The Essential Learning Outcomes

Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining:

❖ **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
  *Focused* by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

❖ **Intellectual and Practical Skills, including**
  • Inquiry and analysis
  • Critical and creative thinking
  • Written and oral communication
  • Quantitative literacy
  • Information literacy
  • Teamwork and problem solving
  *Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance*

❖ **Personal and Social Responsibility, including**
  • Civic knowledge and engagement—local and global
  • Intercultural knowledge and competence
  • Ethical reasoning and action
  • Foundations and skills for lifelong learning
  *Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges*

❖ **Integrative Learning, including**
  • Synthesis and advanced accomplishment across general and specialized studies
  *Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems*

**Note:** This listing was developed through a multiyear dialogue with hundreds of colleges and universities about needed goals for student learning; analysis of a long series of recommendations and reports from the business community; and analysis of the accreditation requirements for engineering, business, nursing, and teacher education. The findings are documented in previous publications of the Association of American Colleges and Universities: *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College* (2002), *Taking Responsibility for the Quality of the Baccalaureate Degree* (2004), and *Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Achievement in College* (2005). *Liberal Education Outcomes* is available online at [www.aacu.org/leap](http://www.aacu.org/leap). [LEAP: Liberal Education and America’s Promise]