The Gaede Institute for the Liberal Arts is pleased to announce the sixteenth annual Conversation on the Liberal Arts, to be held Thursday to Saturday, March 23-25, 2017, on the campus of Westmont College. The 2017 Conversation theme is “Liberal Arts for a Fragile Planet.”

In a time of constant ecological threat and rising climate crisis, higher education is a critical locus of awareness, expertise, and leadership. Liberal arts education, especially as it prioritizes experiential and intellectual integration, seems well suited to cultivating these assets. But liberal arts institutions, for a variety of reasons, have only rarely been at the forefront of environmental research and activism. “Liberal Arts for a Fragile Planet” will gather scholars, administrators, students, and activists to consider opportunities and challenges at the intersection of liberal education and environmental concern. We invite full panels and individual papers on themes including, but not limited to:

- Collaborative pedagogical models that bring together faculty from several disciplines to address environmental problems;
- Innovative methods for encouraging environmental engagement throughout the curriculum, especially in fields beyond the natural sciences;
- Strategies for communicating challenging narratives about the environment to skeptical or uninformed constituencies;
- Visual arts, theater arts, music, or creative writing as uniquely valuable modes of environmental exploration and advocacy;
- Specific examples of interdisciplinary scholarship (for instance, how human displacement and migration might be considered in concert with ecological or climatological forces);
- The importance of physical location or place in a student’s undergraduate experience;
- How liberal arts colleges might benefit from the work of large, well-resourced environmental studies programs, or how liberal-educational perspectives might inform and enrich conversations at larger universities;
- Outdoor education, field stations and other experiential learning methods as complements to classroom-based academics;
- Any issues emerging from particular fields in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities relevant to environmental problems and accessible to an interdisciplinary audience.

**Student Participation:** We especially encourage undergraduate students to present their work and experience. Student submissions will be considered for both an informal poster session and formal concurrent sessions (please indicate if you have a strong preference for one or the other venue), and may include original scholarship, discussion of curricular or extracurricular projects, and personal reflections. Presentations selected for the poster session should include an illustrative visual (physical or digital). Discounted student registration is available; see westmont.edu/conversation for more information.
Format: One of the highlights of the Conversation on the Liberal Arts, as the name suggests, is the rich discussion it provokes. Plenary sessions will include full-length paper presentations and extended times of conversation. Concurrent sessions will be devoted primarily to discussion of papers (to be distributed in advance), following a very brief introduction by the author. An informal student poster session will provide opportunities for open interaction among students and other conference guests.

Submissions: Please submit either a 350-word abstract or a completed paper (maximum 25 pages in English, and including a short abstract) to libarts@westmont.edu. All standard academic citation and formatting styles will be accepted, but Chicago is preferred. Be sure to include: 1) First author’s full name, academic rank or job title, name of institution or organization, and contact information—mail, phone, and email; 2) Full names, ranks or titles, and institutions/organizations of all co-authors; 3) Title of abstract or paper. All student work should be clearly identified as such.

The deadline for submitting proposals is November 15, 2016. The program committee will contact authors by December 15 with a decision on acceptance. If a proposal is accepted, the full paper should be submitted by March 1, 2017. Please contact Aaron Sizer (asizer@westmont.edu, 805-565-6124) with any questions.

For more information on the Conversation on the Liberal Arts, visit westmont.edu/conversation.