



# Advantage: Westminster

## A STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2020

**WESTMINSTER  
COLLEGE**

Founded 1852...New Wilmington, Pa.

[www.westminster.edu/advantage](http://www.westminster.edu/advantage)

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## Introduction



*“Westminster College’s new Strategic Plan succinctly and proactively responds to emerging conditions that are diminishing higher education nationwide. Our Plan is not only a statement of institutional vision, but a comment on what we think higher education should be doing to return America once more to its place as a world leader in higher education.*

*First, it reaffirms the relationship between the teacher and the student in an age of increasing depersonalization in undergraduate education. Second, it elevates the call for academic rigor in response to a growing national market for quick degrees focused primarily on vocationalism. Third, it reinforces our commitment to keep a high-quality, private education affordable in an age of unacceptable cost increases at the college level nationally. And finally, it recognizes our need to maintain a campus learning environment that meets contemporary student learning needs without adding to the financial burden of those who use it.*

*These are big, strategic ideas and we are excited about rolling up our sleeves to achieve the 39 Key Goals in the Plan to meet these four broad Initiatives.”*

*~ Richard H. Dorman, D.Ed.  
Westminster College President*

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## Prologue

This ten-year Strategic Plan outlines four Initiatives designed to enhance the learning experience of all Westminster College students. It complements the Mission Statement of the College by outlining specific goals that are both adaptive to current and emerging realities, yet sensitive to its church-related, values-based liberal arts heritage. Though the Plan's Initiatives and Goals address multiple areas for attention, the singular focus is on the students who shall always remain the principal beneficiaries of our educational efforts.



A thorough analysis of internal and external environmental conditions was conducted to provide a context for the recommendations leading to the identification of the Key Goals contained in the Plan. The final Initiatives broadly address many of the challenges and trends revealed in this analysis. Important themes that surfaced within this contextual overview included: changing student demographics; rise of competition; affordability; academic reputation; tradition versus innovation; and our physical plant, among others. This analysis significantly informed the institutional direction presented herein.

The success of the Plan shall be assessed through evaluative measures outlined in a separate but complementary Operational Plan. While the Strategic Plan represents a policy statement addressing institutional direction and priorities, the Operational Plan is an administrative tool. Assessments within it shall focus on the many operational strategies implemented to meet the Key Goals for each of the four Initiatives, which address the following topics:

- To ensure that we support our employees who are responsible and accountable for our students' educational experience.
- To enhance our institution's academic reputation and our intellectual environment.
- To remain accessible and affordable in an era of continually escalating costs.
- To expand and enhance the functionality and physical attractiveness of our campus.

This assessment shall be embedded, pervasive, and informative throughout the lifespan of the Plan.

Broad institutional representation characterized the formation of this Plan. Trustees, alumni, administration, faculty, staff, and students all contributed to this final document with more than 80 people actively contributing to it. Though not all recommendations were incorporated, the Plan represents a realistic outline of goals and aspirations needed to advance Westminster College in these uncertain and challenging times.



# Advantage: Westminster

## The Initiative to Support Our People

*"The Westminster Way" shall define the College's culture among and between campus constituencies and shall reinforce our commitment to a "winning tradition" across all endeavors of the College in accordance with our Mission Statement.*

WE BELIEVE that Westminster College is an outstanding place to learn, teach, work, and live. Among campus constituents, exceptionally high levels of interpersonal caring, respect, collaboration, and collegiality exist. Yet we challenge and support one another to constantly improve in order to elevate further Westminster as among America's best colleges. This institutional "ethos" must be preserved and nurtured for it represents a key defining feature of the College. This Initiative reinforces the importance of this culture and defines goals to preserve and nurture it as one of our great institutional strengths.



## Key Goals

### *Affirm Our Underlying Values*

- Codify our institutional values into a list known as "The Westminster Way."
- Establish specific strategies to continue and further enhance our "winning traditions" of developing intellectual, interpersonal, athletic, and spiritual outcomes that distinguish human beings at their best, and incorporate these strategies into the working fabric of the institution.
- Reinforce our church heritage and enhance our mission to others.

### *Nurture Talent*

- Demonstrate ways to develop, recognize, and honor the many gifts and multiple intelligences that exist within the campus community.
- Ensure fair and equitable salary and benefit packages for all employees based on thorough research, reflection, and budget affordability.
- Continue to provide a high-quality, private, liberal arts education, identifying programs, policies, and procedures that maintain heightened levels of satisfaction among all on campus.
- Provide professional development opportunities for all campus employees to maintain skill levels in their respective roles.



# Advantage: Westminster

## The Initiative to Enhance Our Reputation

*The academic reputation of Westminster College shall be elevated through enhanced programming for faculty development, student scholarship, improved external collaboration and outreach, and a commitment to supplementing our liberal arts mission with experiential educational opportunities.*

WE BELIEVE that the quality of education provided is directly related to the quality of faculty providing it. It is important for Westminster faculty to maintain currency in their discipline, enthusiasm about what they teach, expertise in their instructional skills, and dedication to the intellectual development of every student in class. Faculty must also seek ways to involve students in scholarly activities and share their intellectual and instructional efforts externally for the purpose of reinforcing the institution's role as an important intellectual and societal resource. WE ALSO BELIEVE in the importance of applied learning, whereby classroom instruction can be augmented through real-world experiences implemented across the curriculum.



## Key Goals

### *Reinforce the Importance of Faculty Development*

- Enhance operational funding and financial incentives to encourage and realize faculty development goals.
- Establish a sponsored research grant writer position to support faculty and student research congruent with institutional priorities and the experiential learning mission.

### *Enhance the Academic Core Mission*

- Secure significant endowment resources to support the academic programs and core educational mission of the College.
- Further enhance our excellent graduation and retention rates.
- Continue to increase the overall admissions quality of our undergraduate students.
- Elevate the visibility of scholarship in both internal and external communications.
- Develop permanent guest lecture and outstanding alumni recognition programs that will support our efforts to build a stronger academic reputation while bringing enhanced visibility to the College.

### *Expand Applied Learning Opportunities for Students*

- Enhance the Drinko Center as a major institutional resource to coordinate and financially support experiential education, student research, community outreach, and faculty development.
- Develop experiential education options for each major discipline and promote those options among students and in student recruitment activities.
- Develop programs of interdisciplinary collaboration that support experiential education, enhanced visibility of the College, and increased revenue.
- Create and build meaningful partnerships with local, regional, and national companies and non-profit agencies to provide experiential learning and internship opportunities.

### *Become a More Heterogeneous Campus*

- Broaden the diversity of our campus across multiple demographic dimensions and provide financial support to meet the operational goal of creating a more diverse campus community.



# Advantage: Westminster

## The Initiative to Remain Affordable

*Westminster College shall remain a high-value liberal arts college, providing recognized excellence in undergraduate education at a competitive price.*

WE BELIEVE that a high-quality, private, liberal arts education should be available at a reasonable cost to those desiring such an education. Research on the impact of college on students has repeatedly and conclusively demonstrated that the strongest intellectual and social development of students occurs at smaller, private, liberal arts colleges. The cost of such colleges, however, is rapidly exceeding family affordability. Westminster College shall position itself as an affordable choice while maintaining a commitment to educational excellence and exceptional student outcomes.

## Key Goals

### *Build Our Financial Foundation*

- Increase the endowment through private gifts from 2009-10 levels with an emphasis on augmenting endowed scholarships to offset institutionally-funded financial aid.
- Increase the percentage of alumni participation in philanthropy to the College.
- Develop budgetary protocols and incentives that reward savings and efficiencies across campus cost centers.
- Create opportunities for students to build a philanthropic and affinity commitment to the College both during their undergraduate years and following graduation.

### *Achieve Enrollment Capacity*

- Increase overall full-time equivalent (FTE) traditional student undergraduate enrollment.
- Increase overall FTE graduate enrollment.
- Increase overall FTE Lifelong Learning enrollment.
- Implement content delivery strategies for Graduate and Lifelong Learning programs that incorporate our signature personalized one-on-one teaching with online educational components to provide a “hybrid” offering that meets the learning needs of the adult student population.
- Invest significantly in the Admissions function to meet future enrollment and financial goals and expand our recruitment catchment area to new markets.
- Enhance and invest in existing programs that represent outstanding enrollment growth opportunities for the College.
- Within our Mission, consider and implement new programs that will enhance institutional growth to meet future enrollment goals.

### *Better Position the College to its Publics*

- Create a comprehensive branding and marketing plan to position the College for growth.



# Advantage: Westminster

## The Initiative to Improve Our Campus

*Westminster College shall further develop its campus infrastructure to effectively meet the learning and living requirements of the 21st-century college student.*

WE BELIEVE that a college should provide facilities and services that effectively meet the contemporary learning and living needs of the campus community without placing undue financial burdens upon the institution. In order to maintain an affordable cost, we seek a highly functional and attractive campus environment through the thoughtful acquisition and allocation of precious resources. This Initiative recognizes that the outstanding campus improvement efforts over past years need to be expanded to realize a contemporary standard in our infrastructure.



## Key Goals

### *Fund Capital Priorities*

- Identify, prepare, and renovate selected existing classroom and office facilities to meet contemporary standards.
- Identify, prepare, and renovate selected student residence and food service facilities to meet contemporary standards.
- Provide updated instrumentation for our science curricula necessary for meeting the learning needs of current science students.
- Provide the necessary housing and academic space to accommodate the College's growth within the next decade.

### *Maintain Currency in Information Technology*

- Add campus-wide Wi-Fi capabilities.
- Provide for a more stable Information Technology funding mechanism.
- Examine a policy of centralizing personal computer purchases across the campus on a periodic rotating basis and recommend any changes to existing policy should changes be warranted.

### *Become More Environmentally Sensitive as a Campus Community*

- Develop, support, and recognize programs to improve the College's efforts toward environmental sustainability and incorporate more sustainable practices into its operations and infrastructure.



# Westminster College

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## Points of Pride

### What others say about Westminster College ...

- “Top Tier Liberal Arts College” – *U.S. News Guide to America’s Best Colleges*
- “Top 15 in graduation rate performance” – *U.S. News Guide to America’s Best Colleges*
- “Best 371 Colleges” and “Best in the Northeast” – *The Princeton Review*
- “Great Town/Gown Relations” and “Best College Radio Stations” – *The Princeton Review*
- “Top three in social mobility among liberal arts colleges” – *Washington Monthly College Guide*

### The demand for Westminster has never been higher ...

- More than 1,500 students – **Westminster is small by choice** and we are proud of the young women and men who share their diverse talents
- Nearly 4,000 applications for 400 spots in freshman class
- Incoming freshmen have 3.5 high school grade point average and nearly 1100 SAT (over 80 points above the national average), and most rank in the top 20% of high school class
- 12:1 student-to-faculty ratio – **Students receive the personal attention they deserve from dedicated faculty**

### Westminster graduates are in demand and prepared for success ...

- 98% of Westminster graduates are employed or enter graduate school within a year of graduation
- Westminster graduates are accepted into medical school at double the national average (86% vs. 43%)
- **The Career Center** works with students during their four years on campus – most students complete at least one internship and career seminar
- More than 18,000 Westminster alumni provide a worldwide Titan support network – **Westminster for Life**
- **The liberal arts prepare you for life** – Great teaching combined with intellectual curiosity leads to endless opportunities

### We’re good neighbors and stewards ...

- **Drinko Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning** enriches undergraduate education, funds undergraduate and collaborative research opportunities, and serves as a community resource for K-12 education – Westminster students and faculty present research around the world
- Westminster’s **“Science in Motion”** and **“Language in Motion”** programs provide the region’s K-12 students with hands-on science and language programs and teachers with professional development
- **The Outdoor Biology and Environmental Science Lab** provides hands-on experience in conservation and sustainability of natural resources to students and the community
- Westminster’s **Lifelong Learning** and **Continuing Education Programs** provide area adults with opportunities to upgrade skills and earn college degrees
- **President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll** (three straight years) – Nearly 80% of Westminster students volunteered last year, three times the national average and nearly twice the national average for college students

### Westminster College at a Glance ...

- History:** Founded in 1852 and affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA). Private, coeducational, four-year, liberal arts college
- Location:** New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, is 60 miles north of Pittsburgh, 90 miles south of Erie, and 90 miles southeast of Cleveland
- Degrees Offered:** B.A., B.S., B.Mus., M.Ed.
- Majors:** 41 majors and 10 pre-professional programs
- Accreditation:** Middle States Association, Approved by Pennsylvania Department of Education, American Chemical Society, National Association of Schools of Music
- Faculty:** 104 full time; 90% have doctorate or equivalent
- Enrollment:** Approximately 1,500 students (58% female, 42% male)
- Cost:** Tuition & Fees – \$28,040; Room & Board – \$8,440
- Financial Aid:** 98% of students receive financial aid, including scholarships, grants, low-interest loans, and student employment