



December 10, 2015

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, is celebrating its twentieth anniversary in a greater position of strength than ever before. Our expansion has continued, with the number of learners reaching 1,200 in 2015. The number of courses we offer has increased to 48. Our free Web Talks have been instantly successful. We have started offering webinars and web video sessions in some of our courses and they have greatly enhanced learning. We have launched an effort to publish projects by our students on our public website to encourage their study and develop Bahá'í scholarship.

Our plans for the next Five Year Plan are even more ambitious. We want to establish relationships with universities so that our learners can receive college credit for selected courses. We plan to reach out to the community of interest in clusters all across the country. We also plan to utilize Web-based training of faculty and enhance our Web publishing, which requires an editorial board with professional expertise that requires some compensation.

Further, with the expansion in the range of courses we offer, demand for scholarships and discounts has increased. From May 2014 to April 2015 we gave out \$23,000 and anticipate giving out even more this year.

With plans to expand Institute services and enhance its delivery system to provide more people with the opportunity to develop their capacities to serve the Cause through acquiring knowledge, skills, and an orientation to learning and service, we set our annual financial goal **at \$45,000**.

We invite you to share our new plans with your community and friends and would appreciate your generous contribution to meet our financial goals for this year. For your convenience, we have included a Contribution Form and instructions if you prefer to make your contribution electronically.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the Institute's activities and functions. We deeply appreciate your support and look forward to your further involvement with the Wilmette Institute and its programs.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

Robert H. Stockman  
for the Wilmette Institute

**Wilmette Institute Board**

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Boyd Staszewski  
Robert H. Stockman

**Director**

Robert H. Stockman

Bahá'í National Center  
1233 Central St.  
Evanston, IL 60201-2886  
PH 1.877.wilmette  
PH 1.877.945.6388  
FX 1.847.733.3563  
info@wilmetteinstitute.org  
[www.wilmetteinstitute.org](http://www.wilmetteinstitute.org)

# 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

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## **Our goal is to offer \$45,000 in scholarships**

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, and to develop our programs.

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### **Please provide the following information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please make checks payable to Bahá'í Services Fund: 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.*

*Electronic contribution instructions on next page*

It is now possible to contribute to the Wilmette Institute online, if you are a Bahá'í residing in the lower forty-eight United States. Here are the simple steps:

- Type in <https://ocs.bahai.us/ocs/>.
- On “Online Contribution Page,” type in your User ID and Password. Then click on “Sign In.”
- On the next screen, click on “Enter Contribution.”
- On the following screen, click on “One-Time Contribution” or “Continuing Contribution.” Now you are five steps away from completing your contribution to the Wilmette Institute. For a one-time contribution, follow the steps below (steps for a continuing contribution are very similar):
  - 1. Select Fund and Donor:
    - A. Click on first blue square with white down-pointing arrow.
    - B. Choose “Wilmette Institute – Contribution.”
    - C. Enter amount you wish to contribute (include household members if you wish).
  - 2. Confirm Amount: View fund selected and amount.
  - 3. Select Payment Method:
    - A. Select payment date.
    - B. Select method of payment (bank account, credit card).
  - 4. Authorize Contribution.
  - 5. Contribution Complete.

# Wilmette Institute

## Fact Sheet

The Wilmette Institute, a center of Bahá'í learning under the jurisdiction of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, was founded in January 1995. Its programs aim to facilitate study and dialogue on the teachings and principles of the Faith to help individuals and communities apply learning and advance human civilization.

The Institute began offering 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 learner 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 forty-eight in 2015. More than seventy-five courses have been developed and offered, some as many as a dozen times. Nearly 10,000 students, residing in over one hundred fifteen 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 take advantage of discounts necessary to make the courses affordable.

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. Its registration and marketing capabilities more than doubled the Wilmette Institute's enrollments overnight. In November 2012 the Institute upgraded its course software and added video conferencing. In 2013 it upgraded the Moodle course-management system twice. In 2015 it inaugurated a series of free Web Talks, webinars (courses for pay that include regular live web video), a public web page with student projects, and a literary online journal about the arts in the Bahá'í community.

Over the next five years, the Institute aims to develop courses on the Faith that are potentially accreditable by universities, create new courses to reach the community of interest in advanced clusters, create free webinars and other programs to deepen Bahá'í youth, expand its use of social media, steadily improve course quality, expand its web publishing, and train its faculty more systematically. 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 principles of the Bahá'í revelation continues to increase; a “proto-mini-university” that provides a variety of educational services to the world.