

Preamble

The Curriculum Committee offers the following principles for curriculum revision. We believe that these principles will guide us as we design a curriculum that enables all of us, students and faculty alike, to engage the world's great challenges using the liberal arts. These challenges demand global citizens who understand the complexity of enduring problems, can address significant challenges from multiple perspectives, possess initiative and problem-solving skills, and can operate out of their own values while holding them open for critique and discussion. Thus, these principles push us to create an integrative curriculum that emphasizes inquiry, interdisciplinarity, agency, and self-reflection as we maintain our commitments to deep exploration of particular fields and modes of knowledge.

We also believe that these principles will guide us in creating a new curriculum that excites us as scholars and teachers—that allows us to explore our own fields and the intersections between fields and to ask new and challenging questions—as it better prepares our students to engage the challenges our world faces in the 21st century.

Motion

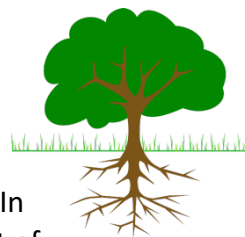
The faculty of Gustavus Adolphus College endorse the following guiding principles for the development of a new curriculum for the college.

1. Develop an “arboreal” curriculum (roots, trunk/stem, branches/leaves) that prepares students to critically engage the root causes of the world's most pressing problems -- locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.
2. Incorporate significant project components both within the major and in general education.
3. Design a general education curriculum emphasizing understanding of multiple modes of inquiry as well as how cultural context and subject position may relate to chosen modes of inquiry.
4. Maintain opportunities for departments and programs to offer majors consistent with liberal arts ideals.

Rationale:

- 1. Develop an arboreal curriculum (roots, trunk/stem, branches/leaves) that prepares students to critically engage the root causes of the world's most pressing problems -- locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.**

Traditional liberal arts curricula emphasize breadth (via general education) and depth (via majors) and are often described as T-shaped. In contrast, we propose a tripartite approach in which (a) the development of foundational liberal arts capacities occurs in conjunction with the exploration of multiple modes of inquiry (roots), (b) leading to and supporting intensive study of a particular discipline (trunk/stem), and (c) culminating in an interdisciplinary, project-based exploration of a pressing world problem (branches/leaves).



2. Incorporate significant project components both within the major and in general education.

This aspect of the curriculum should be significant and iterative. We do not envision solely a “senior/capstone project.” Rather, students will be required to participate in project-based learning throughout their time at Gustavus in both their major and in general education. We do not envision one project that starts in the first year and continues throughout a student’s time at Gustavus but rather repeated opportunities to develop and expand capacities, leading to a culminating project.

Projects can take a variety of forms including but not limited to:

- collaborative research, scholarship, and creativity;
- community-based education;
- classroom experiences with significant project-based learning;
- undergraduate research experiences done either collaboratively or individually.

Regardless of the exact form that the projects take, this aspect of the curriculum should include substantial projects that:

- start in the first year;
- incorporate, develop, and encourage student mentoring and leadership;
- iterate through a developmental process during the student’s Gustavus education;
- critically engage some dimension of the root causes of the world’s most pressing problems; and
- culminate in a research, scholarship, or creativity project and presentation.

3. Design a general education curriculum emphasizing understanding of multiple modes of inquiry as well as how cultural context and subject position may relate to chosen modes of inquiry.

The envisioned general education curriculum would feature general education courses that juxtapose modes of inquiry, highlighting both complementarities and contrasts between and among them. Courses offered as part of the general education curriculum would not count toward majors and may or may not include a project-based component.

We believe that this curriculum must:

- emphasize the development of essential liberal arts capacities;
- encourage and develop student agency, initiative, and responsibility;
- develop intercultural and interreligious competencies;
- support students in the exploration of a range of modes of inquiry; and
- explore the use of graduation requirements emphasizing demonstrated student accomplishment rather than course completion.

4. Maintain opportunities for departments and programs to offer majors consistent with liberal arts ideals.

Majors, like general education requirements, are elements of a curriculum that reflect and partially fulfill the mission and vision of the college. While the components (including both course requirements and pedagogical methods) of a high-quality education in a specific discipline are best determined by faculty members in that discipline (and/or by the requirements of external agencies), the design and execution must be consistent with the liberal arts ideals of the College.