

IUPUI is firmly committed to the value of liberal education.

Liberal education refers to knowledge that is broad and adaptable rather than narrow and technical. It affords the ability to communicate effectively, analyze and solve problems, and integrate and apply knowledge and skills in new settings. Liberal education prepares students to deal with complexity and change. It includes the development of a sense of social responsibility, as well as intellectual and practical skills that transcend task- or discipline-specific proficiencies.

Liberal education encompasses the core values of the liberal arts but extends beyond those disciplines.

In 2009, I joined in establishing the Presidents' Trust, whose members have pledged to make the case for liberal education and its civic and economic value in today's world. We will do so, in part, using data gathered by the Association of American Colleges and Universities' "Liberal Education & America's Promise" (LEAP) initiative. IUPUI hosted a meeting of this group last June.

IUPUI's commitment to liberal education for the 21st century began with the Hesburgh award-winning Principles of Undergraduate Learning.

The Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PULs) define in terms of learning outcomes our expectations for skills that all students should have by the time they graduate. Adopted by our faculty more than a decade ago, they are integrated into general courses all undergraduates may take as well as courses in the student's major.

In a study just released by the Presidents' Trust at our annual meeting, employers surveyed by Hart Research Associates said they "want their employees to use a broader set of skills and have higher levels of learning and knowledge than in the past to meet the increasingly complex demands they will face in the workplace." They reported being frustrated with their inability to find "360 degree people" who have the technical skills and broader skills necessary for both the employee and the company to be successful.

IUPUI's Principles of Undergraduate Learning fill that bill.

In addition to having principles guiding course content, the LEAP data also show that how learning is achieved is critical to student success.

Research shows that certain "high-impact" educational practices enhance student learning. Such high-impact practices as first-year experiences, learning communities, undergraduate research, and service or community-based learning improve student success. This research is summarized by George Kuh, Chancellor's Professor of Higher Education at IU Bloomington, in "High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to Them, and Why They Matter."

IUPUI is committed to high-impact practices.

In fact, IUPUI has won national recognition for first-year experiences, learning communities, undergraduate research, and service learning in US News & World Report. IUPUI is making these practices part of every student's experience. More than 90 percent of entering first-year students enroll in learning communities.

These practices will gain impetus with the new RISE Initiative.

Research, I nternational, S ervice, and E xperiential Learning (RISE) will integrate high-impact practices into all IUPUI undergraduate students' experiences. Developed by Executive Vice Chancellor Uday Sukhatme, the goal of RISE is to have every graduate participate in proven high-impact experiences that lead to success.

There is also evidence of greater economic benefit for employees who graduate with a fully rounded liberal education, according to LEAP studies.

From a federal database analyzing qualifications for 1,100 different jobs, the highest salaries apply to positions that call for intensive use of liberal education. These include writing, reasoning, judgment, decision making, problem solving, social and interpersonal skills, mathematics, and originality—all skills addressed within our Principles of Undergraduate Learning and reinforced by practice-based learning.

There is more information about the LEAP Initiative, the Presidents' Trust, and its research at the AAC&U web site: <http://www.aacu.org/resources/liberaleducation/index.cfm>.

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