The purpose of universities is not to grant degrees; **our mission is higher learning**.

Higher learning is **not just tertiary education**; it is qualitatively different from primary and secondary education.

Higher learning is **developmental, transformative, integrative, and holistic**; it transcends content comprehension.

A focus on **higher learning as a shared, common purpose** unifies educators.
Higher Learning: Integrates Knowledge and Development

...a process of change, or transformation, that integrates 1) the acquisition, integration, and application of knowledge with 2) personal and social development and maturation -- which can no longer be considered separate, but, instead, interact and shape each other as they evolve... students learn about the world and themselves at the same time.
The student who graduates should not be the same person as the one who started college...

- Personal and intellectual challenge; identity formation
- Engagement with new ideas; perspective change
- Interactions with people who are different; cultural immersion
- Embraces but transcends content comprehension; more than accumulative
I understand the argument that the university can’t do everything. Academic courses, it goes, are for the mind. Let the home and the church and the psychotherapist and the athletic program attend to the spirit and the body and the rest…We can’t be therapists and doctors and spiritual directors, too.

What I am asking for is a more holistic approach to learning, a disciplinary training for people who teach in college that takes into account the fact that we are educators of whole human beings, a form of higher education that would take responsibility for emergence of an integrated person.
Defining Student Success

Integrated Person

Learning Outcomes/Categories
- General education, disciplinary content, cognitive skills, preparedness for work, citizenship, global literacy, personal and relational competence, identity, resiliency...

Learning Outcomes

Graduation/Completion in X years
Relationship Models
Bank/Assets, Production Line, Consumer, Auditor, Mentor/Apprenticeship/Student Success
Progressive/Empathic Relationship with Students

- Student success = a progressive concept of the relationship of students/universities that embraces shared responsibility for the quality and outcomes of learning—and therefore for students’ ability, capacity, and readiness to learn.

- Since (1) learning is an activity of the whole person, and (2) well-being—broadly defined—is a major factor in readiness to learn, advancing student success requires attention to students’ as whole people, and to their individual and collective well-being.

- Attention to students, shared responsibility for learning, and responsiveness to students’ needs suggest an underlying ethic of care.
“Dysfunctions”: Mental and behavioral health problems and disorders: depression, anxiety, stress, substance abuse (alcohol, recreational drugs, illicit and prescription psychotropic medications)

Chronic physical or psychological illness, with or without treatment

Life conditions that affect ability to sleep, think, reflect, participate fully in learning experiences, and wonder (e.g., poverty or financial stress, noisy or stressful home/living environment, competing demands for time and attention)
Implications of Shared Responsibility: Ethic of Care

- Being in relation recognizes human interdependence and imposes certain ethical conditions

  - Attentiveness: noticing with empathy
  - Responsibility: embracing interdependence
  - Capacity/Competency: readiness and effectiveness
  - Responsiveness: accepts differential vulnerability; does not require reciprocity
Behavioral Health & Learning: A Sample

National Epidemiologic Study on Alcohol and Related Conditions [2008]: nearly 50% of college-attending students had a psychiatric disorder -- primarily alcohol use disorder -- in the past year; fewer than 25% of students with any psychiatric disorder sought treatment.

University of Michigan Persistence of Mental Health Problems Study [2009]: Over half of students had a mental health problem in first year; 60% two years later. Although most recognized need for treatment, fewer than 50% sought it.

Consortium Mental Health and Counseling Study [NASPA and Center for the Study of Collegiate Mental Health, Penn State; 2010]: 8-16% frequency of feeling isolated/alone or sad all the time; 21-24% hard to stay motivated for class or hard to concentrate.

National College Health Assessment [2004-2013]: using frequency X level of threat to academic success calculation, most important health issues affecting academic success of undergraduates and medical students = stress, depression/anxiety/SAD, relationship problems, concern for troubled friend/family member, and death of friend/family member.

College Alcohol Study [1993-1999]: Net total effect of alcohol consumption on GPA is negative; main effect is via a reduction in the hours spent studying. Reducing alcohol consumption levels among college students may result in improved study habits.

Air Force Academy [2010]: Drinking caused statistically significant reductions in academic performance, especially for higher-performing students.
University of Michigan [2009]: Healthy Minds Study; 56% response rate from a broad random sample of undergraduate and graduate students at Michigan. Main points:

- Depression has a significant negative association with GPA (reduction by 0.17)
- Co-occurrence of depression and anxiety associated with significant further drop in GPA (reduction by total 0.40)
- Anxiety without depression not associated with GPA
- Depression associated with higher likelihood of dropping out of university
- All nine primary symptoms of depression (DSM-IV and PHQ) are independently and negatively associated with GPA
- Findings true for men and women, undergraduates and graduate students, and not modified by financial status or exercise

Neuroscientific Correlation

Imaging depression

- Reduced levels of blood flow and oxygen consumption given the same stimulus
- Neurophysiological flatness matches reported symptoms and observed signs
…what if we took shared responsibility seriously? What if our understanding of supporting student learning and success was reflected in the priorities, organization, and curricula of colleges and universities? What if we attended to the influence of well-being on learning in the way we organize our programs -- and institutions? What if we worked from an ethic of care?
Learning: Always and Everywhere

Evidence-Based Support

First-year experience and transition programs
Coherent curriculum
Integration of classroom & other learning experiences
Intensive writing
Frequent feedback
Diversity of ways of knowing and learning
Integration of knowledge, experience, skills

Academic Affairs
Student Affairs
Student Engagement
Institutional Commitment

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Learning: Always and Everywhere

Evidence-Based Support

- First-year experience and transition programs
- Coherent curriculum
- Active and experiential learning
- Integration of classroom & other learning experiences
- Engagement with diversity
- Diversity of ways of knowing and learning
- Frequent faculty contact
- Frequent feedback
- High expectations
- Integration of knowledge, experience, skills

Learning is achieved across the whole of the college experience

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Core Student Learning Outcomes

- General Education Knowledge
- Mastery of Disciplinary Knowledge
- Critical Thinking, Analytical Reasoning, Problem Solving

Moral Development and Perspective-Taking
Identity, Purpose, and Resiliency
Personal and Social Responsibility; Workplace Readiness
Intentional learning experiences throughout undergraduate experience

Collective & Cumulative

Shared responsibility across the institution
Taking Responsibility: the Emergence of an Integrated Person = Renewed Vision of Learning

Re-membering students: intentional integration of learning experiences (and of learning itself)

- Re-membering: literally, put students back together.
- Focus on the whole student.
- Recognize that learning happens always and everywhere.
- Reject the separation and categorization of mind/body, learning/life, academic/student affairs; integrate classroom and out-of-classroom learning experiences throughout the student experience.
- Focus on understanding all the factors that promote or impair learning and on intervening wherever possible to help students be ready to learn.
Liberal education, transformative learning, primary learning outcomes, the emergence of an integrated person, assessment, student engagement, and students themselves [who are, in the wild state, pre-disciplinary] are horizontal.

The organization of colleges and universities is primarily vertical.

General education is often understood -- by both students and faculty -- as a necessary horizontal evil on the way to a vertical future.

Other horizontal activities and people -- such as student affairs programs and staff -- have inferior status [perceived purposes: maintain order, clean up the mess]

Faculty reward systems are almost entirely vertical; problems of scope and scale.
In Practice, Faculty Reward Systems Generally Do Not Emphasize Student Learning

- Professional Recognition
- Disciplinary Standing/Stature
- Research Funding
- Scholarship
- Publication
- Citation
- ...Promotion & Tenure
- Institutional Service
- Department Service
- Interdisciplinary Work
- Teaching
- Advising
- Mentoring
• Specialization of roles and responsibilities
• Separates mind/body
• Differentiates “learning” and “development”
• Opportunity: focus on higher learning
• Specialization of roles and responsibilities
• Separates mind/body
• Differentiates “learning” and “development”
• Opportunity: focus on higher learning
New geometry of learning: common purposes

- Higher learning is developmental; it happens always and everywhere in students’ college experience.

- Factors positively correlated with student learning are as multiple and diverse as the sources of learning themselves.

- Create a new geometry: make learning the common purpose across campus; reflect purpose in policy; tightly couple learning experiences in and out of classroom; assess everything.
Action Steps: High Impact Learning Experiences

- First-year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences - Core Curriculum
- Learning Communities
- Writing - Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity / Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects
Curriculum infusion approach

- Georgetown faculty link academic course content to health and wellness topics through readings, presentations, discussions led by campus health professionals, and reflective writing
- Some courses include work in local communities
- Creates meaningful connections among faculty, students, and campus health professionals
- Puts *cura personalis*, or care for the person, into practice while engaging students in personal growth and learning.

Surveys indicate that the project is “having a positive effect on students’ abilities to connect their lives to their learning, as well as to create a more caring and connected university community.”

- Students agree that spending time on these health and well-being topics during class is worthwhile, and that these faculty members demonstrate *cura personalis* more than faculty in non-Engelhard classes.
- Students report learning new information about health and well-being and that they are thinking about these issues in new ways, such as being more open and tolerant toward others struggling with disease, disability, or trauma.

-CNDLS website: https://cndls.georgetown.edu/project/engelhard/ (emphasis ours)
Recipient of the **NASPA Promising Practices Award 2013**

- 5-day intensive pre-freshman program—combined content lectures and examinations for Intro Bio with learning styles assessments and informational sessions to provide the students with a preview of the requirements of biology and the pace of college.
- Participants are shown to be more successful in their coursework, have higher retention rates, and usually graduate within four years.
- Fewer students are repeating courses and a greater number of students retained within the major.
- Combined efforts with CAS, which helps students through the delivery of practical learning strategies through workshops, presentations, and individual consultations, including learning strategies customized for science majors.

“The BIOS program, in collaboration with the Center for Academic Success, has helped prepare hundreds of first-time freshmen to make a successful transition to college.”

-Sheri Wischusen, BIOS co-director and director of undergraduate research. LSU College of Science Press Release, March 1, 2013 (emphasis ours)
Kennesaw State University
Thrive Program

A “collaborative transition and retention program” developed by the University’s Center for Student Leadership and the Department of First-Year Programs in University College—enhanced academic and social support to a subset of KSU students who receive the HOPE scholarship, starting during senior year of high school and continuing through the first years of college.

Students develop the academic skills required to maintain the HOPE scholarship, integrate academically and socially to university culture, progress toward graduation, and develop leadership skills.

Pre- and ongoing workshops and events
- Study skills and strategies
- Academic stamina
- Financial aid
- Community service
- Bonding with peers

Early registration

Academic advisement

Customized, thematic 1st-year seminar

Living-learning community

“Graduation Coach”
Early data show a positive effect on first to second year retention, GPA, summer enrollment and progression to sophomore status, overall satisfaction with the University, and higher levels of personal commitment to complete degrees at KSU.

In the first year: 85% of Thrive students vs. 78% of non-Thrive students returned for second year; 72% Thrive vs. 52% control earned the GPA necessary to keep their scholarship; and all of the minority students in the first cohort outperformed peers not in the program.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
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<td><strong>Prompt</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
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<td>Recognition of (1) national trend questioning the effectiveness of the liberal arts in preparing graduates for professional and personal success, along with (2) opportunity to do this particularly well at Rollins.</td>
<td>Design a model that responds to the issues and concerns raised by the community; is not constrained by current structures, policies, and practices; and is feasible.</td>
<td>Need to momentum and energizing staff, faculty, and institutional leadership while also laying a foundation for long-term success accomplishment of outcomes.</td>
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<td>With K&amp;A, college’s readiness for a paradigm shift career and life planning services. Implementation of a supported by students, faculty, and institutional leadership.</td>
<td>Identified the characteristics of an better support student success by learning experiences out of the classroom, on and off campus, throughout the student experience—all within the context of Rollins’ liberal arts tradition</td>
<td>Established committee of faculty and staff the structure of the organization and policies and processes for the new model, integration of learning experiences inside and outside the classroom</td>
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Encourage and support institutional commitments to develop a campus learning culture that has as a core objective the promotion of student well-being—understood deeply and profoundly expressed in the opportunities and expectations that are featured by the institution.

- Institutions are asked to consider well-being as inextricably connected to robust (challenging, prompting of genuine intellectual risk, engaging and confirming) campus learning cultures.

- Not superficial or transient happiness, but rather self-identity, purposefulness, realization, and flourishing.

- Curricular, pedagogical, and structural integration—and leadership of both faculty and administrators who, as educators, understand and express both the intrinsic and extrinsic values of learning and higher education.
The Well-being and Flourishing of Students

Considering Well-being, and its Connection to Learning and Civic Engagement, as Central to the Mission of Higher Education
- **Collaboration**: improving readiness to learn and removing barriers to learning.

- **Supporting learning and student success**: linkage to renewal in Student Affairs and the academy (Learning Reconsidered; Greater Expectations); challenges “services” as the central work; focus on quality of engagement, learning environment, and outcomes.

- “Tight coupling” and integration of learning experiences in and out of the classroom.

- Partnerships between faculty and staff in the daily process of teaching and learning.
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<th>Purposes and Preferences of Learners</th>
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