

Liberal Arts Education Principles at Lyon College

The center of a liberal arts education is the development of essential intellectual abilities: reasoning clearly and critically, reading carefully and accurately, communicating precisely and persuasively, and interpreting with insight and imagination. This intellectual cultivation is accompanied by the acquisition of complementary values and virtues: intellectual honesty, the love of truth, fairness to opposing points of view, tolerance of reasoned dissent, and patience with complexity and ambiguity. These intellectual and affective qualities together produce a liberally educated person who habitually takes a thoughtful and informed approach to any issue.

The intellectual and personal development that is the heart of a liberal arts education occurs in many ways: through the advising received from faculty; from personal and informal association with faculty, staff, and other students; through participation in campus organizations and athletics and attendance at lectures and cultural events; through the house system; through the Honor and Social Systems; and through the Campus Ministry program. While each of these plays an important part, the chief means of a liberal arts education is the academic curriculum, comprising lectures, seminars, laboratories, studios, internships, and research.

The liberally educated person is the product of the critical, analytical, and creative study of established knowledge, principles, theories, and practices. A liberal arts education results from careful consideration of issues that are of perennial and contemporary concern to thoughtful persons. It grows through reading and experiencing the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic expressions of human beings around the globe. In other words, a liberal arts education occurs through the critical transmission of and creative response to the world's cultural heritage.

Therefore, a liberal arts education cannot be narrowly focused. Those who take a reasoned approach to their experience must have a breadth of knowledge and understanding. To be liberally educated is to be broadly educated in the arts, the humanities, the natural sciences, and the social sciences.