APC Recommendations for the Proposed Liberal Education Learning Goals and Outcomes

The Academic Policies Committee (APC) endorses the University Liberal Education Committee’s (ULEC) proposal for revised liberal education learning goals and outcomes (attached). However, the APC encourages the University Senate to consider the following issues when deliberating the ULEC proposal. The following suggestions represent views shared by multiple faculty and staff, including APC members.

Recommendations

1. Differentiate between the goal and outcome on “Goal 4: Integrate and apply learned skills, knowledge and responsibilities to address new contexts and questions.” Consider additional outcomes.

2. Present the Liberal Education Learning Goals and corresponding Outcomes in the same bulleted, non-numbered order that they appear as the AAC&U Essential Learning Outcomes: Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; Intellectual and Practical Skills; Person and Social Responsibility; Integrative Learning. Define a way (e.g. retaining bolded words) to facilitate discussion about non-numbered goals.

3. Add “personal awareness” to Goal 2 and Outcomes 4 through 7.

Supporting Text

1. Integrative Learning Goal and Outcome. “The AAC&U Integrative Learning Value Rubric states, ‘Fostering students’ abilities to integrate learning—across courses, over time, and between campus and community life—is one of the most important goals and challenges for higher education.’ My colleagues and I worry that in crafting Goal Four we may have lost this inclusive concept of Integrative Learning that was included in earlier versions of this document. We may need a more narrow conceptualization in order to move this document forward. In that case, moving forward should trump my concerns. However, I do not believe that the aims of true Integrative Learning are served adequately by the very narrow Goal Four, which is proposed as both a goal and a learning outcome. By not associating assessable curricular and co-curricular learning outcomes under this goal, we miss an opportunity to include the entire campus community in the crucial practice of integrative learning.”

“I’m not suggesting that APC write additional outcomes at this time, but I do think we need to acknowledge that there is more work to be done here. Our recent discussions on integrative learning suggest that there are multiple views on how this goal can be met. To illustrate, an example from the AAC&U Integrative Learning Value Rubric: “meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to deepen understanding of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.”

The following is another revision for consideration: “Goal=Integrate learning across courses, over time and between campus and community life. Outcome=Integrate and apply learned skills, knowledge and responsibilities to address new contexts and questions.”

2. Order of Learning Goals and Outcomes. “AACU does not ‘number’ their suggested goals and outcomes; rather, they present them in bullet form. To remove the thought that there is an intended hierarchy to their importance, we should consider presenting them on our webpage in bullet form, rather than with numbers 1-11. Although it would be reason enough to [switch the order Goals 1 and 2] by citing both AACU guidelines (http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm) and many years of precedence here at UW-Eau Claire (http://www.uwec.edu/Assess/plans/), I am compelled to make this switch for yet a third rationale. I think that when we, as a University, give primacy to ‘acquiring skills’ over ‘acquiring knowledge’, we present ourselves more as a
‘Tech’ school rather than what we are: a rich, diverse collection of many that explore the creation of knowledge within a variety of disciplines from multiple perspectives.”

“As a matter of practicality, having non-numbered goals with no effectually short, defining titles will make it difficult to reference specific portions of the document. This will make it not only difficult to direct discussion of goals conversationally, but formally as we craft potential credit requirements within the goals themselves.”

3. **Goal 2 and Personal Awareness.** Personal awareness is absolutely vital to transformative learning about EDI. The Critical Multicultural Learning Goals and Outcomes emphasize knowledge, awareness, and skills. It is especially valuable from a humanities and arts perspective. Submitted (with suggested changes below) by David Shih.

**GOAL 2:** Build knowledge and awareness of diverse peoples and cultures and of the natural and physical world through the study of mathematics, sciences and technologies, histories, humanities, arts, and social sciences.

**Outcome 4:** Describe models for understanding the structure and functionality of natural entities, systems, and processes; use scientific, mathematical, or computational methods to challenge models; and draw inferences from data.

**Outcome 5:** Use knowledge, personal awareness, historical perspectives, analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and the standards of evidence appropriate to the humanities to address problems and explore questions.

**Outcome 6:** Use knowledge, personal awareness, theories, methods, and historical perspectives appropriate to the social sciences to explain and evaluate human behavior and social institutions.

**Outcome 7:** Use knowledge, personal awareness, historical perspectives, theories, or methods appropriate to the arts to describe their context, function and impact.