

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY & RATIONALE

Opening Statement

General Education is an essential part of the curriculum at Oxnard College.

The rationale for general education requirements is ancient and deeply rooted in a positive affirmation of human potential. Developing this potential has been linked to the study of the imaginatively-rich and intellectual heritage of classical education throughout the world.

The academies of Greece and Rome and the early universities of Europe and those universities established in the Americas required their students to complete a liberal arts curriculum which is remarkably similar to present day patterns of general education. The expectation then and now was that by completing a curriculum that included language arts, fine and performing arts, natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, logic, analytical philosophy and physical education, a student would develop an honest, insightful, sensitive and moral capacity to think, communicate and live a fully human life. A well-educated human being would understand the value of participating in the civic life of the community and contributing to the well-being of others.

These goals of general education are promoted and kept relevant by an on-going revision and expansion of the content of general education courses. In this way, new research and vital perspectives on human experience in all the cultures evident in world history and contemporary life are included in the curriculum.

A liberal arts education can help a student develop an inner capacity for both thoughtful contentment and flexible perseverance in living through the changing cycles of human experience. Through the assimilation of general education subjects and methods of inquiry, students can become wiser, more creative, more tolerant, happier, and more responsible participants in human history. Students are advised to choose their general education courses with an imaginative sense of their own authentic interests and well-being.

To promote a rich and effective general education program, the following aims have been defined by the faculty of Oxnard College:

General

- To introduce students to several areas of academic discourse and the methods of inquiry developed in each area.
- To illustrate the depth, breadth, and diversity of knowledge inherited from centuries of human effort to learn.
- To demonstrate the connections between ideas and historical reality and between ethical values and social experience.
- To educate broad-minded and insightful students who are capable of reasoned and responsible decisions in many arenas of life.

Individual Growth & Career Development

- To develop in students an awareness of their potential for learning and intellectual understanding and to awaken creativity, sensitivity, and communication skills in each student. This includes a capacity for confident access to all modes of information technology.
- To develop in students the critical thinking and learning skills that will promote success in their chosen careers or professions and enable

students to participate competitively and cooperatively in the work place and global economy of the 21st century.

Critical Thinking Skills

- To teach students how to recognize clear and defensible modes of reasoning as distinguished from fallacies and rationalizations.
- To encourage students to articulate their own thoughts clearly and reasonably and to analyze fairly the statements and arguments of others.
- To teach the distinction between facts and values, descriptive statements and prescriptive norms, relative values and absolute values in order to help students engage more effectively in scientific, social, and moral discourse.
- To develop the critical thinking and problem solving skills which enhance students' ability to participate effectively in employment and community activities.

Multi-Cultural Appreciation

- To introduce students to a wide range of cultures as presented in art, literature, religion, mythology, music, drama, dance, and social customs.
- To promote appreciation of the ideas and values implicit in the multi-cultural heritage of humanity and to teach the relevance of multi-cultural sensitivity to a rewarding and effective life in the global community.
- To encourage students to explore their own cultural identity and seek continuous opportunities to develop themselves through creative expression.

Community Life and Civic Responsibility

- To develop informed and responsible citizens who understand and value the need for active participation in the public, artistic, and political life of the community, the nation, and the world.
- To teach students the fundamental concepts and values that support constitutional and representative institutions of government and nurture world-wide aspirations for freedom and opportunity.
- To promote the understanding that cooperation and peaceful resolution of disputes are the most morally defensible and practical ways to work through conflicts at all levels of social experience.