior Vice President and Dean of Faculty. This reviewer reads the department's internal program review and makes a report to the department chairs, the Senior Vice President of the College and Dean of Faculty, and the Associate Dean of Faculty. Additionally, we have three Division Chairs (Humanities, Natural and Mathematical Sciences, and Social Sciences) who [oversee](#) program reviews in each of the departments under their supervision. Finally, each academic program is asked to provide a response to the external reviewer's report. Examples of the process are from foreign languages and literature, history, and psychology: [FLL report](#), [FLL reviewer](#), [FLL response](#); [HIS report](#), [HIS reviewer](#), [HIS response](#); [PSY report](#), [PSY reviewer](#), [PSY response](#).

Outside of the formal program review process, every department/program is asked to do an annual assessment report, such as those from [psychology](#), [English](#), and [classics, religion and philosophy](#), that enables the department to determine how well its learning goals are being met. Such assessments evaluate how well the department/program achieved its own learning goals, which are mapped to the college mission. This analysis is based in part on student major performance and feedback on several college-wide assessment tools (e.g., the CLA, NSSE, Student Satisfaction Survey) provided by the Director of Institutional Research to individual departments (described in 4.B.2, below). Other data sets also include senior exit interviews and surveys and annual demographics about placement of graduates in jobs or graduate schools. Students are [expected to participate](#) in these annual assessments.

Academic departments regularly use these assessments to improve their programs, as well as their practices. For example, the [Education Department](#) has recently improved its processes for complying with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requirements by:

- Requiring students in ED 453, Classroom Organization and Management, to furnish the departmental secretary with a copy of their qualifying scores. This change was made after the Department realized in a recent annual assessment that students' national Praxis scores were not being stored in a central location for use in reporting.
- Developing a new course, Emergent Literacy, to fulfill additional literacy requirements for Early Childhood and Elementary.
- Restructuring of advising forms for new freshmen entering Fall 2014.

The Education Department has also raised its standards for qualifying students by requiring a higher minimum GPA in all coursework, going from the old required 2.50 in all coursework and certification coursework and 3.00 in all Education coursework, (with no D's allowed), to the newer standard: all coursework 2.75; all certification related AND education coursework, 3.00. This change went into effect in Fall 2014.

Similarly, the English Department used college-wide NSSE results indicating low student awareness about different cultures as an impetus to expand its global literary offerings with the reinstatement of

two World Literature surveys and the 2009 hiring of a faculty member who specializes in Caribbean and Africana literature. The History Department has also responded to self-assessments that identified a lack of diversity in course offerings by hiring a faculty member in 2011 to deliver courses focusing on the Middle East and Africa. Furthermore, the Chemistry Department had determined from its senior exit surveys that students were interested in enhanced opportunities to utilize sophisticated instruments to analyze data, and this past year, the department hired a tenure-track analytical chemist and obtained new instruments for the department.

**The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning.**

The [transcription of credit](#) from other institutions is overseen by the Associate Dean of Faculty in consultation with appropriate department chairs. Transfer credits must be earned at an accredited institution and the student must have earned a “C” or better. Courses that are comparable to those offered in the Westminster General Education curriculum or to those offered within a major may satisfy those requirements; otherwise they will be considered elective credit. These policies applies to special types of transfer credit such as international baccalaureate credit, international transfer credit, and summer school, and correspondence courses. The College also maintains standards for [credit by examination](#) for AP, IB, and CLEP exams.

If a transfer course is not an exact match for one of Westminster’s courses, students may receive transfer credit for *New Foundations* requirements if the learning goals for the course are similar to those required for courses in that Tier II context. That review is done by the Associate Dean of Faculty, with the assistance of the appropriate department chair, if necessary. Transfer students must complete at least 48 credits of full-time study at Westminster, including the two semesters prior to graduation, but transfer credits will not be counted toward a student’s overall Westminster GPA. Currently matriculated students who wish to assure the transferability of course credits taken at another institution must have prior approval from their advisor.

The College has spent a great deal of time in the past several years refining transfer credit policies in an effort to help transfer students succeed and to make an education here at Westminster more accessible to diverse groups of students. In 2013-2014, the College approved a new transfer credit policy for incoming students who have already earned an [Associate of Arts degree](#) at another institution. The college also enhanced its policies for students who have previously earned [military credits](#).

[Credit earned through internships](#) or other forms of off-campus experiential learning are regulated by procedures of the Internship Program housed in the Center for Career Development, which offers a variety of experiential learning opportunities. As a result of assessment discussions regarding the value of experiential learning, the internship program was expanded two years ago to allow for a total of 12 hours of academic credit to be earned through experiential learning. Specific guidelines for individual internships delivered through this program are set and monitored by the Internship Coordinator in conjunction with a faculty supervisor, and are posted on the website.

Independent studies are conducted with the approval and guidance of individual faculty members according to the guidelines in the [independent study forms](#). The college catalog additionally describes [policies](#) pertaining to the transfer of credit for dual enrollment, dual credit, study abroad, and off-campus programs. Although not technically transfer credit, it is important to note that students entering Westminster College having completed three or more years of study in a single foreign language in high school may take a foreign language placement exam and begin study at a higher level. If they earn a “C” or better in that higher level class, they will receive full or partial credit for

the required courses that preceded it.

## **Course Prerequisites, Course Rigor, Expectations for Student Learning, Access to Learning Resources, and Faculty Qualifications for All Programs, Including Dual Credit Programs**

### **Prerequisites**

Prerequisites for courses are determined at the department level and approved by the Curriculum Committee during the course approval process. Course prerequisites are identified in the course catalog and in the computerized registration system. Compliance with prerequisites is monitored through the Registrar's electronic course schedule, as students are not allowed to register for a class electronically if they have not successfully completed the prerequisites. Prerequisites may be waived by the appropriate department chair.

### **Course Rigor**

The College maintains the rigor of its courses through [careful oversight](#) that begins with the faculty, who establish and maintain the curriculum, and the President and the Board to confer degrees. The elected faculty members of the Curriculum Committee approve all new [courses](#) and [programs](#), and [regularly review existing courses](#) to ensure that they adhere to general education requirements. In this way, we avoid slippage of quality because we keep abreast of how courses and programs are delivered. Recently, the College approved a new credit hour policy to clarify in course syllabi how many hours of study are expected outside of class for each hour spent in class to receive [course credit](#). Furthermore, through faculty action, a new [plus-minus grading system](#) has been developed for the first time this year because the faculty felt that it would encourage students to maintain a consistently high level work throughout the semester, reasoning that more precise grading would result in a more rigorous academic effort on the part of students.

With a suitable curriculum in place, the faculty believe that excellence in teaching is another critical factor in maintaining overall course rigor. Regular performance reviews of faculty (after the first and third, and sixth years, especially), as well as post-tenure reviews, that include analysis of student course evaluations, faculty self-reports, and classroom observation/annual reports by department chairs, provide an intensive look at how we are teaching our students. The [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) also contributes to the maintenance of course rigor by supporting faculty who wish to enhance their own teaching effectiveness, including a mentoring program for new faculty and a [Teaching and Learning Committee](#) that offers pedagogical support and assistance in course assessments. [Several advisory committees](#) also serve as watchdogs of special programs to ensure that they maintain proper standards. Furthermore, while [Writing Across the Curriculum](#) programs are now standard in higher education, the faculty consider Westminster's program to be another method by which students are sharpening their critical thinking through the written application and interpretation of course material.

Students also have a responsibility to approach their coursework with a sense of personal rigor. We encourage them to do so in part by providing ample honors opportunities. [Departmental honors](#) may be earned and there are 17 active chapters of honor societies on campus, including a nationally-renowned chapter of [Alpha Chi](#) and a newly established chapter of the national freshman honor society, Alpha Lambda Delta. Most importantly, the college created its first [Honors Program](#) in 2012-2013 to provide advanced students with a multi-year honors experience involving challenging coursework with an interdisciplinary focus. In its third year, the Honors Program is thriving and providing talented students with unique and highly individualized educational opportunities.

## **Expectations for Student Learning**

Expectations for student learning are established first in the College's vision statement, within the "[Vision for the Student Body](#)," which sets forth expectations that students will be educated holistically and with careful mentorship by faculty, administration, staff, and the alumni network. The College endorses and develops in students enduring liberal arts values through the following educational goals: critical thinking, communication, mathematical skills, historical perspective, social institutions, science, technology, cultures and global interdependence, values, and aesthetic sensitivity. The College ensures that progress in these areas is achieved through the [General Education](#) program, which consists of three incremental educational [Tiers](#) that, over the course of a student's education at Westminster, will provide exposure and competencies in all educational goals. Tier I hones skills of communication, interpretation of quantitative data, and critical thinking. Tier II applies these foundational skills to a variety of contexts and disciplines. Tier III is an integrative tier in which students have an opportunity to make connections among these contexts while exploring a fundamental human concern or significant global, political, social, theoretical, or ethical issue.

The College recently deepened its expectations for students and the college as a whole by instituting the [Concept for Student Development](#), and recommendations made by the [Westminster Experience Task Force](#) helped to provide specific means to operationalize the concepts in the CSD, such as the development of the required (for freshmen) [LST 101](#) course and the [Price Leadership Program](#). The CSD targets five domains of student growth: intellectual, ethical, professional, social, and wellness. The development of these domains is supported by a 2013 alumni gift that funds the Compass E-portfolio system that chronicles and assesses student progress in each of these domains over the course of their years spent at Westminster. This e-portfolio system, part of the Price Leadership Program, is introduced to students in their first year, and progress will be monitored by the advisor and alumni.

The [Westminster Seminar](#) for freshmen and transfer students communicates most intensively to students the expectations that the college has for their learning. These courses introduce students to the rigors of academic work and college life in general. [The Director of the Westminster Seminar](#) oversees and coordinates the entire program and makes sure that faculty receive the necessary instructional support to deliver the seminar properly.

## **Access to Learning Resources**

It is part of [Westminster 2020](#) to "Develop an Information Technology Plan to improve institutional process efficiency and decision-making, support critical campus academic and business needs, and ensure that [the] College's information and technology security systems and compliance efforts are adequate." The newly hired Executive Director of Informational Technology is working with the Special Assistant to the President to refine the plan. Student Satisfaction Survey [results](#) and [student](#) and faculty comments suggest a need to improve IT services. With regard to academic resources, specifically, [division chairs](#) assure that the general education curriculum is supported with adequate resources. Periodic program reviews also make an assessment about the availability of resources that serve each major.

The Tomnitz Family Learning Opportunities Center (LOC) described in Criterion 3 ensures that the largest number of students have proper access to learning resources by providing strong academic support for at-risk students. For a complete description of the [LOC](#) programs, see Criterion 3.D.

Special kinds of learning resources are monitored by specific committees or staff. [The Coulter Science Center Committee](#) oversees the maintenance, security, and proper functioning of classrooms

and laboratory spaces in the Coulter Science Center. [The Director of Library Services](#) ensures that the college offers up-to-date library services in consultation with faculty, departments, and the Library Advisory Committee, a sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee. The Director of Library Services ensures that campus-wide audiovisual/media services are available to students, faculty and staff.

Making learning accessible to students who may not be able to engage in the residential educational experience has become strategically important to the College. Three years ago, as part of the [Westminster 2020](#) plan to “[d]evelop online resources for a diverse group of learners,” faculty developed an [online learning program](#) that has significantly expanded access to educational resources at the College. The [Director of Online Teaching](#) ensures that information about online learning is effectively disseminated among the entire college community and annually assesses the effectiveness of online teaching. Each year, we have expanded our [online offerings](#) and are now in the process of experimenting with [blended courses](#) that combine online learning with a traditional classroom experience in order to better serve the needs of our students.

### **Faculty Qualifications For Programs**

There are currently 58 full-time [faculty members](#) at Westminster, 54 of whom have a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their fields, thus meeting the goal of the [Westminster 2020](#) plan to “[r]ecruit, develop, and retain quality faculty that are a strong match for the college.” While the [Dean of Faculty](#) oversees recruitment, development, and retention of faculty and professional academic staff, and the [President of the College](#) has “sole authority to hire faculty members,” the faculty itself takes an extensive role in [hiring, promotion, granting of tenure, and reviewing of its members](#). The Faculty Handbook describes specific requirements for the [appointment](#) of faculty and professional academic staff at each rank as well as the approval process for recommending a new hire. Specific guidelines for search and appointment of new faculty are outlined in [Section 2.3](#) and [Appendix H](#) of the Faculty Handbook.

Evidence of ongoing faculty qualifications for all programs is contained in the [official files](#) of every faculty member maintained by the Academic Dean’s office. Such evidence includes division chair reports on department chairs, department chair reports on individual department members and adjuncts, reports of the Faculty Personnel Committee, classroom observations, annual faculty self-reports, and where applicable, tenure packets.

A faculty member who is determined to be unqualified to teach will [not be reappointed](#). The College also has policies in place for [dismissing faculty members](#), Division chairs, and Department chairs who are no longer considered fit to continue in their professional capacities.

Faculty qualifications are also maintained through faculty development policies governing [sabbatical](#) and [other forms of leave](#), educational assistance, travel for research or conferences, and [monetary awards](#). Stipulations are made about [faculty workload](#), [faculty compensation](#), stipends or release time for administrative work, [limits on outside professional activities](#) that might interfere with primary college responsibilities, and [proper use of college facilities](#). The College further contributes to faculty development and the maintenance of a productive workplace through the provision of [benefits](#). As noted in the Criterion Five argument, the lack of college resources is a significant concern for faculty development, and faculty developmental resources are an important component of the [Leading the Way](#) campaign.

### **Dual Credit Programs**

The College currently does not offer dual credit courses for high school students.

**The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.**

The Westminster College Teacher Education Program is administered by the Department of Education and was recently authorized by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Common Core standards and Missouri Standards for Preparation of Educators (MoSPE) are incorporated into all Westminster education methods courses.

The Business Program at Westminster College has recently been accredited (November, 2014) by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP).

Westminster has formal partnerships with [Washington University](#) and with [Missouri S & T](#) that enable us to offer a dual degree program in [engineering](#). Washington University has three separate accreditations from the Engineering Accreditation Commission of Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET). Missouri S & T maintains 15 different accreditations in engineering from ABET. Each of these institutions is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Similarly, the dual degree nursing program has a formal partnership with [Barnes-Jewish College Goldfarb School of Nursing](#), which is regionally accredited by HLC, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, and the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs; it is also approved by the Missouri State Board of Nursing. Westminster has an articulated agreement with the [Logan College of Chiropractic/University Programs](#) to deliver a “3+3” [baccalaureate/DO degree](#). Logan is accredited by the HLC and the Council on Chiropractic Education; Logan’s School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona has received provisional accreditation status from the Commission on Osteopathic College Accreditation and the American Osteopathic Association.

**Evaluation of Graduate Success; Degree Programs Prepare Students for Advanced Study or Employment**

The Office of Career Services was recently redesigned and renamed the Center for Career Development in the last few years to reflect its expanded mission to engage, prepare, and empower students to succeed in a highly competitive and global community. This re-envisioning of the way students are prepared for life beyond graduation is another goal of [Westminster 2020](#), to “[d]ifferentiate the Office of Career Services by offering more experiential and career-related opportunities, while closely aligning with the Columns Concept.”

*Westminster 2020* sets a goal of a 95% placement rate for its graduates into professional jobs or graduate/professional programs, including many with national recognition. The College is currently exceeding that goal. Westminster College has been keeping careful track of the “first destinations” of graduates after they leave the college. [Placement statistics](#) are posted on the Center for Career Development website.

The latest figures we have are for 2012; they indicate that, with an 88% response rate, Westminster has a 96% placement rate for graduates in the first six months after graduation. The placement rate has been well over 90% since the 2006-2007 year. In 2012, 54% of graduates were employed in the for-profit sector, 17% were attending graduate school, 16% were working for non-profit organizations, 15% were teaching, and less than 1% were serving in the military (numbers total slightly over 100% because some students are working and attending graduate school simultaneously). The Center for Career Development is working towards a more formalized process

of gathering alumni placement information in accordance with standards set by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. The current process is almost in line with those standards right now and continues to become more rigorous and comprehensive.

The Office of Institutional Research collects first destination information for not only the Center for Career Development, but also for departments and programs. The program review process requires departments to closely monitor, assess, and reflect on the progress with which their majors gain employment or attend graduate school in their fields.

In 2011, Westminster administered an Alumni [survey](#) that asked them to reflect on the value and practicality of their Westminster Education. With a 13 percent response rate and an average age of respondents at age 27, 91 percent of those respondents said that they would attend Westminster College again if they had the chance. One survey that included students, faculty, staff, parents and alumni asked respondents to do a forced ranking of concepts that represent Westminster College to them. Alumni ranked in the top five: 1) “Academic Quality”; 2) “Personal Attention”; and 3) “Tradition”; 4) “Leadership Development”; and 5) “Student Success.” It is interesting that current students ranked “Personal Attention” fourth, “Leadership Development” sixth, and “Student Success” seventh. The difference in the rankings of these concepts between students and alumni suggests that, once they graduate, Westminster alumni perceive more strongly the value and practicality of their college education in their post-graduate lives. Another part of this survey asked alumni to rate on a scale of 1-7 to what extent they felt Westminster College provided them with a high-quality education while preparing them to be lifelong learners, leaders, and more specifically, leaders in the global community. The College received high rankings in all of these categories, with the exception of the question on leadership in the global community. The responses to this question were not as strong, which suggests that our older alumni are not as familiar with the Columns Concept as some of our more recent graduates.

In another series of questions, alumni indicated that Westminster College prepared them best in the following areas: written and oral communication, completing tasks and learning independently, working efficiently as part of a team, and treating others with respect. All of these skills are integral to the concept of lifelong learning, the development of which is one of our highest priorities at Westminster College.

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## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Argument

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**The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.**

The [learning goals, mission, and vision](#) of Westminster College are stated in the College Catalog. They are also articulated in *Westminster 2020*, which describes distinct visions for: the College, its programs, its faculty and staff, the campus, the student body, and the alumni. Westminster has been vigilant about ensuring that programs, majors, and co-curricular activities meet those learning goals; the College makes such determinations through intensive assessment practices.

Since its last re-accreditation visit by HLC in 2005, Westminster College has taken an active role in improving the assessment of student learning, expanding and diversifying the measures that is used to evaluate teaching, learning, and organizational effectiveness and following the [Assessment Plan](#). Every effort to include the broadest possible campus population in these assessments has been made. Targeted assessment practices have been embedded into the yearly cycle of the College by instituting an annual Assessment Day in which students, faculty, and staff participate.

In 2005, HLC charged Westminster with improving assessment practices in five key areas: 1) the overall college-wide assessment system; 2) broad-based participation in assessment efforts; 3) assessment measures; 4) examples of how assessment has led to changes in curriculum and instruction; 5) and funding for assessment initiatives. The college immediately responded by taking measures to improve or make plans for improvement in each of the five areas. In 2008, the then-Associate Dean of Faculty issued a [report](#) to HLC summarizing our assessment progress at the three-year mark. The following presents a brief summary of changes the college has made in its assessment practices since 2005:

1. *College-wide assessment system.* The assessment system was enhanced during the 2005-2006 academic year with the development of the [assessment model](#), which is included in the Concept for Student Development; this system ensures that our programs are clearly connected to our mission and learning objectives, and that we are assessing program design and implementation, as well as outcomes. The assessment system allows faculty, staff, students, and administrators to monitor student development in the aggregate and to adjust programs and learning experiences to ensure achievement of learning goals. Academic department assessment is required to explain how majors meet learning goals and fulfill the college's mission statement.

Departments are also asked to prove how courses and developmental experiences achieve these goals and objectives. Most academic departments annually report, but some have not, and some departments have majors for which there are either no learning goals or assessment plans. Periodic program reviews combine intensive self-study with outside review to create meaningful benchmarks for progress in meeting goals. The College has instituted several significant data collection and analysis tools that focus on how programs and their implementation achieve these goals (these tools are described in 4.B.2, below). Outcomes assessment include: embedded assessment (senior theses, portfolios, performance examinations), pre-post analyses (writing assessments, the CLA), and performance surveys of graduates and their employers (described in 4.A.). Going forward, the College plans to use the Price Leadership Program e-portfolio as a means of collecting and evaluating assessment data. Improvements can be made in public dissemination of assessment results as well as connections with institutional budgeting and planning.

2. *Broad-based participation in assessment efforts.* We have broadened the base of participation in college-wide assessment in several ways. For one, we have integrated planning and assessment across programs and levels in order to make it part of yearly planning and reflection on the effectiveness with which we deliver student learning. In 2005, the college engaged in a community-wide conversation to articulate our institutional identity, which had been identified as an area of weakness, leading to the identification of the “[Columns Concept](#)” of developing “leaders in the global community” as the educational mission and passion that we have established at Westminster in the past several decades. In 2006, a group of 150 faculty, staff, and students articulated seven critical success factors in realizing the Columns Concept, and these factors became the foundation of the *Westminster 2020* plan.

Westminster now has broad participation in on-going planning and assessment activities around these critical success factors. Cabinet officers annually assess progress toward annual goals and formulate plans for the coming year and in preparation for meetings with the Board of Trustees. Faculty is involved in institutional planning at the program level, through naturally occurring governance structures that oversee planning and assessment, so that these functions become continuous and embedded in the educational life of the College. For example, in 2013-2014, the [Curriculum Review Task Force](#) considered making changes to *New Foundations*, and used assessment results to inform their discussions. The system connects assessment to educational decision-making in ways that lead to action and make a difference in the quality of our programs. However, connection between assessment and institutional planning and budgeting remains in need of improvement.

3. *Assessment measures.* Several key assessment measures at Westminster are described in 4.B.2, below. Most of these measures were instituted after the last HLC re-accreditation visit in efforts to find more precise or tailored tools to assess student learning at Westminster. Other measures are locally developed to address very specific issues that become meaningful outside of the regular course of academics. Westminster also assesses its student life programs. The Dean of Student Life and staff in that office determine every year how well these programs meet Student Life [learning outcomes](#). Furthermore, the Social and Academic Council (SAC), a campus-wide committee composed of representatives from academics, student life, enrollment services, and the student body, monitors student success initiatives, relying on assessments from a variety of sources. SAC studies several assessment tools in making its recommendations, including the NSSE, the Student Satisfaction Survey, and the [CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey](#). The latter survey helps the College to determine to some extent the overall well-being of students as they apply themselves to their coursework, to monitor student engagement, and to identify activities that may interfere with student learning.

4. *Examples of how assessment has led to changes in curriculum and instruction.* Changes made as a result of assessment efforts are explained in detail in 4.B.3, below.
5. *Funding for Assessment Initiatives.* Since the last re-accreditation, the Dean of Faculty has instituted a designated budget line for program assessment. Each department has funds to support annual assessment within the major as well as for periodic program reviews. In addition, the [assessment budget](#) supports overall assessment efforts.

**The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.**

Learning objectives for curricular and co-curricular programs are connected to our institutional mission and vision; through our assessment model, we assess the development and implementation of our programs, in addition to the outcomes. To that end, Westminster College uses a number of assessment instruments as part of the institution's assessment processes. Some are developed locally and others are selected to permit comparison with results from other institutions. The Office of Institutional Research provides support for all College assessment efforts at all levels within the organization.

Nationally Normed Instruments

*The College Learning Assessment survey (CLA).* Measure of Outcomes. Westminster College has used the CLA since 2004-05. Analysis of [CLA results](#) confirm that scaled scores of upper level students are higher than those of first-year students reflecting progress on the core attributes of a liberal education: writing, higher order thinking, problem solving, and quantitative reasoning.

*Educational Testing Service.* Measure of Outcomes. Use of E.T.S. Major Field Tests is a decision made by departmental faculty. Business, Economics, and Political Science use the MFT exams each spring. They have also been used in the past with students majoring in Biology, Chemistry, and Education. Summary reports are reviewed by the respective departments. The Office of Institutional Research can compare the departmental results with those from selected comparison institutions.

*1<sup>st</sup> Year Initiative (FYI).* Measure of Success of Program Structure and Implementation. The FYI was first used in Fall 2004 with students enrolled in the Westminster Seminar. The FYI has been used annually through FY13. [Summary reports](#) are prepared and maintained by the Office of Institutional Research. Results are reviewed by the Director of the Westminster Seminar and the Assessment Committee.

*IDEA Survey.* Measure of Implementation. [IDEA surveys](#) for courses are given according to guidelines outlined in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Individual reports are returned to faculty. Summary reports are occasionally prepared by the Office of Institutional Research following departmental request. Results are reviewed by the Dean of Faculty and by the Faculty Personnel Committee during second-and fourth-year reviews of probationary faculty members, during tenure and/or promotion reviews, and for post-tenure reviews and/or significant merit increase reviews.

*HLC Student Opinion Survey.* Recently received [survey results](#) have supplied the College with some additional student satisfaction data to add to its locally administered Student Satisfaction Survey.

Local Instruments

*Major Surveys and Exit Interviews.* Measure of Program Structure and Implementation, as well as

Outcomes. Major Surveys were developed by the Westminster College Assessment Committee in Fall 2002 to measure the extent to which seniors believe that they have achieved major learning goals provided by the departments. Major Surveys are completed annually. Seniors also meet in small groups each year with a faculty member from another department or a staff member to discuss their experiences pursuing a major at Westminster. Summaries of student responses on the Major Surveys and the discussion during the exit Interviews are prepared and returned to the departments for use in their future planning. Department assessments evaluate those interviews and determine whether changes in the major are necessary as a result of the findings. Results show that Westminster seniors believe that departments are meeting stated learning goals.

*Student Satisfaction Survey.* Measure of Program Implementation and Outcomes. The present SSS was first offered in the spring of 2006 as the College sought new ways to assess the real learning experiences and attitudes of Westminster students and is now administered annually. Previously, the Student Satisfaction Inventory offered by Noel-Levitz was used (1996-2005). Results are sent back to individual departments, including: [Academics](#), [Bookstore](#), [Business Office](#), [Campus Facilities](#), [Career Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Enrollment Services](#), [Food Services](#), [Health Services](#), [IT](#), [Leadership Services](#), [Library](#), [Multicultural Student Development](#), [Residential/Greek Life](#), [Security](#), [Spiritual Life](#), [Student Involvement](#), [Study Abroad](#), and the [Wellness Center](#). Departments are charged with reviewing results as well as student comments ([Academics](#), [Bookstore](#), [Business Office](#), [Campus Facilities](#), [Career Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Enrollment Services](#), [Food Services](#), [Health Services](#), [IT](#), [Leadership Services](#), [Library](#), [Residential/Greek Life](#), [Security](#), [Spiritual Life](#), [Student Involvement](#), [Study Abroad](#), and the [Wellness Center](#)) accompanying the numerical results and instituting changes to programming as a result.

*Writing Assessment.* Measure of Outcomes. Communication is one of Westminster's ten college learning goals and it is defined as the ability to write, speak, read, and listen effectively. Assessment of written communication involves collection of writing samples from a student's Westminster Seminar course and a second piece of writing from the student's upper-level Tier III course. The papers range from 2-6 pages in length and are designed to develop a thesis. Topics are chosen by the student and/or the instructors of the courses. The samples are then matched and evaluated by a team of writing assessment evaluators composed of faculty members. This evaluation is conducted on Assessment Day. Executive Summaries (e.g. [2012](#) and [2013](#)) are prepared for review by the Assessment Committee and are posted on the Westminster web site.

Review of the results of these assessments over time and multiple conversations between the director of the Writing Across the Curriculum program and the Assessment Committee led to a revised writing assessment process that began during the 2011-2012 academic year. Key differences of this new process include the scheduling of the writing assessment on [Assessment Day](#) in March. The English Department faculty serves as a core group for the assessment process supplemented by full-time teaching faculty colleagues from several other departments. The assessment is performed using a newly formulated rubric created by the Director of Writing Across the Curriculum in consultation with the Assessment Committee.

The College has made some progress in assessing the [ten college-wide learning goals](#), though much work remains. Critical thinking is assessed via examination of CLA results, written communication is assessed via the writing assessment process discussed above, and [quantitative literacy](#) was assessed last year by the Assessment Committee as well. The committee is currently formulating plans for assessment of other institutional learning goals, with expectations to assess the Human Behavior and Social Institutions, Historical Perspectives, Information Technology, and Cultures and Global Interdependence learning goals in the 2014-2015 academic year and to assess the remaining learning goals in 2015-2016.

### Online Assessment

The College has gathered [some information](#) from [Winter](#) and [Summer](#) Online students to help evaluate the new online courses but needs to engage in a more substantial assessment process.

### Quality Initiative

Westminster's most significant recent assessment effort has been participation in Pathways Cohort #3, upon invitation by HLC. This effort was intended to assist HLC in evaluating the Lumina Foundation's Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) in the areas of "Broad Integrative Knowledge." Participation in this process has had the added benefit of helping us to evaluate some of our hallmark programs and learning goals. Our efforts resulted in a [report](#) made to HLC about the value and effectiveness of Lumina's DQP. It also gave Westminster faculty members the opportunity to test their own integrative teaching by mapping the DQP to *New Foundations* as well as to the *Columns Concept* and the *Concept for Student Development*. We implemented this study by: 1) administering faculty and student surveys on broad integrative learning; 2) analyzing the way we deliver our Tier III upper level integrated course and the Westminster Seminar for freshmen; 3) meeting with students, faculty, and trustees to enhance understanding about the purpose and value of the Undergraduate Scholars Forum; and, 4) mapping the DQP to specific Westminster courses and programs. Detailed explanations of each of these steps are contained in the report prepared for HLC. Participating in the Pathways Cohort #3 project has enabled us to: 1) understand how and where broad, integrative knowledge is acquired and demonstrated through our curricular and co-curricular experiences; 2) develop and refine teaching and learning strategies in broad integrative courses; and 3) use these findings to refine programming. The details of these results are found in Part II of The Quality Initiative report. In addition to the knowledge we gained as an institution, Westminster's participation in this project has provided meaningful feedback to the Lumina foundation about the broad, integrative component of its DQP.

### **The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.**

Many significant changes across a number of platforms have been made as a result of deeper assessment efforts made since our last re-accreditation. In 2005, the Assessment Committee formed task forces charged with the responsibility of amplifying the meaning of each of the stated learning goals in *New Foundations*, our General Education program. This process has heightened our understanding of *New Foundations* and has resulted in greater awareness of assessment opportunities within the curriculum. For instance, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) has been adopted as a measure of critical thinking and writing ability, and juniors rather than seniors are tested so that they have time to gain feedback and potentially make improvements before graduation. Results from the CLA also informed the development of "[CLA performance tasks](#)" within the Westminster Seminar course. Writing assessment has been embedded into *New Foundations* by comparing writing samples required in the Westminster Seminar taken freshman year and the Tier III integrative course taken in junior or senior year. NSSE is used, in part, because it addresses questions of global interdependence, which helps us to measure the success with which we fulfill the mission of the Columns Concept to develop leaders in the global community. In 2005, standardized annual department assessment reports were introduced to ensure that they address program goals, curriculum structure, assessment measures, assessment results, changes to the structure and implementation of the major, and resources needed to implement the changes. This standardized format for annual reports has resulted in more intentional integration of planning, assessment, and educational change.

Progress has been made in assessing Student Life programs and the College has experimented with

integrating academic and student life activities. For example, in 2007-2008, the Center for Leadership and Service piloted the College's Concept for Student Development through the Emerson Center for Leadership and Service, which integrates academic course work with service-based experiences. This pilot study allowed the College to assess the application of the principles embodied in the Concept for Student Development and make adjustment before making it the foundation for our new e-portfolio system. The Office of Student Life updated its [learning outcomes](#) in the Spring of 2012 to reflect more closely its adherence to the College's mission of educating leaders in the global community. For example a newly stipulated Student Life goal states: "Students will demonstrate multicultural competency through their collaborative interaction with others as part of their curricular and co-curricular experiences within the WC community and beyond." Student Life also updated its [mission statement](#).

Westminster's General Education program has benefitted from changes made after reflecting on our assessment results. The newly instituted CLA, along with our existing writing assessment, indicated that students were making only modest gains in critical thinking and writing skills. To address our concerns about student writing skills, we took the following measures: 1) adopted a writing assessment rubric in more of our general education courses; and 2) The Center for Teaching and Learning hosted a series of Writing Across the Curriculum workshops for faculty to help them develop more effective methods of teaching writing across the disciplines. To address our concerns about critical thinking skills, we began to intensively emphasize undergraduate research by 1) instituting in 2008 the annual Undergraduate Scholars Forum that provides a showcase for individual and group scholarship across the curriculum; and 2) devoting our 2008 Faculty Development Day to the mission of promoting undergraduate scholarship.

NSSE results suggested to us that the College needed to amplify the goal of global interdependence. As a result, the Global Education Task Force was commissioned with studying foreign language education within the curriculum. We have also endeavored to enhance immersion experiences in international education by promoting our increasingly popular Study Abroad program, encouraging and supporting the faculty-led travel courses that are now offered every year, and expanding opportunities for international internships. Since the fall of 2012, Westminster has signed four new exchange agreements and converted the college's outbound-only arrangement with the University of Winchester to a reciprocal exchange relationship. In addition, Westminster created in 2006 the Take a Friend Home program, an innovative and global outreach cultural immersion program that pays the transportation costs of one international and one domestic student to visit each other during summer and winter breaks and also created a new Transnational Studies major that focuses on global issues and international diplomacy. In 2007, the College established the Hancock Symposium (first named the Westminster Symposium on Democracy) to bring students together to discuss issues of global significance. In 2008, the College established the Center for Engaging the World (CEW) with an endowed Directorship in a concerted effort to further internationalize the campus and the curriculum. The CEW develops opportunities for students to study abroad and for faculty to engage in international scholarly activity. The CEW has additionally established an Annual Summer Leadership Program for Chinese Students; this program draws two dozen university and high school students from China each year to take classes at Westminster and visit cultural sites around the area. It also satisfies another goal in [Westminster 2020](#) to "[d]evelop and implement selected on-campus summer programs for International and U.S. high school students focusing on global awareness and leadership development." The college has offered several [faculty-led travel courses](#) in recent years. In addition, students have taken advantage of a variety of study abroad opportunities offered through Westminster. In Summer 2013 alone, 53 Westminster students studied at 12 different international locations, including the Semester at Sea program. Efforts to internationalize the curriculum have also been made at the department level, for instance, the English Department is phasing out the "Introduction to

Literature" course and revitalizing its offering of the "World Literature" survey course in two parts. In addition, Tier III integrative courses are increasingly global in scope. Expanding our global footprint and further internationalizing our curriculum has been an exciting area of growth that is a direct result of our serious self-assessment in the way we fulfill our College learning goals.

Many departments have made changes within the majors as a result of increased assessment efforts in recent years. For example, the Chemistry Department—using the ETS major field examination, embedded assessments, student research, internship performance, exit interviews, and rates of acceptance to graduate school—has added to its offerings courses in Inorganic Chemistry and Medicinal Chemistry, added a Bio-Chemistry major, purchased state-of-art instrumentation equipment through a NASA grant, and included more oral presentation requirements in Chemistry courses. Another example of where assessment has improved student learning is in our Physical Education major. This major used to be divided into a teaching and non-teaching option, but in the last five years, the college has reorganized it to build a newly-designed Health and Exercise Science department with three majors that better meet the needs of our students and respond to changes in society and the job market. The three new majors are: Exercise Science, Health and Wellness, and Physical Education (teaching). These changes emphasize the significant role of exercise in holistic and body system health; promote a lifetime of wellness; and prepare students for specialized careers in exercise training, sport training and health, as well as physical education or the medical profession.

Another important area of improvement made as a result of analyzing Student Satisfaction Survey and NSSE results has been in advising. Data indicated that students were not benefiting as much as they could have from faculty advising; therefore, the Registrar's Office and the Computer Service Department joined forces to streamline registration procedures to allow faculty more time for one-on-one advising with students. The SSS includes student evaluations of the quality of advising provided within the major, data that is included in all departmental assessments. In 2013 the College formed an [Advising Task Force](#) that has recommended more training for faculty in the process of advising students. This year, we are conducting several training sessions to that end. We also have a new computerized database of course equivalencies (TES) that can be used by both incoming transfer students and current students wishing to transfer courses from other institutions and a new staff hire responsible for overseeing transfer credit approvals. These measures will make the process of transfer credit approval faster and more consistent.

The unique needs of transfer students came to the College's attention after assessing performance and [retention data](#) for that student [cohort](#). In 2013-2014, the College formed a Transfer Student Task Force to study these issues and are in the process of formulating strategies on how to improve the transfer experience. These latest efforts are part of a longer process to help transfer students acclimate themselves to Westminster. In 2007-2008, the Social and Academic Council developed new policies and procedures designed to support transfer students. In 2009-2010, Westminster created a new Westminster Transfer Seminar modeled on the Westminster Seminar for freshmen but tailored to the specific needs of transfer students. This is another way in which we are implementing a goal laid out in [Westminster 2020](#), "[t]o Strengthen academic support, academic advising, and college transition programs focused on student success." In 2010, we opened a Commuter Student Lounge in our student center in order to meet the distinct needs of non-residential students. Additionally, we have been revising and streamlining our transfer policies to create a more seamless transition for students entering Westminster with credits from other institutions.

Westminster College has been particularly attentive to the educational needs of military veterans. This year, under the direction of a faculty member in the History Department, students at the college started a Veterans Club to provide a social and logistical support base for veterans. The College has also revised its transfer policy to accommodate the needs of military veterans (see 4.A.2 and 4.A.3).

As part of [Westminster 2020](#) and in an effort to enhance academic rigor, Westminster has also established in 2012-2013 an Honors Program, as described in 4.A.4, above.

In the area of Student Life, the College has used results from the CORE Alcohol and Drug Survey to adjust campus policies on the use of alcohol at social functions. Student Life also conducted an external review of the Greek system, which resulted in the Greek Task Force and [Greek Standards](#), in addition to a series of “Leadership Labs” taught within the fraternities to improve leadership abilities among the fraternity officers.

**The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.**

Westminster College has made tremendous efforts to improve and learn from its assessment practices. We have become significantly more self-aware and capable of delivering the learning outcomes that we profess as a result of more studied focus on how we teach and how students learn. We have established respectable assessment practices by becoming informed and educated on testing and other forms of assessment that are used across a variety of institutions of higher learning in the U.S. In some cases, we have tailored testing to the unique needs of our College; in others, we have developed internal assessment tools, such as the Broad Integrative Learning Group described above. A significant marker of our progress in assessment at Westminster is our establishment of an annual Assessment Day, when we suspend classes so that the entire campus community may participate in surveys, interviews, workshops, meetings, and other activities aimed at determining the effectiveness of our teaching and learning strategies. We have also appointed a Director of Assessment, a member of the faculty who additionally chairs the [Assessment Committee](#). Westminster’s [assessment policies](#) are posted on the website.

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## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

## Argument

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### Goals for Student Retention, Persistence, and Completion

*Westminster 2020* sets the following goals for student retention, persistence, and completion rates: 85% or greater freshman-sophomore retention; greater than 91% spring to fall return rate; a 70% six-year graduation rate; and a 65% four-year persistence to graduation rate. These goals are appropriate to the mission of educating students through a distinctive liberal arts curriculum and a dynamic developmental experience. Though these goals are higher than the norm, the College is pursuing them in order to intensify commitment to student achievement and to maintain the educational integrity of the college. An important concern at the moment is about freshmen retention rates:

<u>Retention period</u>	<u>Westminster 2020 Goal</u>	<u>10-year average</u>
Fall-Spring Freshmen Year	91%	93%
Freshman-Sophomore	85%	79%

While retention goals for freshmen from fall to spring are being met, [first to second year retention](#) is lagging. Exit interviews of students have determined that many freshmen leave the college for personal reasons unrelated to the education offered at Westminster.

Most of Westminster's student population consists of individuals who attend college with traditional expectations of living on campus and completing their degrees within four years. However, we also recognize that many of students choose to expand on their degree opportunities by remaining at Westminster for five or six years in order to complete double majors or to take advantage of experiential learning. Many (10-11%) of our students [design their own majors](#) and set their own flexible agenda in terms of time-to-degree completion. We are also committed to assisting students who struggle with the challenge of completing a college degree in four years, whether because of learning difficulties or personal situations that prevent adherence to a strict 14-16 hour course load per

semester.

**The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.**

Through the Office of Institutional Research, Westminster tracks retention figures for all students from their first year at Westminster (whether as freshmen or transfer students), from year to year and from Fall to Spring. Freshmen retention rates are discussed above. After the freshman year, Westminster's [retention rates](#) improve significantly, as shown in retention figures from the 2000-2014 period: We see an 88% retention rate from Year 2 to Year 3, and 94% from Year 3 to Year 4. These figures have fluctuated somewhat since 2003, but have remained fairly consistent to the extent that we do not see any overall negative or positive trends. That said, we have been extremely determined in recent years to improve retention by becoming rigorous in identifying and addressing concerns as they arise. Since last year, retention has dropped off, and we are still in the process of figuring out if this change is an anomaly of some sort or if there are other issues at play. The Office of Enrollment Management is studying retention carefully at the moment.

**The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.**

The primary method of improving retention at Westminster College is the [Student Success Network](#) (SSN). The centerpiece of the SSN is the Early Alert Process, which is a collaborative network of faculty, staff, offices, programs, and services engaged specifically in student success. The Early Alert Process is embedded in MyWC (the college portal). The Office of Student Life has made significant, meaningful adjustments to this system in the past three years to make it easier for faculty, administrators, and staff to report problems quickly and efficiently. Weekly e-mail reminders are sent out by the Associate Dean's office to urge accurate and prompt reporting of attendance lapses, academic weaknesses, or other problems (social, athletic, financial) that impinge upon student success. The Student Response Team is a collaborative group of faculty and staff who coordinate efforts to intervene on behalf of students and get them back on track. The Academic Review Board, the Behavioral Intervention Team, and the Social and Academic Council are similarly collaborative groups that address specific types of disciplinary, behavioral, or social problems that interfere with the student learning experience across the campus community.

An important area in which Westminster has become unique in its approach to retention has been in the development of the College Transition Program for incoming freshmen with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Beginning in 2010, the college responded to research that redefined ASD by conducting a workshop to investigate the learning experiences of students with characteristics of autism that directly affect their academic and social success at Westminster College. Students diagnosed with ASD now represent about 40% of the entering freshmen in the Learning Disabilities Program. Westminster College officially recognized the College Transition Program as distinct from the Learning Disabilities Program and designated direction of the program to one full-time member of the professional academic staff in 2011. The CTP's services include: one-on-one academic advising; enrollment in supplemental courses designed to encourage and support academic success, and liaison support between students and other sectors of the college.

Assessments show that a student's initial engagement with college life significantly shapes the college experience overall. For that reason, we focus intensively on those first encounters. For example, we instituted a Spring/ Summer Orientation, Advising and Registration (SOAR) program, during which incoming freshmen spend a day on campus in the Spring or Summer prior to their first fall semester for orientation, advising and registration. This day helps future students to become acclimated to the

Westminster environment at their own pace, before facing the major adjustment of living on campus. Students also participate in a New Student Welcome Week, with special group move-in dates (e.g., International, transfer students) to further ease transitions for specific cohorts of students. We have paid careful attention to what happens during this crucial week of adjustment and have shaped activities and procedures to create a healthy start to the four-year college experience.

**The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice.**

Westminster's methods and processes for studying and improving retention reflect good practice. We have designed and implemented programs tailored to the type of student we traditionally enroll and with retention in mind. All freshmen and transfer students participate in the [Westminster Seminar](#) program, which we continually fine-tune and re-evaluate using numerous assessment measures as well as general feedback from the entire campus community. These seminars—organized around student interests and integrated by common objectives and shared readings—intensively engage students in the academic and social environment on a variety of levels with the goal of creating in them a sustained, meaningful, and proactive participation in their own learning. Additionally, all freshmen students and selected transfer students (those who we believe need more support) also are required to complete "The Leader Within" course ([LST 101](#)). The faculty and staff at Westminster College not only try to improve retention of students from year to year but also to model a practice of lifelong learning for every Westminster graduate.

## Sources

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## 4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### Summary

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Westminster College is committed to preserving the quality of its educational programs and learning environments. As we have demonstrated in this argument, we maintain rigorous procedures for monitoring our programs along with the faculty and professional academic support staff that deliver them. We offer numerous support services and alternative educational opportunities that enhance student learning. Our assessment practices have expanded dramatically since our last reaccreditation; we have devoted a substantial amount of time, thought, and financial resources to assessing how well we are teaching and how well our students are learning. In making adjustments in this area, we have embedded assessment practices in our routine review processes at the program, department, and faculty level.

That said, we have identified areas of concern in our assessment practices. One concern is our ability to keep pace with the changing needs of our students. Our current assessments are useful and comprehensive, but every year, we need another way to measure another type of student or educational situation. For this reason, our existing data collection processes would benefit from improved centralization, and perhaps a paring down of the number of surveys we administer so that we can focus on a few key indicators. In addition, our flagging freshmen retention is an obvious area that we are working hard to assess, but we have not yet settled on the best approach. We are also concerned about our assessment of new and expanding programs that have been instituted in response to the shifting dynamics of higher education. Since our last reaccreditation, for instance, we have started online and distance learning, established an Honors Program, and expanded support services for students with learning disabilities. While we are paying close attention to the delivery and success of these new initiatives, we have not yet established clear assessment practices for them. Similarly, Westminster has broadened its involvement in dual-degree programs and will continue to expand educational offerings of this nature, but agreements with other institutions naturally require enhanced oversight for which we presently have no formal procedures. And finally, our growing cohort of transfer students has necessitated much more intensive review of transfer credit from a variety of institutions. We are addressing this concern with a new hire and a new database that evaluates transfer credit, but we anticipate that needs in this area will continue to grow.

Overall, Westminster College has met its assessment challenges responsibly and comprehensively, but always with an eye toward improvement. We remain vigilant about the needs of our students and the quality of the educational experience we deliver. We are committed to navigating our way through the current higher education landscape that calls for constant assessment and improvement.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

### Argument

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The Vision Statement contained in [Westminster 2020](#) stipulates that the College will focus efforts and resources on achieving a national reputation for institutional identity—[the Columns Concept](#)—which embodies Westminster's mission and historical traditions. The Columns Concept acknowledges that Westminster excels at developing young men and women to be leaders in a global community. *Westminster 2020's* [Goal 2](#) identifies strategies that leverage the College's traditional business models and management practices in order to realize the College mission and vision. Throughout the development of *Westminster 2020*, and, to the present, several plans have been established for increasing revenue, such as [Regaining Westminster's Enrollment Momentum](#), [The Westminster College Strategic Enrollment Management Plan—2014](#), and the [Leading the Way Capital Campaign](#).

### Treasurer's Reports and Financial Analytics

Treasurer's reports ([FY10](#), [FY11](#), [FY12](#), [FY13](#), [FY14](#)), financial audits ([FY09](#), [FY10](#), [FY11](#), [FY12](#), [FY13](#)), and [financial analytics](#) statements chronicle the changing financial state of the College. [FY14 financial audit information](#) has recently been received, along with an [auditor's letter](#), a [bond covenant letter](#), a [final financial statement](#), and a [final management](#) letter, all of which provide detail about the current College financial state.

The composite [financial ratio](#) for the College dipped to 1.1 in FY12, resulting in letters of concern from the [U.S. Department of Education](#) and [HLC](#), but, because the composite ratio increased to 1.9 in [FY13](#), in 2014 the [DOE](#) released the College from the Zone Alternative restrictions imposed in 2013. The Board has adopted [ratio objectives](#). The College has computed the [latest composite financial](#)

[ratio](#) at 2.14. The current [debt service ratio](#) is 1.37, above the minimum requirement of 1.20.

Despite careful financial planning, the College has faced significant recent challenges in generating the revenue needed to sustain the institution. When President Forsythe took office in 2008, the College was facing a deficit of nearly \$4M. Although the College made great strides in growing enrollment and closing this financial gap between 2008 and 2013, [enrollment stagnated and then began to decline](#) in FY12. After considerable discussion and planning, the College launched a branch campus in Mesa, Arizona, at the City of Mesa's request, opening for classes in Fall, 2013. This venture was identified as an alternative revenue source and was to be maintained in order to generate revenue for the College by creating efficiencies and economies of scale. However, given limitations on resources needed to sustain the branch campus, the Board of Trustees [voted to close](#) it at the end of its first year. As the FY15 academic year opened, a [revised plan for enrollment management](#) was unfolded, with substantial changes to financial aid, marketing, and recruitment strategies. Additionally, the President established a [Special Assistant](#) position to assist with the identification of new revenue streams. These challenges and changes will be discussed in detail in this section of the assurance argument.

### **Fiscal Resources**

The operating revenue base for Westminster College consists of three main sources: tuition, endowment draws, and gifts. Other revenue sources include auxiliaries and revenues from the National Churchill Museum. The last several operating budgets are found here: ([FY10](#), [FY11](#), [FY12](#), [FY13](#)). The [FY2014 operating budget](#) for Westminster College was approximately \$22 million, and the [FY2015 operating budget](#), approved by the [Board of Trustees](#) in October 2014, is a little over [\\$21 million](#). Over the past five fiscal years, gross tuition and fee revenue has increased by 28%; however, most of the increase in revenue is due to increased tuition rates. The overall TDR for the College in FY15 was 52.93%, [up from 46.56% in Fall, 2009](#). Freshman TDR in Fall, 2014 was 58.98%. This is lower than many top competitors; however, the goal is to achieve a freshman TDR of 55% for Fall, 2015. A new scholarship philosophy and plan is being implemented that will help achieve enrollment numbers with an acceptable TDR.

In response to declining enrollment and increased financial pressure, in FY13, the College discontinued retirement contributions for full-time employees (formerly 8% of salary), and faculty and staff salaries were essentially frozen. With a FY14 decline in enrollment, the Cabinet agreed to cut non-personnel operating expenditures by approximately \$647,000 in order to balance the budget. Over the last three years, [budget cuts](#) total more than \$1.8M.

A 4% pricing increase was put into effect for FY15 to cover rising costs and to maintain the high quality of education that Westminster offers. Similar budget reductions were established for FY15. The College has relied on the [endowment](#) and [endowment draws](#) to help supplement budget gaps in the past, and it will need to continue to do so for FY15. The FY15 deficit is \$1.4M. Because the College has suspended a \$200,000 debt service payment to the endowment, the resulting supplemental draw will be \$1.0746M (over 7%). Since FY10 the endowment draws have been around 6.3% with a high of 6.8% in FY14. The long-term plan for the endowment draw is to reduce the [draw to 4.5%](#) in order to preserve and grow the [endowment](#).

[Gift income](#) is derived from three sources: annual funds, non-endowed designated funds, and the endowed fund. Fundraising initiatives include the Annual Fund and the [Leading the Way](#) campaign to drastically increase the endowment.

### **Increasing Financial Viability**

The principal financial driver for the College is net tuition revenue; however, [Goal 3](#) of *Westminster 2020* recognizes the need to develop and implement new educational and other ventures that ensure the financial viability of the College. Within that context, several initiatives have been and are being implemented:

1. The opening of the Mesa branch campus was a [new educational opportunity](#) that retained the core mission of Westminster. HLC granted provisional accreditation for the branch campus in February, 2013, and the campus began operations in Fall, 2013. However, the Mesa campus was closed in May, 2014. For a complete discussion of the Mesa initiative, see the Westminster College Mesa Campus [CEV report](#), [appendices](#) and [plans](#).
2. A Board of Trustees Summer 2013 Study Group (SSG), consisting of several Trustees and the President, reviewed and analyzed the current market of higher education, Westminster's indicators of financial health, and the current business model and developed [a list of seven recommendations](#). Based on the group's findings, Westminster contracted with the Noel-Levitz consulting firm in Spring, 2014 to conduct market research. The objectives of the research were determining existing programs provide the best opportunity for enrollment growth, programs that Westminster can add to increase enrollment and how Westminster can best position itself to increase market share. Noel-Levitz completed this [study](#) in Summer 2014, and Westminster has since determined [a series of action plans and strategies](#) for implementing the recommendations of the study. The administration provides updates to the Board on progress made in implementing SSG recommendations. A new [College Marketing Plan](#) has also been recently developed.
3. The development and implementation of a campus-wide, integrated [Strategic Enrollment Management Plan](#) began in late Fall, 2013 and provides a paradigm for aligning mission, enrollment goals, and budget outcomes that will lead to improved outcomes for the College. Major changes, including the awarding of merit financial aid and a more robust communication/messaging plan have been implemented for recruitment of the Fall, 2015 cohort.
4. The [development](#) of an online program began during the 2010-2011 academic year. The program [grew](#) from 11 courses during a newly-created summer online term (June/July 2011) and three courses during the winter term (December 2011/January 2012) to a record high number of courses (27) in Summer 2014. [Revenue from these online sessions](#) has grown steadily.
5. The creation of the position of [Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Initiatives](#). This position is "responsible for coordinating strategic initiatives on behalf of the President, enhancing business processes, and identifying new sources of revenue, such as grant opportunities, business partnerships, certification programs, and new forms of educational programming."
6. The College has set a goal to expand the use of facilities during summer months to generate more revenue. The Associate Vice President for Institutional Operations will be the staff coordinator for camps and conferences. During the Fall, 2014 semester, three opportunities were identified for summer academic camps, and coaches were making plans for offering 2-3 sports camps, as well.
7. The [Leading the Way Campaign](#) (LTW) is the comprehensive campaign approved by the Board of Trustees of Westminster College. The Campaign officially started in FY12 and is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2019. The Campaign has a goal of \$60 million, with \$50 million of that amount being for priorities approved by the Board. The remaining \$10 million of the Campaign's goal consists of annual gifts to the Westminster Fund and contributions for special initiatives suggested by donors consistent with the College's mission. An additional goal of \$30 million is targeted for [athletic and recreational facilities](#) which may be completed in total or

may be completed in phases. Throughout the entire comprehensive campaign an emphasis is being placed on receiving cash gifts and pledges that will be paid over at most five years in order for the impact of the gift to be helpful on campus as soon as possible.

## **Human Resources**

Westminster College is committed to employing qualified, high-quality [staff and faculty](#) to serve its students. Westminster has invested in human resources by allocating 55-60% of the operating budget the last five years to personnel-related expenditures. As of Fall, 2014, Westminster College employs 58 full-time faculty, 27 adjunct faculty, 181 full-time staff, and 59 part-time staff.

In response to declining enrollment and increased financial pressure, in FY13, the College discontinued matching retirement contributions for full-time employees (formerly 8% of salary); likewise, [salary adjustments have not been made in five of the past six years](#), resulting in salary rankings, [when compared to other institutions of higher education](#), that indicate that faculty salaries are [significantly lower](#) than those at comparable institutions. Given that staff salaries are compared primarily to positions in the mid-Missouri region, they are close to the range expected, although cost-of-living increases are needed to stay competitive. When staff salaries are evaluated using the CUPA-HR for Carnegie Class, the [salaries](#) are not competitive. Complete current salary information is found [here](#). Deep concern about compensation has been documented in the 2013 and 2014 [Campus Climate Surveys](#) of faculty and staff, which also documents other faculty and staff concerns, as well as positives. In November, 2014, the President announced a one-time \$500 bonus for full-time employees and a \$250 bonus for part-time employees. The College will also be trying to implement a 1% salary increase and a 1% retirement match for all employees in FY16 (estimated cost = \$170,000 - \$180,000) while maintaining a balanced budget. A zero-based budgeting approach will be implemented for FY16 budgeting.

The Human Resources office coordinates the hiring processes of the College to ensure compliance with the Equal Opportunity Employer and Affirmative Action policies. If employees choose to leave the College, the Human Resources office conducts exit interviews to gather information pertaining to work experience and to analyze where improvements can be made. The results are shared with the appropriate Cabinet members and discussed for follow-up, when necessary. Faculty exit interviews have not uncovered any consistent patterns in reasons for departure; however, some faculty have expressed their frustration with the compensation issues, which has heightened the need to put clear plans in place to resolve them. Departing employee information provided through the exit interview is confidential and shared only in summary format. Since personnel comprises a large portion of the college budget, the College has [implemented a process](#) for approving all new hires, replacements, promotions, pay increases, and other personnel-related changes. An employment status change form is completed by the manager of the department and the form must be signed by the department head, the Cabinet member of the corresponding department, the Director of Human Resources, the Controller, the CFO, and the President of the College in order for it to be approved.

Despite the financial challenges of the past five years, the College has been able to hire highly-qualified faculty and staff, and strategic hires have been made in Institutional Advancement, Enrollment Management, Information Technology, the President's Office, and in several key faculty positions. Evidence of the strength of those hires is found in [a sample of resumes](#) and curriculum vitae. However, retention of both faculty and staff has been a concern over the past five years, as well. Over the past five years, twelve faculty members have left the College for reasons other than retirement. Of those, the majority left for a promotion, family needs, or because they were not a good fit with the College. Eight of the twelve positions were filled with full-time faculty; the other four are being covered by part-time faculty. The College acknowledges that faculty/staff retention must be

noted as a significant concern.

## Facilities

The Westminster Strategic Vision for the campus states that “the Westminster College campus will provide excellent [facilities](#) to fully support the mission. The campus buildings, [non-reservable classrooms](#), [reservable classrooms](#), grounds, athletics fields, and student housing, including fraternity housing areas, will reflect our pride in and love for the College as well as the excellence of our programs.”

[Institutional Operations](#) provides routine, reoccurring, reactive, and preventive maintenance, custodial, and grounds services. The services follow an established frequency and are managed via a computerized maintenance management system. [Deferred maintenance reports](#) and associated improvement plans are presented to and reviewed at least annually with the Board of Trustees Institutional Operations Committee. During Spring, 2014, Fulton experienced a major hailstorm. As a result, almost every building on campus has a new roof.

[A comprehensive master facilities plan for the College](#) was developed in 1997 and [updated in 2002](#). An update for [college housing](#) was completed in 2007. The 2002 update included plans for moving the College’s capacity from 750 to 1000 students. Listed below are the major construction projects which have taken place over the past 10 years, many of which are a direct result of the master facilities plan:

- 2003 / 2004: Renovation and substantial addition to the College’s science center – Coulter Science Center.
- 2006 / 2007: Construction of a dining facility – Mueller Leadership Hall.
- 2008: Construction of a freshman residence hall – Sloss Hall.
- 2008: Construction of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house.
- 2010 and 2011: Construction of five student townhouse units – Westminster Grove townhouses.
- 2013: Renovations to Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity house.
- 2013: Renovation of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity house.

## Technology

*Westminster 2020* includes two major strategies for providing technological support for the College: improve institutional process efficiency and ability to rely on systems for strong data based decision-making; and maintain and enhance the Information Technology environment to support critical campus academic and business needs. During Summer, 2014, a new Executive Director of Information Technology was hired, and he is working closely with the Special Assistant to the President to analyze the College’s current technology needs in order to present a thorough needs assessment to the Board of Trustees during the 2014-2015 academic year.

The positions and reporting relationships have been restructured in IT Services, to create redundancy in the most critical skill sets. Several vacant positions have been filled, and while Westminster IT, like many other offices in small colleges, does not have the ideal number of employees, the College is at budgeted staffing level.

The negative effects of IT capacity on both student satisfaction and employee morale are well known, and a lack of IT staffing and poor service have affected all areas of the college. Additional IT issues are addressed in the FY14 auditors' [management letter](#). Westminster has some old and/or out of warranty equipment, both on the server side and in client machines in offices, classrooms, and labs.

An effort is under way to replace the most important of these through grants and gifts – \$70K in gifts has been earmarked for a critical server upgrade in January 2015. This upgrade will bring in new equipment and put older ones under warranty, increase capacity, and decouple the most critical two applications (email and Jenzabar) from other systems. This is expected to alleviate the increasing outages that were experienced in recent months. A replenishment plan is under construction and additional funding is being sought. The IT director and interim CFO are exploring cost-saving alternatives associated with data mining, backup, and redundancy; and there are specific gifts that facilitate upgrades, such as last year's Kemper grant which outfitted a classroom for teleconferencing, and the upcoming funds pledged by a Trustee to equip a cybersecurity lab for the Computer Science department.

The new College website, to go live in Spring 2015, is a major improvement with recruitment implications; and the goal is to conduct a systems analysis of the needs of Enrollment Services. Westminster currently pays for, but does not use, several modules of Jenzabar, including Advising, Student Life, and Budgeting. The adoption of these modules would reduce variability, improve collaboration and data integration, and support data-driven decision making. \$30K in gifts have been earmarked to provide key training to IT services staff so the adoptions and migrations can be managed and the end users can be trained in-house. These changes will last several years, and, during the interim, IT will remain a precarious part of campus operations, with risks and opportunities both rating unusually high.

### **Resource Allocation**

The goal of resource allocation at Westminster College is to ensure that the College's educational purposes are not adversely affected. The CFO and the Business Office staff develop budget model projections and [work interactively](#) with all of the members of the President's Cabinet to allocate resources based on mission-focused priorities in an efficient and effective manner. The College does not have any subordinate entities to which it channels resources. The final approval of the budget rests with the Board of Trustees.

Based around the Columns Concept, the mission and goals were developed and adopted during the strategic planning process. During the planning process for the strategic plan, the mission statement and goal initiatives were reviewed and prioritized to ensure that resource allocations support them, fiscally and otherwise. The final priority for *Westminster 2020* was approved by the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Annual budgeting is done in each area of the College, with Cabinet members working with the CFO. Each Cabinet member considers the mission and vision of the College in making decisions about the budget, and many key budget decisions have been made in light of *Westminster 2020* (e.g., funding for the Churchill Institute for Global Engagement, for the Mesa branch campus etc.). In response to concerns about a lack of faculty and staff involvement in the overall budgeting process, the Cabinet adopted a [new process for budgeting in FY2015](#) that was intended to help educate campus constituents and build stronger consensus for budget decisions.

### **Achieving the Mission and Vision of the College**

The mission and vision of the College were clearly articulated in *Westminster 2020*, with specific plans for implementation of the strategic plan. However, progress on many of the goals has been difficult due to budget restraints. Based on the revenue generated by tuition and the endowment, it has become clear that continuing to achieve the mission and vision set forth for Westminster will be difficult without the addition of increased revenue streams. Westminster has developed a national

reputation as evidenced by the successes of graduates and placement rates (96% placement based on 86% of graduates reporting); however, the lack of resources has begun to affect numerous areas, most notably faculty and staff compensation, classroom technology, deferred maintenance, and campus facilities. In order to continue achieving the institutional mission, Westminster will need to secure additional resources, a reality that the administration, faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees clearly recognize. Additionally, as additional resources are added, a philosophy of compensation will need to be developed to guide decisions about salary and retirement match adjustments.

### **Qualified Staff**

The Human Resources office ensures that staff members are appropriately qualified when they are hired. When a position is vacant, HR reviews the position's duties, the classification placement, and required credentials. Positions are posted internally, locally, and sometimes statewide and nationwide. A hiring committee is usually formed to assist in the hiring process. HR or the hiring committee pre-screens the applications to ensure that the minimum qualifications are met before interviews are conducted. Any employment offers are contingent on the results of a background check. All new faculty members are required to submit official transcripts prior to being hired. The [process for faculty hires](#) and for [staff hires](#) are found in the Faculty and Employee Handbooks.

### **Budgeting and Monitoring**

Since 2008, the College made a concerted effort to make the budgeting process more open, transparent, and tied to the strategic plan. Regardless, the Cabinet has recognized that despite these efforts, a [Budget Committee](#) was needed in order to ensure open and thorough communication and collaboration with budgeting. Therefore, through the work of this Committee, the College now has a collaborative and participatory budgeting process. The CFO and Business Office support staff develop [multi-year budget models](#) that are to be approved by the Board of Trustees. The model serves as the foundation for the more detailed budget model for the next fiscal year. Next, an eight week budget planning process is initiated by the CFO and Business Office support staff. They meet with each Cabinet member to discuss the expected revenues and expenditures in their areas for the next fiscal year in order to build the budget. The budget process is fluid and consists of continuous discussions and feedback regarding changes in expectations of enrollment, revenues, and expenditures.

The iterative process produces a balanced annual preliminary budget that is reviewed by the President and the BOT Financial Affairs Committee. This document is then presented to the full Board of Trustees for approval at their May meeting.

After fall semester census day, the actual enrollment numbers are incorporated into the budget model in order to summarize any variances. An update of the College's financial status is given to the Board of Trustees at their October meeting. After spring semester census day, final enrollment numbers are used by the Cabinet to make any necessary budget decisions based on the favorable/unfavorable results.

Cabinet members and department heads at Westminster College are responsible for monitoring their areas' budgets. As part of the check requisition process, the department head must approve and sign the check request. A Cabinet member signature is required if the request is more than \$1,000. This allows department heads and cabinet members to continuously monitor expenditures from their allocated budgets. The department heads are also given access to budget information on MyWC (the college portal), which allows them to continuously monitor their budgets. A treasurer's report is prepared monthly allowing the departments to monitor spending and control budget overages. The

college also undergoes an annual independent [audit](#) and the results are submitted to the Board of Trustees for review.

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## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Argument

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Although there have been times when, due to the need to act quickly, the faculty were not involved in decisions made by the Cabinet and Board of Trustees (e.g. opening of the Mesa campus), Westminster College has established a culture of shared governance. The Board of Trustees, students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to collaborate on the College's strategic initiatives, committees, and decision-making processes. Additionally, the College has a well-defined [organizational structure](#) that establishes clear lines of communication and formal reporting relationships. The College's [Vision for Faculty and Staff](#) emphasizes that educational and developmental programs will be engaging and fully integrated, causing curricular and co-curricular opportunities to be seamless. Inherently, our faculty and staff, regardless of their role, view themselves as educators in an integrated community committed to student success in all developmental domains. The significant interconnections developed through integrated committees and shared leadership opportunities promote a culturally-valued collaborative environment.

### Engagement of Internal Constituents

#### Board of Trustees

The management of Westminster College is vested in the Board of Trustees. In general, the Board hires the President, approves faculty tenure, approves the annual budget, sets expectations for the institution's financial health, and advises and supports the President and Cabinet in carrying out the mission of the College. At the same time, the Board expects the leadership team to manage the execution of the budget, resource allocation, personnel, and programs. The Board's exercise of ultimate institutional authority is set forth in the [Westminster College Bylaws](#). The Bylaws clearly stipulate the election, composition, number, participation, and tenure of the Trustees. Additionally, the Bylaws clearly define the responsibility and authority of the Board to manage the affairs of the College. The Bylaws also create a [committee structure](#) within the Board. The committees are responsible for oversight, reviewing policies and practices, and providing assistance in policy formation related to their specific designation and assignment. The committee duties, commitment of Trusteeship, and officers' responsibilities are clearly delineated in the Bylaws.

Over the past five years, the Board of Trustees has been committed to overhauling its own processes and expectations, resulting in a new and expanded [Board Manual](#). The key changes were to set trustee

expectations for time, talent, and treasure; to require trustees to complete an annual self-assessment, with feedback from Board officers; to set term limits; to reorganize committees and refine committee charters; to improve all processes by benchmarking with the *Association of Governing Boards* and HLC standards; to join *AGB* so that all trustees get *Trusteeship* magazine and can be held accountable for educating themselves; and to create structures through which trustees take ownership of their committees and responsibilities. Finally, in order to diversify views of the College, the Board has added a student trustee (the President of SGA) and a “Young Alumni” trustee, both of whom are granted the privileges of the floor and the right to vote on Board matters.

Additionally, for the newly appointed trustees, a formal one-day session was developed by the College in concert with the Board of Trustees’ officers including a comprehensive set of materials to familiarize the new trustees with the College’s operations, administration, staff, faculty and other matters related their new roles as trustees. This session is held prior to the first formal board meeting that the new trustees attend, generally in October. During this one-day set of meetings, the new trustees jointly attend meetings with [members of the College’s Cabinet](#), other administrators, staff and with other members of the operating functions of the College. The session concludes with an informal dinner as a new trustee group with faculty members of the College.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the overall operation of the College during periods between meetings of the Board and shall exercise the powers of the Board during such times, subject to the limitations set forth in these Bylaws, the College’s Charter and applicable law. In addition to other duties, the Governance and Trusteeship Committee of the Board of Trustees is responsible for providing orientation to new trustees, ensuring a smooth, seamless transition onto the Board.

### **Administration**

The [structure](#) for Westminster College’s administration is set forth in the Faculty Handbook. The Executive Cabinet consists of:

- President of the College
- [Senior Vice President of the College and Dean of the Faculty](#)
- [Vice President and Dean of Student Life](#)
- Vice President for Business and Chief Financial Officer
- [Vice President for Institutional Advancement](#)
- Vice President and Dean of Enrollment Management
- Executive Director of the National Churchill Museum/Vice President for the Churchill Institute
- Associate Dean of the Faculty.

The President, by virtue of the administrative authority vested in him or her by the Board of Trustees, is responsible for the organization, coordination, and executive leadership of the entire campus community. Evaluation of the President is determined by the Board of Trustees.

Administration, faculty, and staff are represented to the President through the President’s Cabinet. The Cabinet is an advisory body to the President on matters relating to the specific administrative areas of the College and the College as a whole.

### **Faculty**

As Chief Academic Officer and the second-ranking administrator and member of the President’s Cabinet, the Senior Vice President and Dean of the Faculty [oversees the educational and student development mission](#) of Westminster College. This position also coordinates and integrates College

operations relating to all aspects of the strategic student success system and serves as the liaison between the faculty and the President. The [Associate Dean of Faculty](#) works closely with the Dean of Faculty on all academic initiatives. He/she is specifically responsible for overseeing advising, assessment, HLC re-accreditation, and all matters related to transfer credit.

Faculty members are also represented by the three [Division Chairs](#). The Division Chairs advise the Senior Vice President of the College and Dean of the Faculty and, at his or her request, the President, on issues pertaining to the academic divisions. They assist in operational planning and budgeting in the academic divisions and serve as members of any committee or task force that contemplates the addition to, deletion from, or major modification of programs in the divisions. They also assume leadership for developing and strengthening each department, including oversight of program reviews in each department.

[Department Chairs](#) are responsible for [overseeing](#) the work of their individual departments, primarily with developing and evaluating faculty, planning course offerings, overseeing majors and minors in the department, organizing assessment efforts for their majors, and keeping all information updated in the catalog and on the college website. Finally, [program directors and coordinators](#) are responsible for academic programs that do not fall within a specific department or which expands the boundaries of a specific department (e.g., Director of Online Teaching, Director of the Westminster Seminar, Coordinator for Women's and Gender Studies, Coordinator for Security Studies).

Faculty members have the ability to participate in faculty governance through the [committee structure](#) and through their participation in monthly faculty meetings. In addition to the elected committees that carry out the most significant work of the faculty (Faculty Personnel Committee, Executive Committee, and Curriculum Committee), faculty participate in numerous additional committees designed to oversee various aspects of the academic and college-wide programs (e.g., Admissions Committee, Assessment Committee). All committees, including structure, membership, and duties, are described in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

At the same time, all members of the [General Faculty](#) have privileges of the floor at faculty meetings. Eligibility for participation in faculty governance is specified in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Faculty meetings are held monthly. The primary business of the faculty meetings is to allow for discussion and voting on issues that have come through the committee structure to the full faculty for consideration.

### **Staff Communication and Participation**

Beginning in FY15, the College began holding college-wide staff meetings the first Wednesday of every month. The goals of the meetings are to provide information to the staff regarding important events or issues at the College, allow the staff to express concerns and/or present items of interest (e.g., introduction of new staff, discussion of new policies, and updates on important processes, including the HLC assurance process and the Presidential Search). The staff meetings are administered by the Director of Human Resources. These meetings are in addition to the President's regular State-of-the-College address each semester and periodic "town hall" meetings with faculty and staff, which are conducted as needed.

### **Student Governance**

The [Student Government Association](#) is composed of all students of the College. Its officers are elected by the student body. The Student Government Association serves the interests of the individual student and student groups and sponsors and supports various activities and events on their

behalf with a [budget](#) derived from a student activity fee. Almost this entire budget is administered by a [Finance Committee](#) comprised entirely of students. The SGA President meets weekly with the College President to discuss student issues and events. At the same time, in this capacity, he/she serves as a member of the Board of Trustees and is expected to serve as an ex-officio member of the Student Life Committee of the Board and to represent the student body.

The student/peer student conduct process allows students to shape their campus community by holding students accountable for the choices they make and the consequences of those choices. The Student Judiciary Board is composed of nine student justices selected in the spring semester and may not include more than three people from any single NPC or IFC Greek organization, unless there are no other applicants who apply for the available positions. There shall be no more than four of the justices who are voting members or on the executive committee of the Student Government Association. The intention of the board is that its members will be a representation of the Westminster College student community.

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## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Argument

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Westminster College utilizes a strategic framework and plan called [Westminster 2020 \(Executive Summary\)](#) as the basis for systematic and integrated planning. *Westminster 2020*, adopted by the Board of Trustees in Fall, 2011, was guided by the College's mission and vision statements. Additionally, the strategic plan is informed by a statement of institutional identity, [The Columns Concept](#), which differentiates Westminster College in higher education.

*Westminster 2020* is organized around three goals:

Goal 1. Use the Columns Concept to differentiate and position the College to achieve its mission and vision and ensure it financial vitality.

Goal 2. Structure, resource, and operate the College to maximize its ability to achieve Goal 1.

Goal 3. Develop and implement new educational and other ventures that enable the College to serve new constituencies, limited only by the requirement that the venture be consistent with College's Mission and Vision and its need to ensure its financial vitality.

Strategies and action steps within each goal provide the detail for achieving the goals and form the basis for annual operational plans. Additionally, although the College has not carried out this plan in a formalized or regular way, the processes and action steps for linking the assessment of student learning with evaluation and planning are detailed in Goal 1, Objective D of the strategic plan; the College acknowledges that this process needs to be improved. Beginning in Fall, 2009, Westminster College began the [process](#) for formulating *Westminster 2020*. The planning process involved numerous task forces and was coordinated by an Executive Strategic Planning Steering Committee composed of administrators, faculty, and staff. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the Steering Committee conducted an environmental scan to identify internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats.

The Steering Committee presented the results to the Board of Trustees in May, 2010. The analysis presented to the Board included the results of the environmental scan, the critical issues facing the College in the next decade, and the six key strategic drivers in the external environment that would

have a significant impact on Westminster's ability to realize *Westminster 2020*. The BOT Strategic Planning Task Force reviewed the analysis and approved a framework for developing *Westminster 2020*. During the 2010-2011 academic year, a draft strategic plan was developed and submitted to the Board in May, 2011.

Due to threats identified in the environmental scan (affordability, changing demographics, competition, consumerism), the Strategic Plan had to respond to market forces. Given that the primary driver for strategy is increasing tuition revenue, the College concluded that the enrollment management plan should be the underlying framework for prioritizing, phasing, and resourcing goals within the overall plan. In the early stages of the plan, goals were set in such a way as to optimize growth. Specifically, the College would be looking to expand current markets and develop new markets through the development of the inquiry pool, increased outreach to community colleges, addition of new curricular and co-curricular programming and the implementation of branding and marketing initiatives. Additionally, the enrollment management plan would include a comprehensive retention plan.

Goal 2, Objective B establishes the allocation of resources to support the vision. Steps that include analysis, prioritization, and timing of resource commitment would be conducted for each strategic initiative. Success metrics and key decision dates for each strategy are included in [the Westminster 2020 Annexes](#).

Also included in *Westminster 2020* is a [Financial Analysis](#) that provides summary information on the FY12 base year, key assumptions, rationale for setting priorities, general priorities, financial summary, strategies funded by the comprehensive capital campaign, financial metrics and risk assessment and mitigation. The first priority focused on completing Phase I of the enrollment management strategy as soon as possible with the goal of being at enrollment capacity by Fall, 2013, a goal which was not realized. This was the first time on record that the College's strategic plan included a financial analysis, which guides allocation of resources, even in constrained circumstances.

Also included in Goal 2 are objectives to develop an [Information Technology plan](#) and update the Facilities Master Plan. In order to implement and support a comprehensive and sustainable plan for information technology, the strategic plan includes strategies to improve institutional process efficiency and decision-making, support critical campus academic and business needs, and ensure that the College's information and technology security and compliance systems are adequate.

The assessment plan addresses both curricular and co-curricular programs and is measured through a variety of methods. The College contends that for students to be prepared for lives of success, significance, and service, the college-wide assessment system must be based on the five domains of the Concept for Student Development: intellectual, social, ethical, and professional development, in addition to wellness. Some initial assessments have been conducted and data is being generated; however, while some plans for assessment of the information are currently being looped back into the budgeting and planning process, a more systematic process for ensuring that assessment is always considered in these processes is needed.

## **Risk Management**

As part of its present overall governance discipline, the Board of Trustees, principally through its committee structure process and the senior administration of the College, routinely engages in a risk assessment process with respect to the institution's breadth of risks, both positive and negative, as well as internal and external, to ascertain and report upon in a transparent fashion what risks could affect the institution and its ongoing ability to achieve its operational goals, strategic plan, and its

overall mission. This process is presently led by the College's President with significant input from Cabinet members. The President reports on risk management monthly to the officers of the Board, and annually to the Governance and Trusteeship Committee of the Board of Trustees; his report includes his overall assessment of these risks, their potential impacts to the institution, and their likelihood of occurrence. The most recent [reporting](#) of the Annual Risk Assessment to the Committee was in January, 2014. The risk categories of this assessment that are presently evaluated and reported upon in this process are Financial, Operational, Reputational, Legal, and Educational Mission.

In early 2013, the President, the current and past Board Chairs proactively initiated a dialogue with a small group of Trustees regarding a broader and more in-depth discussion of the College's risks and the related risk assessment process, including the consideration and development of a more robust Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) process for the College overall. The result was a [report](#) to the Governance and Trusteeship Committee in February, 2014. All members of the President's Cabinet studied the ERM process based on resources provided by the Association of Governing Boards (AGB). Developing an ERM process was the primary task of the President's Cabinet [annual retreat](#) in June, 2014, during which time the Cabinet worked with representative Trustees to complete a College risk assessment. The outcome of the retreat was an ERM policy, [ERM Council with charter](#), and [a risk register](#). In addition, the Board Governance and Trusteeship Committee is working to develop Board oversight responsibilities in light of this new comprehensive approach to ERM. The ERM plan was submitted to the Board of Trustees for review and approval during the October, 2014 meeting. At the same time, the ERM Council began holding regular meetings during the Fall, 2014 semester in order to educate the campus on the need for risk management and to collect additional feedback on the identified risks.

## Sources

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- Annual Risk Assessment 2013-1
- Cabinet Retreat 2014 Summary
- ERM Reports August 2014
- Executive Summary
- Process Used for Strategic Planning
- Risk Management Council Charter
- Strategic Plan Annexes
- Strategic Plan Annexes (page number 58)
- Strategic Plan Westminster 2020
- Strategic Plan Westminster 2020 (page number 40)
- The Columns Concept Final
- Westminster College - Final ERM Program G&T Presentation - February 6, 2014-1

## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

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The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Argument

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Westminster College has developed an assessment program measuring progress toward its mission and academic and co-curricular goals. The College utilizes an Assessment Committee, chaired by the Associate Dean of Faculty.

The Assessment Committee provides policy oversight of the college-wide program to assess progress toward the goals set forth in the College's mission statement, as well as documents derived from the College's mission statement, including the [College's learning goals](#) and the [Concept for Student Development](#). The Committee also provides assessment results to College constituencies for use in quality improvement processes, aids in marketing and recruiting efforts by sharing assessment results with appropriate College offices, coordinates academic department and other College office assessments, and plans and implements assessments for Assessment Day activities. The Committee has also established a timeline for departmental assessment and reporting.

Information derived from the assessment program is utilized to request additional funding for staffing, operational needs, new programs, research, advising and other educational needs and goals. Annual departmental assessments include departmental reviews of student progress and learning goals, departmental strengths and weakness, and plans for additional departmental needs. Examples of assessment tools include evaluation of the Columns Concept, the Student Satisfaction Survey, Senior Exit Interview, [CLA](#), [NSSE](#), load evaluation, and major/minor data.

The [Summer Study Group](#) report was actually an assessment of *Westminster 2020*, in light of changes in the College's environment. The results led to a prioritizing of components of the strategy, which the College is currently [implementing](#). In part due to what we learned from our attempts at launching the Mesa campus, but also what we have learned from continual study of the landscape of higher education, we need a more deliberate [Enterprise Risk Management](#) process, better business plans, and a more comprehensive understanding of marketing in order to be successful in the future.

### Sources

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- 120611CorrectedLearningGoals
- 2013 NSSE Exec Summary
- Concept for Student Development
- ERM Reports August2014
- Executive Summary 2012 2013
- Summer Study Group Consolidated Recommendations 9-23-13
- SummerStudyProgressReport 1014-1

## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### Summary

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Westminster College has the institutional structure and processes necessary to fulfil its mission and improve the teaching and learning process. The College has an articulated strategic plan and framework that is endorsed by the Westminster Board of Trustees. The context and focus of the strategic plan ensures a mission driven path for planning, decision-making and resource allocation. The framework provides a vehicle for linking the mission, vision and core values to the management of the college. The College is critically aware that the current resource base will not support future challenges and opportunities and is taking action to plan for the future.

The College is aware of several areas that are challenges and the need for action plans to improve or correct the situation. These would include but are not limited to:

- The critical challenge of developing additional sources of revenue. Shortfalls in revenue have produced limitations such as inadequate technology, concerns over faculty and staff retention due to lack of pay increases and retirement contributions, and some deferred maintenance. Several steps including implementation of findings from the Summer Study Group, the Leading the Way Campaign, and the development and implementation of a new strategic enrollment management plan are being utilized to address Westminster's financial sustainability to providing a quality education.
- The lack of adequate participation and process related to the development of the College's budget, which is currently being addressed. While the mission statement and goal initiatives of *Westminster 2020* were reviewed and prioritized to ensure that resource allocations support the strategic plan, the yearly budget development process needs steps that help educate and build consensus with campus constituents. The creation of a Budget Committee in Fall, 2014 should alleviate this concern.
- While data and results of the campus assessment plan may be looping back to budgeting and planning in informal ways, we need a systematic plan for doing so, in addition to clear documentation.

### Sources

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*There are no sources.*