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ZIDIA GIBSON

Students, faculty and staff congregate outside the Florence J. Gillmor Hall expansion in anticipation of the grand opening Sept. 16. The building – which cost \$14 million funded by donations, according to a Westminster College press release emailed to faculty and staff – boasts a 26,000 square foot expansion of the performing arts facilities.

## WESTMINSTER COLLEGE PERFORMING ARTS FACILITIES RECEIVES A MAKEOVER

When senior technical theatre major Briar Woodie first stepped foot inside the new Florence J. Gillmor Hall building earlier this semester, they “just kind of stood there,” absorbing the view. “It’s polar opposite of the old brick — which is beautiful in the other building — but it’s just ... it looks pristine,” Woodie said. Dozens of delicate light fixtures hang from the ceiling, smooth wood paneling covers the walls and an enormous winding staircase leads to a brand-new recital hall. The air is reminiscent of a recently purchased car: proud, accomplished and ready to be put to use. Westminster College’s latest building is finally here, and ready for showtime. *(Continued on page 2)*

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ZIDIA GIBSON  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



ZIDIA GIBSON

Students, staff and faculty tour the Florence J. Gillmor Hall expansion during the grand opening Sept. 16. The grand staircase leads to the Emma Eccles Jones Recital Hall, a music rehearsal room and offices. "It's going to be fantastic for the dancers," said senior technical theatre major Briar Woodie. "It's going to be great for the use and the space and being able to [...] separate everyone, because it was kind of like we were bumping elbows [before]."

(Continued from page 1)  
Florence J. Gillmor Hall boasts a 26,000 square foot expansion of the performing arts facilities, according to Dean of Arts and Sciences Lance Newman at the grand opening Sept. 16. New classrooms, rehearsal and performance spaces, an upgraded costume shop and a student lounge are just a few of the features, totaling \$14 million entirely funded by donations, according to a Westminster press release emailed to faculty and staff.

"It's going to be fantastic for the dancers," Woodie said. "It's going to be great for the use and the space and being able to [...] separate everyone, because it was kind of like we were bumping elbows [before]."

Prior to the expansion, Westminster dance students attended classes at the Ballet West studio in Trolley Square, according to a past Forum article covering the building construction delays. Woodie said other performing arts students also vied for limited space in the Jewett Center for the Performing Arts.

"[The theatre] costume shop

was in the basement with no windows and it was kind of like a dungeon," Woodie said. "And we would practice in the spaces that we would be performing in. [...] If dance kids needed it, or if music was doing something in there, [...] it was really hard to be able to have our own spaces to be able to do our own things."

Sydney Jones, a third-year music studies major, said the new facilities are a "way better space" for musicians, who also felt the strain.

“IT'S POLAR OPPOSITE OF THE OLD BRICK – WHICH IS BEAUTIFUL IN THE OTHER BUILDING – BUT IT'S JUST . . . IT LOOKS PRISTINE.”

**BRIAR WOODIE**

senior technical theatre major

"[In the past] we split the orchestra rehearsal room with the choir, and we always had a little bit of butting heads [over] where the music stands would be, the arrangement of the chairs and having to share the space," Jones said. "It was just like, learning to

share and trying to not step on anyone's toes."

Jones and Woodie both dealt with spacing issues for longer than expected: the COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent supply chain issues, played a part in delaying the grand opening, according to a previous Forum article.

"We've been waiting forever for [the building to open]," Jones said. "The very first time I walked into the big atrium and I got to look all the way up, I was like, 'This is the fanciest music building I've ever been in.'"

President Dobkin said the expansion has received praise since the grand opening Sept. 16.

"I think it showcases our students really well, and our faculty, because we have, of course, talented faculty [...], and their collaborations," President Dobkin said. "It's gotten a lot of positive attention and fits with our trajectory."

However, President Dobkin

said some details will be refined for at least the next year, a process that's "not unusual."

"There are some spaces that, it happens with any project once you get in and start using it, you realize things need to be tweaked a bit, or something's not quite right," President Dobkin said.

Briar Woodie, a senior technical theatre major, said they are familiar with these potential problem areas.

"There is a rehearsal space, but we call it the echo chamber because you can't say anything because it will echo for eternity," Woodie said. "For the most part, [the building is] beautiful [...] but [...] with any building, there's a couple of things you're like, 'Was that the best choice?'"

Regardless, Woodie said they are excited to use the new space for their upcoming performance, "Frankenstein," which they are designing.

"It's going to be so fun, it opens in October and so it's going to be a spooky show for spooky season," Woodie said. "I think it'll have people get excited about the season and see the cool new space." **F**

# STUDENTS REFLECT ON WESTMINSTER'S GEORGE WASHINGTON STATUE

LALISÉ ESHETÉ  
STAFF REPORTER

Before any student from Stock Hall, Behnken Hall or Olwell Hall can walk to Westminster College's residential parking lot, they must pass a 3 feet by 9 feet bust of George Washington's expressionless head and withstand its sharp-eyed gaze.

Though some faculty and off-campus students might be unaware of this statue, any student who has lived in the Residential Village and abided by the mandatory two-year residency requirement will be familiar with Washington's head.

The statue was originally a gift to commemorate the friendship between Peggy Stock — who presided over Westminster College from 1995 to 2002 — and a former George Washington University president, according to the plaque sitting underneath the bust.

In 2002, the year of the statue's arrival on Westminster's campus, Forum editor Matthew Gaschk referred to it as "hideous" and questioned its relevance to Westminster.

In a letter he wrote to the readers of The Forum, Gaschk

said, "What's the most important thing to Westminster College? Money. Whose bust rests on the front of the \$1 bill? George Washington. If you hold up a \$1 bill, it almost looks like the model used to create the giant George Washington head [...]."

Some current students said the statue is a confusing symbol.

"It's stranger to me [more] than anything," said Ben Snarr, a Stock resident and sophomore computer science major. "I mean you're looking around and then it's just George fucking Washington."

For others, the statue is not just an oddity, but a dissonance in Westminster's promise of inclusivity. Though George Washington is not technically a symbol of confederacy, he was a slave owner and is therefore relevant to recent "demands for a more honest accounting of American history," according to The New York Times.

"I think it's just counter-

intuitive for our school [...] that we preach for like advocacy and inclusivity, and then we have a monument recognizing someone who owned slaves and was [...] racist," said Josie Chesley, a former Westminster student and sustainability manager at Chesley Electric.

The statue made an impression on one newly-arrived Westminster student as well.

“IT'S STRANGER TO ME [MORE] THAN ANYTHING. I MEAN YOU'RE LOOKING AROUND AND THEN IT'S JUST GEORGE FUCKING WASHINGTON.”

BEN SNARR

Stock Hall resident, sophomore computer science major

"It's weird we have [the bust] up here, cause he had slaves and stuff," said first-year psychology major Emiline Krieser. "What's he got to do with us?"

Over the years, many Westminster students have tried to explain the bust.

Forum reporter Melissa Walker took a patriotic

approach in her 2002 article and said George Washington is relevant to Westminster because he is a Founding Father of the U.S.

Whether the statue provokes indifference or disapproval, it isn't treated with reverence. The statue was vandalized with a jack-o'-lantern on Halloween 2021.

"Yeah, you see a lot of stuff on there, especially during Halloween season," Chesley said. "I've seen pumpkins, beer cans — and in the winter I've seen people pack snow onto its face."

The statue was also used for a political protest in 2005. An unknown vandal glued tear drops to the bust in protest of George W. Bush's inauguration, according to a 2005 article by Forum reporter Trena Ahlstrom.

Past and recent vandalizations of the George Washington statue on campus reflect a nationwide push to remove confederate symbols, according to multiple articles published by The New York Times. Since 2015, 114 memorials were removed across the U.S., while over a thousand confederate symbols remain, according to a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

There is a history of removing statues on Westminster's campus as well, according to a 1998 Forum article by William Richlin, who referenced several bronze statues that had since been removed for unknown reasons.

Though there are conflicting opinions on George Washington's presence on campus, there are no significant calls for the statue's dismantling, which allow it to remain indefinitely. **F**



LILY MILLER

The signature of the sculptor, Avard Fairbanks © 1975, for the George Washington statue located next to Stock Hall Sept. 28. The statue is a site of many irreverent pranks, often in the spirit of Halloween, according to Josie Chesley, a former Westminster student and sustainability manager at Chesley Electric.

# WESTMINSTER OPENS DOORS FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY WITH TUITION-FREE PROGRAM

MADI GODDARD  
STAFF REPORTER

The Westminster Commitment is a tuition-free Westminster College program with the potential to encourage college attendance for incoming students who are statistically left out due to financial barriers.

“I think [The Westminster Commitment] covers a really distinctive way for students in Utah to take a look at Westminster, particularly for those who might not take a look at Westminster because of the prevailing narrative that Westminster is too expensive [and] not demographically diverse,” said Tamara Stevenson, the chief diversity officer, and vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion at Westminster.

The program is designed to cover the total cost of tuition for four years and is exclusively for Utah students who are out of high school and have a cumulative 3.3 GPA, according to the Westminster

Commitment webpage.

Applicants must be first-time students enrolling in the fall and come from a low-income household, according to the webpage.

Utah students looking at colleges in their home state will find Westminster College is the most expensive, according to The Salt Lake Tribune.

Victoire Soumano, a senior geology major and an international student from Mali, said she received a different form of financial aid from Westminster.

“My main thing in choosing [Westminster] was the programs and the financial aid situation,” Soumano said.

Soumano also said she was originally looking at a school in Montana, but after touring Westminster and applying, she received a scholarship.

“If I didn’t get the scholarship I wouldn’t be able to attend Westminster because I wouldn’t be able to afford it,” Soumano said.

## Diversity at Westminster

Westminster College diversity compared to national diversity ranks lower by about 20%, according to College Factual.

Nationally, enrollment rates for Black American students decreased by 8.8% in 2021, according to Research.com.

Students of color are more reluctant to take out student loans for college because of these factors, according to Tamara Stevenson, the chief diversity officer, and vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion at Westminster.

“It’s not that [students of color] don’t want to go college, university — they do — but that cost commitment, right, is daunting,” Stevenson said.

## FAFSA Completion in Utah

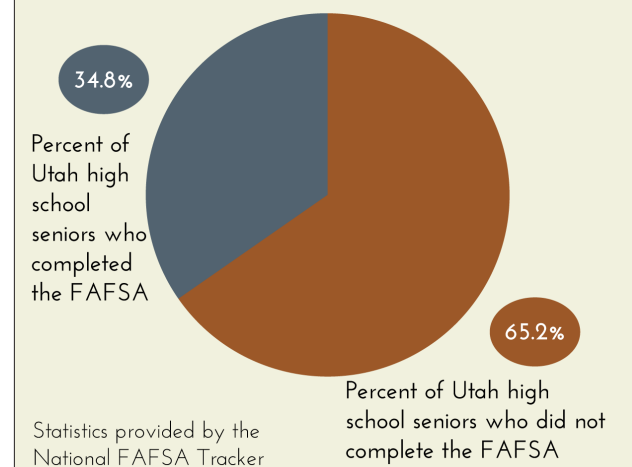
Incoming Westminster students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, to receive federal financial aid, loans, work-study and grants, according to the Westminster first-generation student resources webpage.

The National FAFSA Tracker shows Utah has a FAFSA completion rate of 34.8%, placing Utah second to last nationally, with the lowest being Alaska at 28%.

“I think that speaks to the willingness, the readiness, the understanding of the cost of higher education — and maybe the reluctance, [to apply]” Stevenson said.

Low completion rates may indicate Utah students are not getting the chance to receive any federal financial aid, which can help pay for college, according to

## Utah’s FAFSA Completion Rate as of June 24, 2022



VANESSA EVELETH  
This chart shows the percentage of high school seniors who completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Less than 35% of students in Utah completed the application, which could limit the ability to receive financial aid to attend college, according to the National FAFSA Tracker.

an Inside Higher Ed article based on findings from the National Center for Education Statistics.

“53% of students from the lowest quintile either never enrolled or delayed their enrollment by more than a year, compared to roughly 11% from the top quintile,” according to the Inside Higher Ed article.

In other words, over half of the low-income students are not enrolling in college after graduation.

The Westminster Commitment may help to change that, as one of the criteria for qualification is a student’s “total family household income must be below \$60,000 with limited assets,” according to the webpage.

The program and information are presented to high school students applying for college, according to Tamara Stevenson, the chief diversity officer, and vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion at Westminster, and can be found when researching financial aid on the Westminster College website.

“This particular program is a way to entice some of that attention,” Stevenson said. “And [I’m] excited to know we’ll be starting our first cohort this year.”

F

## What is the Westminster Commitment?

The Westminster Commitment is a tuition-free program for Utah students who have financial need. The scholarship covers tuition costs for eligible students for four years.\*

To qualify, students must:

Submit an admissions application by Feb. 1 Regular Decision deadline

Be admitted to Westminster College

Submit a FAFSA

Have a total family income below \$60,000 and limited assets

Have a cumulative high school 3.3 GPA

Graduate from a Utah high school

Enroll as a first-time, full-time undergraduate student in the Fall

\*Information courtesy of the Financial Aid office and can be accessed at [westminstercollege.edu/paying-for-college/financial-aid/the-westminster-commitment](http://westminstercollege.edu/paying-for-college/financial-aid/the-westminster-commitment).

VANESSA EVELETH

The graphic shows a short description and the requirements for qualification for the Westminster Commitment program. The information can be found on the Westminster College website within the financial aid section.

# STUDENTS GROW A FRUIT ORCHARD, COURTESY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

LILY MILLER  
STAFF REPORTER

Westminster College students from the Environmental Center planted an orchard west of Black Bridge, which anyone in the community is welcome to take from, according to sophomore environmental science major and Environmental Center Organic Garden Coordinator Ashlyn Gnoyski.

“The trees were planted last spring, which is when the Orchard first got started,” Gnoyski said. “There is a lot of student involvement in the orchard.”

Gnoyski said she helps maintain the Orchard along with members of the garden team, which consists of students, faculty and staff.

The Orchard was created by a Westminster alum and environmental studies major Maile Kilmer, who came up with the idea as part of their senior project, according to Gnoyski.

Gnoyski said the Orchard has

running on a drip irrigation system, “so it basically waters itself as long as we make sure the watering is going correctly,” Gnoyski said. The drip irrigation system slowly drips water to the root of the plants, saving water in the process, according to Gnoyski.

Gnoyski said compost is also incorporated into the Orchard, which was previously only used in the Organic Garden. The compost was laid down first, then pieces of cardboard and lastly the mulch, according to Gnoyski.

The Orchard receives its funding from the Environmental Center, along with the environmental studies program, according to Gnoyski.

Anthony Wilson, a Sugar House resident who bikes across campus frequently, said they noticed the installation of the Orchard last year.

“The blueberries are great for picking, I have grabbed a handful myself a couple of times,” Wilson said.

Organic Garden webpage.

“More than 80% of the world’s flowering plants need a pollinator to reproduce; and we need pollinators too, since most of our food comes from flowering plants,” according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The campus hives are maintained by students and provide honey and wax, according to the Organic Garden webpage. Students can attend workshops about beekeeping, participate in a guided visit to the hives or be employed as beekeepers.

“We might be planning on planting some more fruits in the future as the current plants and trees develop more,” Gnoyski said.

Students who want to be involved with maintaining the Orchard can join the Organic Garden workdays, according to the Organic Garden webpage. Workdays occur every Tuesday, and anyone can join by visiting the Organic Garden located behind the Bicycle Collective. **F**

“ ALL OF THE VISIBLE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES THAT YOU CAN SEE IN THE ORCHARD ARE BASICALLY NEW THIS SEASON. ”

ASHLYN GNOYSKI

Environmental Center coordinator, sophomore environmental science major

a large variety of vegetables and fruits in various stages of growth at the moment.

“All of the visible fruit and vegetables that you can see in the orchard are basically new this season,” Gnoyski said. “We have some strawberry bushes, a lot of asparagus growing and an apple tree was planted.”

The Orchard is currently

Alison Carter, a sophomore undeclared major, said, “I love walking past the Orchard every morning on my way to class, and seeing the bees buzz around as the fruit thrives.”

Bees are pollinators to many plants, which is a compelling reason for the campus beehives’ location in the Orchard next to the creek, according to the



LILY MILLER  
Vines wrap around an archway as evidence of the Environmental Center’s efforts in the Orchard by Black Bridge on Westminster College Sept. 28. Ashlyn Gnoyski, a sophomore environmental science major and Environmental Center Organic Garden coordinator, said she helps maintain the orchard along with other student, faculty and staff members of the garden team.

# SNOWBOARDER ISABELLA GOMEZ NAVIGATES SPORTS AND SCHOOL

MIKEY O'HEARN  
STAFF REPORTER

Westminster College is highly regarded as a college of interest for professional athletes striving to compete on the big stage at the Olympic and Paralympic Games, according to Westminster's Olympic Legacy webpage.

Isabella Gomez, a junior environmental studies and graphic design custom major, is a member of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Team and said she takes pride in being a student while competing.

"Not a lot of people go to school while they're pushing their athletic career and so I 100% [do have Westminster pride on the slopes]," Gomez said.

Gomez said despite the overlap she tries to have her athletic career and student life exist separately.

"I'm starting off as a student just like everybody else. It's really important to have friends that are just at school," Gomez said. "A lot of people that go to school, their academics [are] the most important thing for them and I think that really motivates me to also take it super seriously and not let it go on the back burner."

Asa Miller, a junior management major who represented the Philippines at the 2018 and 2022 Winter Olympic Games, said he also makes a clear differentiation between his on- and off-season.

"When I am in school and not competing during the fall, school is very easy to balance with athletic training," Miller said.

Despite seeing Gomez sporadically, every moment with her is full and present, according to Ti'are Stroud-Lewis, a junior public health major and past roommate of Gomez.

"I try to support her in any way that I can," Stroud-Lewis said. "I'm probably one of her biggest fans."

Stroud-Lewis said Gomez's work ethic is vigorous and unwavering whether during the off-season when she is able to

focus more on school and friends or the on-season with a fixation on snowboarding.

"I notice that as a student and as an athlete as well, she goes all in; she gives 100%," Stroud-Lewis said.

While balancing both student life and an athletic career, Gomez said she maintains the ability to fully immerse herself in whatever world she's in.

"Bringing in both worlds but keeping them separate is something I really enjoy," Gomez said.

“ [SNOWBOARDING IS WHEN I'M] PROBABLY MY MOST AUTHENTIC SELF. I CAN BE THE MOST CREATIVE. ”

ISABELLA GOMEZ

junior environmental studies,  
graphic design custom major

**The following interview has been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.**

**Q:** How does your professional athletic career and student life overlap?

**A:** In my academics right now, I'm trying to pursue a graphic design major which carries into snowboarding with product design. Snowboarding translates into school with hard work, dedication and just always trying to put my best foot forward with what I'm doing. Snowboarding gives a broader perspective; it helps me think creatively when I'm going into projects.

**Q:** Is there a sense of community in professional athleticism at Westminster College?

**A:** I definitely think so. There's a U.S. Team gym up in Park City where we all go to workout in the off-season and through that I've met a lot of people. We all talk about going to school and the balance. We try to share tips

and how to make sure we're still pursuing athletics but also pursuing an academic career.

**Q:** How do you navigate athletic and student life alongside one another?

**A:** I try to reach out to people and have conversations with former student-athletes who have graduated from Westminster. I ask a lot of questions so there's little confusion on where my track is in terms of credit. I also try to share my experience when they ask for it so there's that sense of community.

**Q:** Is there Westminster pride when you're competing on the slopes?

**A:** I definitely take pride in being a student while competing. Not a lot of people go to school while they're pushing their athletic career and so I 100% do. Westminster is a really cool place because everyone is open to ideas whether you're with them or not. Westminster does a really good job of holding the space to have those ideas be vocalized and that is something I definitely want to carry into snowboarding, since it can be very tunnel-visioned in the sense of how things are done. I think diversifying ideas and allowing perspectives to come in and having a more classroom discussion about how we snowboarders want things to go in the industry would be a beneficial way to look at things.

**Q:** What does snowboarding mean to you?

**A:** It's probably my most authentic self. I can be the most creative. It's unlike conventional sports where there are rules and ways to do things. Every rider has the creative ability in how they want to present their style and how they want to approach a feature. Also being able to travel with my friends and doing what I love with those people that I love was a really special time for me.

**Q:** How has Westminster supported your athletic career?

**A:** Westminster has supported my athletic career with really being supportive in the sense of having open conversations. They've been very honest with me about how I should plan my four years here, and how I should arrange my classes. They have been very open with me about leaving the school for competition and athletic reasons. **F**



CHAR HARRIS  
Isabella Gomez, a junior environmental studies and graphic design custom major and member of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Team, completes a quarterpipe in Mt. Hood, Oregon on May 7, 2022. "The adrenaline of competing is the fact that you're trying to put out your best in that moment," Gomez said.

## STUDENTS CLIMB TO NEW HEIGHTS WITH UPDATED ROCK WALL



LALISE ESHETE

Cavin Meadows, a sophomore international business major, boulders on the updated Bishop's Wall in Westminster College's Health, Wellness and Athletic Center Sept. 29. Students and faculty have free access to the rock wall, according to Annie La Roche, a junior outdoor education and English literature custom major who has worked as a climbing wall manager and route setter for the last two years.

LALISE ESHETE  
STAFF REPORTER

Angular wood juts out in neat, modern patterns, dotted with multicolored plaster rocks, at the updated Bishop's Wall in Westminster College's Health, Wellness and Athletic Center.

A crowd of around 20 students and faculty took turns climbing the refurbished wall, some on belay (in a harness attached to a rope) and some bouldering (free climbing), while others watched and ate slices of pizza, at the grand opening of the new climbing wall Sept. 29.

Westminster's climbing wall is finally up and running after

construction and renovation since May 2022.

Recent additions to the wall include wood paneling and a slight two-foot increase, according to Annie La Roche, a junior outdoor education and English literature custom major who has worked as a climbing wall manager and route setter for the last two years.

"I like [the wall] a lot," La Roche said. "The design is very different but it's a lot better for route setting and management."

Maxwell Fouad, a junior history major and climbing instructor, said the wall's new appearance has also changed its overall effect.

“THE DESIGN IS VERY DIFFERENT BUT IT'S A LOT BETTER FOR ROUTE SETTING AND MANAGEMENT.”

ANNIE LA ROCHE

climbing wall manager,  
junior outdoor education and English literature custom major

“[THE NEW WALL IS] SUPER HYPE [...] BEING ALL WOOD LIKE THIS.”

MAXWELL FOUAD

climbing wall instructor,  
junior history major

"It gives more of a modern feel," Fouad said. "[The new wall is] super hype [...] being all wood like this."

The wall was given as an anonymous donation because the old one was due for a replacement, according to La Roche. The donor wanted to support the rock climbing passion on campus, La Roche said.

The wall's revamp has inspired more people to climb, according to La Roche, who said it's likely to get even busier.

"Lately it's been like 20-plus people climbing at the same time," La Roche said.

Cavin Meadows, a sophomore international business major, said he will "definitely come a lot more often" now that the wall has changed.

Any student or faculty who decides to utilize the new wall can expect free equipment and instruction on different types of rock climbing, such as lead belay, top rope (attaching the rope while climbing) and bouldering, according to La Roche. **F**

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## ASW EVENTS SEE INCREASED ENGAGEMENT, ACCORDING TO EVENTS PRESIDENT

DEVIN LOGAN  
STAFF REPORTER

The 2022–23 school year has begun and Westminster College’s returning students, along with the new faces of the Class of 2026, are showing more student engagement in campus events this year than in previous years, according to ASW Events President and senior business management major Denali Zebelean.

“People are eager to come and wanting the human connection so it’s really great, and it’s rewarding to see [everyone come together and have fun] at the events,” Zebelean said.

ASW events in the first week of school saw large numbers of students, according to Zebelean.

The Block Party was “really huge,” with 420 students who attended this year compared to the 150 people in previous years, Zebelean said. Movie night also had an attendance of about 80 people, and capture the flag had around 100 people show up, according to Zebelean.

Zebelean said she tries to cater the best she can to the campus when she organizes the events.

“It’s beautiful to come together and recognize our diversity and be one big community,” Zebelean said. “You can come as you are and you’re going to be accepted.”

To find out more information about the campus events, visit the ASW website or follow on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook @westminsterasw for up-to-date information. To contact Denali Zebelean with any inquiries, email her at [aswevents@westminstercollege.edu](mailto:aswevents@westminstercollege.edu).

“ YOU CAN COME AS YOU ARE AND YOU’RE GOING TO BE ACCEPTED. ”

DENALI ZEBELEAN  
ASW events president, senior business management major

F



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