PILLARS OF LEARNING AT DEPAUL

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, contribute meaningfully to society, and continue learning throughout their lives. Moreover, DePaul shares with other universities the intention 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 pillars of 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 Pillars of Learning provide a framework for learning at DePaul, where students prepare to engage in the world of the twenty-first century, carrying with them the heritage and values that distinguish DePaul.

Pillar 1. Mastery of Content

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

Pillar 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.

Pillar 3. Personal and Social Responsibility

This pillar 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.

Pillar 4. Intercultural and Global Understanding

This pillar 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.

Pillar 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.

Pillar 6. Preparation for Career and Beyond

This final pillar 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.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

These six Pillars provide a common framework for learning at DePaul. Each academic program – including majors and general education – is expected to approach these Pillars in ways appropriate to their fields of study. Thus, specific learning outcomes -- that is, what every student is expected to know and be able to do -- will be set at the program level, with the understanding that those outcomes contribute to an education built on these six Pillars. Likewise, assessment of student learning will focus on program-level learning outcomes. While individual major programs may emphasize some Pillars more than others, learning outcomes for general education (including Liberal Studies, Honors, and the SCPS core) will work to develop all six.

Additional Notes

These Pillars of Learning at DePaul were approved by Faculty Council and the Provost on May 4, 2022 after discussion with representatives from Liberal Studies Council, the University Honors Program, the School for Continuing and Professional Studies, the Committee on Academic Policy, the Committee on Curriculum and Programs, and the Committee on Learning & Teaching.