Your College Journey

If you think of college as a journey -- which is a pretty good metaphor -- then you will realize that it is not a kind of travel in which you backpack around the territory, moving whenever and wherever the mood strikes you. It is more like a guided tour, arranged by people who have expert knowledge of the area you are exploring and know what kinds of experiences will give you a full and coherent sense of the territory, or at least as full as can be encompassed in four years of study. You will have the opportunity to make many choices along the way, but the general itinerary is planned in advance.

You might think of this publication as a guidebook that is intended to help you understand how a thoughtfully designed undergraduate education can help you get the most from your journey through college. We want to help you understand the purposes of this journey and why those guiding it have picked out certain places for you to visit. They will be particularly anxious that you pay attention to some general skills, such as communicating clearly or thinking analytically, no matter what field of study you are visiting. You will learn more about the goals that the faculty have set for you, and -- through the faculty -- your future employers and the larger society. Since you have some choice of places to visit and little free time, we want to help you make the best use of the options available.

In other words, you will find answers to the question you may sometimes ask yourself or your advisers, "Why do I have to take this course?" You will learn how a bachelor's degree is designed to prepare you both for work and for a life lived with other people. When you have finished, you will see your general education courses not as "hurdles to jump" or courses to be "gotten out of the way," but rather as the educational journey of a lifetime, the base on which to build a life as well as earn a living.

This guidebook is for anyone who wants to earn a bachelor's degree. The advice it offers applies no matter what kind of college or university you attend: two-year or four-year; public or private; for-profit or nonprofit. It applies especially if you plan to complete your degree at more than one college, although it is entirely applicable if you expect to stay at one institution for your whole undergraduate career. The ideas here are relevant no matter how old you are, whether you are a full-time or part-time student, or if you have large breaks in your college attendance. They apply without exception to all majors.

http://www.aacu.org/about/index.cfm