

University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes

Ferris State University

Approved by Academic Senate April 5, 2011

Through experiences inside and outside the classroom, Ferris State University's general education program challenges students to become successful citizens of a diverse and globalized world. Success in a rapidly changing world requires the ability to adapt and apply knowledge and skills from multiple areas to creatively address new and challenging situations. This philosophy is especially appropriate in a world of increasingly complex connections and interactions between world cultures that daily become more inextricably linked in the social, political, economic and scientific issues they face.

Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Natural World

Focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring

Graduates of Ferris State University should know:

... how all cultures, past or present, are fundamentally similar to each other, and why it is important to understand cultural differences. People of all cultures work and play, laugh and cry, have families and friends. They have histories and traditions that shape who they are as individuals and societies. They have religions and philosophies that bring meaning to the world in which they live. They express themselves through language and through the works they create of music, art and literature. These things may differ in significant ways from culture to culture, but rather than barriers that divide and separate, the differences should be understood as variations on the theme of human experience. Recognizing the similarities and understanding the differences between peoples are critical for success in a diverse and globalized world.

...how their lives are shaped by the society and place in which they live. Each of us lives in a society that includes political, legal, economic, educational, health care and other social institutions and systems. These social systems, together with our interpersonal relationships, daily influence who we are and how we interact with others. Furthermore, the natural environment of the place a people live exerts a powerful influence on the nature of their society and relationships with each other. We must know how these things influence us as individuals in order to fully understand who we are and how we fit into the larger world we are a part of.

... how scientists come to an understanding of the natural world and why a scientific understanding of the natural world is important. We live in a time of general concern regarding the dangers of global climate change, pandemic diseases, resource depletion, environmental degradation and other hazards yet undiscovered. Scientific investigation is essential to finding creative and sustainable solutions to these problems. As citizens required to make personal and political decisions about scientific issues, we need to both comprehend the scientific process and critically evaluate proposed solutions.

...how technology shapes their world. The modern world is characterized by technologies that influence our lives in myriad ways. Because of this dependence on technology, we need to understand the nature of technological systems and practices, how they interrelate with each other and how they impact our lives at many levels.

Intellectual and Practical Skills

Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance

Graduates of Ferris State University should be able to:

...identify, access, and use information effectively. Whether information comes from traditional sources or emerging technologies, the knowledge and ability to gather and use it in the most effective way for a given purpose is fundamental to both personal growth and professional success.

...critically evaluate information using appropriate reasoning skills. Knowledge is growing exponentially. A successful citizen must have the ability to evaluate the validity and usefulness of this information.

...interpret and use quantitative information together with the qualitative to understand and effectively solve real-life problems. Much of the information we receive is numerical in nature and represents a form of communication that transcends cultural boundaries. Graduates need the ability to effectively use this quantitative together with qualitative information to solve real-life problems.

...think and act creatively in problem solving. Solutions to today's problems require thinking that is characterized by imagination, innovation, divergent thinking and risk taking.

...communicate effectively with others in both the personal and professional spheres of life. Clear communication of thoughts and ideas is critical for success in all aspects of life and requires the ability to read, write, speak, listen and interact in meaningful ways.

...function effectively as a member of a team. There is a growing need for individuals with the teamwork and leadership skills necessary to work effectively with others in both the private and public spheres.

...make informed decisions in the use and management of financial resources. The knowledge and ability to effectively manage financial resources is important for personal and professional success.

Personal and Social Responsibility

Anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges

Graduates of Ferris State University should understand the value of:

...participating in the civic life of their communities. Whether it involves volunteering for some personal or public concern, participating in the electoral process or some other form of civic engagement, there is a need for citizens who are willing and able to promote the quality of life in and beyond their community.

...inclusion, empathy and positive engagement in their interactions with diverse others. Human diversity is manifest in myriad ways including physical, intellectual, socioeconomic, ethnic, cultural, and sexual. From the local to global scale, successful citizens develop an attitude of respecting diversity in their interactions with others.

...considering issues through well established ethical and moral traditions. Each of us daily has to make ethical choices. Recognizing an ethical dilemma and applying ethical reasoning are essential elements of personal and professional development.

...continuing to learn for personal and professional growth. Developing interests throughout life and pursuing opportunities to learn about them are hallmarks of a university graduate.

...making informed lifestyle choices. Proper nutrition and healthy leisure and recreation activities provide an essential foundation for a life of wellness.

Integrative Learning

Demonstrated through the application of knowledge, skills, and responsibilities to new settings and complex problems

Graduates of Ferris State University should be able to:

...integrate and apply what they have learned inside and outside of the classroom. Real-world problems most often require solutions that transcend academic boundaries, connecting theory and practice across multiple disciplines. The ability to adapt and apply knowledge and skills from multiple areas to creatively address new and challenging situations is necessary for success in a rapidly changing and increasingly connected world.

In summary, the University-Wide Student Learning Outcomes for Ferris State University are:

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... how all cultures, past or present, are fundamentally similar to each other, and why it is important to understand cultural differences.

...how their lives are shaped by the society and place in which they live.

... how scientists come to an understanding of the natural world and why a scientific understanding of the natural world is important.

...how technology shapes their world.

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...critically evaluate information using appropriate reasoning skills.

...interpret and use quantitative information together with the qualitative to understand and effectively solve real-life problems.

...think and act creatively in problem solving.

...communicate effectively with others in both the personal and professional spheres of life.

...function effectively as a member of a team.

...make informed decisions in the use and management of financial resources.

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- ...inclusion, empathy and positive engagement in their interactions with diverse others.**
- ...considering issues through well established ethical and moral traditions.**
- ...continuing to learn for personal and professional growth.**
- ...making informed lifestyle choices.**

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