

THE SEARCH FOR A VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND DEAN OF THE COLLEGE

Westminster College seeks a dynamic Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College (VPAA) who will provide visionary academic and institutional leadership for one of Pennsylvania's finest liberal arts colleges. The new VPAA will engage with faculty and staff to shape the College's educational initiatives and will arrive on campus as Dr. Kathy Brittain Richardson enters her tenth year as the College's 15th President with the support of an active Board of Trustees and a talented Leadership Team.

The Westminster faculty and administration are seeking a leader who will provide guidance and momentum for the faculty and the curriculum, a contemporary framework for defining programs and pedagogies in the liberal arts and pre-professional programs, and an approach that is both inclusive and decisive, bringing energy and direction to Westminster's educational future.

As chief academic officer, the VPAA manages all elements of the academic administration, including oversight of the curriculum via a robust shared governance structure, supervision of academic schools and academic support services, and leadership on issues of program support and funding, as well as new program development. Reporting directly to the President, the VPAA serves as an advocate for the faculty and the academic program on the College's Leadership Team, maintains close communication with the president and fellow senior administrators, and serves in a liaison role to selected committees of the Board of Trustees and to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

AT A GLANCE

Location: Westminster is located in rural New Wilmington, Pa., 65 miles north of Pittsburgh, 80 miles south of Erie, and 85 miles southeast of Cleveland.

Students: Westminster's enrollment is approximately 1,150 undergraduate and graduate students.

Faculty: 87% of the faculty hold terminal degrees. The student-to-faculty ratio is 12:1, and the average class size is 17.

Accreditation: Westminster is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Campus: Westminster's campus extends over 300 acres, including a 100-acre outdoor laboratory and Brittain Lake. Over \$50 million has been invested over the past nine years to improve academic buildings, athletic facilities, residence halls and campus grounds, including a renovation and expansion of the Hoyt Science Center and improvements in campus technology.

Calendar: Westminster operates on a semester calendar, with Fall and Spring semesters of 16 weeks, plus a Summer session.

Majors & Programs: Seven undergraduate schools offer more than 40 majors and 10 pre-professional programs. The College also offers master's degrees in Business and Education.

Residence Life: Westminster is a four-year residential campus, and 78% of the student body lives on campus. The College recently invested \$8.1 million to renovate the three residence halls that house first-year students.

Athletics: A member of the NCAA Division III Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC), the College has 22 varsity athletic teams. The Titan Athletic Corridor was realized in 2020 with the construction of a new softball field, a new turf baseball field, a new track and field throwing area and the UPMC Sports Complex featuring a new field for soccer and lacrosse. Our student-athletes have also benefited from recent improvements to Burry Stadium and extensive renovations to Memorial Field House, including a renovated natatorium.

Faith & Spirituality: The College strives to provide a supportive atmosphere that welcomes and respects individuals who represent a wide range of beliefs. The Westminster community reflects and promotes a faith-based, service-over-self philosophy. While rooted in the Presbyterian tradition, it allows for a climate of respect for people of all faiths and backgrounds, creates camaraderie, and encourages giving of self.

Student Activities: Westminster students participate in more than 65 clubs and organizations, including band, choir, orchestra, radio/television production, theatre, national fraternities and sororities, student government, publications, special interest groups and honoraries.

Alumni: There are approximately 20,000 dedicated and passionate Titan alumni who live across the region, state, country and globe.

ABOUT WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE is nationally known for its collaborative environment, outstanding academic programs, focus on student success, and the effort invested in making higher education affordable and attainable to all students. Established in 1852, Westminster is proud to be among the first colleges in the country open to all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex or religion from its founding charter by the Presbyterian Church.

Westminster has been characterized by the excellence of its educational programs and the strength of its student outcomes, both of which are largely attributable to the College's longstanding tradition of close faculty/student mentorship.

Westminster is a community of learning, small enough to encourage the exchange of different ideas and philosophies yet large enough to provide diversity of knowledge, experiences and values. Its residential atmosphere and dedicated faculty and staff enhance personal interaction and contribute to the College's high graduation and retention rates.

The entire Westminster Community takes pride in the College's ability to enhance and transform the lives of its students, over one-quarter of whom are the first in their families to attend college. In 2024, the College reaffirmed its commitment to affordability with the announcement of the Westminster Advantage program, its first large-scale tuition-free initiative.

MISSION, VISION & STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Mission of Westminster College is to help students develop competencies, commitments and characteristics that have distinguished human beings at their best. The College sees the well-educated person as one whose skills are complemented by ever-developing values and ideals identified in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Westminster's quest for excellence is a recognition that stewardship of life mandates the maximum possible development of each person's capabilities.

VISION

Westminster College will be nationally recognized as a leader in providing a supportive and transformative educational experience for all students. Forged in a tradition of academic excellence and inclusion, Westminster's approach to a comprehensive liberal arts education focuses on critical thought, collaboration and experiential learning, which empowers students to lead successful lives of meaning, integrity, leadership, citizenship and service to others.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 - 2027

The College's strategic plan builds support for Westminster's rich learning community through four key initiatives:

- Recruit and Retain Students
- Revitalize Campus Environment
- Renew Engaging Experiences
- Replenish Resources

Important work was done to advance each of these goals during the second "thousand days" of the Plan under Dr. Richardson's leadership. The new VPAA will arrive at an important moment in the life of the College, as the College launches new initiatives for the final "thousand days" of the ten-year plan.

Academic Program

From a curricular perspective, Westminster's vision of a liberally educated person results from engagement with a four-year integrated course of study known as the Westminster Plan. It involves a general education program, prescribed graduation requirements, a major and electives.

Liberal Studies is at the center of the Westminster Plan curriculum and spans all four years of the undergraduate experience. The first-year sequence consists of four courses: Westminster 101, a course designed to assist students in making a successful transition to higher education; Inquiry 111, an introduction to varied ways of knowing across the liberal arts; Writing 111, which provides instruction and practice in essential skills and forms of written expression; and Speech 111, a course that provides a basic grounding in oral communication skills.

In addition to progressing through major courses, the middle portion of the Westminster Plan is devoted to interdisciplinary coursework. This exploration is accomplished through the Intellectual Perspectives portion of the curriculum, which provides students with familiarity to a broad range of human intellectual endeavors and creativity that were introduced in the First-Year Program. Students also complete a Cluster Course, through which they engage with a common problem, question, theme or issue from the perspective of two different disciplines, co-taught by a faculty expert from each of those two disciplines.

Finally, the process of liberally educating students is completed with a senior capstone course. The Capstone is the culminating experience in the major and is designed to provide opportunities for structured reflection on the value of education in and beyond the major, while providing another chance to strengthen communication and problem-solving skills. Throughout the entire curriculum, the use of information technologies is emphasized to enhance teaching and learning, and to provide students with knowledge acquisition skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.

Students can bolster their learning experiences through performances and exhibits, internships, practicums, clinical rotations, student teaching, study abroad, travel courses, service learning and co-curricular offerings across the campus community. Whatever activities students pursue, Westminster has their personal and professional development in mind.



Faculty

Trained in universities around the globe, Westminster College faculty choose to teach and conduct research at Westminster because of its focus on student and faculty development and a pervasive collegial atmosphere. Westminster faculty continually demonstrate a broad range, quality and quantity of research and scholarship endeavors. Annually, on the average, the faculty publish 25 books, articles, and book chapters, and they share 95 presentations, exhibits, and performances in national and international venues.

Faculty members at Westminster are true teacher/scholars and often engage their students in research endeavors at levels of complexity typically reserved for graduate students. These efforts culminate each spring in Westminster's Undergraduate Research and Arts Celebration, during which 25% of the student body, including first-year students, makes presentations, gives performances or exhibits their art. Additional outcomes from this remarkable level of faculty mentoring are an enviable graduation rate, as well as outstanding post-graduation employment rates and graduate and professional school acceptance rates.

In response to the changing higher education landscape, the faculty have also worked tirelessly to update the College's academic program offerings. Through a rigorous process of curricular review, the College has added several undergraduate programs, including Nursing (both a BSN and an RN-to-BSN completion program), as well as new minors and micro-credential opportunities. The most recent addition to our academic offerings is our Degree in Three program, which offers an accelerated pathway through our business majors and allows students to begin our Master of Business Administration program in year four or to move directly into the workforce. The faculty continuously monitors academic offerings to ensure that the College's programs remain in alignment with the values of a traditional liberal arts education, emerging developments in science and technology, the needs of an increasingly globalized society and the professional standards that maintain programmatic or institutional accreditation.



Students

Westminster is tremendously proud of the young adults who share their diverse talents.

- Over 3,000 applications typically are received for admission to the first-year class.
- 40% of Westminster students received Pell grants for the 2024-2025 academic year, and approximately 30% of them are first-generation college students.
- Almost 60% of all first-year Westminster students participate in intercollegiate athletics, and 50% of the total student population are student-athletes.
- Around 20% of the total student population is involved in a School of Music curricular activity, such as the Titan Marching Band.
- Our medical school and law school acceptance rates are consistently twice the national average.
- A third of the class of 2025 was accepted to graduate or professional school.



Points of Distinction

- Ranked in the Top 25 in the nation for six consecutive years in *U.S. News & World Report's* "Social Mobility" list, which measures how well schools graduate students who receive federal Pell Grants. Westminster also climbed 11 spots last year to place #112 in the National Liberal Arts Colleges category. — "Best Colleges 2024 edition," *U.S. News & World Report*
- Named a top 100 liberal arts college in the country by *Washington Monthly*, which highlights institutions that have made "contributions to the public good." — "2023 College Guide and Rankings," *Washington Monthly*
- Ranked #22 in the nation in the *New York Times* College Access Index based on the share of students who receive Pell grants, the graduation rate of those students, and the price that the College charges both low- and middle-income students — "Top Colleges Doing the Most for the American Dream," *New York Times*
- Placed in the top 5% nationally for effective teaching practices for first-year students. — *National Survey of Student Engagement*
- Offers a federally-funded TRIO Student Support Services program to complement services provided through the College's Student Success Center.
- Engaged a new plan for student success and support called the Comprehensive Program for Advancing Student Success (CompPASS). CompPASS embraces a holistic perspective and affirms Westminster's long-standing commitment to student-centric practices, including case management and coordinated care, targeted student success groups, early alert programs, as well as basic needs security initiatives through the PA Hunger-free Campus Grant and Hope Impact Partnership.
- Dedicated a high-fidelity nursing simulation lab in fall 2024 made possible through support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, Lawrence County (PA) Commissioners and donor gifts. The lab provides hands-on training for our nursing students and for first responders across the region.
- Raised more than \$30 million over the past five years, including \$14 million for Annual Fund support, \$7 million of capital projects and campus enhancements, and \$6 million for Endowed Scholarships that provide vital financial aid to deserving students.
- Opened the Crime Investigation Labs that allow Criminal Justice Studies students to learn and practice evidence identification, collection and examination.

DESIRED ATTRIBUTES FOR THE NEW VPAA

THE NEW VPAA candidates should have an earned doctorate with documentation of at least ten years of college-level teaching experience and increasing responsibilities in academic administration. In addition, the VPAA should demonstrate:

- Visionary leadership combined with a commitment to the liberal arts as a foundation for the total academic program.
- Commitment to a high value of teaching, learning, scholarship, academic freedom, and the centrality of the student/faculty relationship.
- Experience as a strategic thinker and a proactive planner, particularly with the creative development of undergraduate programming that addresses contemporary and anticipated needs and interests of students.
- Strong and transparent leadership skills with an ability to listen, communicate, and build consensus and energy around new initiatives.
- Experience actively collaborating with other campus divisions to foster student success.
- Financial acumen necessary to engage in budget analysis and development, priority setting, and administration of resources.
- Familiarity with accreditation and assessment models that enhance student success.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The VPAA/Dean Search Committee will evaluate materials on a rolling basis. Candidates are encouraged to submit materials by May 20, 2025, for the most favorable consideration. The VPAA is expected to begin work in August 2025.

Application materials should include a letter of candidacy responding to the opportunities and the desired attributes for a new VPAA, a complete CV or resume, and the names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses of three references, none of whom will be contacted without the formal permission of the candidate.

All material should be submitted electronically to VPAAsearch@westminster.edu and addressed to Kenneth J. Romig, Chair of the VPAA Search Committee. All nominations, inquiries and applications will be confidential until finalists are identified for on-campus interviews.



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