

Strategic Plan 2010-2015 Integrative Learning

Overview of the Office of Integrative Learning

The Office of Integrative Learning offers a variety of programs and resources to fully engage students in their lifelong educational journeys and assist them in making connections between school, work, and other spheres of their everyday lives. The purpose of the Office of Integrative Learning is to facilitate students' ability transcend boundaries between academic, personal, and work life to become engaged, ethical, and academically proficient learners.

While classroom learning provides students with a solid foundation of critical thinking skills and a liberal arts curriculum, curricular and co-curricular studies and experiential education offer "real life" preparation for future careers. The Office of Integrative Learning believes that learning occurs when students reflect and make connections between theory and practice. The critical thinking skills which allow students to excel academically also yield professional success and a strong commitment to their communities.

Collaborative programs available through the Office of Integrative Learning encourage students to examine links between academics, culture, and volunteer or professional work to fully engage their chosen field of study throughout and beyond the higher education experience.

Some of the hallmark programs of the Office of Integrative Learning are:

- Community Reading Project, which brings campus and community together to discuss social ethics and academics as applied to literature.
- The LIB 100 Course Co-Curriculum, which encourage students to critique and shape their own educational paths.
- The US 201 Course Co-Curriculum, which provides an opportunity for intentional student learning and development which complements the content and skills goals of the course.

Mission for Integrative Learning

To develop students' capacity for integrative learning – across and between academic disciplines, connecting liberal and vocational education through the application of theoretical knowledge for society's benefit.

Vision for Integrative Learning

Integrative learning is recognized and valued as having a vital role in a liberal education and the GVSU experience. This emphasis on integrative learning helps students to put the pieces together and develop habits of mind that prepare them to make informed judgments in the conduct of personal, professional, and civic life. *Excerpted from AAC&U Statement on Liberal Education*

Programs within Integrative Learning

Community Reading Project (CRP)

Vision Statement

The Community Reading Project is an interdisciplinary endeavor among the GVSU campuses and local communities. It is providing students, staff, faculty, administration and the members of our communities with the highest quality engagement of reading and discussing relevant books.

The Community Reading Project will offer participants opportunities to explore the traditions of humane values and the heritage, problems, and perspectives of their own and other cultures. Participants will develop the skills of inquiry, reflection, analysis, critical thinking, dialogue, and creative expression.

The Community Reading Project is characterized by and supports active and engaged learning. It is dedicated to creating diverse and inclusive environments, opportunities and dialogue that promote the development of intellect and creativity through reading. Realizing this vision will result in an enriched and vibrant campus culture and surrounding communities.

Mission Statement

The Grand Valley State University Community Reading Program (CRP) enhances the intellectual environment and culture of GVSU and its surrounding communities by encouraging the reading, appreciation, and discussion of books. The CRP strives to promote diversity, inclusion, insight and understanding by creating dialogue and events surrounding relevant themes and ideas within the books.

LIB 100 Co-curriculum

In discussions about our mission of liberal education, Grand Valley State University realized that while we embrace the mission of liberal education, our students also need to understand liberal education in order to fully claim its benefits. To address this issue, starting in fall 2005, the Liberal Studies Department and the College of Interdisciplinary Studies added forty-two additional sections of Introduction to Liberal Education (Lib 100) to the university's class schedule.

Collaborating with the admissions office, advising faculty and student affairs, we "strongly encourage" first year students to select this course in their first or second semester, although it is not required. Faculty from various disciplines were invited to teach these courses.

The co-curriculum was revised in 2009 and is modeled after the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) essential learning outcomes.

US 201 Co-curriculum

The intent of the co-curriculum is to provide an opportunity for intentional student learning and development which complements the content and skills goals of the course. This co-curriculum is based in theories of intercultural and multicultural competence, as well as the experiences of the faculty and students.

The relationship between academic learning and student development is integral to deep and transformational learning. The idea of transformative learning reinforces the root meaning of liberal education itself – freeing oneself from the constraints of a lack of knowledge and an excess of simplicity. In the transformative educational paradigm, the purpose of educational involvement is the evolution of multidimensional identity, including but not limited to cognitive, affective, behavioral and spiritual development (Learning Reconsidered, 2004). The hope is that in juxtaposing the co-curriculum with the course content opportunities for transformational learning will increase and deepen.