

Context and Goals for the Institutional Strategic Directions

A Liberal Education Approach for Student Learning

Context

Our world is increasingly interdependent and complex, with rapidly changing demographics, institutions, and workplaces. The explosive growth of information and knowledge requires intellectual tools and dispositions that are dynamic, responsive and transferable. The liberal education approach can empower our students to become global citizens, capable of communicating across borders and critically analyzing the evolving issues and problems they face. Such an approach supports respect for individuals, cultural differences, and alternative views.

Through a liberal education, students are encouraged to address ethics and values, cultivating civic and personal responsibility and engaging critical themes across languages and cultures. A liberal education is inherently adaptable and broadly applicable across all learners and social environments; it provides students with a vital set of critical thinking tools to challenge the disempowerment often produced in contemporary economic, political, and social institutions.

Liberal education aligns with Lane's transformational vision and comprehensive mission.

Liberal education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g., science, culture and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills, such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.

American Association of Colleges and Universities, *Liberal Education for Everyone*, 2008.

Goals

- Create and nurture learning environments that support the intellectual, social and civic development of all students, from underprepared to high-achieving, across all areas of the college's comprehensive mission
 - Improve students' information literacy: help them understand how information is constructed, how to critically use sources and evidence, and how to discern measures of credibility
 - Adapt the liberal education approach to create curricular and co-curricular activities that empower students and staff to become critical thinkers and lifelong learners
- Provide the necessary resources, infrastructure and staffing levels to support this liberal education emphasis; provide faculty and staff's professional development opportunities to fully engage all students in liberal education learning of the highest quality