

September 20, 2018

Dear Friends,



The Wilmette Institute stands at an important milestone in its progress. Last year we signed an agreement with a seminary that allowed its students—or anyone who registered as a student with them—to take six of our courses for credit, with the possibility of taking others with the school's permission. As a result, a Bahá'í was able to take six courses for credit toward her Masters in interfaith chaplaincy, and two others took one course each.

To get to the point where this was possible, we upgraded the quality of our courses, trained our faculty and staff in the use of learning objectives and grading rubrics, expanded our use of live web video in our courses, and instituted a system of departments with chairs to systematize our organization. We also improved course marketing, streamlined our registration process, and cleaned up our course delivery platform so it was easier to use.

And all of this cost money. The Wilmette Institute could no longer operate on a shoestring; it had to professionalize. We did this not just for an arrangement with one seminary, but because we are now aiming to set up similar arrangements with as many universities and professional schools as possible.

No one school currently has enough students to support a course on the Bahá'í Faith on a regular basis, but all the universities and colleges across the United States have enough students potentially to support a series of regular online courses on the Faith for credit. This will create in the upcoming generation a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Faith's verities and the crying needs of society. It will create Bahá'í faculty able to relate the Faith more effectively in an academic setting. And it will stimulate new educational materials and scholarship about the Faith.

In essence, the Wilmette Institute seeks to become an online Bahá'í Studies department for any school that wants its services.

But to do this, we need your assistance. With it, we'll be able to continue our noncredit courses—which serve about 1,300 people per year—and develop our free web video talks so they can educate the younger generation and develop the Bahá'í voice in public discourse. We thank you greatly for any support you can give.

Wilmette Institute Board

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Director

Robert H. Stockman

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

Robert Stockman, Director

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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

Please provide the following information:

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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.

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:
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 - B. Choose “Wilmette Institute – Contribution.”
 - C. Enter amount you wish to contribute (include household members if you wish).
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 - 3. Select Payment Method:
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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 courses that are designed according to standards of excellence and the Bahá'í standard of the independent investigation of truth.

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 fifty-eight in 2017. More than 110 courses have been developed and offered, some as many as fifteen times. Over 12,500 students, residing in 126 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 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. 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 2015 it inaugurated a series of free Web Talks and in 2018 it inaugurated discourse webinars.

Over the next five years, the Institute aims to establish partnerships with dozens institutions of higher education that will allow many students to take online courses on the Faith for credit. It plans to steadily improve course quality, expand its use of web video to reach young adults and the community of interest, increase its web publication of student projects and faculty research, and train its faculty in order to become the main source of Bahá'í-inspired university-level courses in the world.

