

# Reimagining our Mission Statement & Revisiting our Values (Spring 2021)

[Recommendations](#) of the strategic planning group

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## Community Engagement

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the strategic planning group (SPG) began with a thorough review of mission statements and value statements from a large number of institutions including 30 members of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges ([COPLAC](#)) and 12 SUNY comprehensive colleges.

Throughout the process, engagement was iterative, informed, and inclusive. There were multiple stages, the design of each stage based on data collected in previous stages, and all community members were invited to participate in each stage. The first stage invited community members to participate in discussion and brainstorming. The last two stages involved community surveys that resulted in responses from a total of 1,151 community members to at least one of the two surveys.

### Stage 1: Brainstorming sessions

In the first stage of community engagement, members of the SPG met with a total of 60 departments across all college divisions. SPG members facilitated 36 brainstorming sessions (1/18 - 3/10) resulting in 151 mission statements/ideas. We studied the statements and ideas to look for common themes and core values. In addition, we conducted word frequency analyses to identify the most frequently used words and phrases. After identifying the 50 most frequently used words and phrases, the SPG voted on the top 12-15 to include in the first community survey (viz., Stage 2). We also created mission statement structures to get feedback on which rhythm and cadence sounded best.

### Stage 2: First community survey

In the second stage, we invited the community to complete a Google survey ([Appendix A](#)) that asked for the following:

- Email, name, role
- Select up to 4 words (with an option to contribute their own)
- Select up to 4 phrases (with an option to contribute their own)
- Select version from among 8 structured that sounded best based on rhythm
- Contribute their mission statement/idea

Our goal was to receive 500 responses (approximately 10% of our community of faculty, staff, and students). During a 2-week period (3/15 - 3/26) we received 903 responses including 40 alumni, 5 board members, 24 community members, 6 emeriti, 137 faculty members, 161 staff members, and 602 students. Note that it is possible to have multiple roles (e.g., staff and community member).

Responses were shared anonymously on a [web dashboard](#) that was updated multiple times each day throughout the survey period. The SPG studied the responses and conducted frequency analyses to examine word frequency, phrase frequency, and to identify common themes. The SPG formed 4 subcommittees, and each created 2 possible mission statements. The entire SPG then voted on the top 5 possible mission statements. Our top five choices were further supported by predictive metrics based on average keyword frequency and keyword saturation relative to length.

Based on themes and core values that emerged in the first two stages, the SPG subcommittees also created revisions of the current values and generated additional values for possible inclusion in our value statements.

### Stage 3: Second community survey

In the third stage, we invited the community to complete a second Google survey ([Appendix B](#)) that asked for the following:

- Email, name, role
- Select the mission statement they liked best
- Select the language they liked best for each of our 5 Values: Learning, Creativity, Inclusivity, Civic Responsibility, Sustainability (for each value, 3 choices were given: the current version and two revised versions created by SPG)
- Select additional Learning and Creativity related values
- Select additional Inclusivity, Civic Responsibility and/or Sustainability related values

Our goal was to receive 500 responses (approximately 10% of our community of faculty, staff, and students). During a 2-week period (4/14 - 4/29) we received 539 responses including 38 alumni, 15 board members, 13 community members, 6 emeriti, 86 faculty members, 146 staff members, and 297 students. Note that it is possible to have multiple roles (e.g., staff and community member).

Responses were shared anonymously on a [web dashboard](#) that was updated multiple times each day throughout the survey period.

We met to discuss the information collected from all stages and made minor revisions to the top rated mission statement. We also selected the top rated value statements with minor revisions to 2 of the statements.

# Mission Statement

## Current statement

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Dedicated to learning, SUNY Geneseo is a residential public liberal arts college with selected professional and graduate programs. We combine a rigorous curriculum, transformational learning experiences, and a rich co-curricular life to create a dynamic and inclusive scholarly environment. The entire College community works together to advance knowledge and inspire students to be socially responsible and globally aware citizens who are prepared for an enriched life and success in the world.

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## Votes from the second community survey

Possible mission statements	Votes
Geneseo is a socially responsible, public liberal arts college that prepares students to build a better world. As a supportive and inclusive community, we are on a journey together finding strength in diversity, discovering joy in growth, and becoming lifelong learners.	130
A public liberal arts community, Geneseo prepares students to build a better world. We connect the local to the global and theory to practice. We find strength in kindness and diversity, and joy in learning and service. Create with us. Explore with us. Grow with us.	120
Geneseo is an inclusive public liberal arts college community, finding strength in diversity and joy in growth. We inspire students to build a better world, connect the local to the global, engage theory to practice, and make truth serve justice.	112
Geneseo strives to build a supportive and inclusive community of life-long learners committed to building a better world. Grow with us in our collaborative journey of discovery.	107
At Geneseo, we're nurturing a supportive and inclusive community of life-long learners with a shared commitment to justice, equity, and collaborative inquiry.	62

In addition to ensuring that every community member could share their voice with multiple opportunities to provide input, the community surveys were instrumental in engaging our community in continued conversations about our values as well as what makes Geneseo special and unique. One common theme that emerged from these conversations is the desire to communicate that we are an exceptional public liberal arts institution.

## Top mission statement

Geneseo is a socially responsible, public liberal arts college that prepares students to build a better world. As a supportive and inclusive community, we are on a journey together finding strength in diversity, discovering joy in growth, and becoming lifelong learners.

## Recommended new mission statement that incorporates additional feedback from the Distinguished Academy and the College Council

**We are a distinctive public liberal arts college that welcomes and inspires students to develop their knowledge and skills to build a better world. Our supportive, inclusive community is exceptional in cultivating creativity, engagement, and discovery. We find strength in diversity, joy in growth, and fulfillment in lifelong learning.**

## Values

### Current values

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The Geneseo campus community is guided by our beliefs in and commitments to the following values:

- Learning: embracing high expectations for intellectual inquiry, scholarly achievement, and personal growth
  - Creativity: affirming a spirit of innovation that inspires intellectual curiosity and problem-solving
  - Inclusivity: fostering a diverse campus community marked by mutual respect for the unique talents and contributions of each individual
  - Civic responsibility: promoting ethical local and global citizenship
  - Sustainability — advancing just principles of ecological, social, and economic stewardship
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The SPG recommends adoption of the top-voted revised statement (in bold) for each of our 5 core values. Two items in blue were modified slightly by the SPG.

### Learning

Statement	Votes
<b>Embracing high expectations for intellectual inquiry, critical thinking, scholarly exploration, and personal growth.</b>	262
At Geneseo, we foster life-long learning toward personal growth and continued contributions to societal betterment.	155
Embracing high expectations for intellectual inquiry, scholarly achievement,	100

and personal growth. <b>(current version)</b>	
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## Creativity

Statement	Votes
<b>Empowering a spirit of innovation that inspires intellectual curiosity, self-expression, and problem-solving.</b>	247
At Geneseo, we inspire innovation, intellectual curiosity, artistic expressions, and problem-solving.	183
Affirming a spirit of innovation that inspires intellectual curiosity and problem solving. <b>(current version)</b>	96

## Inclusivity

Statement	Votes
<b>Welcoming a diverse campus community that supports and celebrates different identities, promotes equity, and respects the ideas and contributions of each individual.</b>	237
Fostering a diverse campus community marked by mutual respect for the unique talents and contributions of each individual. <b>(current version)</b>	202
At Geneseo, we are compassionate in our kind and respectful contributions, collaborations, connections, and community.	83

## Civic Engagement (revised name)

Statement	Votes
<b>Encouraging active participation as a member of local and global communities that is grounded in self-reflection, empathy, and an ethical commitment to the common good.</b>  <b>Encouraging active participation grounded in self-reflection, empathy, and an ethical commitment to the common good of our local and global communities.</b>	318
Promoting ethical local and global citizenship. <b>(current version)</b>	122
At Geneseo, we engage in empathetic and ethical local and global citizenship and community.	80

## Sustainability

Statement	Votes
<p><b>Building a culture that integrates and applies principles of environmental, social, and economic stewardship that is informed by an understanding of the past and our obligations to the future.</b></p> <p><b>Building a culture of well-being that integrates and applies principles of environmental, social, and economic stewardship informed by an understanding of the past and our obligations to the future.</b></p>	285
<p>Advancing just principles of ecological, social, and economic stewardship. <b>(current version)</b></p>	130
<p>At Geneseo, we steward our social/cultural, environmental, and financial resources to enhance the well-being of all in our current community and those in future generations.</p>	106

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### New Mission Statement

We are a distinctive public liberal arts college that welcomes and inspires students to develop their knowledge and skills to build a better world. Our supportive, inclusive community is exceptional in cultivating creativity, engagement, and discovery. We find strength in diversity, joy in growth, and fulfillment in lifelong learning.

### New Value Statements

**Learning:** Embracing high expectations for intellectual inquiry, critical thinking, scholarly exploration, and personal growth.

**Creativity:** Empowering a spirit of innovation that inspires intellectual curiosity, self-expression, and problem-solving.

**Inclusivity:** Welcoming a diverse campus community that supports and celebrates different identities, promotes equity, and respects the ideas and contributions of each individual.

**Civic Engagement:** Encouraging active participation grounded in self-reflection, empathy, and an ethical commitment to the common good of our local and global communities.

**Sustainability:** Building a culture of well-being that integrates and applies principles of environmental, social, and economic stewardship informed by an understanding of the past and our obligations to the future.

## Appendix A: First Community Survey ([Stage 2](#))



### Reimagining our Mission Statement: Part

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Please join us in reflecting on what makes Geneseo special and unique, and help us choose the words, phrases, and ideas to include in our new mission statement!

The input that we collect through this form will be shared anonymously on our Mission Statement Dashboard updated daily. Our goal is to reach 500 responses. Student submissions will be entered into a drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card.

We will use the input from this Google form and our small group discussions to create 4-5 mission statements. We will then invite all community members to complete a follow-up survey to rank order the mission statements. The mission statements and rankings will then be forwarded to our College Cabinet to select (and possibly make small changes to) our new mission statement.

Thank you for helping us to find the words that best represent our community, shared vision, and values!

\* Required



Email address \*

Your email

Please select all that apply

Alumni Board/Council member Community member Emeriti Faculty Staff Student

Role?

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

First name \*

Your answer

Last name \*

Your answer

Please select up to four words that best describe what we want to be known as/for?

☐ engagement

☐ kindness

☐ service

☐ public

☐ inspire

☐ connect

☐ inclusive

☐ growth

☐ global

☐ citizens

☐ experiences

☐ community

☐ creative

☐ learning

☐ transformational

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Select up to four phrases that best describe what we're trying to accomplish through a Geneseo education?

- ☐ public liberal arts
- ☐ supportive and inclusive community
- ☐ service to others / spirit of service
- ☐ globally aware citizens
- ☐ transformational learning
- ☐ life-long learners
- ☐ contribute to a changing world
- ☐ shape lives of purpose
- ☐ build a better world
- ☐ dedicated to learning
- ☐ socially responsible
- ☐ dynamic and inclusive scholarly environment
- ☐ caring and connected community
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please read each statement aloud and think about which version sounds the best to you based on the rhythm of the language. These are only examples.

- ☐ Geneseo prepares students to build a better world. We're on a journey to connect the local to the global, truth to justice, and theory to practice, finding strength in diversity and joy in growth. Geneseo students connect and grow.
- ☐ Geneseo prepares students to build a better world, connect the local to the global, make truth serve justice, and bring theory to practice, finding their strength in diversity and joy in growth.
- ☐ While Geneseo prepares students to build a better world, it also encourages their journey to connect the local to the global, truth to justice, and theory to practice, finding strength in diversity and joy in growth.
- ☐ Geneseo prepares students to build a better world. We're on a journey to connect the local to the global, truth to justice, and theory to practice, finding strength in diversity and joy in growth. Connect with us. Grow with us.
- ☐ Connect, grow, discover, and find your joy, sharing in our journey to build a better world.
- ☐ Our beloved Geneseo is devoted to imagining a better world. Our students embrace the opportunity to connect the local to the global, truth to justice, and theory to practice, finding strength in diversity and joy in growth. Get in touch with us. Grow with us.
- ☐ Join with us. Grow with us. We're on a journey to connect the local to the global, truth to justice, and theory to practice, finding strength in diversity and joy in growth. Geneseo prepares students to build a better world.
- ☐ Connect theory to practice. Find strength in diversity. Build a better world.

### Custom mission statement

Enter your own mission statement (or additional key words and phrases):

Your answer

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## Appendix B: Second Community Survey ([Stage 3](#))



### Reimagining our Mission Statement and Revisiting our Values: Part II

Please join us in reflecting on what makes Geneseo special and unique!

We invite you to rank 5 mission statements created with the input from small group brainstorming sessions and over 900 responses from our first survey in March. The 5 mission statements and their rankings will be forwarded to our College Cabinet to select (and possibly make small changes to) our new mission statement.

We are also seeking input on the language used in our values. The input that we collect through this form will be shared anonymously on our Mission Statement and Values Dashboard, updated daily. Our goal is to reach 500 responses. Student submissions will be entered into a drawing for a \$100, \$50, or \$25 Visa gift card.

Thank you for helping us to find the words that best represent our community, shared vision, and values!

\* Required

Email address \*

Your email

Please select all that apply

	Alumni	Board member	Community member	Emeriti	Faculty	Staff	Student
Role?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

First name \*

Your answer

Last name \*

Your answer

## Mission Statements

Please select the mission statement that you like the best.

- ☐ A public liberal arts community, Geneseo prepares students to build a better world. We connect the local to the global and theory to practice. We find strength in kindness and diversity, and joy in learning and service. Create with us. Explore with us. Grow with us.
- ☐ Geneseo strives to build a supportive and inclusive community of life-long learners committed to building a better world. Grow with us in our collaborative journey of discovery.
- ☐ Geneseo is an inclusive public liberal arts college community, finding strength in diversity and joy in growth. We inspire students to build a better world, connect the local to the global, engage theory to practice, and make truth serve justice.
- ☐ Geneseo is a socially responsible, public liberal arts college that prepares students to build a better world. As a supportive and inclusive community, we are on a journey together finding strength in diversity, discovering joy in growth, and becoming lifelong learners.
- ☐ At Geneseo, we're nurturing a supportive and inclusive community of life-long learners with a shared commitment to justice, equity, and collaborative inquiry.



### Our values: Learning

Please select the language that you like best, or contribute your own.

- ☐ Embracing high expectations for intellectual inquiry, scholarly achievement, and personal growth.
- ☐ At Geneseo, we foster life-long learning toward personal growth and continued contributions to societal betterment.
- ☐ Embracing high expectations for intellectual inquiry, critical thinking, scholarly exploration, and personal growth.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Our values: Creativity

Please select the language that you like best, or contribute your own.

- ☐ At Geneseo, we inspire innovation, intellectual curiosity, artistic expressions, and problem-solving.
- ☐ Affirming a spirit of innovation that inspires intellectual curiosity and problem solving.
- ☐ Empowering a spirit of innovation that inspires intellectual curiosity, self-expression, and problem-solving.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Our values: Inclusivity

Please select the language that you like best, or contribute your own.

- ☐ Fostering a diverse campus community marked by mutual respect for the unique talents and contributions of each individual.
- ☐ Welcoming a diverse campus community that supports and celebrates different identities, promotes equity, and respects the ideas and contributions of each individual.
- ☐ At Geneseo, we are compassionate in our kind and respectful contributions, collaborations, connections, and community.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Our values: Civic Responsibility

Please select the language that you like best, or contribute your own.

- ☐ At Geneseo, we engage in empathetic and ethical local and global citizenship and community.
- ☐ Encouraging active participation as a member of local and global communities that is grounded in self-reflection, empathy, and an ethical commitment to the common good.
- ☐ Promoting ethical local and global citizenship.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Our values: Sustainability

Please select the language that you like best, or contribute your own.

- ☐ At Geneseo, we steward our social/cultural, environmental, and financial resources to enhance the well-being of all in our current community and those in future generations.
- ☐ Advancing just principles of ecological, social, and economic stewardship.
- ☐ Building a culture that integrates and applies principles of environmental, social, and economic stewardship that is informed by an understanding of the past and our obligations to the future.
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional learning-related values

These may fit primarily with our current Learning and Creativity values.

Which of the following would you like to see integrated into our value statements? Please select up to 4.

- ☐ Sharing a passion for learning and innovation
- ☐ Thinking critically about knowledge and how knowledge is developed
- ☐ Embracing rigor and aspiring to excellence
- ☐ Applying knowledge to better ourselves and our world
- ☐ Fostering curiosity
- ☐ Supporting a growth mindset
- ☐ Integrating curricular and co-curricular experiences
- ☐ Providing equal access to educational opportunities
- ☐ Inspiring creativity and innovation
- ☐ Learning through service
- ☐ Valuing other perspectives
- ☐ Developing leadership skills
- ☐ Contributing to the advancement of knowledge and scholarship
- ☐ Engaging with transformational learning opportunities
- ☐ Promoting lifelong learning
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional community-related values

These may fit primarily with our current Inclusivity, Civic Responsibility and/or Sustainability values.

Which of the following would like to see integrated into our value statements?  
Please select up to 4.

- ☐ Advancing diversity, inclusivity, and equity
- ☐ Advocating for self and others
- ☐ Embracing universal design to help all succeed
- ☐ Working for justice
- ☐ Promoting belonging and holistic wellbeing
- ☐ Achieving decolonization in all aspects of the College community
- ☐ Fostering relationships
- ☐ Participating in democratic action
- ☐ Practicing kindness and understanding
- ☐ Engaging in productive discussion
- ☐ Becoming informed and developing an appreciation for others and other cultures
- ☐ Empowering community engagement
- ☐ Utilizing resources in a responsible/ethical manner
- ☐ Contributing to public service
- ☐ Appreciating how the local connects to the global
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_