

Proposed Draft of Mission Statement and Rationale

10/3/18

*Your St. Olaf [new general education *name*] explores inclusive academic approaches and ways of knowing that connect classroom work with experiential learning. This curriculum supports the examination of faith and community values, encourages habits of mind and body that sustain lifelong learning, and prepares you for globally engaged citizenship in a diverse and changing world.*

Rationale: The existence of a general education mission statement is one way for the St. Olaf core to be **owned and supported by the faculty**. A revised general education curriculum will promote stewardship of faculty potential for teaching and mentoring in their areas of interest and expertise. Just as the college mission statement articulates our values and identity as a liberal arts institution, the general education mission statement clearly states the aims of general education to our students and to the rest of the St. Olaf community, and enhances our ability to coherently implement and nurture the curriculum. This mission statement responds to the call from the 2017-18 GE Task Force Report for a “rededication to a college-wide, intentional effort to support students’ recognition of the meaning and value of their GE” (p.1) and reiterates that the responsibility for providing the general education curriculum is shared by all faculty members in departments and programs across the campus. The statement also addresses the observation that “too many students...regard it mainly as an obstacle to other activities they regard as more meaningful, such as study abroad, major courses, or career-related courses” (p. 6).

- The words “your [new general education *name*]” address students directly and signify that this statement is for them. These words relate to the principle that general education promotes **student agency**. A revised general education curriculum will inspire students to be more thoughtful about how they fulfill their requirements, and this, in turn, will deepen their capacity to articulate the purpose of general education and question their preferences, not just follow them.
- The words “academic approaches” and “ways of knowing” relate to the principle that general education supports **breadth** that complements depth in a major. Students develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions across a range of disciplines and interdisciplinary areas of the liberal arts. They should come to appreciate the distinctive contributions of academic disciplines, and how they interact to advance understanding of the world.
- The word “inclusive” relates to the principles that general education supports the **college mission** and is **inclusive, accessible, and supports equity**. These principles suggest that the general education curriculum welcomes all students, fosters belonging, and supports their learning without presuming a particular student profile.
- “Connecting classroom work with experiential learning” relates to the principle of **breadth** and reflects a range of pedagogies such as team-based learning, laboratory work, off-campus study, and creative work.
- “Habits of mind and body that sustain lifelong learning” and “prepares you for globally engaged citizenship in a diverse and changing world” relate to the principles that general education supports **breadth, the college mission, student agency, and is forward-looking**.