



San José State
UNIVERSITY

A campus of The California State University

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SS-S05-5

At its meeting of April 25, 2005, the Academic Senate passed the following Sense of the Senate Resolution presented by Senator Heisch for the Executive Committee.

SENSE OF THE SENATE RESOLUTION
PROMOTING LIBERAL EDUCATION

WHEREAS, The Academic Senate's amendments to the General Education guidelines includes a learning objective to help students to become intentional learners who can adapt to new environments and integrate knowledge from different sources, and continue learning throughout their lifetimes; and

WHEREAS, A campus dialogue on what it means to be an educated person has been underway since May 2003;

WHEREAS, The Academic Senate has endorsed a vision for San José State University that recognizes the value we place on the integration of liberal and professional education and theoretical and applied knowledge; and

WHEREAS, The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), of which SJSU is a member, defines "liberal education" as: "A philosophy of education that empowers individuals, liberates the mind from ignorance, and cultivates social responsibility. Characterized by challenging encounters with important issues, and more a way of studying than specific content, liberal education can occur at all types of colleges and universities. 'General education' and an expectation of in-depth study in at least one field normally comprise liberal education;"¹ and

WHEREAS, In 1998, the AAC&U adopted the attached statement on liberal learning; and

WHEREAS, "On the occasion of its 90th anniversary, AAC&U is launching a decade-long initiative to champion the value of a liberal education—for individual students and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality. The initiative will expand public and student understanding of what really matters in college—the kinds of learning that will truly empower them to succeed and make a difference in the 21st century."² and

¹ AAC&U, http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/what_is_liberal_education.cfm. The terms liberal education and general education are also explained in the AAC&U report - *Greater Expectations*, Chapter 3; available at <http://www.greaterexpectations.org/>.

² AAC&U, <http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/index.cfm>.

WHEREAS, The AAC&U has invited universities committed to advancing liberal education for all students to join its LEAP campaign (Liberal Education and America's Promise) "by working to: identify ways to help students understand, embrace, and achieve liberal education outcomes; integrate liberal and professional studies; and assess liberal education outcomes across the curriculum;"³ and

WHEREAS, We take seriously our obligation to help our students prepare for life; and

WHEREAS, SJSU has both the ability and responsibility to help to inform its students and its community of the importance of a liberal education; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate call upon Interim President Kassing and Interim Provost Sigler to sign the AAC&U commitment form before the end of this semester so that SJSU becomes a LEAP partner campus; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Senate Executive Committee identify activities and projects to help expand understanding of the importance of a liberal education with such work involving Senate committees, colleges, the Office of Communications & Public Affairs, the SJSU Foundation, and the continued work of the Educated Person Dialogue.

Approved: April 18, 2005

Present: Ashton, Donoho, Heisch, Kassing, Lee, Lessow-Hurley, Maldonado-Colon, Nellen, Phillips, Thames, Veregge

Absent: Bros, Greathouse, Sigler, Van Selst

Vote: 11-0-0

Financial Impact: Unknown

³ AAC&U, http://www.aacu.org/advocacy/how_to_get_involved.cfm.

AAC&U Statement on Liberal Learning

A truly liberal education is one that prepares us to live responsible, productive, and creative lives in a dramatically changing world. It is an education that fosters a well-grounded intellectual resilience, a disposition toward lifelong learning, and an acceptance of responsibility for the ethical consequences of our ideas and actions. Liberal education requires that we understand the foundations of knowledge and inquiry about nature, culture and society; that we master core skills of perception, analysis, and expression; that we cultivate a respect for truth; that we recognize the importance of historical and cultural context; and that we explore connections among formal learning, citizenship, and service to our communities.

We experience the benefits of liberal learning by pursuing intellectual work that is honest, challenging, and significant, and by preparing ourselves to use knowledge and power in responsible ways. Liberal learning is not confined to particular fields of study. What matters in liberal education is substantial content, rigorous methodology and an active engagement with the societal, ethical, and practical implications of our learning. The spirit and value of liberal learning are equally relevant to all forms of higher education and to all students.

Because liberal learning aims to free us from the constraints of ignorance, sectarianism, and myopia, it prizes curiosity and seeks to expand the boundaries of human knowledge. By its nature, therefore, liberal learning is global and pluralistic. It embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural, and intellectual world. To acknowledge such diversity in all its forms is both an intellectual commitment and a social responsibility, for nothing less will equip us to understand our world and to pursue fruitful lives.

The ability to think, to learn, and to express oneself both rigorously and creatively, the capacity to understand ideas and issues in context, the commitment to live in society, and the yearning for truth are fundamental features of our humanity. In centering education upon these qualities, liberal learning is society's best investment in our shared future.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of the Association of American Colleges & Universities, October 1998

Source: http://www.aacu.org/About/statements/liberal_learning.cfm