



## Civic Literacy Student Learning Outcomes

### Goal Statement:

Students will develop civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions through learning and practice.

### Framing Language:

Questions of civic identity and civic action surround some of the most challenging unscripted problems our students encounter. Civic literacy permeates silos that can characterize public higher education, elevating campus-wide culture and endowing our students with a holistic higher education experience.

We define civic literacy as a combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to participate in the civic life of our communities (American Council on Education, 2000, p. vi). In order to develop civic literacy, learners must cultivate their own individual civic identity. In a higher education context, this cultivation takes place both within the formal curriculum and without, in a wide variety of co-curricular and other experiences.

This document emphasizes that critical thinking can occur in the process of reflection, which embeds a critical, problem-solving habit of mind in student learning outcomes. It further emphasizes that in order to act effectively, students must learn not only about civic life, but how to develop intentions and put those intentions into action, regardless of the field of inquiry or practice. With this general education goal, we recognize our responsibilities as college educators to help students learn to integrate their knowledge and skills by “engaging with and responding to civic, social, environmental and economic challenges at local, national and global levels” (Lumina, 2014, p. 27).

### Glossary:

- **Civic identity** -- Self-perception as an “active participant in society with a strong community and responsibility to work with others towards public purposes” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2009, p. 1).
- **Civic life** -- The “public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation, as contrasted with private or personal life, which is devoted to the pursuit of private and personal interests” (Center for Civic Education, 2014, para. 1).
- **Citizenship** -- Broad inclusion in local, national and international communities as well as digital communities (in contrast to a formal, legal definition).
- **Community** -- Specific to higher education, community includes contexts of learning and practice, such as disciplines of study and professional socialization.
- **Civil discourse** -- “Robust, honest, frank and constructive dialogue and deliberation that seeks to advance the public interest” (Brosseau, 2011, para. 5).



## Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

### 1. **Learners build personal voice and agency by examining their own cultural background in the context of civic and democratic principles.**

*The self and civic identity are dynamic (General Studies Learning Outcomes, Civic Literacy, #1)*

*Examples of learning objectives (what learners will be able to do) include the following:*

- 1.1. Exhibit curiosity about what can be learned about oneself from other individuals and within communities.
- 1.2. Recognize distinct individual attitudes and beliefs.
- 1.3. Articulate one's own attitudes and beliefs.
- 1.4. Acknowledge that communities interpret civic and democratic principles differently.

### 2. **Learners discover civic elements within the context of learning experiences.**

*Civic learning occurs in the context of learning experiences (General Studies Learning Outcomes, Civic Literacy, #2)*

*Examples of learning objectives (what learners will be able to do) include the following:*

- 2.1. Connect and extend knowledge from learning experiences to civic life.
- 2.2. Connect and extend knowledge from learning experiences to lived experience.
- 2.3. Develop ability to work within diverse groups.
- 2.4. Employ knowledge from learning experiences to imagine meaningful change in civic life.

### 3. **Learners reflect upon and connect knowledge from learning experiences to their civic identity and local and global civic life.**

*Civic learning, like civic life, is integrative (General Studies Learning Outcomes, Civic Literacy, #3)*

*Examples of learning objectives (what learners will be able to do) include the following:*

- 3.1. Reinforce and clarify learning about self as it relates to a sense of civic identity.
- 3.2. Relate learning experiences to the impact one could have on individuals and communities.
- 3.3. Tailor communication strategies to effectively express, listen, and adapt to others' perspectives.
- 3.4. Synthesize civic identity and civic learning to articulate intention to act.



## Student Learning Outcomes (cont.)

**4. When provided the opportunity, learners participate in activities of personal and public concern that are both life enriching and beneficial to the community.**

*Civic action and reflection (General Studies Learning Outcomes, Civic Literacy, #4)*

*Examples of learning objectives (what learners will be able to do) include the following:*

- 4.1. Make reasoned judgments about effective modes of civic participation.
- 4.2. Take civic action or other engagement.
- 4.3. Employ civil discourse in community interactions.
- 4.4. Evaluate effectiveness of civic participation.
- 4.5. Adapt participation to changes in community contexts and structures.
- 4.6. Reflect on benefits of involvement to civic identity, civic learning, and continued engagement.

This draft completed December 2018 by Quinsigamond Outcomes Research for Excellence (Amy Beaudry, Gaelan Lee Benway, Maureen Giacobbe, and Tiger Swan) and the following colleagues: Michael Beane, Jude D'Angelo, Nancy Donohue-Berthiaume, Mary Sylvester and Nichole Wheeler.



## References

- American Council on Education. (2000). *Civic responsibility and higher education*. T. Ehrlich (Ed.). Washington, D.C.: Oryx Press.
- Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2009). *Civic engagement VALUE rubric*. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/civic-engagement-value-rubric>
- Brosseau, C. (2011, October 27). "Executive session: Civil discourse in progress." Frankly Speaking. Retrieved from <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs011/1105924840139/archive/1108422226053.html>
- Center for Civic Education. (2014). National standards for civics and government. Retrieved from <http://www.civiced.org/standards?page=912erica>
- Lumina Foundation. (2014). *The Degree Qualifications Profile (DQP)*. Indianapolis, IN. Retrieved from <https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/dqp.pdf>
- Torney-Purta, J.V., Cabrera, J., Roohr, K.C., Liu, O. L., & Rios, J. A. (2015). *Assessing civic competency and engagement in higher education: Research background, frameworks, and directions for next-generation assessment*. ETS research report <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12081>