

Goals of a St. Lawrence University Liberal Education

St. Lawrence University offers students manifold opportunities to develop as liberally-educated persons who can understand and demonstrate multiple ways of knowing and learning. A central goal of a liberal education is the critical ability to stand outside one's own inherited frames of meaning in an effort to understand those whose beliefs and circumstances may be unfamiliar. To prepare themselves for diverse, fully-realized lives, informed by ongoing cultivation of their capacities for knowledge, creativity, and responsibility, graduates of St. Lawrence University should have achieved the following learning goals:

I. Knowledge

Graduates of St. Lawrence should demonstrate depth of knowledge in at least one area of study.

Students should be able to identify and use multiple epistemologies or disciplinary approaches to knowledge and inquiry.

Crossing disciplinary and cultural boundaries, students should be able to work collaboratively, solving complex problems, and discovering, applying, or creating new knowledge.

II. Capabilities

During their four years at St. Lawrence, students will acquire and practice skills that they can use effectively in their academic, personal, and social lives. "Skills" does not mean simple tools. In the context of a liberal education, students need both the ability to use a set of tools, a technology or an art, and just as importantly, the ability to evaluate critically the content created or accessed through those skills, indeed the very skills themselves. Thus students should not only be able to use a particular technology, but they should be able to describe the limitations and distortions that may come with it. We use the word "capabilities" to emphasize the ways these skills enhance access to a fuller and more informed life. Furthermore, many of these capabilities are overlapping and mutually reinforcing. In this context, all St. Lawrence students should be able to do the following:

Write well both for a general audience and within the conventions of their majors

Read a variety of texts precisely and with the ability to identify salient features of genre, perspective, and methodology

Speak articulately and in an audience-appropriate manner in interpersonal and public contexts

Listen actively and empathetically

Think analytically, critically, and creatively

Reason quantitatively

Acquire, evaluate, and communicate information using visual, textual, performance- and sound-based media, analog and digital resources, and new and emerging technologies

III. Personal and Social Responsibilities

To aid in the development of a personal ethic of considered values and to further their abilities to be both fully-realized people and citizens at the local, national, and global levels, St Lawrence graduates should have achieved the following bases for judgment and action:

Respect for diverse peoples across a world of uneven wealth and privilege

Intercultural competence

Critical reflection on their own identities and perspectives

Knowledge of the natural environment, including the complexity of natural systems and causes of environmental degradation, as well as the interdependence of humans with natural systems and how those systems can be sustained

Knowledge of the importance of social institutions and political systems in shaping and being shaped by economic conditions.

Development of virtues important for learning, such as inquisitiveness, perceptiveness, intellectual honesty and humility, fair consideration of evidence, respectful treatment of those with whom one is in dialog, and commitment to free exchange of ideas.