The General Education Program

General Education New Faculty Orientation 21 August 2007

Higher Education

* why students go to college
* not a continuation of high school...
* ...but a chance to *become who you are** learning *more** learning *different*

General Education

not one's major, but broader learning
the "core" of the undergraduate program
two models:

* everyone takes the same thing

distribution requirements

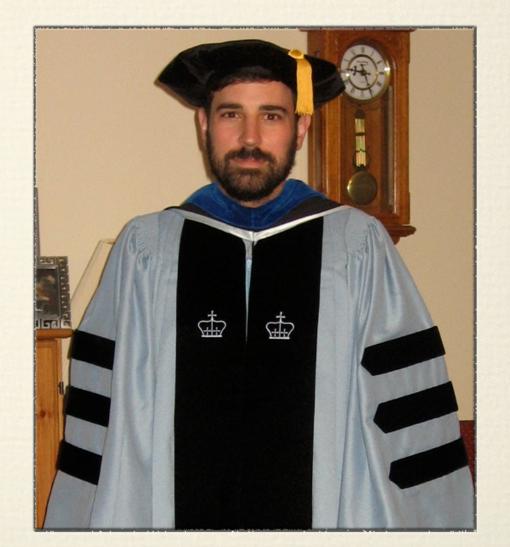
A Very Brief History of College (1)

*medieval monasteries

*classical curriculum

*1850s: Land Grant institutions

*specialization



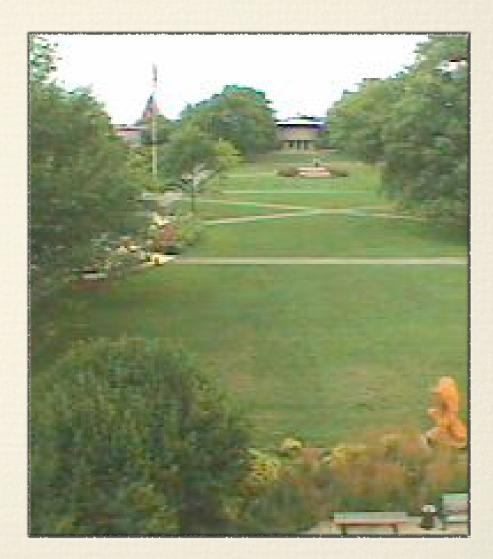
A Very Brief History of College (2)

*the General Education movement, part one

*"in loco parentis"

*1960s

*the General Education movement, part two

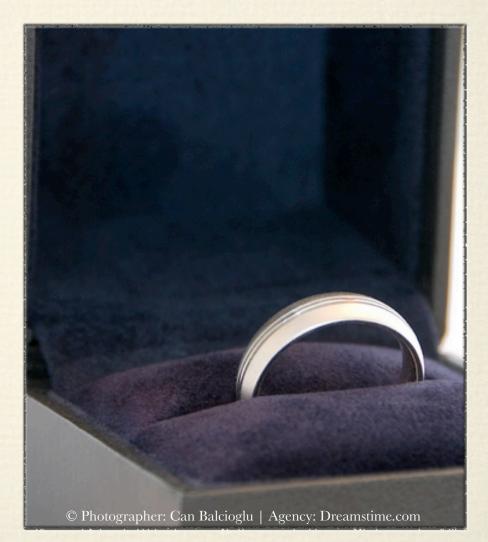


AU's Alloy

* a blend, not a synthesis

* choice within limits:

- * five curricular areas
- diverse course offerings (150 in all), taught by all departments of the university
- * program-wide values



Six Program Values

- written and oral communication
- critical thinking, including information literacy
- * ethics
- * aesthetics
- * perspectives of race, class, culture, and gender* a global point of view

Five Curricular Areas

- 1. The Creative Arts
- 2. Traditions that Shape the Western World
- 3. Global and Multicultural Perspectives
- 4. Social Institutions and Behavior
- 5. The Natural Sciences

The Three Rules

1. Distribution Rule: two courses in each curricular area; both courses from the same "cluster"

- 2. Sequence Rule: take the foundation course in an area before taking a second-level course in that area
- 3. Multidisciplinary Rule: no more than two courses offered by a single department

Things Students Are Wondering

* AP credit: yes, for up to four courses

- transfer credit: once enrolled at AU, all courses for General Education credit *must* be taken at AU
- * pass/fail option: yes
- * taking courses not for General Education credit: of course!

http://www.gened.american.edu 202 885-3879

http://www.american.edu/universitycollege/ 202 885-3839

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