Liberating GE

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ASCCC, February 2014
About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality of student learning in college.

More than 1,300 institutional members—including accredited public and private colleges and universities of every type and size, including community colleges.

A network of more than 30,000 faculty members, academic leaders, presidents, and others working for educational reform.

A meeting ground for all parts of higher education – about our shared responsibilities to students and society.
About LEAP

Launched in 2005, Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) is a national initiative that champions the importance of a twenty-first-century liberal education—for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality.
Essential Learning Outcomes

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

→ **Focused** on engagement with big questions, enduring and contemporary

**Intellectual and Practical Skills**

→ **Practiced** extensively across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

**Personal and Social Responsibility**

→ **Anchored** through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

**Integrative and Applied Learning**

→ **Demonstrated** through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems
The Essential Learning Outcomes, cont.

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World**
  Through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages, and the arts

- **Intellectual and Practical Skills**
  - Inquiry and analysis
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Written and oral communication
  - Quantitative Literacy
  - Information Literacy
  - Teamwork and problem solving

- **Personal and Social Responsibility**
  - Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
  - Intercultural knowledge and competence
  - Ethical reasoning and action
  - Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

- **Integrative and Applied Learning**
  - Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
Why LEAP?

The World Is Demanding More:

• Demand for larger numbers of college educated workers

• Demand for engaged and informed citizens

• Demand that those educated workers and citizens have higher levels of learning and knowledge, as well as new and different skills and abilities.
Clarifying Terminology

**Liberal Education**: College learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change. It emphasizes broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth achievement in a specific field of interest. It helps students develop a sense of social responsibility as well as strong intellectual and practical skills that span all areas of study and includes a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

**Liberal Arts**: Specific disciplines (humanities, sciences, and social sciences)

**General Education**: The part of a liberal education curriculum shared by all students. It provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual and civic capacities.
Why LEAP?

Employers are Raising the Bar and Endorse Liberal Education Outcomes

• 95% of employers put a priority on “hiring people with the intellectual and interpersonal skills that will help them contribute to innovation in the workplace.”

• 93% of employers agree that “candidates’ demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than their undergraduate major.”

• 93% of employers say they are “asking employees to take on more responsibilities and to use a broader set of skills than in the past.”

• 91% of employers say that “the challenges their employees face are more complex today than they were in the past.”

Source: “It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success” (AAC&U and Hart Research Associates, 2013)
Nearly 2/3s of Employers Think that Today’s Graduates Need Both Broad Learning AND In-Depth Learning Preparation for a Specific Job or Field is NOT Enough
Key Findings

◆ **Innovation is a priority** for employers, and they report that the challenges their employees face today are more complex and require a broader skill set than in the past.

◆ Employers recognize **capacities that cut across majors** as critical to a candidate’s potential for career success, and they view these skills as **more important than a student’s choice of undergraduate major**.

◆ Employers recognize the **importance of a liberal education** and the liberal arts. The majority agree that having both field-specific knowledge and skills and a broad range of skills and knowledge is most important for long-term career success.

◆ Employers endorse education practices that involve students in active, effortful work and the **application of skills**.

◆ Employers express **interest in e-portfolios** and **partnerships** with colleges to ensure college graduates’ successful transition to the workplace.
Employers *Do* Want Graduates Who Possess 21st Century Skills, Including Ethical Responsibility and Intercultural Competence – and Democracy Needs These Skills, Too
PURPOSEFUL PATHWAYS?
What Knowledge and Skills Are Needed for Success?

Preparation for a Fast-Paced Economy and for Multiple Jobs over Time
Preparation to Make a Life of Meaning and Purpose
Preparation for Knowledgeable Citizenship
“I don’t know too many jobs that the job is being well-rounded. You know, it’s not like you’re going to work at ‘Well-Rounded, Inc’ or something.”

Student, University of Wisconsin System
Global Integrated Learning Conceptual Model
Designed by Michigan State University

Global Pedagogy: students are engaged in issues across regions, places, cultures, and contexts in a way that facilitates
- Fosters and adapts from both local and global perspectives
- Their perspectives in the works of others and authors
- Their ability to understand complex civic issues and the world
- Their ability to understand and integrate diverse domains, perspectives, and ways of knowing.

Integrated Pedagogy – providing students with more "ways of knowing" (more perspectives, fields of mind, disciplinary theories) helps them become better, more reflective thinkers:
- Culture, history, and positions influence our worldview
- Different groups define theories, analyze, and solve problems in different ways
- Being a citizen and scholar means that one must be able to shape information from multiple frames of reference

Integrated Learning:
- Integration of concepts requires some foundation theory and content
- Students need a purpose or desire to integrate; they need to feel some connection to the topic or relevance
- Faculty cannot be an expert in all fields or perspectives on a topic, but a learning approach stimulates this need.

Learning Pedagogy – focused on students and learning outcomes:
- Problem- and inquiry-based
- Active and experiential
- Connected, interdisciplinary, and holistic
- Faculty to guide and facilitate, not accumulate expertise
- Goal is to develop students' capabilities, not fill their brains
- Concept-driven, not fact-driven

LEAP

Association of American Colleges and Universities
High Impact Practices

Through the LEAP initiative, AAC&U has published research on a set of widely tested teaching and learning strategies and programs that—when done well—have substantial educational benefits, especially for traditionally underserved students. The elements of good teaching and learning embedded in these practices can be applied in many settings, including in traditional classrooms as well as special programs, and in co-curricular settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>★ First-Year Seminars and Experiences</th>
<th>★ Undergraduate Research</th>
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<td>★ Common Intellectual Experiences</td>
<td>★ Diversity/Global Learning</td>
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<td>★ Learning Communities</td>
<td>★ Service Learning, Community-Based Learning</td>
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<td>★ Writing-Intensive Courses</td>
<td>★ Internships</td>
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<tr>
<td>★ Collaborative Assignments and Projects</td>
<td>★ Capstone Courses and Projects</td>
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English 101
Authentic Assessments

As part of its VALUE (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education) project, AAC&U worked with faculty and other academic and student affairs professionals in an exhaustive process of gathering, analyzing, synthesizing, and drafting institutional-level rubrics for 16 of the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes.

Each VALUE rubric contains the most common and broadly shared criteria or core characteristics considered critical for judging the quality of student work in that outcome area.

The VALUE rubrics reflect faculty expectations for essential learning across the nation regardless of type of institution, mission, size or location.

For more on the VALUE project, please see www.aacu.org/value
This is your campus on assessment.

Creating a Culture of Assessment that Doesn’t Frighten, Annoy, or Disenfranchise People
What is the story you want to tell?

- How do you plan to influence change?
- How will you know if you have good evidence?
- What are the goals you want to reach?
LEARNING OUTCOMES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN THE SPIRIT OF GREATER EXPECTATIONS

Guiding questions for a campus:
- Which learning outcomes should be assessed at which critical points? How do they interrelate to form a comprehensive program that can demonstrate cumulative learning over time and across courses?
- What do we already have in place that could serve assessment purposes?
- What might we need to add?
- Which elements should be part of the general education program? Which demonstrate competency building in the major?

Note: A campus should substitute its own outcomes for the examples in the first and second columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome area of the intentional learner</th>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>First-year general education experience (introductory or novice level)</th>
<th>Introduction to the major (introductory or novice level)</th>
<th>Intermediate courses in the major or general education (intermediate level)</th>
<th>Senior capstone or culminating experience in the major or general education (advanced/expert level)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Empowering intellectual and practical skills</td>
<td>written communication</td>
<td>oral communication</td>
<td>second-language proficiency</td>
<td>critical thinking</td>
<td>creative thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informing knowledge from multiple disciplines</td>
<td>experience with various inquiry modes</td>
<td>knowledge of cultural artifacts</td>
<td>knowledge of the world and its problems</td>
<td>comfort with science and technology</td>
<td>experience with the arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>The examined values of responsible life and citizenship</td>
<td>ethical perspectives</td>
<td>acceptance of difference</td>
<td>civic participation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>awareness of the learning process</td>
<td>ability to draw on different perspectives</td>
<td>ability to connect across disciplines</td>
<td>ability to apply theory to practice</td>
<td>ability to conduct research</td>
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Sacramento State: Graduation Initiative, GenEd and Closing the Achievement Gap

**What?**

- Baccalaureate Learning Goals
  - Competence in the Disciplines
  - Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World
  - Intellectual and Practical Skills
  - Personal and Social Responsibility
  - Integrative Learning

**Who?**

- Motivated & Sustained Learning
- Oral Communication
- Written Communication
- Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Inquiry and Analysis
- Teamwork
- Ethical Reasoning
- Quantitative Reasoning

**How?**

- High-Impact Practices
  - Common Intellectual Experiences
  - Collaborative Assignments
  - Research and Inquiry Internships
  - Study Abroad
  - First-Year Experiences
  - Service Learning
  - Community Engagement
  - Learning Communities
  - Capstone Experience

**How Do We Get Better?**

- Authentic Audience Problem Solving

**Program, Major, Course, Projects**

- Assignments
- Activities
- Experiences

**Value Rubrics:**

- Lifelong Learning
- Integrative Thinking
- Intercultural Competence
Selected LEAP Publications

College Learning for the New Global Century (2007)


To Learn More

www.aacu.org/leap

To see the LEAP Campus Toolkit, visit leap.aacu.org/toolkit

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