Statement on General Education

General education includes not only basic skills, but a perspective extending beyond any one discipline to give students a view of themselves and society that is human and humanizing. Among the results are strengthened intellectual abilities, an appreciation of social issues, and an awareness of natural phenomena.

The teaching of fundamental analytic and verbal skills, historical-cultural surveys, and humanities courses are natural settings for such intellectual growth; however, other courses which demonstrate and demand a well-designed synthesis of information, problem-solving, and communication are also pertinent. This aspect of education includes, but is not limited to, the liberal arts.

Interdisciplinary activities, participation of faculty and students outside traditional boundaries, and interaction among various faculty units encourage general education. Furthermore, general education requires continued clarification as a vital part of any curriculum. Integration of facts and concepts together with refinement of analytic and communication skills must take place in all disciplines.

Concerned, informed citizens are the aim of general education. These are people who appreciate the social structures that shape our lives, impose obligations, and provide service. They understand the wise use of resources and the role of political ideologies and religions in shaping our society. Their tasks include responsibility for production and the meaningful use of work and leisure time. Besides being sensitive to the advancement of science and technology in helping to understand, improve, and preserve our quality of life, they are sensitive to the diversity among humans and the need for justice.

The recipients of such an education become literate individuals who not only know how to read and write, but can also listen effectively and have an understanding of the use of numbers as a universal means of communication. They are cognizant of non-verbal communication through such forms as music, dance, and the visual arts.

A general education is thus a function of effective learning which takes place at many times and in different manners, all toward the same purpose. The University is conscious of its general as well as special mission in education, and fosters a community of individuals who know its meaning and value along with specialized professional training, for both are central to effective preparation of students.

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