Vision, Goals and Outcomes for General Education at USM
Adopted by the Faculty Senate April 2, 2004

General education at USM is a coherent, integrative, and rigorous liberal education that will enable our graduates to be world-minded, intentional, life-long learners. General education engages the academic community in learning experiences that both illuminate and transcend the perspectives of various disciplines, and systematically fosters the values and dispositions, knowledge, and skills essential for students to demonstrate

1. Informed understandings of human cultures and the natural world;
2. Analytical, contextual, and holistic thinking about complex issues;
3. Effective communication using multiple literacies and forms of expression;
4. Critical reflection upon, and informed action in, their roles as citizens, family members, consumers, and producers; and
5. Ethical action to maintain their own health and contribute to the social, environmental, and economic welfare of local and global communities.

Goals and Outcomes

1. To demonstrate informed understandings of human cultures and the natural world:

Students will be able to
1.1 Examine and analyze interrelationships within and among ecosystems and human communities;
1.2 Clarify and assess the values and histories underlying quests for human freedom;
1.3 Describe and employ different lenses used in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, fine arts, and within a specific field or fields of practice; and
1.4 Value and appreciate the diversity of human cultures, the natural world, and the complexity of the interrelationships between them.

Students will have knowledge of
1.5 The processes of creative expression and products of human imagination across cultures;
1.6 Socio-cultural systems over time and across the world;
1.7 Diverse ecosystems and interrelationships between the human and the natural world; and
1.8 Natural processes as disclosed through modes of scientific inquiry.

2. To demonstrate analytical, contextual and holistic thinking about complex issues:

Students will be able to
2.1 Employ quantitative and qualitative analyses to solve problems, identify the component parts of complex issues and describe their interrelationships, and evaluate information using accepted criteria and standards;
2.2 Recognize and construct well-reasoned arguments; and
2.3 Value, appreciate, and work effectively with diverse viewpoints, uncertainty, and ambiguity, and remain open-minded towards alternatives.

Students will have knowledge of
2.4 Different levels of cognitive complexity and alternative sequences of thinking and reasoning;
2.5 The intellectual standards of and criteria for sound reasoning and logical argumentation, including the processes of quantitative and qualitative analyses, and systems of thinking; and
2.6 Alternative systems of thought, and modes of problem solving.

3. To demonstrate effective communication using multiple literacies and forms of expression:

Students will be able to
3.1 Express themselves clearly through a variety of media including writing, speaking, non-verbal modes, and technologies;
3.2 Identify, select, and employ audience-appropriate forms of communication;
3.3 Critically evaluate information communicated through various media;
3.4 Critically read and frame questions for understanding;
3.5 Practice respectful civil discourse with diverse individuals; and
3.6 Value and appreciate the richness of multiple literacies and forms of expression, and the limitations of each in contributing to knowledge and understanding.

Students will have knowledge of
3.7 The standards and criteria of effective communication and critical reading;
3.8 Artistic, scientific, quantitative, linguistic, technological, philosophical, and socio-cultural literacies;
3.9 A variety of texts from the major fields of knowledge; and
3.10 The characteristics and contexts of diverse forms and modes of communication.

4. To demonstrate critical reflection upon and informed action in their roles as citizens, family members, consumers, and producers:

Students will be able to
4.1 Analyze their roles as citizens, family members, consumers, and producers, and assess their responsibility for action in these roles and in service to their communities;
4.2 Clarify their own values, frame decisions, and evaluate actions as citizens, family members, consumers, and producers within ethical frameworks;
4.3 Appreciate the values and histories underlying different views on the roles of citizens, family members, consumers, and producers;
4.4 Recognize the diverse expression of these roles within societies; and
4.5 Take thoughtful, ethical action despite ambiguity and uncertainty.

Students will have knowledge of
4.6 The ethical dimensions of perspectives used in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, fine arts, and within specific fields of practice;
4.7 The roles of citizen, family member, consumer, and producer, and the interrelationships among them in different societies and historical periods;
4.8 How values shape communication, interpretation, and action; and
4.9 The effects of action/inaction in the roles of citizen, family member, consumer, and producer through a cross-cultural and historical perspective.

5. To demonstrate ethical action to maintain their own health and contribute to the social, environmental, and economic welfare of local and global communities:

Students will be able to
5.1 Recognize and practice a healthy lifestyle;
5.2 Employ effective approaches to decision-making and distinguish between ethical and unethical action;
5.3 Articulate her/his own ethical basis for decisions and actions, and engage in informed civic
action with integrity;
5.4 Collaborate with diverse individuals and groups to find solutions to complex problems; and
5.6 Value and practice civic engagement in a diverse democracy.

Students will have knowledge of
5.7 Health and healthy practices;
5.8 Civic processes and the values upon which they are based;
5.9 The context of and connections among local, state, regional, national, and global systems over time;
5.10 The systems of values and ethics, both historical and contemporary, underlying diverse societies and political systems; and
5.11 The democratic ideals of egalitarianism and social and economic justice, environmental stewardship, and compassion and caring.