

## Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)

### A Contemporary Approach to General Education, Connecting General Education and the Major

#### *A Work in Progress*

A) **Learning Outcomes:** Learning outcomes work to guide curricular as well as pedagogical and assessment decisions. Students have multiple opportunities to explore both the “what” and the “why” of the program’s aims and intended outcomes.

B) **Sequential Progression from First to Final Undergraduate Years:** Sometimes referred to as “vertical design,” this design principle implements a first to final year structure—keyed to expected student capabilities rather than specified course content—with integrative and applied work at milestone and culminating points across the curriculum, and flexible points of entry for transfer students.

C) **Engaged Learning Practices or "High-Impact Practices":** Widely tested engaged learning practices that have proven benefits for college students are woven into the curriculum (examples include first year seminars/experiences, learning communities, writing intensive courses, collaborative projects and assignments, undergraduate research, internships, e-portfolios, and capstone projects).

D) **Intellectual and Practical Skills in General Education and Majors:** Starting when students enter the program, the program builds clear links between skills (such as analytical reasoning, inquiry and research, quantitative and information literacy, problem-solving, community-based learning, integrative learning) developed in general education and those developed in majors.

E) **Civic, Diversity, & Global Emphases in General Education and Majors:** General education addresses these issues thematically and developmentally across the four years of college, with a strong focus on democracy and its contested applications; global interdependence and American pluralism; ethical issues and social responsibility. There are complementary emphases appropriate to the field within majors and multiple opportunities for students to advance their learning and to engage diverse perspectives in field-based settings.

F) **Science as Science Is Done:** Students experience science “in the making” through strong emphasis on scientific inquiry and analysis in general education and major courses. They also have opportunities to tie their science studies to global challenges, ethical questions, and public policy choices—with appropriate attention to diverse perspectives—both in general education courses and in majors. Connections to real-world challenges, working with non-profit agencies and NGOs, for example, or using global research and data, underscore the emphasis on science as a continuing process of investigation, analysis, and collaboration.

G) **Advanced Cross-Disciplinary Inquiry:** This design principle focuses on “big questions” in the junior and senior year with students working across disciplines and courses, with faculty, on problems that require multiple perspectives—disciplinary and societal—and investigation for their solution. Examples might include students' working with faculty on “Mind, Brain, and Behavior,” “Environmental Sustainability,” or “Health and Human Rights: Comparative Policies and Models.”