

## Appendix 3

### **Geneseo Learning Outcomes for Baccalaureate Education: A Framework for Building and Assessing a Holistic Student Experience at Geneseo**

#### **History and Context**

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, the faculty at Geneseo revised the general education program by adopting a common core for all students. The goals of this reform effort were to increase the rigor of the courses in the general education program, to expand the breadth of each student's educational experience, to include courses in critical reasoning, and to increase the coherence of the core, particularly with the new Humanities sequence and laboratories in the Natural Sciences. Over the past thirty years the general education program has had some notable improvements and additions, but the basic shape has remained the same. There have also been some changes due to requirements handed down from SUNY. On our own campus, discussions about redesigning our curriculum have been occurring since the formation of the Curriculum Task Force in 2007.

Revisiting the goals and requirements of General Education – and of a Geneseo education as a whole – parallels the larger, nationwide conversation about the role of higher education in our culture. In 2004 the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) released its “Statement on Integrative Learning.” This document argues that “fostering students’ abilities to integrate learning – across courses, over time, and between campus and community life – is one of the most important goals and challenges of higher education.” Integrative Learning deliberately makes connections between classes, fields, and academic and co-curricular life, with the end goal of graduating students who can respond to challenges and new knowledge in a productive manner. In other institutions of higher learning, this charge from AAC&U has generated a range of ambitious expectations for undergraduate education. We believe these ideas deserve serious consideration. The challenge, as always, at a primarily undergraduate school with a liberal arts focus like Geneseo, is to balance the goals of career-preparation with broad exposure to ideas and ways of thinking that will produce engaged, responsible and thoughtful citizens of the world. A Geneseo education is rigorous, rich in both broad and specialized knowledge and thus not reducible to a menu of courses and credits. As such, this statement of learning outcomes is not intended to translate into a one-to-one correspondence to a set of course requirements. Responding to the general trend of “educating the whole person,” we re-examine the relationship of the core requirements to the major and, for the first time, consider the place of the co-curriculum in creating a unique and challenging experience for Geneseo students.

The baccalaureate learning outcomes described in this document are designed to guide the entire Geneseo education. What follows is a framework for building and assessing a holistic student experience that supports the College's mission, which “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.”

### **Broad and Specialized Knowledge**

The Geneseo curriculum introduces students to a broad range of methodologies, concepts and problems through a rigorous general education program and stresses the pursuit of deep and complex understanding through engagement with academic majors and minors. The College Mission to promote student “success in the world” requires that students gain in-depth knowledge of a discipline and develop the ability to both use and communicate that specialized knowledge. The “pursuit of an enriched life” frequently necessitates intellectual flexibility and involves investigation of domains outside one’s professional interests.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate broad knowledge of:
  - The Physical and Life Sciences
  - The Behavioral and Social Sciences
  - The Arts, Languages, and Humanities
2. Students will demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a body of specialized knowledge.

### **Intellectual and Practical Skills**

In support of Geneseo’s institutional mission as “a center of excellence in undergraduate education,” College Values stress “high standards for intellectual inquiry and scholarly achievement.” Geneseo prepares students for twenty-first century challenges through the development of intellectual and practical skills that transcend disciplinary boundaries and are applicable throughout their lives.

Learning Outcomes:

Geneseo students will demonstrate competency in the following skill areas:

#### **1. Critical Thinking**

To formulate questions (hypotheses) or frame issues in ways that permit examination or investigation; to explicate and evaluate the assumptions underlying the claims of self and others; to establish and pursue systematic and valid methods for collecting and evaluating relevant evidence; to draw soundly reasoned and appropriately limited conclusions on the basis of evidence; and to relate conclusions to a larger body of knowledge.

#### **2. Communication**

To demonstrate skill in English and another spoken language. To compose written texts that effectively inform or persuade, following the conventions of Standard

English and practices of academic disciplines. To engage in articulate discussion, debate, and public speaking in a manner suitable to the listener(s) and the nature of the discourse. To be mindful of the interplay between the style and purposes of rhetorical acts.

### **3. Quantitative/Symbolic Reasoning**

To construct and interpret mathematical and symbolic depictions of information including equations, models, graphs and diagrams; to generate accurate calculations and/or plausible estimates; to draw valid conclusions from quantitative evidence and/or symbolic results; to evaluate assumptions underlying estimation, modeling, and data analysis; and to clearly communicate the conclusions drawn from quantitative/symbolic analysis.

### **4. Informational and Digital Literacy**

To identify when information is needed; to locate and access information in a variety of formats; to evaluate the credibility (and appropriateness) of a source for various uses; to incorporate information from a variety of sources into written, oral or multimedia products; to use information resources ethically.

### **5. Creative Expression**

To engage in artistic and/or scholarly production and expression, and to understand the relationship between one's individual work and wider contexts.

### **6. Leadership and Collaboration**

To work effectively with others in order to achieve specific (shared) goals while managing/sharing work fairly and respectfully.

### **7. Cross-Cultural Skills and Global Engagement**

To interact, learn, and work with an understanding of the complexity of identities, cultural diversity, and pluralism; to develop global self-awareness and understanding of global systems and to apply such knowledge to relevant contemporary issues; to develop skills in empathy and in verbal and nonverbal communication; to foster curiosity and openness towards new cultural contexts.

## **Integrative Learning**

Integrative learning fosters the ability to connect and combine knowledge and skills acquired through the curriculum and the co-curriculum to new complex situations within and beyond the college and to foster reflection on the ways that such knowledge is utilized. Such learning is developed through high impact practices such as international experiences, service and community-based learning, intensive research activities, internships, advocacy, learning communities, and capstone courses and projects.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate

1. The ability to develop collaborative solutions to difficult problems and complex issues.
2. The ability to synthesize, connect, and draw conclusions from multiple perspectives or fields of study to address real-world problems and issues.
3. The ability to reflect on their civic, personal, and professional lives.
4. An increased commitment to social and civic engagement.

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