

Diversity: An Ongoing Priority at Westmont

During the January trustee meetings, the board's Diversity Committee and Planning Committee held a joint session. The purpose of this session was to review the efforts that have been made in response to the 1995 Long Range Plan's recommendations on diversity.

One of eight priorities included in the Long Range Plan is "that the Westmont community be creatively and energetically responding to the significant issues related to diversity -- including both ethnic and gender diversity." But why? Because:

1. "As a Christian institution, we have special reasons for celebrating diversity as an aspect of God's creation, and for striving to create community out of rich diversity as an aspect of building God's Kingdom in the world."
2. "As a liberal arts institution, ... diversity contributes to a more interesting and a more stimulating intellectual environment."
3. "Diversity, especially among administration, faculty and staff is important if the college is going to be performing its 'modeling' role in the lives of students ... helping students to overcome stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, class, etc. ..."
4. "... our commitment to diversity is part of creating an environment where students can be helpfully apprenticed in the art of dealing with diversity in constructive ways."

After receiving a report from the administration, the Planning Committee affirmed the efforts that have been made in recent years to make Westmont a more diverse community. The committee also underscored the importance that ongoing attention be given to this long range priority, which was then unanimously affirmed by the entire Board of Trustees.

Westmont's long range priority on diversity has been of particular importance to President David Winter, who is retiring from his current position on June 30. In recognition (and illustrative) of his leadership role in this area, we have reprinted on page 2 an article of his which appeared in the June 1996 issue of Christian Scholar's Review.