

CU Boulder Common Curriculum Learning Objectives and Outcomes Proposal

**Common Curriculum Planning Committee
October 6, 2022**

PLEASE SEND COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO:
commoncurriculum@colorado.edu

PART A. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED STRUCTURE

Following upon the Academic Futures recommendation that CU Boulder should develop “a campus-wide common learning experience and/or curriculum” for undergraduate education and Chancellor Philip DiStefano’s directive to design “a campus-wide common learning experience and a common set of intended learning outcomes,” the Common Curriculum Planning Committee was charged by Provost Russell Moore with “the identification and design development of a common curriculum through which our undergraduate students will achieve shared learning goals that address integrative values and common touchpoints throughout the undergraduate career.” Provost Moore further charged the committee with developing “campus-wide learning goals that reflect both a deliberate statement about who we are as a university and that complement and enhance all of our educational programs.” In keeping with its charge, the Common Curriculum Planning Committee hereby submits this proposal for Common Curriculum Learning Objectives and Outcomes to Provost Moore as the foundational step of forming a common curriculum.

The common curriculum integrates curricular pathways across all schools and colleges with co-curricular experiences offered across campus. Spanning the entire student journey, the common curriculum defines the learning objectives and learning outcomes that make up a CU Boulder undergraduate experience. It ensures that all students are prepared as civically engaged citizens and leaders, lifelong learners, and contributors to a thriving future.

PART B. OUTLINE OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The Common Curriculum Planning Committee has defined the overall learning objective of the Common Curriculum—i.e., the ***purpose and distinctive nature of a CU Boulder education***—as preparing our students to take part in creating ***Sustainable Futures***: for themselves, for society, and for the world.

In addition, the committee has identified learning objectives that define ***three habits of mind*** that support this overall objective:

Discovery
Reflection
Engagement

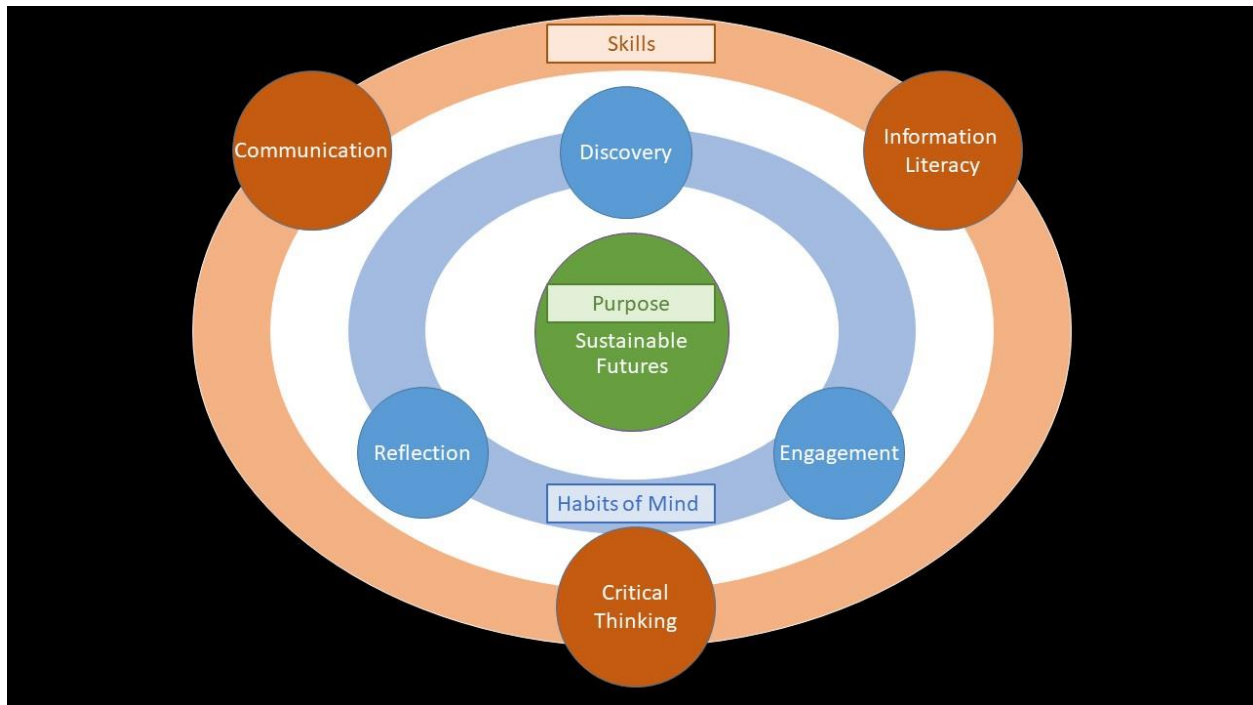
Finally, the committee has identified ***three essential skills*** for accomplishing these goals:

Information Literacy
Critical Thinking
Communication

These seven total learning objectives will not be sequentially taught, individual courses; nor will they be “covered” in the first year or in lower-division courses only. Rather, these learning objectives will be woven throughout the fabric of a student’s entire undergraduate academic experience at CU Boulder.

The Common Curriculum Planning Committee has designed three assessable learning outcomes for each of these seven learning objectives. The committee imagines that the first phase of implementing the Common Curriculum will involve mapping these learning outcomes onto the curricular pathways and existing learning objectives and outcomes of all the schools, colleges, and undergraduate degree programs at CU Boulder, including both general education (or core) requirements and the curricula of specific majors, minors, and certificates. In addition, the common curriculum will incorporate the First Year Experience and its co-curricular activities, which focus on introducing students to academic life in higher education and reinforcing skills of study, citizenship, and self-care.

Thus, the common curriculum’s learning objectives will span all levels of the undergraduate experience and be offered through both curricular and co-curricular activities.



PART C. DETAILS OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Purpose of the Common Curriculum

Sustainable Futures: Self, Society, World

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

At CU Boulder, students will gain an understanding of the interdependence of individual, societal and environmental wellbeing and of the necessity for stewardship to advance balanced and equitable futures for all. Throughout their CU Boulder education, students will cultivate skills and habits of mind that enable them to thrive as individuals and contribute to a thriving world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of CU Boulder will be able to:

1. Discern their role in advancing resilient communities and demonstrate the ability to act as stewards for sustainable futures.
2. Explain different discipline-specific definitions of and approaches to sustainability and how sustainable solutions may be achieved through collaboration among different disciplines.
3. Articulate how specific actions foster individual well-being, social equity, long-term economic vitality, and the health of the natural environment.

Habit of Mind: Discovery

Preparing to Be a Lifelong Thinker and Problem-Solver

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

CU Boulder students will be active members of a university community that is devoted to the advancement of knowledge and marked by creation and creativity across all areas of research, scholarship, creative work, and innovation. They will cultivate curiosity and develop new ways of thinking, working, and living by participating in applied learning and invention and publicly presenting their research, scholarship, and creative work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of CU Boulder will be able to:

1. Evaluate positions, theories, practices, and/or methods on a topic they have defined and researched.
2. Investigate phenomena from multiple and distinct disciplinary perspectives, identifying points of agreement and disagreement and using ideas from one perspective to inform and critique another.
3. Integrate diverse ideas in creative and innovative ways to craft novel insights, new conceptual models, and/or solutions to problems.

Habit of Mind: Reflection

Preparing to Engage in Self-Understanding, Sustain Personal Well-Being, and Make Ethical Choices

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

CU Boulder students will understand their roles and responsibilities as self-reflective, self-sustaining individuals, as members of groups in a diverse society, and as ethical, civically literate citizens committed to building a more equitable world.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of CU Boulder will be able to:

1. Describe their own identities, beliefs, and social positionings in relation to those of other people.
2. Apply ethical reasoning to comprehend how their actions affect themselves and others, and how the policies, functions, and actions of systems and institutions affect individuals and groups of people.
3. Practice metacognitive strategies to assess and foster their own learning and well-being.

Habit of Mind: Engagement

Preparing to Advance a Diverse Democracy

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

CU Boulder students will know how to make positive contributions to a diverse world as citizens and leaders engaged in their communities. Citizenship involves developing an orientation to the public good—understanding that this concept is always contested—and a commitment to democratic processes to address differences. Leadership involves promoting collaboration, motivating others, valuing diverse perspectives, and elevating the strengths of individuals. As committed citizens and leaders, students will recognize how histories, cultures, and values shape identities, practices, and social positionings; will understand that engagement can take many forms across different communities and cultures; and will engage productively across differences to identify and address barriers to inclusion, equity, and sustainability.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of CU Boulder will be able to:

1. Define a personal approach to leadership and community engagement and an orientation to the public good with respect to different communities and cultures.
2. Participate in respectful and empathetic dialogue to explore barriers to inclusion, equity, and sustainable futures.
3. Engage in activities that positively contribute to their communities, such as community-based learning, volunteering, and internships and publicly engaged research, scholarship, and creative work.

Skill: Information Literacy

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

CU Boulder students will be able to negotiate increasingly complex information environments and to understand different modalities of information, how information is produced and valued, and their own involvement and participation in information landscapes as they create new knowledge.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of CU Boulder will be able to:

1. Practice inquiry as an open-ended, social process of evaluating information and participating ethically in communities of learning.
2. Analyze how social, legal, technological, and economic factors affect the creation, dissemination, accessibility and use of information.
3. Recognize that information evolves and emerges from particular contexts and that authority and ways of knowing are legitimized within particular situations.

Skill: Critical Thinking

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

CU Boulder students will be able to conceptualize and synthesize an original belief about or solution to an issue through reasoned questioning, evaluation, and judgment derived from rigorous analysis, interpretation, inference, observation, discussion, and/or experience, and then to apply the finding in an intellectually transformative way, with an understanding of its relevance and implications.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of CU Boulder will be able to:

1. Review material through attentive reading, listening, research, observation, and experience.
2. Evaluate sources of information, recognizing the different perspectives, identities, and social positions that may inform those sources.
3. Apply learning to create original arguments, craft solutions to problems, and participate in informed discussion and collaboration.

Skill: Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

CU Boulder students will be able to use appropriate media (written, spoken, visual, symbolic, digital) for effective expression, argumentation, and communication of ideas and sentiments to audiences.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of CU Boulder will be able to:

1. Write and speak logically, clearly, and with originality, using the process of composition to enhance intellectual discovery and express complex thought.
2. Demonstrate facility with the fundamentals of persuasion as these are adapted to a variety of situations and audiences.
3. Demonstrate advanced facility in the modes of communication most relevant to their particular majors or prospective professions.