BTtoP History and Background

Founded in 2003, the Bringing Theory to Practice (BTtoP) Project encourages and supports colleges and universities in reaffirming their core purposes and developing sustainable campus cultures to support the advancement of higher learning and discovery, the well-being of the whole student, and higher education’s mission as a public good to deepen and sustain the civic society.

BTtoP is the only national independent initiative focused on attending to the connections and explorations of each of these integral pieces of the mission of higher education together. BTtoP is also aware that discussions surrounding the value and promise of higher education are ongoing in our society, and that there are many who share BTtoP’s concerns about the depth of student learning, the availability of opportunity for meaningful civic engagement and development, and the consideration of students as whole persons.

To enrich these conversations and the promise of their outcomes, BTtoP aims to be a supportive ally and resource as institutions craft their own deepened campus culture for learning—one that expects and delivers a context in which students can have a truly liberating and transforming experience, and that is valuable in itself and valuable in its utility—what “higher” education can mean and be. Having gained foundation and individual support of over $9.3 million from the project’s inception, BTtoP has awarded over 460 grants at varying levels to hundreds of diverse colleges and universities.

In 2013-2014, BTtoP announced over $700,000 of support (including campus matching) to twenty-nine campuses reflecting the breadth of higher education. The intent of this collaborative learning community was to jointly gain greater understanding, and then to encourage practices and policies that demonstrate commitment as institutions, and as educators, to valuing and promoting the transformative promise of higher education for students—a promise much richer than what may prevail elsewhere; a promise and expectation of connecting rigorous and engaged learning to being a whole person. A comprehensive report of BTtoP’s ten years of funding is forthcoming this year.

Campus Stories

Georgetown University, Washington, DC
Georgetown University’s “The Engelhard Project for Connecting Life and Learning” focuses on teaching to the whole student by bringing health and wellness issues into the classroom in a way that supports student knowledge gain and encourages students to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviors.

Using a curriculum infusion approach, Georgetown faculty link academic course content to health and wellness topics through readings, presentations, discussions led by campus health professionals, and reflective writing assignments. In addition, fitting with Georgetown's focus on social justice, some
courses extend those discussions and reflections into work in local communities. The project strives to create meaningful connections between faculty, students, and campus health professionals and encourages the practice of one of Georgetown’s most important Jesuit principles, cura personalis, or care for the person, while engaging in personal growth and learning. Since the project’s inception in 2005, more than 14,000 students have taken Engelhard courses taught by more than 85 faculty members.

**Chattanooga State Community College, Tennessee**
Chattanooga State Community College is implementing an “Executives-in-the-Classroom” project to pilot a modernization of the college’s freshman success course. The vision of the project is to provide a distinct contrast to the traditional lecture experience and build a campus culture of social responsibility and civic engagement. Chattanooga State is committed to strong work ethic development, focusing on the personal well-being of every student.

Through “Executives-in-the-Classroom,” faculty and staff model strong work ethic and develop courses that include mentoring and service-learning activities; local businesses become active partners with the college to help build a workforce grounded in strong work ethic principles and civic mindedness; and students have the opportunity to develop a personal commitment to strong work ethic and community involvement that is directly related to their intended academic and career paths. Due to the successful launch of this program, the college is asking each of the academic divisions to develop a robust freshman experience course incorporating the core design of the "Executive-in-the-Classroom" pilot work for fall 2015.

**Wagner College, New York**
In the First-Year Program, each Wagner student enrolls in a learning community comprised of three courses taught by two faculty members from different disciplines and each learning community links the course content with an experiential component that consists of service learning, field-based learning, or a combination of both. Students reflect on their experiences through intensive writing and discussion.

Students and faculty in the First-Year Program completed questionnaires each year about their experiences. Although levels of well-being were fairly high for most students, analysis of the student data showed that service learning and student well-being were related positively. Students in learning communities that were engaged with service learning (some or all of their off-campus experiences were service or civically engaged) reported higher levels of social, emotional, and psychological well-being than students in learning communities that were engaged primarily in field-based learning or field trips. Further, higher levels of engagement initiated by the faculty members with the experiential learning site(s) and the students were positively related to higher levels of student well-being.

**S. Engelhard Center**
Founded in 2008, the S. Engelhard Center supports projects and initiatives that affect greater and sustained commitments by educational institutions at all levels to provide effective means of addressing the intellectual, emotional, and civic development of today’s students in preparation for claiming their positive future. The Center is supported by the generosity of the Charles Engelhard Foundation, The Endeavor Foundation, The Lumina Foundation, The Teagle Foundation, The Spencer Foundation, and The William and Mary Greve Foundation.
Degree Qualifications Profile

*A template of proficiencies required for the award of college degrees at the associate, bachelor’s, and master’s levels

Knowledge

At each degree level, every college student should demonstrate proficiency in using both specialized knowledge from at least one field and broad, integrative knowledge from arts and sciences fields. Both kinds of knowledge should be pursued from first to final year, providing opportunities for integration across fields and application to complex problems—in the student’s area of emphasis, in out-of-school settings, and in civil society.

Broad and Integrative Knowledge

Key areas include the sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, and global, intercultural and democratic learning. In each area, students:

• Learn key concepts and methods of inquiry
• Examine significant debates and questions
• Make evidence-based arguments

In addition, at each degree level, students:

• Produce work that integrates concepts and methods from at least two fields

Specialized Knowledge

Students demonstrate depth of knowledge in a field and produce field-appropriate applications drawing on both major field and, at the B.A. level and beyond, other fields. Students learn:

• Discipline and field-specific knowledge
• Purposes, methods, and limitations of field
• Applied skills in field
• Integrative skills and methods drawing from multiple fields and disciplines.

Intellectual Skills

Students hone and integrate intellectual skills across the curriculum, applying those skills both to complex challenges within major fields and to broad, integrative problem-solving challenges. Skills include:

• Analytic inquiry
• Use of information resources
• Engaging diverse perspectives
• Ethical reasoning
• Quantitative fluency
• Communication fluency

Civic and Global Learning

Students acquire knowledge required for responsible citizenship both from their formal studies (see knowledge and skills, above) and from community-based learning, and demonstrate their ability to integrate both forms of learning in analyzing and addressing significant public problems and questions, both in civic and global contexts. Civic learning may be demonstrated through: research, collaborative projects and/or field-based assignments.

Applied and Collaborative Learning

Students demonstrate their ability to integrate and apply their learning (see knowledge and skills, above) in complex projects and assignments, including collaborative efforts, that may include: research, projects, practicums, internships, work assignments, performances, and creative tasks.

*A draft second edition of the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) was released for preview at AAC&U's 2014 Annual Meeting. DQP 2.0 is informed by feedback from faculty and leaders from hundreds of colleges, universities and community colleges that worked with the “beta” version of the DQP which was published in January, 2011. Following further discussion with the field, the first edition of the DQP was officially released on October 8, 2014. The Degree Qualifications Profile is available for download at http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/The_Degree_Qualifications_Profile.pdf.
General Education (G.E.) Paths at California State University, Northridge

CSUN students have the opportunity to enroll in **GE Paths**, an alternative approach to meet General Education (GE) requirements around a special theme or major question based upon their personal and intellectual interests. GE Paths clusters and connects multi-disciplinary courses and learning approaches to provide a cohesive and engaging student experience. Students can choose from among six paths:

- Evolutionary Thinking
- Arts, Media, and Culture
- Social Justice
- Health and Wellness
- Global Studies
- Principles of Sustainability

GE Paths advances the understanding of the theme through broader academic exploration beyond the traditional academic dividing lines, bolstering collaboration and different learning approaches across multiple disciplines.

GE Paths advances the understanding of a theme by combining multiple disciplines and learning approaches, and encouraging collaboration across traditional academic dividing lines.

To date, 99 faculty are participating in the program, with more classes and sections added each semester. The university continues to scale up the program. In spring 2015, more than 5,400 students enrolled in GE Path courses, an increase of 20% from the previous year. In addition, CSUN has partnered on the project with Los Angeles Pierce Community College. Students who begin their college careers at Pierce can complete the lower division portion in five of the six paths at Pierce and then “finish” the path with upper division general education coursework at CSUN.

GE Paths also offers faculty the possibility to participate in faculty learning communities around themes of their interest. It also provides opportunities for faculty development addressing certain pedagogies such as high impact practices. It creates a forum that intentionally connects faculty, which in turn encourages campus community and engagement, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Specific student learning outcomes have been defined for each path. As a sample, below are the expected student learning outcomes for the Arts, Media, and Culture path:

1. Students will be able to define aesthetics, culture, and media and their interconnections.
2. Students will explain the rich and varied genres of aesthetic expression across a diverse range of visual, written, and oral forms of culture.
3. Students will be able to analyze various artistic, literary, intellectual, and other works of culture with the appropriate theoretical concepts.
4. Students will be able to evaluate various cultural forms, new media, and social phenomena.
5. Students will create their own literary and artistic works.

To review the expected learning outcomes for the other paths and for more information about the GE Path program, visit [www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/ge-paths](http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/ge-paths).
# Curriculum to Career

The Lynk: Mount Holyoke’s signature approach to connecting the liberal arts with practical experience through curriculum-to-career pathways. It encompasses:

- enhanced advising, sophomore institute, embedded practitioners, alumnae networking, industry and field site visits, senior capstone
- faculty development program offering incentives for connections between learning objectives in the major and post-graduation opportunities
- $3,000 to $3,600 available to every student to support a summer internship or research opportunity domestically or abroad

Nexus: professional tracks that include academic courses, pre- and post-experience courses, practical experience, and presentation at the Learning from Application (LEAP) Symposium. The current tracks are: Development Studies; Educational Policy and Practice; Engineering; Global Business; Journalism, Media, and Public Discourse; Law, Public Policy and Human Rights; Non-Profit Organizations; and Public History, Archives, and Museums.

Innovation Hires: faculty hires emphasizing curricular invention and a bold reimagining of the liberal arts for future generations.

# The Equity Imperative

Community College Transfer Initiatives: with support from the NSF, the initiative provides scholarships for transfer students to complete science majors and prepare them to enter graduate programs and careers in STEM fields.

Makerspaces: opportunities for girls and women to engage in hands-on experimentation and invention to develop solutions to life science challenges in fields ranging from public health to biotechnology.

Community-Based Learning: courses, independent studies, internships, and research and service projects that combine learning and analysis with community action and social change.

# Globalization

VP 50: in-class tele-collaborations designed to broaden students’ understanding of international and global issues; raise awareness of how global issues play out in practice; deepen cross-cultural understanding; enhance language proficiency; and link interests and career paths.

Global Scholars in Residence: engage the community in dialogue on global issues in lectures, classes, and informal gatherings. The 2014 scholar-in-residence was Nobel Peace Prize-winner Leymah Gbowee who focused on women’s leadership in ending wars and building peace.