

The Future of Education at Vincennes University

Submitted by the members of the Educational Futures Task Force

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Vincennes University has a long and rich tradition of educational excellence. That commitment to excellence is the cornerstone of its educational philosophy and demands an understanding of and adherence to the principles of liberal education. All constituencies consciously embrace, promote, and advance these principles to achieve the academic excellence the 21st century requires.

VU's understanding of liberal education

Liberal education at Vincennes University fosters a culture of learning that nurtures a collaborative effort among students, faculty, staff and administrators to develop engaged and contributing members of society. We believe that liberally educated students graduate with knowledge, skills, and values necessary to be successful in daily life, in the workplace, and as lifelong learners.

Liberal education expands students' perspectives by integrating the breadth of general education with the depth of the major. Liberally educated students learn to think critically, using multiple methods to solve problems through the synthesis of skills and knowledge gathered from a variety of disciplines. They gain a global perspective with the capacity to consider diverse ideas in an ever-evolving world, enhancing their ability to make responsible, ethical and aesthetically-informed decisions. Liberal education at Vincennes University creates intentional, collaborative learners who are empowered and motivated to seek, communicate, and apply knowledge.

Liberal education as it applies to VU and its mission

As a premier learning institution, Vincennes University is committed to liberal education that fosters intentional learners who are empowered to thrive in the 21st century as they enter the workforce or further their education. Through student-centered collaborative and integrative experiences, they attain the breadth and depth of skills and knowledge necessary to flourish in their personal and professional lives and to contribute as responsible citizens in their local, national and global communities.

VU's Vision of Student-Centered Learning that Embraces Liberal Education

Vincennes University offers programs of study that integrate diverse learning experiences for individual awareness, growth, and expansion. Degree programs at Vincennes University create a sustained and enriched community of learning that emphasizes intellectual integrity, meaningful communication, collaborative effort, and moral values.

The Vincennes University community recognizes the relevance and value of both general education and the disciplines in order to create students with a sustained desire to learn and the ability to link broad topics and concepts with those of concentrated study. Faculty, staff and administrators model the importance of a liberal education by taking responsibility for broadening their own perspectives. They are committed to working collaboratively with peers, community members, and the larger academic community to create challenging, cumulative, coherent experiences, both curricular and co-curricular. Faculty identify clearly stated learning goals, assess student achievement, and participate in professional development designed to maintain professional expertise and improve learning. They plan, teach and assess instructional content centered around the needs and abilities of students.

Students and faculty collaborate to empower students to become motivated and intentional learners via an integrative educational experience. Students are at the center of their own learning through the use of active learning, authentic instruction, cooperative learning, and cognitive apprenticeship. Students actively participate in their learning because they understand the relevance of the subject matter in all disciplines of study to their lives. They seek

opportunities to learn outside the classroom and interact with a diverse population to broaden their perspectives as they progress through their program of study and as lifelong learners.

Conclusion

Vincennes University's commitment to liberal education is essential in achieving its goal of developing students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to engage in society in meaningful and productive ways. With a clear understanding and promotion of liberal education as central to its mission, Vincennes University contributes to the "realization of the potential of all its students." (AAC&U and CHEA, 2008).

Educational Futures Task Force
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