SUNY Geneseo Campus Commitment to Applied Learning

Overview of Applied Learning on Campus

SUNY Geneseo has discussed applied learning on campus for many years, but as part of a broader conversation on “transformational learning.” In 2008-09, we became part of the Leadership Coalition of the national Bringing Theory to Practice project affiliated with Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Through this project, SUNY Geneseo is developing a model that integrates academic learning, civic engagement, and personal/social development to educate the whole student. This approach is sometimes referred to as transformational learning, and includes what George Kuh identifies as high-impact practices, such as applied and experiential learning. In 2012, SUNY Geneseo used transformational learning as a theme and organizing principle for the Self-Study Report generated for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education re-accreditation process, and ultimately added transformational learning to the college’s Mission Statement:

“SUNY Geneseo, nationally recognized as a center of excellence in undergraduate education, is a public liberal arts college with selected professional and master’s level programs. It combines a rigorous curriculum, transformational learning experiences, and a rich co-curricular life to create a learning-centered environment. The entire college community works together to develop socially responsible citizens with skills and values important to the pursuit of an enriched life and success in the world.”

Specific examples of programs/offices/centers responsible for applied learning:

Academic Affairs
- Academic Departments – research, directed study, and internships
  - Real World Geneseo Project and Extreme Learning course model
- Center for Inquiry, Discovery, and Development
  - Carnegie Elective Classification in Community Engagement – service-learning
  - Student Ambassador Program – student designed independent projects
  - Institute for Community Well-Being - campus/community partnerships
  - The Edgar Fellows Program - honors program
- Office of International Programs – study abroad, international partnerships
- President’s Office – planning and public outreach on Presidential Commissions
- Sponsored Research – support of undergraduate research

Administration and Finance
- Office of Sustainability – campus community partnerships to promote ecological justice

Student and Campus Life
- Career Development
  - Internships
- Center for Community
- Student volunteerism and service-learning
- The GOLD Leadership Program
- Real World Geneseo Program
- Orientation Advisor Program
- YouBelong Program
- First-Year Adirondack Program

• Health & Counseling
  - Geneseo Healthguards Program
  - Alcohol & Other Drug Advocates Program

• Residence Life
  - Living-Learning communities
  - Community-Based learning
  - Resident Assistants

• Intercollegiate Athletics and Recreation
  - Community Service
  - Travel Abroad
  - Student-Athlete Foundational Education (S.A.F.E.) Program

• Student Life
  - Student Life Internship Program
  - Student Organization Leadership/Governance
  - Student Organization service and philanthropic endeavors
  - MacVittie College Union Student Manager Program
  - Off-Campus Travel Program
  - All-College Hour Speaker series
  - AAC&U VALUE Assessment Project

**Types of Applied Learning Campus is Known For/Proud Of:**

SUNY Geneseo is known for many types of applied and experiential learning opportunities, and is restructuring our curriculum to ensure every student encounters at least one transformational learning experience prior to graduating. SUNY Geneseo is most proud of:

**Community Engagement** – in January 2015, the Carnegie Foundation selected SUNY Geneseo as one of 240 institutions to receive the 2015 Community Engagement Classification. This Carnegie Classification recognizes SUNY Geneseo’s commitment to the partnership between college and community to develop our students into socially responsible citizens. In addition, SUNY Geneseo was named to President Obama’s 2014 Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction in the Interfaith Community Service category, a national recognition for our commitment to community service and service-learning. Geneseo is also on the 2014 President’s Honor Roll in three other categories: General Community Service, Economic Opportunity, and Education. The college has been on the honor roll every year since the program was launched in 2006.
**Study Abroad** – In the fall of 2013, SUNY Geneseo joined the American Council on Education’s (ACE) Internationalization Laboratory with the goal of strengthening our commitment to internationalization, “the process by which institutions foster global learning.” One of SUNY Geneseo’s major strengths is the number of students who participate in study abroad. Currently, approximately 40% of undergraduate students participate in host institution or faculty-led programs before they graduate. This number represents the highest percentage of students studying abroad within the SUNY system, reflecting the important steps the Study Abroad Office, members of the faculty, and other members of the College have taken to help students plan for this pursuit.

**Undergraduate Research** – SUNY Geneseo has a strong tradition of providing undergraduate research opportunities for students. Student involvement in externally-funded research projects began in the 1970s. In 1989, the Undergraduate Research and Travel Grants program was established by the Student Association and the Geneseo Foundation and program funding is currently in excess of $123,000 per year. Currently a total of approximately 270 student research/travel grants, assistantships, and fellowships per year are supported by the Geneseo Foundation, Student Association, and endowments. Each semester 40 to 50 students are engaged in honors research, and between 400 and 500 students per year accrue directed study academic credit for research. Additionally, 40 to 50 undergraduates are employed each year as research assistants on grants from such agencies as the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the National Institutes of Health. Over 800 undergraduates present the results of their research at our annual college-wide student symposium, GREAT Day (Geneseo Recognizing Excellence, Achievement and Talent), and our undergraduates also make approximately 150 presentations each year at regional, national and international professional conferences.

**Types of Applied Learning Campus is Focused on Building:**

As part of SUNY Geneseo’s effort to ensure all students have at least one transformational learning experience prior to graduating, we are continuing to work on growing our applied and experiential learning offerings. Current applied learning efforts include:

**Entrepreneurship** – VentureWorks@Geneseo is an entrepreneurial training and networking program for SUNY Geneseo students in all majors interested in building high-tech, soft-tech, or low-tech start-up companies. This program includes courses, workshops, and events that engage the on-campus community of students, faculty, and staff, as well as the off-campus community in surrounding counties, alumni, and parents. VentureWorks@Geneseo also includes an on-campus business incubator located at a campus-owned house in the Village of Geneseo where entrepreneurial minded students can build real companies. Students can advance their entrepreneurial ideas over the course of a summer or semester, essentially “interning” with their own start-up.
**Internships** – In 2013, SUNY Geneseo hired the first professional dedicated to promoting internships on campus. This Associate Director for Internship Opportunities is housed in Career Development and works closely with students, faculty, staff, employers and alumni to promote and foster meaningful internship opportunities. In the Spring 2015 semester, an online internship system was launched through Career Development’s current job system (powered by CSO). The online internship system allows for the first time tracking of all student internships as well other metrics (major, class year, paid versus unpaid internships). 175 students used the new online system for the Spring 2015 semester. Other new initiatives include hosting a Professional Job & Internship Fair each Spring beginning in 2014. To date, 155 employers and close to 900 students have attended the two Fairs. Efforts are underway to track students participating in non-credit internships either through a zero credit option or a supplemental transcript.

**Residential Education** – In the past few years, the Department of Residence Life has taken considerable steps in creating learning opportunities for our students in the residence halls. Each hall has Learning Outcomes that help to create intentional links between academics, social, and residential experiences for our students. Programming and other events are organized and run to help students reach these outcomes. In Fall 2014, SUNY Geneseo hired its first Coordinator of Residential Education demonstrating its commitment to education outside of the classroom. The responsibilities of this role center on finding new opportunities for students to engage in their education beyond the classrooms, such as making connections between the academic and social lives of our students and faculty and encouraging and spearheading initiatives and projects that help students apply their knowledge to the larger Geneseo community. One example of such an initiative is a living-learning community, where 60 first year students live together and take at least one class together. These students are in different majors, but work with faculty and staff to integrate across the majors in areas such as science education, sustainability, and social justice. Beginning in Spring 2016, these students will take advantage of our college relationship with Letchworth State Park and participate in a week-long, pre-semester program meeting faculty and doing research in the park.

**Actions We Will Take in the Following Year:**

In the coming year, Fall 2015 – Spring 2016, SUNY Geneseo will continue towards our goal of ensuring every graduating student has at least one transformational learning experience prior to graduation. Towards that end, we are engaged in the following ongoing actions:

**Geneseo Learning Outcomes for Baccalaureate Education (GLOBE)**

GLOBE is a revision of general education to build and assess a holistic student experience at Geneseo. This includes the addition of transformative learning experiences that lead to an increased sense of social responsibility and civic engagement, greater ethical integrity, and commitment to action, including the willingness to take reasonable risks and to advocate for or motivate others to action. High impact experiences will help promote such transformational
learning and may include international experience, service-learning, intensive research, internships and social/political advocacy.

**Campus Transformational Learning Inventory**
We want to document the transformational learning opportunities currently available to students on campus, and assess where we have gaps via curricular mapping. We would also like to tag transformational courses/applied learning experiences via our Banner registration system and list them on a website to increase their visibility to students. This Banner tagging will also allow easier tracking and reporting. In addition, we are discussing revision of the yearly Faculty Activity Summary required of each faculty member to list applied learning experiences engaged in the previous year.

**Supplemental Transcript**
SUNY Geneseo wants to develop a supplemental transcript to document applied learning activities such as internships, living-learning communities, service-learning courses, study abroad and other applied learning experiences.