

Whitman College

Whitman College combines academic excellence, an unpretentious Northwest culture and an engaging community.

As they did a century ago, students from across the United States and from many other countries find at Whitman a closely knit community of dedicated teachers and students working together to achieve intellectual vitality, moral awareness, personal confidence, social responsibility and the flexibility to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

Recruiting and celebrating professors who are committed to excellence in teaching, advising and scholarship has always been a top priority of the college. As Whitman's third president, Stephen B.L. Penrose, said, "It's the faculty who make a college great."

The college is honored to attract students who represent the Whitman mosaic—down-to-earth high achievers with diverse interests.

In addition to maintaining a faculty of the highest caliber, Whitman College is steadfastly committed to:

- fostering the intellectual depth and the breadth of knowledge essential for leadership;
- supporting mastery of critical thinking, writing, speaking, presentation and performance skills;
- integrating technology across the liberal arts curriculum;
- promoting a strong faculty-student collaborative research program;
- promoting a rich appreciation for diversity and tolerance and an understanding of other cultures; and
- encouraging a sense of community by offering a vibrant residential life program and extensive athletic, fitness and outdoor opportunities.

The primary evidence of any college's successes can be found among its graduates. Whitman's alumni include: a Nobel Prize winner in physics; the Mars Rover lead engineer; a U.S. Supreme Court justice; an ambassador to Iraq and six other countries in the Middle East; a NASA astronaut; congressional and state representatives; leaders in law, government and the Foreign Service; respected scholars; CEOs of major corporations; renowned artists, entertainers and writers; prominent journalists; leading physicians and scientists; and thousands of active, responsible citizens who are contributing to their professions and their communities.

The Mission of the College

This mission statement, approved by the Whitman College Board of Trustees, guides all programs of the college:

Whitman College is committed to providing an excellent, well-rounded liberal arts and sciences undergraduate education. It is an independent, nonsectarian and residential college. Whitman offers an ideal setting for rigorous learning and scholarship and encourages creativity, character and responsibility.

Through the study of humanities, arts and social and natural sciences, Whitman's students develop capacities to analyze, interpret, criticize, communicate and engage. A concentration on basic disciplines, in combination with a supportive residential life program that encourages personal and social development, is intended to foster intellectual vitality, confidence, leadership and the flexibility to succeed in a changing technological, multicultural world.

Statement on the Value of Diversity

Many individuals and groups — trustees, overseers, alumni, students, faculty and staff — contributed to the creation of this statement, which was developed by the Diversity Committee and endorsed by the Board of Trustees:

Diversity is fundamentally important to the character and mission of Whitman College. Diversity enriches our community and enhances intellectual and personal growth. We seek to provide a challenging liberal arts experience for our students that prepares them for citizenship in the global community. By sustaining a diverse community, we strive to ensure that all individuals are valued and respected and that intellectual and personal growth are enriched because of our differences.

Environmental Principles

Recognizing the impact Whitman College has on the environment and the leadership role Whitman College plays as an institution of higher learning, the college affirms the following environmental principles and standards, which will be followed while exploring practical ways to promote an environmentally conscious campus. The college pledges to:

- reduce the amount of nonrecyclable materials, reuse materials when possible and utilize recycled materials;
- consider the eco-friendliest science and technology available to decrease our environmental impact;
- continue to build an energy-efficient campus in the 21st century;
- patronize companies that are active in their defense of the environment;
- encourage individuals' environmental accountability through programs of environmental education;
- consider environmentally friendly options when they exist and are practical when making decisions regarding developmental projects;
- further the use of reused materials, recyclable materials and the internet for campus communications;
- encourage and ask our food service to make environmentally friendly decisions when purchasing food and supplies, reducing waste and reusing materials;
- maintain campus grounds through the employment of bio-friendly substances and services; and
- strive to improve upon current practices so we may engage the trends of the industrial world with the natural environment.

The Faculty

Whitman College's full-time faculty currently numbers 164. In addition to their dedication to teaching and advising, Whitman faculty members conduct an impressive amount of original research.

Believing that an active professional life supports enthusiasm in teaching and advising, the college encourages faculty members' scholarly work through a generous sabbatical program, the faculty scholarship fund and other resources. During recent years, Whitman faculty members have been recipients of awards such as the Graves Award in the Humanities and CASE Professor of the Year Award for Washington State. Members of the faculty have garnered honors and fellowships from the Battelle Research Institute, National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Fulbright Program, Hughes Medical Institute, PEW Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and other organizations.

Faculty members, with the president and the provost/dean of the faculty, are responsible for basic academic policy and for the formulation of the curriculum. The faculty also has a responsibility for student life and welfare.

Penrose Library

Penrose Library provides critical services, collections, and programs in support of the Whitman College mission and the needs of the college curriculum. The Library provides an exceptional space for learning, personal growth, and communication, while at the same time providing a variety of print and electronic resources and services that enable students to engage in intellectual exploration and creativity. The faculty relies on the Library to provide materials not only for their pedagogical needs but also to help advance their research agendas. These activities in turn feed back into the classroom, providing a model for the student scholar at an institution that actively promotes undergraduate research.

Librarians at Penrose Library value an environment focused on teaching and learning. Instructional programming occurs at several different levels, all aimed at integrating life-long information literacy skills into a student's larger academic development. Librarians work collaboratively with faculty to prepare classroom presentations that facilitate a problem-based approach to instruction. The instructional program is fundamentally about "source literacy" to insure that students have an understanding of the differences and the uses of primary and secondary sources. This approach provides the opportunity to move beyond simply reviewing secondary literature and into engaging in original research. Students are gradually learning how to construct "Research Questions" and integrate primary sources (both digital and analog) into their work. In essence, they begin to experience the complex and messy world of scholarship.

Beyond supplying rich and deep collections for research and learning needs, the Library offers physical and virtual spaces to meet the College's mission of graduating critical thinkers. The Library is open 24 hours a day/7 days per week during the academic year and many of its resources are available in digital formats. The building provides a variety of spaces for learning opportunities including group study, quiet individual study and audio-visual support rooms. An informal environment is encouraged by providing appropriate furnishings that lead to collaborative, discussion-based learning. By focusing on the social as well as the intellectual needs of students, personal growth and social development are fostered in the Library – values which the College strives to instill in Whitman graduates.

College History and Background

Whitman College traces its roots to the 1830s. In 1836, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman established a mission and a school near Walla Walla to teach the Cayuse Indians to read and write their native language. Later, the couple provided assistance to Oregon Trail travelers. However, the Whitmans were killed in 1847, and fellow missionary Rev. Cushing Eells resolved to establish a school in their honor. The Washington Territorial Legislature granted a charter to Whitman Seminary on Dec. 20, 1859. College courses were first offered at Whitman in 1882 and on Nov. 28, 1883, the legislature issued a new charter, changing the seminary into a four-year, degree-granting college.

Whitman prizes its independence from sectarian and political control. The college has remained small in order to facilitate the close faculty-student interaction that is essential to exceptional higher education. In 1914, Whitman became the first college or university in the nation to require undergraduate students to complete comprehensive examinations in their major fields. The installation of a Phi Beta Kappa chapter in 1919, the first for any Northwest college, marked Whitman's growing reputation.

One of Whitman's most recognizable campus landmarks is the clock tower atop Memorial Building, which was constructed in 1899. Among recent construction projects are the upgrade of the Sherwood Athletic Center and the Glover Alston Center, along with the renovation and expansion of Maxey Hall, Penrose Library, the Hall of Science and Harper Joy Theatre. Newer buildings include the Fouts Center for Visual Arts, the Baker Ferguson Fitness Center/Harvey Pool, the Welty Center (health and counseling services) and the Reid Campus Center.

Whitman is committed to providing information technology tools for all members of the college community. All residence hall rooms have connections to the campus network. The college provides all students with computer accounts, email addresses and access to the internet through wired and wireless connections. Computers are available for use in the library and in several computer labs around campus.

The campus is one block from the downtown Walla Walla, a city of 32,000 in southeastern Washington. The town's setting among golden wheat fields shadowed by the Blue Mountains provides countless opportunities for outdoor pursuits. Named one of the nation's top 25 "small town cultural treasures" and cited by *Sunset* magazine as having the best Main Street in the West, Walla Walla is known for its art galleries, symphony orchestra, community theater and premium wineries. Whitman sponsors dance groups, operas, musical soloists, film festivals and performances by the college's excellent music and theatre departments. The college hosts nationally recognized lecturers in science, letters, politics, current history and other fields.