

**WESTMONT COLLEGE
2018-2019 ILO ASSESSMENT**

CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING, PRACTICES AND AFFECTIONS

Executive Summary

Westmont’s Christian Understanding, Practices and Affections (CUPA) ILO

Graduates of Westmont College will:

- demonstrate literacy in biblical and orthodox Christian faith (Christian Understanding)
- demonstrate faithfulness in Christian service (Christian Practices/ Affections)

The Assessment Team:

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The 2018-2019 CUPA Assessment

Building on the foundation provided by the 2013 assessment, the 2019 iteration chose eight mechanisms by which to gather information to help us think about how Westmont is working toward our CUPA outcomes. Four mechanism were direct and four were indirect. The eight mechanisms are described below.

	Direct Assessment	Indirect Assessment
Understanding	CUPA Capstone Essay RS GE Biblical/Theological Literacy Survey data * RS 1 & 10 survey for students in those classes * RS 1, 10 & 20 survey for seniors	NSSE Data (S 2017) Taylor Christian Life Survey 2018 CCCU Alumni Survey Student life reflective essays
Practices	CUPA Capstone Essay Participation in Student Ministries * Emmaus Road/Potter’s Clay/Urban Initiative * Capax Dei participation	NSSE Data Taylor Christian Life Survey 2018 CCCU Alumni Survey Student life reflective essays
Affections	CUPA Capstone Essay	NSSE Data Taylor Christian Life Survey 2018 CCCU Alumni Survey Student life reflective essays

Direct Assessment:

1. **The CUPA Capstone Essay.**

In 2013, Westmont recommended that in lieu of using “faith-learning” questions on student evaluations to gather data for institutional-level assessment, that departments and programs gather CUPA data in ways best suited to their disciplines, curriculum and programing. Departments were invited to share with the CUPA team results any CUPA related writing assignments used in capstone classes or in major-specific upper-division classes. The CUPA team also devised an assignment that could be used or adapted for major-specific use. The team developed a rubric for scoring essays in conversation with faculty of record teaching those classes. Faculty then scored the assignments from their own majors using the rubric. More importantly participating departments read a sample of their essays with their departmental colleagues and discussed their own department’s CUPA aims in light of what they read.

2. **GE RS Senior Survey (covering material from RS 001, 010 and 020)**

The teaching faculty for RS 01, 10 and 20 collaboratively devised a set of multiple choice questions keyed to the major concepts, figures, events and contexts relevant for understanding the content of their courses. The survey was administered from mid-November through the last week of classes, Fall 2018. We included demographic questions that allowed us to take into consideration when students took each class and whether they currently identify as Christian.

3. **GE RS 01 and 10 post-class survey results compared to the Senior Survey results**

RS 01 and 10 faculty administered the same blocks of OT and NT questions as a pre-test, and again as a post-test in their Fall 2018 classes. While the pre- and post-test comparison was part of last year’s RS GE assessment, the post-test numbers compared to our Senior Survey numbers allowed for examination of what and how well students retain factual elements of learning from their OT and NT classes.

4. **Participation in student ministries**

In the last few years the Chapel program, Student Ministries, and The Martin Institute have all undergone leadership changes. Systematic assessment in these areas had not been regularly done up to this point. We gathered what materials were to hand (the number of students participating in various programs) as a starting point for conversation. We will use this round of assessment to establish what we want to know about our students’ faith journeys and how best to gather those insights in future.

Indirect Assessment:

5. **National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)**

Spring of 2017 Westmont participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), administered yearly by the Center for Postsecondary Research based at the Indiana University School of Education. NSSE gathers data from first year students and from seniors, allowing longitudinal comparison. The CCCU works with NSSE to embed a series of CCCU specific questions into the general survey of student engagement. In 2017, fifty-one CCCU schools participated. This allows for some judicious comparison with our CCCU sister schools.

6. **Taylor Christian Life Survey**

The Christian Life Survey (CLS) is conducted by Taylor University every other year. It was first administered in 2010-2011. Westmont participated in the second iteration of the survey, 2012-2013, during our first CUPA assessment. That year, thirteen CCCU institutions participated. The

2018-2019 survey represents the fifth iteration of the survey with ten participating institutions and nearly 3000 participants.

7. CCCU Alumni Survey

Spring of 2018 Westmont participated in a CCCU alumni survey, which included a number of CUPA relevant questions. The responses to those questions were excerpted from the survey as a whole and incorporated into the 2019 CUPA assessment.

8. Student reflections from their participation in student ministries

As mentioned above, due to personnel changes in these areas, we didn't have existing assessment efforts to build on. Again, we gathered what materials were to hand—reflections written by students participating in various programs—as a starting point for conversation. We will use this round of assessment to establish what we want to know about our students' faith journeys and how best to gather those insights in future.

Complete data sets, analysis and discussion can be found in the full CUPA report available via [Westmont's Educational Effectiveness website](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of our analysis and discussion of the results from our eight assessment mechanisms, the CUPA team made the following institutional- and program-level recommendations.

Institutional Recommendations

- 1. We recommend a change in the wording of the CUPA ILO.** Rather than “demonstrate faithfulness in Christian service” we recommend **“acquire the disciplines of mind, body and heart that foster faithful Christian life.”** Service is a fairly precise category. It excludes prayer, study, stewardship, repentance, generosity etc. "Disciplines" include those, as well as service. With the current wording, something like *Capax Dei* is hard to figure in. With the revised wording, it's definitely in, alongside Urban Initiative, Potter's Clay, and many other co-curricular and curricular activities.
- 2. Echoing a recommendation from the 2013 CUPA report, we recommend replacing the language of “critical thinking,” with that of “cultivating sound judgment and wisdom.”** This language is much more positive, constructive, inspiring, embodied and resonant with our Christian mission than mere “critical thinking.” Sound judgment and wisdom are critical thinking with a telos. This shift will help students see their journey at Westmont as building toward a lofty goal rather than simply as acquiring “critical skills.” It may help students end their time at Westmont with more informed confidence in their faith than when they arrived.
- 3. In a similar vein, we recommend helping students frame the challenge and occasional discomfort involved in learning in general, and Christian learning in particular, as “growing pains”** or similarly organic and teleological imagery. Correspondingly, we recommend refraining from using the more modernist framework of “deconstructing and reconstructing” their faith. The “growing pains” metaphor may be especially useful for a new generation of students particularly susceptible to anxiety, and likely to interpret their anxiety as insecurity or even a loss of faith.

Program Recommendations

1. Participating Departments **implement** the changes they discussed within their programs, as a result of the CUPA essay exercise.
2. Departments that did not participate in the 2019 CUPA essay exercise take the opportunity to read and discuss a relevant sample of student work in order to **assess their own work toward discipline specific CUPA goals**.
3. The RS department work with the records office to set up a **protocol to track how incoming students do in their Fall RS classes** and how they do in their subsequent RS classes in order to better understand if sequencing of RS classes improves student learning.
4. The **Church fair** be reinstated.
5. Using the conversation begun by this assessment, Student Ministries, the Martin Institute and the Campus Pastor's office, all of which have had leadership changeovers in the last few years, work together to **establish what CUPA outcomes they want to pursue, and how best to assess those outcomes**.

Suggestions for continued learning

1. Coaches share with faculty and staff what they've learned about supporting the faith of their athletes, some of whom arrive at the college religiously ambivalent and leave as committed Christians.
2. The RS department share some of their discussion on pedagogy which, while relevant to RS GE classes, is also relevant far beyond those classes.
3. Departments carry out another in-house CUPA essay/assignment/exercise c. 2023 and discuss those results as a department, to further discussions begun in 2019.
4. Faculty and staff do some reading. We recommend David Kinnaman's *Faith For Exiles* (Baker, 2019) and *Growing With: Every Parent's Guide to Helping Teenagers and Young Adults Thrive in their Faith, Family, and Future* (Baker 2019) by Kara Powell and Steven Argue, from Fuller Seminary's Youth Institute. A link to Steve Argue's Trailhead lecture can be found [here](#).