

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

An Overview

The concept of liberal arts embodies certain fundamental goals, among them breadth, depth, independent thinking, and rational, humane self-determination. Denison's curriculum provides the means by which these characteristics are deliberately nurtured in our students. Our commitment to a liberal arts education is expressed in the form of General, Major, and Elective requirements. Students should anticipate that their curricular experience will be divided nearly equally among these three spheres. Students work closely with their advisors to fulfill these requirements in ways that meet students' objectives, enable purposeful choices of programs and courses, and facilitate a coherent preparation for becoming a creative and engaged citizen in the twenty-first century.

General Education

The General Education Program is designed to provide intellectual breadth, through experience with a variety of disciplines and appreciation for the diversity of human culture. This program requires broad exposure to various fields and development of essential abilities: listening, reading, and observing; reasoning critically and quantitatively; and expressing ideas convincingly in oral discourse as well as the written word. Approximately one-third of the curriculum is reserved for General Education.

Academic Major

The Academic Major promotes discipline of thought and depth of understanding as it is articulated within a specific field. Within the Major, students are held accountable for discovering the evolving questions within the field and the prevailing methods that lead to greater understanding. Practice within a chosen discipline will constitute about a third of students' coursework as they develop an appreciation for the culture and content of their academic home.

Electives

Electives require further breadth of inquiry and provide additional opportunities for students to individually design their curricular choices. In consultation with their academic advisors, students choose about one-third of their courses as electives. These choices may be a mix of structured options, such as a concentration or a semester of off-campus study, or they may be more flexible reflections of personal interest.

With careful planning, General Education, the Academic Major, and Electives blend into a coherent and meaningful educational experience. These three spheres provide breadth, depth, and flexibility in a liberal arts education nurturing independent thought, rationality, and a capacity for humane self-determination.