



WILMETTE INSTITUTE

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877-wilmette (toll free)

July 30, 2013

Dear Friend:

The Wilmette Institute, an educational institution operating under the auspices of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, has been, for the last seventeen years, contributing to the development of human resources within the Bahá'í community, its friends, and supporters. It delivers flexible, well-organized, formally conducted academic, professional, and service-oriented programs that are designed according to standards of excellence and the Bahá'í standard of independent investigation of truth. Enclosed is a fact sheet about the Institute's goals and services for your review.

Demand for our services has steadily grown, from 350 learners per year in 2008 to 900 per year in 2012-13. We recently upgraded our course management system and launched a web based video conferencing system that should greatly improve our learning experience. A particularly exciting development has been increased interest in our courses by Native Americans, eleven of whom took our course on the **Secret of Divine Civilization**. As a result of advertising on Facebook, we have increased overseas interest in our courses including in the Third World. The number of people returning to take a second, third, and fourth course has greatly increased.

However, not everyone can afford our tuition. Many university students, senior citizens, and overseas pioneers depend on our twenty percent tuition discount to take our courses, and the fact that it exists encourages others to ask for it. Many learners refuse to ask for scholarships on the grounds that others are more worthy than they, but they are willing to accept discounts. We have found that discounts have become a major avenue for many learners to take our courses. We have also found that courses on some Bahá'í authoritative texts simply won't fill sufficiently unless we offer a half price special.

Therefore we turn to you for support for all three of these closely related forms of financial assistance: needs-based scholarships, discounts for special groups of students (including seniors and minorities), and subsidies for priority courses that otherwise won't run (especially courses on some authoritative texts). Last year we offered \$15,000 in assistance, draining our reserve fund significantly. Your assistance with these needs will make it possible for us to educate a larger number of Bahá'ís and prepare them better to teach the Faith and to serve the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

We enclose a contribution form (we cannot yet accept contributions online). We are immensely grateful for your assistance and for any support that you can provide. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about the Wilmette Institute or if we can be of any service.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

Dr. Robert H. Stockman, Director

Contribution Form

O God, my God! Illumine the brows of Thy true lovers, and support them with angelic hosts of certain triumph. Set firm their feet on Thy straight path, and out of Thine ancient bounty open before them the portals of Thy blessings; for they are expending on Thy pathway what Thou hast bestowed upon them.

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Our goal is to offer 300 scholarships totaling \$20,000

These contributions will be used to provide full and partial scholarships, discounts, and other course subsidies to interested individuals, in the United States and other countries, especially developing countries.

Please provide the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

Please make checks payable to Wilmette Institute and send to the address below.

Wilmette Institute
Bahá'í National Center
1233 Central Street.
Evanston, IL 60201-2886

*Your charitable contributions may be tax deductible
Thank You!*

Wilmette Institute

Fact Sheet

The Wilmette Institute, an educational agency of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, was founded in January 1995 to contribute to the development of human resources within the Bahá'í community, its friends, and supporters. It delivers flexible, well-organized, formally conducted academic, professional, and service-oriented programs that are designed according to standards of excellence and the Bahá'í standard of independent investigation of truth.

The Institute began summer classes in 1996 and online courses in 1998. The online courses, available for individual or group enrollment, involve a series of units that require the student to read and post comments and complete a final integrative assignment. Local groups of learners who take courses together may enroll at a discount.

While only two courses were offered online in 1998, the number increased to twenty-eight in 2012-13. More than sixty courses have been developed and offered, some as many as seven times. Over 6,600 students, residing in ninety countries, have participated in our courses. In a typical year, about a third of our students either request scholarship assistance, benefit from needs-based discounts, or benefit from discounts necessary to make the courses affordable to non-Bahá'ís or large numbers of Bahá'ís.

In January 2008 a new course management system using Moodle software went live, greatly improving the quality of our courses. In November 2009 a new registration system using Cvent, a commercial event registration system, was inaugurated, and its registration and marketing capabilities doubled our enrollments overnight. In November 2012 our course software was upgraded and video conferencing was added.

Over the next five years, the Institute aims to improve its services to youth, develop courses on the Faith that are potentially accreditable by universities, expand its use of social media, steadily improve course quality, and train its faculty. The Wilmette Institute seeks to be a major center of study for Bahá'ís, their friends, and supporters as the need to study and apply the Bahá'í revelation continues to increase.