UNIVERSITY LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Preamble

In common with all universities, DePaul strives to ensure that its students come away from their experience with knowledge and skills that will enable them to fulfill their personal and professional aspirations, interact productively with others in all their diverse perspectives, and continue learning throughout their lives. Moreover, DePaul shares with other universities the goal that students will use their knowledge and skills to conduct themselves ethically and humanely, with an appreciation for the past and an eye towards shaping an even better future.

At the same time, DePaul’s mission – Catholic, Vincentian, urban – calls on us to consider these broad goals for learning in a manner that honors the university’s distinctive qualities. DePaul’s Catholic heritage encourages us to study religious traditions, and to critically examine the moral underpinnings of all academic disciplines. The example of St. Vincent, who worked with people from all strata of society in order to address urgent human needs, infuses our understanding of both education and service with a concern for social justice, for the university mission statement reminds us that “the DePaul community is above all characterized by ennobling the God-given dignity of each person.” And as an urban university, DePaul’s deep involvement in multiple communities, within Chicago and beyond, invites us to both draw on the city’s rich opportunities for learning and serve as partners in helping them move forward. In sum, the mission statement tells us, “DePaul University emphasizes the development of a full range of human capabilities and appreciation of higher education as a means to engage cultural, social, religious, and ethical values in service to others.”

With the university’s mission as their foundation, these Learning Goals and Outcomes prepare students to engage in the world of the twenty-first century, carrying with them the heritage and values that distinguish DePaul.

Goal 1. Mastery of Content

This goal embraces the breadth and depth of ideas, theories, approaches, and information which DePaul students encounter through and beyond their studies.

Outcomes: DePaul graduates will demonstrate and be able to apply:

• general knowledge of cultures, religions, science, the arts, history, and computational reasoning.
• specialized knowledge and skills from within a specific discipline or field.

Goal 2. Intellectual and Creative Skills

In order to fully engage with knowledge, whether for a specific purpose or for its own sake, DePaul students are encouraged to develop the ability to think critically and imaginatively, formulate their own understanding, and effectively communicate their ideas. This goal articulates specific skills that comprise these broader abilities.

Outcomes: DePaul graduates will be able to:

• systematically access, analyze and evaluate information and ideas from multiple sources in order to identify underlying assumptions, and formulate conclusions.
• solve quantitative problems.
• create and support arguments using a variety of approaches.
• use existing knowledge to generate and synthesize ideas in original ways.
• communicate clearly in speech and writing.

Goal 3. Personal and Social Responsibility

This goal honors the notion that knowledge reflects and contributes to the values of individuals and communities. DePaul students, in particular, are challenged to consider their own values in light of the university’s mission.

Outcomes: DePaul graduates will be able to:

• articulate their own beliefs and convictions, as well as others’ beliefs, about what it means to be human and to create a just society.
• articulate what is entailed in becoming a self-directed ethical decision-maker and living a life of personal integrity.
• evaluate ethical issues from multiple perspectives and employ those considerations to chart coherent and justifiable courses of action.
• benefit their communities through socially responsible engagement and leadership.

Goal 4. Intercultural and Global Understanding

This goal speaks to the likelihood that, in our diverse and increasingly interdependent world, the future depends on individuals being able to learn from each other and make the best use of finite resources.

Outcomes: DePaul graduates will demonstrate:

• respect for and learning from the perspectives of others different from themselves.
• knowledge of global interconnectedness and interdependencies.
• knowledge to become a steward of global resources for a sustainable future.

Goal 5. Integration of Learning

Given the wide range of opportunities for learning at DePaul, it is important for students to develop the ability to consider relationships among individual experiences of learning so as to make meaning of their education in all its variety.

Outcomes: DePaul graduates will be able to:

• relate their learning – curricular and co-curricular – to multiple fields and realms of experience.
• make connections among ideas and experiences in order to synthesize and transfer learning to daily practice.
• design, develop, and execute a significant intellectual project.

Goal 6. Preparation for Career and Beyond

This final learning goal builds on all the rest and calls on students to be ready to apply their knowledge and skills to the changing world that awaits them.
Outcomes: DePaul graduates will be able to effectively:

- set goals for future work that are the result of realistic self-appraisal and reflection.
- articulate their skills and knowledge and represent themselves to external audiences.
- work toward goals independently and in collaboration with others.
- employ technology to create, communicate, and synthesize ideas.
- set priorities and allocate resources.
- apply strategies for a practice of life-long learning.

Additional Notes

These University Learning Goals and Outcomes were approved by Faculty Council and the Interim Provost in October 2012.

A prior version of this document was drafted in Spring 2011 by a group of faculty, staff and students in the early stages of the strategic planning process that led to Vision 2018. In Autumn 2011, at Faculty Council’s direction, the draft went to the university’s Committee on Learning and Teaching, which sought input from stakeholders across the university and incorporated their valuable contributions into the revised document here. As a result of this process, the University Learning Goals and Outcomes represent a true community effort.

These university-wide goals do not exhaust the learning goals pursued at DePaul. Notably, they do not explicitly refer to the expectations specific to the various schools and departments. Nor will they be pursued in the same manner nor to the same degree in every unit. Nevertheless, the education of all recipients of DePaul undergraduate degrees should be characterized by these goals along with the goals specific to the student’s unit. Since graduate and professional schools encounter students at different stages of their education and at different levels of maturity, their approaches to these goals and their methods of measuring them will have to be adjusted accordingly.