Dixie State College of Utah  
General Education Mission & Philosophy

Graduates will be able to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve problems. Through exposure to the breadth of human knowledge and experience, they will investigate and enhance their worldviews to achieve a global perspective. They will make responsible and meaningful contributions to society, in part through service to others. Graduates will become citizen-scholars.

-- Dixie State College of Utah Mission Statement, 2004

The General Education program at DSC offers a curriculum designed to meet the objectives outlined in the college’s general mission statement. Essentially, a general education at DSC involves an intellectually rigorous process of broad and sustained investigation into the knowledge, skills, and values vital to an educated and responsible citizen. To achieve this goal, the general education curriculum is structured according to a set of distinct outcomes that stress fundamental knowledge, perceptions, and skills as well as breadth in the disciplines.

An ultimate goal of the program is to motivate students to become citizen-scholars by providing them with the foundational knowledge and skills that will enable them to embark on a lifetime of responsible and informed service in the world. Successful students will learn how to learn in a way that transcends self as they acquire the virtues of citizenship. As scholars, students will value curiosity and knowledge for its own sake, and they will ultimately see learning as a lifetime commitment.

FOUNDATIONS AND EXPLORATIONS

EXPOSURE -- Knowledge, Values and Insight

A quality general education exposes students to core knowledge about the natural and social worlds and the variety and complexity of human experience. This exposure enables students to build a “vocabulary” of the great figures and significant events and advances in human history, leading them to effectively understand, cope with, and appreciate the world of the past and the present. Courses will also emphasize the relevance of this knowledge to the student’s life and vision. A comprehensive and broadly integrated education will require students to take courses that stress core understanding in the following categories:
Historical and political systems and changes

Students should become acquainted with human history through the study of civilizations. Recognizing the patterns of social, political and economic changes of the past allows students to appreciate both the complexity and the limitations of human existence.

Cultural achievements and diversity

Students need sufficient contact with the cultural practices of their own society and those of others. This includes an awareness of the changing patterns of diversity throughout history and in the contemporary world. A broad exposure to different cultures enables a student to appreciate and to make sophisticated and informed judgments about diverse customs and practices.

Scientific theories and advances

Students benefit by understanding the natural world and the scientific theories and explanations of that world. Students should become conversant with the major physical structures and life processes scientists identify in the world.

Social and psychological phenomena

Students should be familiar with the dominant social and psychological theories that explain personal and social behavior patterns.

Ethical and philosophical theories and practices

Students need exposure to the complex and varied ways humans express and explain what is valuable and meaningful in their lives, and how they create systems for making sense of human experience. These systems may include ethical, philosophical, theological, and personal practices and beliefs.

INVESTIGATION -- Methods of Inquiry and Modes of Discourse

Exposure to core knowledge in the various disciplines must be accompanied by training in the distinct methodologies and languages available for investigating and describing experience of and in the world. Since knowledge is progressive, students need sufficient training in the methods available for synthesizing existing knowledge and for generating new understandings about nature and human life.

Scientific inquiry

Students should recognize and appreciate the distinct methods scientists use to explore natural and social phenomena. This includes practice in formulating hypotheses, testing through experimentation, measuring and observing phenomena, analyzing and
interpreting data, drawing conclusions, and communicating the results of the investigation.

**Philosophical speculation**

Students gain from exposure to the kinds of questions humans ask about the nature of reality and certainty, and how the answers influence and affect all levels of existence, from whole civilizations to individual behavior. They will learn to value the various processes for formulating meaningful questions and for arriving at meaningful and useful answers.

**Aesthetic interpretation**

Students need training in the appropriate processes for analyzing and assessing aesthetic creations. Students should learn to recognize, value and analyze artistic works, as well as to articulate their own responses to creative and artistic works. They should learn to expand their personal aesthetic experiences by better understanding the responses of others. They should become aware of the diversity of aesthetic expression throughout the history of human experience and in the contemporary world. They will gain an understanding of diverse explanations of the creative impulse and practice.

**Quantitative reasoning**

Students need to be familiar with the conventions of quantitative presentation of information and to possess the basic skills necessary to numerically manipulate and understand mathematical models and statistics dealing with this information. They should be able to connect ideas and procedures more readily with topics both within and outside mathematics.

**INTEGRATION -- Intellectual Processes and Applications**

It is vital that students become fluent in the principal intellectual and communicative practices necessary for integrating and expressing what they know and understand. These integrative processes not only provide the means for students to display their understanding but are also vital elements in exploring knowledge.

**Reading comprehension**

Students cannot succeed in college and in life without the skills and practice necessary to comprehend, analyze and assess written materials. They need substantial practice in annotating texts, summarizing content and assessing different rhetorical methods and claims.
Written communication

Students need ample and frequent opportunities to communicate their understanding of knowledge presented in texts and courses. They must develop sufficient skills to articulate their thoughts and the ideas of others. All students must become fluent with the rudiments of expository writing, including formulating a thesis, developing and supporting that thesis, and expressing their ideas and understanding in a lucid and coherent fashion. Students will demonstrate their understanding of basic grammar, sentence structure, mechanics, and essay structure, through focused practice on composition and research skills, and through various writing assignments in the disciplines.

Verbal communication

Students should develop the skills necessary to communicate effectively in oral contexts such as individual and group presentations and discussions, and in interpersonal relations. Through exposure to the various methods and media available for communicating, students will appreciate the power of verbal and non-verbal communication to influence and persuade others.

Technological competence

Students will be trained in the basic computer applications and vocabulary requisite to success in college and in life. They will learn how computer technology can not only assist but also enable learning and intellectual exploration. Students will become skilled in using a variety of media to produce effective communication information and media-centered products.

Information literacy

Students will learn to define an information need, access the information effectively and efficiently evaluate information critically, in order to accomplish a specific purpose. Students must also understand the economic, legal and social issues related to information use.

Evaluation, assessment and application

Students will be given opportunities to learn and practice the principles of rhetoric in the contexts of various academic disciplines. They will learn to recognize patterns of reasoning and fallacies in logic in order to help them effectively evaluate information as well as their own thinking. They will develop skills in making independent and discriminating choices in a world of ever-increasing complexity.

Critical thinking, creative thinking and problem-solving

Students should develop the higher-order thinking faculties (including evaluation, analysis, synthesis, comprehension, and application) necessary for understanding, processing and generating knowledge and ideas. They will also develop personal
techniques to recognize, nurture and expand their own creativity through activities in varied disciplines, and in an institutional atmosphere that values fresh ideas and procedures originating in student work. Students will develop a framework for solving social, economic, scientific, and mathematical problems that require aspects of schema, pattern recognition, and creativity along with the recognition of the different steps required in the problem-solving process.

Service

Students are better equipped to face the challenges of life if they learn how to integrate their learning with active participation in community-related needs and issues. This experience fosters civic responsibility and motivates students to see their learning as a process of active engagement within their own communities and with the world at large.