

University of Wisconsin System Shared Learning Goals for Baccalaureate Students

All bachelor degree programs offered by University of Wisconsin System institutions have certain goals and purposes. While respecting the individual missions and practices of each UW System institution, the following describes a set of learning goals shared by all of our institutions, even though each institution may approach these goals differently. The essence of these learning goals is a commitment to liberal education.

The University of Wisconsin System embraces the definition of liberal education developed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities, a definition informed by AAC&U's dialogue with hundreds of colleges, universities, and business and civic leaders.

Liberal education is a philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement. These broad goals have been enduring even as the courses and requirements that comprise a liberal education have changed over the years. Characterized by challenging encounters with important and relevant issues today and throughout history, a liberal education prepares graduates both for socially valued work and for civic leadership in their society. It usually includes a general education curriculum that provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines and ways of knowing, along with more in-depth study in at least one field or area of concentration.
[\[http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/What_is_liberal_education.cfm\]](http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/What_is_liberal_education.cfm)

It is within this larger context of liberal education that we envision the *UW System Shared Learning Goals*.

The *UW System Shared Learning Goals* provide a framework to communicate the meaning and value of a college education to students, parents, and the broader community.

The *UW System Shared Learning Goals* provide support to faculty, instructional and academic staff to be more intentional in their teaching and learning activities. They may be used to guide those at individual institutions to write specific, assessable, objectives for student achievement, and to develop curriculum.

The *UW System Shared Learning Goals* provide support to faculty, instructional and academic staff to become more intentional in their teaching, learning, and extra-curricular activities.

These five shared goals were derived from extensive discussions among faculty and staff representing every institution within the University of Wisconsin System. They represent the synthesis and essence of the goals of these various institutions.

University of Wisconsin System Shared Learning Goals for Baccalaureate Students

- **Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World** including breadth of knowledge and the ability to think beyond one's discipline, major, or area of concentration. This knowledge can be gained through the study of the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, and social sciences.
- **Critical and Creative Thinking Skills** including inquiry, problem solving, and higher order qualitative and quantitative reasoning.
- **Effective Communication Skills** including listening, speaking, reading, writing, and information literacy.
- **Intercultural knowledge and competence** including the ability to interact and work with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures; to lead or contribute support to those who lead; and to empathize with and understand those who are different than they are.
- **Individual, Social and Environmental Responsibility** including civic knowledge and engagement (both local and global), ethical reasoning, and action.

Many University of Wisconsin System campuses are currently working to advance these primary learning goals and values. However, we can be more intentional, coordinated, systematic, and effective in educating the citizens that our communities, state, and nation need.

United in our focus on these shared learning goals, the University of Wisconsin System is committed to preparing students with the learning they need to become life-long learners, to enjoy a high quality of life, and to succeed in and contribute to our rapidly changing, increasingly global society.

Reference

College Learning for the New Global Century, AAC&U, January 2007
http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/leap/documents/GlobalCentury_final.pdf