

## **The Columns Concept: Developing Leaders in a Global Community**

Founded in 1851, Westminster College is a private, selective, coeducation, residential undergraduate institution. The College is dedicated to liberal education, to teaching excellence, and an education centered on key values that prepare our graduates to be leaders of character.

For the past eight years, Westminster College has been building a strong foundation for educational excellence. Since the year 2000, the College has realized substantial growth in the size and quality of the student body, completed a highly successful capital campaign for new buildings and programs, created a spirit of optimism on campus, and achieved a level of student engagement far exceeding national averages. Westminster offers an engaging liberal arts education in the context of a close, caring campus community devoted to academic excellence and student success. In this time, Westminster has also created a highly diverse campus with students from over 65 countries around the world. Therefore, we can now articulate a shared institutional identity: developing leaders in a global community.

*Developing leaders.* Our interconnected and dynamic world requires broadly educated men and women of character who can make a difference at all levels of society—family, neighborhood, community, state, nation, world. Leaders are people of ideas and action. They seek to improve the quality of life for everyone; they help people, groups, and organizations transform for the betterment of each individual and the whole. They also learn to lead themselves before leading others. Westminster graduates' success is measured not merely in terms of their accomplishments but by the achievements of those they serve.

Liberal arts colleges were established to prepare leaders for society; hence, a liberal arts education is fundamentally about leader development. In the liberal arts tradition, we understand leader development as education of the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. A broad general education in the arts and the sciences, coupled with depth of study and integrated experiential learning opportunities, nurtures the whole person. The acquisition of leadership skills through study and practice is important, but even more critical to leader development is the cultivation of enduring characteristics and habits of an educated person: creativity, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, decision making, life-long learning, openness, valuing, and moral reasoning. We understand these attributes, noble aims of a liberal education, to be essential qualities of effective leaders. Therefore, every member of the Westminster community plays an important role in leader development.

*In a Global Community.* Global interdependence is a reality now and will be even more so in the future. We understand that leaders at all levels of society must comprehend and appreciate the complexities of global interdependence as they strive to make a difference in whatever context they find themselves. In today's world, an education without a global perspective is incomplete; citizens of any particular nation must also be citizens of the world.

Because our graduates will live and lead in a global community, we have deliberately created a highly diverse international campus, where American students with a wide range of backgrounds live and study with students from many countries around the world. In order to

prepare students to be leaders in a global community, we have created a global community on the Westminster campus, in which all students learn and develop.

Within the Westminster curriculum, students are taught to think critically about global issues and solve problems from an interdisciplinary perspective. They are exposed to the study of new languages and cultures. They are expected to engage in on-campus educational activities that promote cross-cultural understanding; at the same time, they are encouraged to study abroad in order to immerse themselves in another culture. Westminster students graduate with the ability to engage the world, whether by living and working abroad or at home.

Westminster College prepares leaders for life in community, emphasizing service to others and collaboration with all members. Our graduates are leaders who appreciate interdependence, serve with integrity, respect diversity, promote fairness, and share responsibility in ways that make a positive difference in the lives of all people. Our students experience a rich sense of community from the day they step foot on campus, as we place great emphasis on active participation in the life of the College, commitment to the local community, and the development of cross-cultural understanding.