

## New Frameworks for Liberal Education and Inclusive Excellence

**Higher Education Is Creating New Frameworks for Liberal Education That Link Liberal Arts and Career Fields and Foster Inclusive Excellence.** Through its LEAP initiative—Liberal Education and America’s Promise—the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has developed a **21<sup>st</sup> century framework** for an empowering and contemporary college education. Lumina Foundation has developed the Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP) which provides **design principles** that help faculty members translate broad goals for quality liberal learning into well-designed degree programs—encompassing all majors-- at the associate, bachelor’s, and master’s level. **Both frameworks apply to all college learners and all majors.**

To Provide Students With an Empowering Education, LEAP Promotes

**Essential Learning Outcomes**—the inquiry learning outcomes people need for success in life, civil society, and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These outcomes include 1) broad knowledge of culture, science and society, as well as competence in specific major fields; 2) intellectual and practical skills, including inquiry and analysis; critical and creative thinking; written and oral communication; quantitative literacy; information literacy; teamwork and problem-solving with diverse partners; 3) studies and experiences related to democratic and global citizenship and intercultural competence; and 4) hands-on learning experiences that foster integrative, applied, and adaptive learning.

**High-Impact Educational Practices (HIPs)**—ways of engaging and challenging students—including first year experiences, intensive writing, collaborative assignments, diversity and intercultural experiences; undergraduate research, service learning, internships, learning communities and major (capstone) projects that help students achieve and demonstrate Essential Learning Outcomes.

**Signature Work**—challenging higher education to prepare all students to complete a substantial cross-disciplinary project in a topic significant to the student and society, as part of the expected pathway to a college degree and career success. The signature project can take many forms—e.g., capstone, internship, field work, research, community-based projects, creative work, ePortfolio, etc.

**Authentic Assessments**—using students’ own work and faculty-validated VALUE rubrics to probe whether individual students have developed the Essential Learning Outcomes and can apply their learning to complex questions and significant inquiry projects.

**Cross-Cultural Learning Is Essential, not Optional: Keyed to the Needs of a Diverse and Complex World, both the LEAP Framework and the DQP Emphasize Multiple Forms of Diversity Learning:**

Broad, Big Picture Learning Across the Liberal Arts and Sciences – Including **Knowledge of Histories, Cultures, and World Views In Addition To One’s Own—US and Global;**

High Level Analytic Inquiry and Communication Skills – Including the Skills of **Engaging Differing Perspectives and Solving Problems with Diverse Partners, on Campus and in Society;**

Personal and Social Responsibility—With Explicit Attention **to Civic, Cross-Cultural And Ethical Questions,** in the Curriculum, Professional Roles, and Diverse “Real-World” Contexts;

Integrative, Adaptive and Applied Learning—Showing That Students Can Apply Their Knowledge, Skills, and Examined Responsibilities to **Significant Questions and Problems, including Problems That a Diverse and Justice-Seeking Democracy Urgently Needs to Solve.**

**The Challenge Ahead: Helping Students Engage, Practice and Develop These Capacities, Both as Catalysts for Powerful College Learning and—Crucially--for Their Lives Beyond College.**

Adapted from AAC&U and Lumina Sources by  
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