

## **Where do we start?**

### **MODELS OF GENERAL EDUCATION**

The best General Education Program is not based simply on choosing specific goals or finding the perfect model.

The best program is one that is aligned with the learning needs of the students on a specific campus and that the faculty of a campus believe in and teach with passion, commitment, and intentionality – only then can they help their students engage fully with its purposes and opportunities.

### **PRINCIPLES OF CURRICULAR DESIGN**

- Who are the students?
- What learning outcomes do they/we want?
- What content is most appropriate to achieve those outcomes?
- What teaching approaches and learning activities will be most effective?
- How should the learning experience be organized to achieve those outcomes?
- How will the success of the learning experiences (e.g. courses, program, co-curricular) in producing the desired outcomes be assessed?
- How will the information from assessment be used to improve student learning success?

## **Is the General Education program purpose congruent with the overall mission of the institution?**

### **EXAMPLES OF GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENTS**

The primary mission of the program is:

“...to provide a foundation of knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary for advanced study in academic disciplines and for personal growth as responsible, productive members of society.”

“...emphasis on active intellectual engagement in which the pursuit of better questions is as important as the pursuit of better answers”

“...to enable students to find out who they are, express the larger significance of things, and shape their lives accordingly.”

“...to prepare students for a lifetime of thoughtful living. To confront some basic issues of human existence through a progressive awakening to the contexts in which we live and the examination of values.”

“...the skills and perspectives of general education are integrally connected to mastery of a discipline and integrally linked to the campus’ research commitment.”

“...a liberal arts education is preparation for a lifetime of achievement that unites deep learning with practical application in the real world. It asks students to integrate knowledge and experiences in order to create new ideas and ways of solving problems.”

## How is the program different from other programs?

### “SIGNATURE” ELEMENTS TO DISTINGUISH THE PROGRAM

- reflects mission of the campus (e.g. Unity College the environmental studies college)
- takes advantage of location (e.g. Wagner in New York; Pacific Lutheran focus on the Pacific Rim)
- responds to special interests of the students (e.g. Mary Baldwin women’s leadership, adult student career development)
- meets needs of the community (e.g. Portland State city as a learning laboratory)
- uses distinctive pedagogy (e.g. Alverno College competency based)
- extends Western heritage (e.g. St. John’s Great Books)
- unified with 21<sup>st</sup> century theme ( e.g. Univ. of Central Florida: Global Climate Change)

## How do content, foundation skills, and student learning outcomes shape the program?

### KNOWLEDGE BASE – CONTENT GOALS

- Interpret and critically evaluate classical and contemporary works of literature as diverse expressions of the human condition.
- Understand the historical and philosophical traditions that shape the Western world.
- Explore the interaction of art and society.
- Study institutions, systems, and patterns of governance and of economic and social organization that underlie contemporary societies.
- Analyze similarities and difference between their own and other cultures that affect perceptions, beliefs, and behavior.
- Identify the factors which influence health behavior decisions.
- Understand concepts, patterns, and trends that characterize international and intercultural relations.

### SKILLS – MODES OF INQUIRY GOALS

- Read primary and secondary texts in English with comprehension.
- Speak with clarity and purpose in a variety of social and professional contexts.
- Listen attentively and participate effectively in oral discussions.
- Construct logical and persuasive arguments.
- Develop creative and expressive abilities in order to understand the qualities that shape an artist’s work.
- Practice problem solving using quantification, statistical analysis, and computer data manipulation.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how social scientists go about raising questions, formulating theories, and solving problems.
- Understand how the sciences use successive experimentation to replicate, control variables, explain error, and build explanatory models.
- Develop the ability to access, select, store, and manipulate electronic data.

### **VALUES – SELF AWARENESS GOALS**

- Demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of cultures both within and beyond the United States.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of the human quest for meaning, value, and order.
- Develop tolerance for different perspectives that emerge from problem-solving with others.
- Analyze major issues such as war and peace, global order, distributive justice, and the finite character of the earth's resources.
- Consider the contributions of ethical and religious systems to human life.
- Learn to appreciate how one arrives at beliefs and why they may differ from the perspectives of others.
- Develop respect for the finite resources of our planet, responsible use of technology and nuclear power, the limits of humane research, and the fragile wonders of the natural world.
- Demonstrate commitment to the value of acting upon one's beliefs in individual and community life.

### **LEARNING PROCESSES GOALS**

- Develop interests to be pursued in the years beyond college.
- Understand that not only knowledge but intellectual competence is necessary to thoughtful and effective participation in a constantly changing world.
- Introduce students to the excitement of discovery across a wide spectrum of fields of study.
- Establish a strong base of both content and modes of inquiry as the foundation for advanced study, application in different contexts and life long learning.
- Become comfortable with ambiguity and appreciate the value of challenging comfortable assumptions as part of an open and continuous learning process.
- Recognize one's own learning style and preferred modes of learning.

## **Does the General Education Program need renewal or should the focus be on how it is taught?**

### **PEDAGOGIES THAT DEEPEN LEARNING**

- Problem based learning, inquiry
- Service learning, community involvement
- Experiential learning, internships
- Undergraduate research
- Collaborative learning
- Continuous learning assessment
- Portfolio assessment and reflection
- Technology mediated discussions
- Integration of living and learning

## **ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING**

Best Practices in Undergraduate Education  
(1986 Chickering and Gamson, updated in 1995 by Ewell)

- Give special attention to transition to college.
- Set high expectations for student learning.
- Create synthesizing experiences.
- Create active learning experiences.
- Design collaborative learning experiences.
- Encourage time on task.
- Assess learning and give prompt feedback.
- Adapt learning experiences to diverse talents and learning styles.
- Increase informal contact with students.
- Require ongoing practice of skills.
- Provide coherent, progressive learning.
- Integrate learning experiences.

## **How should the program be structured?**

### **Frameworks or Models of General Education**

- Choices from among many courses (distribution)
- All students taking the same courses (required core)
- All students taking a few of the same courses and choices for the rest of the requirements (mix of core and distribution)
- All courses taken at the 100 and 200 level (roughly the first two years or the equivalent of the community college transfer modules)
- Courses taken at all levels from 100 to 400 (distributed across the four years)
- Courses taken together to strengthen interdisciplinary perspectives (tandem or clustered courses)
- Courses taken in sequence to promote study in depth (prerequisite or linked courses)
- Integration of goals into many courses (writing across the curriculum, technology intensive)

## **How many other “good things” do you need to include in the model to have a good program?**

- intentional advising
- co-curricular lecture series
- first year reading program
- service learning
- study abroad
- career counseling
- learning communities
- capstone experience
- team teaching

## THE WAGNER PLAN FOR THE PRACTICAL LIBERAL ARTS INTEGRATION OF GOALS AND PEDAGOGY WITH STRUCTURE

Private Liberal Arts College Enrollment 2000  
Staten Island, New York

Unique Features of the Undergraduate Program:

- emphasis on location,
- experiential learning,
- learning communities

The First Year Program

- integrate 3 courses to help students discover connections between subjects
- link all 3 courses to field work to connect ideas and real world problems
- learning communities are cluster of courses linked to a theme/student cohort o
- 3 hours per week in field linked to one of the courses--a Reflective Tutorial
- faculty member for the Reflective Tutorial is the student's advisor
- Reflective Tutorial emphasizes writing skills and discussion

Intermediate Learning Community

- taken anytime between first year and senior learning community
- can be used to fulfill CORE requirements
- addresses interdisciplinary topics (e.g. Economics and the Environment, Asian History, Politics and Film)

Senior Capstone

- learning community linked to the major
- synthesizes knowledge with fieldwork in chosen area of study
- senior capstone seminar is in the major

General Education Requirements (each courses 1 unit, students take 9 units a year)

Foundations (completed by end of sophomore year)

- writing (1 is first year Tutorial, 1 in literature)
- mathematics (1)
- speech (proficiency by assessment or course)
- computer (proficiency by assessment or course)

Intercultural Understanding (2 courses)

- American Perspectives
- International Perspectives

Disciplinary Perspectives (10 courses)

- Humanities (3, 1 must be in history))
- Social Science (3)
- Science ( 2, 1 with a lab)
- The Arts (2 from different disciplines)

## **THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY – SEQUENCED COURSES SKILLS INTEGRATED THROUGHOUT**

Doctoral Institution  
Located in Washington, D.C  
Approximately 6000 undergraduates  
General Education Program founded in 1989  
“INFORMED, EFFECTIVE MINDS”

Unique Features:

- Organized around perspectives not disciplines
- Reflects the global perspective of the University
- Students in all colleges take same program
- Sequenced courses with skills/goals integrated across all courses

Five areas of inquiry

1. The Creative Arts
2. Traditions That Shape the Western World
3. Global and Multicultural Perspectives
4. Social Institutions and Behavior
5. The Natural Sciences

Students choose two courses in each area:

- a foundation course and a second level course in the same cluster(100 and 200 level)
- over time has been restructured to be less restrictive
- two clusters for each area 4 foundation, 10 second level, 1 wild card
- register for the foundation in one semester and the second-level course in the subsequent semester

Courses in an area of inquiry may be from many disciplines and/or interdisciplinary

Students may not take more than two from a single discipline

Integrated into all courses:

- writing and communication skills
- critical thinking and information literacy
- recognition of ethical issues
- development of quantitative and computing skills
- development of intuitive and creative abilities linked to reasoning
- attention to gender, race, class, and non-Western perspectives

No courses can be transferred in after matriculation

Courses taught primarily by full-time faculty

Variable class sizes

## ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE—CORE CURRICULUM DESIGNED FOR A COMMON EXPERIENCE

Private, Catholic Liberal Arts College  
1000 students  
Core Program founded in 1969

Unique Features:

- Over arching theme is Christian Humanism
- team planned, about 10 faculty for each core course
- interdisciplinary around major themes
- taken throughout the four years in sequence from first to senior year
- equivalency guidelines for students who transfer out

Focus is on building intellectual community among faculty and students

Courses taught in large lecture to entire class followed by small discussion groups of 16-18  
Guest lectures, films, and other presentations complement courses and are for all students

Common assignments for all students in the core

Recent effort to integrate writing in the core with assignments in the major

Critical reading of classic texts from both the West and the East integrated into the core

<i>Semester 081 (Fall 2008)</i>	<b>NEW</b> <i>Semester 082 (Winter 2009)</i>
<b>Core One</b> <a href="#"><u>The Contemporary Situation</u></a>	<b>Core Two</b> <a href="#"><u>The Modern World</u></a>
<b>Core Three</b> <a href="#"><u>The Roots of Western Civilization</u></a>	<b>Core Four</b> <a href="#"><u>Christian Impact on Western Civilization</u></a>
<b>Core Five</b> <a href="#"><u>Humanity in the Universe I</u></a>	<b>Core Six</b> <a href="#"><u>Humanity in the Universe II</u></a>
<b>Core Seven</b> <a href="#"><u>Intercultural Studies -- China (081)</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Intercultural Studies -- India (071)</u></a>	<b>Core Eight</b> <a href="#"><u>Intercultural Studies II -- Latin America (072)</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Intercultural Studies II -- Africa (082)</u></a>
<b>Core Nine</b> <a href="#"><u>Toward a Christian Humanism</u></a>	<b>Core Ten</b> <a href="#"><u>Seminars in Christian Humanism</u></a>

### SALVE REGINA –MIXED CORE AND DISTRIBUTION

Private Catholic, Liberal arts  
Enrollment 2100 undergraduates  
New Program begun in 2005

**Core Courses:**

Portal Course	GST 150 Seeking Wisdom: From Wonder to Justice
Literature	ENG 150 What It Means to Be Human
Religious Studies	RST 210 Christianity in Dialogue with World Religions
Philosophy	PHL 220 Philosophy and Responsibility
Capstone Course	GST 450 The Capstone Experience

**Core Complement**

Foreign Languages (6) Mathematics (3) Social Sciences (9) Literature (3)  
Natural Sciences (6) Visual and Performing Arts (3) Religious Studies (3)

## SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY – THEMATIC CLUSTERS

The Core seeks to create a University learning environment that enables students to achieve intellectual excellence, live as responsible citizens, and seek to be of constant service in creating a more just and humane society. The Core encompasses three thematic course clusters: Laying Foundations, Reaching Out, and Integrating for Leadership. The progression of these clusters is not strictly chronological, nor will all students study Core courses in exactly the same sequence. They will, however, study the same courses based upon the same sets of criteria for inclusion in the Core. The Santa Clara Core Curriculum expresses the psychological dynamics of building on the foundation of one's developing identity (*Who am I?*), then moving out to encounter new realities (*What is the world like?*), and then returning to oneself to integrate these new realities into one's world view as a basis for serving others (*What is my relationship to the world? How should I act?*).

### Laying Foundations

The first cluster of core courses prepares the foundations for the competence and excellence that the University hopes will mark all of its graduates. The traditional building blocks of liberal education—language, culture, and mathematics—challenge students to reflect upon the diverse communities they have experienced in their own lives and to begin to sharpen the analytical tools they will need for whatever paths they choose.

### Reaching Out

The second cluster of core courses expands students' perspectives in two ways. First, students are immersed in the methods of inquiry that a citizen of the 21st century requires to participate in a civic dialogue that is increasingly global in scope. This participation will entail an ability to understand an expanding range of complex topics, including political, religious, scientific, ethical, and social concerns. Second, students are challenged to begin to understand the diverse cultures and societies with whom they share this fragile planet. The expansion of horizons in these ways is intended to encourage the continuing development of intellectually grounded moral compassion in the Santa Clara graduate.

### Integrating for Leadership

The third cluster of core courses are transition courses that straddle both the core and the focused areas of study that comprise students' majors, minors, and other academic and co-curricular programs. They seek to complement these other areas of study by encouraging disciplined reflection on the moral stance those who have earned Santa Clara degrees will adopt in their lives as a result of their engagement with this University's learning environment. Graduates will leave the University as life-long learners, with consciences that are at once both critically formed and always in the process of being critically re-formed.

#### First Theme: Laying Foundations

- English Composition
- Religious Studies (first course)
- Mathematics
- Second Language
- United States
- Western Culture

#### Second Theme: Reaching Out

- Natural Science
- Social Science
- Technology
- Religious Studies (second course)
- World Cultures/Societies

#### Third Theme: Integrating for Leadership

- Ethics
- Religious Studies (third course)
- Third Writing Course