Preparing Engaged Citizens: Integrating Civic Learning in General Education

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General Education at UW Oshkosh | **Our Transformation**

**OLD:** No reform since the 1970s
Lots of artifacts from other eras
Over 700 classes to choose from
Little coherence
Essential Learning Outcomes... *what?*

**NEW:** Complete overhaul
Courses connected and intentional
New guidelines for course inclusion
New governance structures
Tied to [Essential Learning Outcomes](#)
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USP Guiding Principles

- Incorporation of High-Impact Practices (HIPs)
- Inclusive excellence
- Making the case for liberal arts education
- Reflection as a tool for learning
- Assessment evidence via ePortfolio
- Relationships as the basis for success
- No increase in time to degree
Form Follows Function: Building the USP

Explore: **Breadth and Opportunity**
General education requirements in lab science, math, humanities, social sciences, and fine/performing arts

**Quest I : First-Year Experience**
Small, paired classes, Peer Mentors, introduction to college life and expectations, help finding resources

**Quest II : Problem-Solving**
Paired classes, ethical dilemmas via case studies

**Quest III : Community Experience**
Significant engagement with Community Partners and Alumni Mentors

**Connect: Synthesis**
Advanced composition, USP’s “capstone”
Our Campus: Bringing the Community IN

**UW Oshkosh:** 13,000 students, mostly undergraduate

**First-Year Students:** approximately 1,600 each year, many first-generation

**UW System:** third largest in system of 26 campuses (4- and 2-year)

**The Wisconsin Idea:** the borders of the university are the borders of the state
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Our Community: Extending the University OUT

Oshkosh, Wisconsin: population ~66,000
Wisconsin’s “Event City”: EAA Airventure, Rock USA, Country USA, Lifest, etc.
Major Employers: Oshkosh Truck, EAA, UW Oshkosh
Demographics: 91% white, 3% African American, 3% Asian
Quest III: Difficult, But Worth It

Required for every sophomore student (1st or 2nd semester)

Inspiration: Musil’s Civic Engagement Learning Outcomes
Portland State University’s Senior Capstone courses

Features:
- Liberal Education: why are we doing this?
- Students as contributors, not passive receivers
- Community Partners
- Alumni Mentors
- Community Experiences, not “volunteer hours”
- The four “Rs” (Quest III Checklist; handout)
- Student conduct and handbook
- Staff member dedicated to these courses only
- Civic Engagement Student Interns (x2)
- Study abroad options for Quest III
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ABOVE: Art 236: Experience Mapping (Oshkosh Senior Center)

RIGHT: Anthropology 225: Celebrating Culture Through the Arts (Oshkosh Area School District; Lighted Schoolhouse)
Interdisciplinary Studies 224: Conflict & Memorial (UW Oshkosh Veterans Center)

Business 275: Marketing & Sustainability (Growing Oshkosh)
Quest III: Why It’s Worth It

**For the Community**
Building community relationships
Responding to employer demands (hands-on experience, problem-solving, etc.)
University woven into the community fabric

**For the Students**
Hands-on experience directly related to coursework
Networking with community members
Resume-building
Unique experience they might never otherwise have (*farming example*)

**For Instructors**
Off-campus and out in the community
Extending expertise to new (local) areas
Develop new courses
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Challenges & Opportunities

Community Partners
Finding new (and/or consistent) Community Partners
Ensuring quality Community Experience projects for students

Students in Quest III
Student understanding of value of Quest III
Ensuring connections between projects and coursework
Scheduling difficulties (for classes and time for projects)

Quest III Instructors
Administrative tasks associated with Quest III
Assessment of out-of-classroom experiences
Finding a role for Alumni Mentors
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Find Us!

www.uwosh.edu/usp
(New site goes live in a few weeks!)

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Pollock House, home of the USP