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August 10, 2020

Dear Friends,

The Wilmette Institute has made significant progress toward its goals in the last few months. In May, after hundreds of hours of design and implementation effort, the Wilmette Institute's new website went live. Designed with a university audience in mind, it immediately caught the attention of young people. Within three days, four people indicated that they wanted to take one of our university-level courses, and some wanted to take them for credit. Since that time, an astonishing 150 people have indicated similar interest! We have never had such an outpouring of interest in university-level courses before. And that was before we had designed and launched a marketing campaign!

Then in June, we submitted an application to the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, to affiliate. GTU is a consortium of Protestant, Catholic, and Unitarian schools of religion and institutes studying Buddhism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, which pool their resources to offer Masters and PhDs in religion and in its relationship to social justice. They invited us to affiliate back in January, and in July the first of three review meetings was positive. We are very busy designing courses that would be appropriate to offer for credit through GTU.

We are also busy with our application for accreditation through the Distance Education Accrediting Commission. We anticipate the final document will exceed 200 pages, of which we drafted about 150 last summer, and now we have to revise it all because of a year of experience. If we can achieve accreditation, it will be possible for hundreds of students per year to take Bahá'í courses and transfer the credit back to their undergraduate and graduate degrees. We will then design a marketing campaign to take our courses to as many students as possible.

We are doing all of this on top of offering more courses than ever (we will probably offer 70 in 2020) and to more students than ever before (between 1500 and 1900). We have added courses to serve 11 to 17 year olds for the first time and have reached over 200 of them so far. We are also offering more free live web video programs than ever before; as many as 12 per month, to audiences of up to 500, with a focus on public discourse.

Because the Institute is poised on the threshold of becoming a credit-granting educational institution, its financial needs are greater than ever before. Not only does it need to be raising several hundred thousand dollars per year to meet expenses, it also needs to start building an endowment to guarantee its long-term financial stability. Therefore we are turning to you, our friends and supporters, in an appeal for a greater outpouring of support and for long-term commitments, in order to bring our vision to fruition.

We thank all of you for your continuing support and hope you can assist us with these new challenges.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

Robert 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

Please provide the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Total amount enclosed: _____ Earmarked for web video noncredit courses

Please make checks payable to Bahá'í Services Fund: Wilmette Institute, and send to the address below.

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Your charitable contributions may be tax deductible.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE WILMETTE INSTITUTE ONLINE
Available only to Bahá'ís residing in the lower forty-eight United States

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.