

INSTITUTIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR LEARNING

[AS DEVELOPED BY CAMPUS CONSENSUS AND
UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE FACULTY SENATE
ON OCTOBER 11, 2005]

(1) Critical Thinking

Students will develop refined analytical or reasoning skills, including logical and quantitative reasoning abilities, and problem solving.

Students will develop and exhibit habits of curiosity necessary for lifelong inquiry, discovery, learning and appreciation of the world of ideas. They will be able to think, question, investigate and reflect critically about human societies, individuals and the environment. As a result of refining their analytical abilities, students will be capable of rendering informed, mature, systematic and sophisticated judgments about ideas and intricate human and societal problems, including contentious and complex questions requiring focused and intense intellectual inquiry, modeling and analysis.

(2) Communication

Students will develop effective communicative abilities, including listening, observing, speaking, writing and dialoguing.

Students will develop their capacity to listen and use language more effectively in both written and oral communications. They will be increasingly able to communicate cogently, persuasively and concisely. Students' writing will reflect an increasing ability to acquire, assess and organize complex material and articulate sophisticated arguments in a variety of written formats, including essays, memoranda and letters. Students will also demonstrate increasing confidence and refinement in their speaking and rhetorical abilities in diverse settings. In addition to improving their individual communication skills, they will also be able to effectively listen and engage in respectful dialogues with others on a variety of subjects.

(3) Reading and Literacy

Students will become active readers.

Students will improve in their ability to carefully, closely and thoughtfully read a range of texts, including journal articles, academic monographs, works of literature, visual images, performances, mass media and culture. Students will demonstrate a growing appreciation for the value of reading and the critical interpretation and evaluation of texts.

(4) Field or Discipline Specific Knowledge

Students will understand disciplinary modes of intellectual inquiry.

Through the introductory core and advanced study in their majors and minors, students will demonstrate a growing appreciation of disciplinary contexts, methodologies and conceptual frameworks. Students are expected to have a deeper understanding of the natural world and our human connection to it, a keener appreciation of the diverse forms of human creativity, a broader understanding of social and historical processes, a greater knowledge of literary and scientific traditions and deeper insight into human behavior.

(5) Interdisciplinary and Integrative Perspective

Students will recognize, explore, appreciate and engage the interconnections between disciplines.

In addition to developing enhanced abilities in one or more fields, students will be increasingly aware of the interconnections between primary modes of thought and inquiry as well as the necessity for multi-pronged approaches to solving complex problems. Students will have growing capacities to effectively integrate and synthesize diverse or discrete aspects of their educational offerings into a coherent and relevant whole. Through capstones, theses and other integrative experiences, including multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs, students will demonstrate abilities for linking knowledge from various sources and bringing such inter-relationships to bear on pressing intellectual and social dilemmas.

(6) Research

Students will develop advanced research abilities.

Students will demonstrate improvements in their information and media literacy. They will demonstrate an ability to apply their critical thinking skills and discipline-specific knowledge to the evaluation of sources. Students will demonstrate an enhanced capacity to engage in, communicate and disseminate independent research that employs a range of information resources and technologies. Students will recognize and adhere to the ethical obligations of researchers.

(7) Technology

Students will learn how to use appropriate technologies effectively.

Students will demonstrate an ability to use a range of technologies for research and communication. These include basic, everyday technologies such as e-mail and web search engines and more complex and discipline-specific technologies.

(8) Civic, Social, Intercultural and Global Competence

Students will demonstrate competencies, skills, attributes and values necessary for successful participation in a diverse, pluralistic and increasingly interdependent world.

Students will have a solid understanding of, and major concern for, aspects of diversity, including race, gender, sexuality, religion, culture, ability and opinion. Students will understand on-going social, political, economic, environmental, cultural and technological transformations and their mutually reinforcing impacts. Through a variety of international and intercultural learning experiences, students will develop the skills needed for local, national and global citizenship as well as for meaningful participation in the quest for equity, dignity, sustainability and social justice.

(9) Collaboration

Students will be able to work effectively in teams.

While evincing a capacity for independence and self-reliance in thought and action, students will also demonstrate social and collaborative skills necessary for effective functioning in collective endeavors.

(10) Balanced Personal Growth and Development

Students will strive to be well-balanced persons capable of making thoughtful and healthy choices.

Students will demonstrate the capacity for informed ethical and moral judgment. They will be able to make responsible and healthy lifestyle choices and to exercise ethical reasoning in all their interactions. Students will demonstrate creativity and imagination in their personal and professional lives. They will strive for a balance in their physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual domains.

(11) Practicality and Real-World Relevance.

Students will be able to apply theory in relevant, appropriate and reflective ways.

Students will be familiar with the real-world contexts and applications of theories. They will be able to reflect on their academic experiences and relate them to diverse real-world issues. They will appreciate the connections between what they learn and their everyday lives. Students will successfully participate in experiences such as internships, research, service learning and study abroad. The connection to the real world will increase students' confidence in selecting majors and/or exploring career options.