Core Competencies

I.   Background

Lehigh is an institution committed to producing students of the highest intellectual caliber and personal ability, in an environment that promotes and sustains opportunities for intentional learning. As noted in the National Panel Report *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College[1]*, a critical role for Higher Education both today and in the future is to ensure that students coming to Lehigh participate in and receive an education of lasting value.

A critical aspect of such an environment is Lehigh's ability to expose students to core, fundamental competencies that transcend their experiences across their academic, co-curricular, social and personal development. As noted in *Greater Expectations,* and interwoven throughout Lehigh's mission and goals, our ability to fulfill this commitment will be greatly enhanced if we work together as a community where living and learning are not constrained by boundaries, but fully **integrated and coordinated** across all facets of campus life. Never more has this been the case for Lehigh, as we have embarked upon a number of initiatives that seek to build connections far and wide across the campus community, rooted in common experience. Examples include: integrated academic majors and programs (e.g. IBE, CSB, & Bioengineering); affiliated living options coupled with academic programs of study (e.g. Global Citizenship & South Mountain College); and ArtsLehigh, a program that strives to infuse broadened concepts of culture and creativity all throughout students' academic and co-curricular lives.

In line with these initiatives, the Division of Student Affairs is devoting great energy to cultivate a comprehensive core experience for all of our undergraduate students. Because of the essential need to create an optimal environment for students' success academically, residentially, co-curricularly and personally, it is crucial that our efforts be strategic. After careful review and consideration of national research including *Learning Reconsidered 2[2]* and the *Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Developmental Outcomes[3]*, student development theories, institutional "best practice" models, internal data, and extensive discussions, what follows are four identified core areas in which we aim to facilitate student learning and personal development.

II.   Lehigh University Core Competency Areas

- ***Intellectual Exploration***
- ***Individual Identity Development***
- ***Interpersonal Development, Equity, Community and Global Engagement***

Descriptions of each area and examples of achievement within them are included. Within each core area, examples of achievement are broken down by class year, thus identifying skills developmentally appropriate for traditional-aged college students and skills that serve as building blocks for more complex learning as one matriculates through college. It should be noted that the examples provided in each core area are a continuum and not concrete boxes in which students neatly fit.

Finally, the descriptions and examples are not intended to be comprehensive lists; rather they serve as a means for understanding each of the core areas and as a resource to guide planning and curriculum development of individual departments, programs, and services. Also, attached to this document, is a Developmental Competencies Map that provides a more specific list of skills associated with each of the four core areas.

As we move forward to build seamless transitional experiences across students' developmental years, our formal and informal efforts to do so will be best accomplished in an environment that intentionally and fluidly weaves such learning throughout the fabric of Lehigh.

III.   Core Competency Areas and Examples of Achievement

A. _**Intellectual Exploration**_: Student's ability to develop an interest in, and therefore adopt strategies and behaviors, to advance their cognitive and academic abilities; exploration of, how to learn/integrate their academic experiences and also begin to understand and develop an inherent drive for/value of life-long learning.

-In the first year, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):

- Manages time to complete tasks with consideration for priorities and deadlines
- Knowledgeable of support services on campus and utilizes them as needed
- Understands learning style and applies it in order to study effectively
- Communicates effectively in both oral and written form
- Identifies educational goals and objectives

-In the second year, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Articulates justifiable rationale for beliefs and perspectives
- Demonstrates an appreciation for various forms of expression from diverse perspectives
- Able to form intellectual questions and think critically in order to further develop personal views
- Decides on major course of study and actively explores career goals
- Applies prior information to a new situation or setting

-In the third year and beyond, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Integrates in class and out of class learning into career exploration and decision-making
- Completes some culminating example of intellectual work (senior project, thesis, etc.)
- Successfully engages in experiential learning opportunities such as study abroad, internships, co-op, etc.
- Articulates the advantages and challenges of a diverse society
- Employs complex reasoning

B. _**Individual Identity Development**_: Student's exploration and understanding of personal values, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about self; student's need to (re)visit the question "Who am I?" and "What does that mean?".

-In the first year, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Understands one's individual background, culture, experiences, attributes roles, interests, etc.
- Identifies personal skills and abilities
- Based on personal values, make appropriate decisions about involvements on campus
- Explores personal, ethical, spiritual, and moral values
- Demonstrates successful peer-to-peer relationships
- Trusts others appropriately

-In the second year, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Sets manageable and meaningful personal goals
- Acknowledges and can describe personal qualities
- Initiates action towards achievement of goals and exhibits conscientiousness
- Demonstrates resiliency and ability to overcome obstacles
- Seeks involvement in previously unexplored interests and activities

-In the third year and beyond, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Accomplishes tasks in an environment where little direction is given
- Articulates a personal leadership philosophy or style and demonstrates emotional intelligence
- Defines pluralism accurately in one's own words
- Understands relationship between health/wellness and accomplishing life goals
- Uses moral reasoning and makes ethical decisions

C. _InterpersonalDevelopment, Equity, Community and Global Engagement s_: The identification, understanding and implementation of the skills necessary to build relationships in life; the ability to understand who students are in relationship to others who are different from them; ability to evaluate the type and quality of interactions with others. Feeling a part of the community and therefore developing a commitment to broadly shared ideas and interests; working together for a common purpose; developing a sense of personal responsibility for promoting the growth and sustainability of the larger community.

-In the first year, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Listens effectively to others' points of view
- Expresses thoughts and emotions through verbal and non-verbal forms of communication
- Understands basic conflict management styles
- Establishes mutually rewarding interpersonal relationships with peers, friends, and romantic partners
- Demonstrates personal responsibility for self
- Has a sense of belonging to a community
- Understands and participates in relevant governance systems
- Understands the role of society and communities in shaping values
- Participates in service/volunteer activities

-In the second year, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Understands group dynamics and operates successfully in group settings
- Understands others' cultures and engages in relationships with people of different backgrounds/cultures/views
- Contributes to the achievement of group goals; makes commitments and follows through
- Influences and negotiates with others through communication
- Demonstrates assertive behaviors
- Understands the importance of service to others and is aware of community needs
- Possesses and demonstrates integrity through actions and decisions
- Articulates a meaning of citizenship
- Respects the identities and practices of various groups
- Appropriately challenges unfair and intolerant behavior and the use of stereotypes by others

-In the third year and beyond, examples of achievement may include (but are not limited to):
- Appreciates the presence of different viewpoints
- Seeks and incorporates feedback from others
- Exhibits necessary balance of independence and interdependence in relationships and team settings
- Builds networks and establishes relationships that support goal accomplishment
- Seeks opportunities to mentor/teach others
- Understands ethics within a community or organization and makes ethical decisions
- Advocates on behalf of the needs and equitable rights of others
- Engages in controversy and public discourse in a civil manner
- Initiates change for the common good
- Facilitates productive dialogue and work within groups focuses on a common goal

[1] Published by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), Fall 2004.
[2] Published by ACPA, ACUHO-I, ACUI, NACA, NACADA, NASPA, and NIRSA, 2006.
[3] Many statements and examples in this document are taken directly from _Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes_ (Council for the Advancement of Standards in higher Education), 2006.

Core Competencies Skill Development Map

ACADEMIC LEVEL	Intellectual Development	Individual Identity Development	Interpersonal Development, Equity, Community & Global Engagement
First Year	- Manages time to complete tasks with consideration for priorities and deadlines - Knowledgeable of support services on campus and utilizes them as needed - Understands learning style and applies it in order to study effectively - Communicates effectively in both oral and written form - Identifies educational goals and objectives	- Understands one's individual background, culture, experiences, attributes roles, interests, etc. - Identifies personal skills and abilities - Based on personal values, make appropriate decisions about involvements on campus - Explores personal, ethical, spiritual, and moral values - Demonstrates successful peer-to-peer relationships - Trusts others appropriately	- Listens effectively to others' points of view - Expresses thoughts and emotions through verbal and non-verbal forms of communication - Understands basic conflict management styles - Establishes mutually rewarding interpersonal relationships with peers, friends, and romantic partners - Demonstrates personal responsibility for self - Has a sense of belonging to a community - Understands and participates in relevant governance systems - Understands the role of society and communities in shaping values - Participates in service/volunteer activities
ACADEMIC LEVEL	Intellectual Development	Individual Identity Development	Interpersonal Development, Equity, Community & Global Engagement
Second Year	- Articulates justifiable rationale for beliefs and perspectives - Demonstrates an appreciation for various forms of expression from diverse perspectives - Able to form intellectual questions and think critically in order to further develop personal views - Decides on major course of study and actively explores career goals - Applies prior information to a new situation or setting	- Sets manageable and meaningful personal goals - Acknowledges and can describe personal qualities - Initiates action towards achievement of goals and exhibits conscientiousness - Demonstrates resiliency and ability to overcome obstacles - Seeks involvement in previously unexplored interests and activities	- Understands group dynamics and operates successfully in group settings - Understands others' cultures and engages in relationships with people of different backgrounds/cultures/views - Contributes to the achievement of group goals; makes commitments and follows through - Influences and negotiates with others through communication - Demonstrates assertive behaviors - Understands the importance of service to others and is aware of community needs - Possesses and demonstrates integrity through actions and decisions - Articulates a meaning of citizenship - Respects the identities and practices of various groups - Appropriately challenges unfair and intolerant behavior and the use of stereotypes by others
ACADEMIC LEVEL	Intellectual Development	Individual Identity Development	Interpersonal Development, Equity, Community & Global Engagement
Third Year and Beyond	- Integrates in class and out of class learning into career exploration and decision-making - Completes some culminating example of intellectual work (senior project, thesis, etc.) - Successfully engages in experiential learning opportunities such as study abroad, internships, co-op, etc. - Articulates the advantages and challenges of a diverse society - Employs complex reasoning	- Accomplishes tasks in an environment where little direction is given - Articulates a personal leadership philosophy or style and demonstrates emotional intelligence - Defines pluralism accurately in one's own words - Understands relationship between health/wellness and accomplishing life goals - Uses moral reasoning and makes ethical decisions	- Appreciates the presence of different viewpoints - Seeks and incorporates feedback from others - Exhibits necessary balance of independence and interdependence in relationships and team settings - Builds networks and establishes relationships that support goal accomplishment - Seeks opportunities to mentor/teach others - Understands ethics within a community or organization and makes ethical decisions - Advocates on behalf of the needs and equitable rights of others - Engages in controversy and public discourse in a civil manner - Initiates change for the common good - Facilitates productive dialogue and work within groups focuses on a common goal