

## College Purposes and Goals

Hamilton College is committed to the intellectual and personal development of students. We seek to nourish a love of learning, a creative spirit, and an informed and responsible engagement with an ever-changing world. To promote these qualities, the College challenges all of its students to work with their advisors to devise an educational program that fosters:

**Intellectual Curiosity and Flexibility**—examining facts, phenomena, and issues in depth and from a variety of perspectives, and having the courage to revise beliefs and outlooks in light of new evidence.

**Analytic Discernment**—analyzing information, patterns, connections, arguments, ideas, and views quantitatively and symbolically.

**Aesthetic Discernment**—evaluating quality and value in a variety of artistic and other intellectual domains.

**Disciplinary Practice**—engaging in the focused and sustained practice of disciplinary techniques and methodologies in order to acquire mastery of a specific ability or craft.

**Creativity**—imagining and developing original ideas, approaches, works, and interpretations and solving problems resourcefully.

**Communication and Expression**—expressing oneself with clarity and eloquence, in both traditional and contemporary media, through writing and speaking, and through visual, aural, gestural, and other modalities.

**Understanding of Cultural Diversity**—critically engaging with multiple cultural traditions and perspectives, and with interpersonal situations that enhance understanding of different identities and foster the ability to work and live productively and harmoniously with others.

**Ethical, Informed, and Engaged Citizenship**—developing an awareness of the challenges and responsibilities of local, national, and global citizenship and the ability to meet such challenges and fulfill such responsibilities by exercising sound and informed judgment in accordance with just principles.

In pursuing these goals, students should progress meaningfully along a path toward fulfilling their potential for being thoughtful, responsible, and purposeful individuals with the capacity to make a positive difference in the world.

## **Education in the liberal arts at Hamilton College comprises:**

**I. Foundations:** The faculty expects that students will attain a high level of engagement early in their studies and will develop as creative and critical thinkers, writers and speakers. To achieve these aims, the College encourages all students to participate in at least four proseminars and requires all students to complete the Writing Program and the Quantitative Literacy Requirement.

1. *The Proseminar Program:* Proseminars emphasize active participation and engagement in learning. Proseminars offer intensive interaction among students, and between students and instructors, through emphasis on writing, speaking and discussion, and other approaches to inquiry and expression that demand such intensive interaction. Descriptions of proseminars are available through advisors and the Office of the Registrar.

2. *The Writing Program:* Students must pass at least three writing-intensive courses. For a full description of the Writing Program requirements, see "Standards for Written Work."

3. *The Quantitative Literacy Requirement: For students through the Class of 2013.* Every student must demonstrate basic quantitative literacy by passing a quantitative skills examination given during Orientation, or by passing a designated quantitative course, or by completing a non-credit tutorial. This requirement should be completed by the end of the second year. For a detailed description and list of courses, see "Standards for Quantitative Work."

*The Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Requirement: For students in the Classes of 2014 and 2015.* Every student must pass at least one designated quantitative and symbolic reasoning course. This requirement should be completed by the end of the second year. For a detailed description of this requirement, see "Standards for Quantitative Work."

**II. Breadth in the Liberal Arts:** As a liberal arts college, Hamilton expects students to undertake coursework in a wide variety of disciplines, to explore areas unfamiliar to them and to make connections across courses and disciplines. A liberally educated person studies in the traditional academic divisions of the arts, foreign languages, the humanities, mathematics, the sciences and the social sciences. Hamilton also emphasizes cultural analysis, including the study of non-western traditions and of diversity in the United States. Students will work with their advisors to determine how best to achieve this intellectual balance.

**III. Concentration:** Each student must meet the requirements for a concentration.

**IV. Senior Program:** All students are required to complete the Senior Program in their concentrations as a means of demonstrating an appropriate level of mastery of the content and methods of a discipline. Each department and program of concentration has designed a

senior program that serves as an integrating and culminating experience for the concentration. Building on their courses and showing their increasing ability to work independently in terms of both motivation and subject matter, seniors are required to produce a significant synthesis of knowledge by means of one of the following: a research project leading to a written, aural or visual creation; a seminar for concentrators, including a major presentation and research paper by each student; or comprehensive examinations ideally involving both written and aural components.

Students make progress toward meeting these goals by studying broadly across diverse areas of inquiry, guided by their advisors, and investigating a particular area of study more thoroughly by completing a concentration of their choosing. A faculty advisor assigned to each student provides information, advice and dialogue about choice of courses as the student strives to meet these goals. For many faculty members and students, this relationship will be as important as any they form. As the primary intellectual guide, the faculty determines the fundamental structure and the basic requirements of the curriculum in light of the liberal arts tradition and its appropriate adaptation to the contemporary world.

In sum, Hamilton's mission is to provide an educational experience that emphasizes academic excellence and the development of students as human beings. This experience centers on ready access to an exceptional faculty and can be shaped to meet each individual student's interests and aspirations. A Hamilton education prepares students to make choices and to accept the responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic world of intellect and diversity. It will be the foundation on which they build a lifetime of personal and professional achievement and satisfaction.