VIU DEGREE-LEVEL OUTCOMES
From the AP #2 Working Group
April 2013

As a group, we have considered what might work as institution-level learning outcomes. This is an important discussion right now at VIU, and a number of groups are looking at *learning outcomes* from particular perspectives. Just to remind people: our work is as a sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Planning and Priorities of Senate, and we came to *learning outcomes* as a way to consider how we might re-design various elements of the undergraduate experience. In other words, before tinkering with first-year, or designing new capstone courses, or anything else, ***what is it that we believe students ought to have as the learning outcomes of a baccalaureate degree***?

Let us be clear that this document outlines an approach to *institution-level* learning outcomes. These would be competencies and experiences that we require of all B.A. Majors and Minors, B.Sc. Majors and Minors, and the B.B.A. concentrations. Departments and programs would be expected to ensure that curriculum supports these institutional outcomes.

The suggestions below are adapted from a number of other such schemes, including a 1996 paper entitled "Perceived Needs of Students in the 21st Century" co-authored by VIU's John Black and Deanne Schultz; *The Study of Undergraduate Education at Stanford University* report released in January 2012; and "The Essential Learning Outcomes" promoted by the Association of American Colleges and Universities - among others.

An earlier draft was circulated to the university community and then discussed at an open session on November 23, 2012. Valuable feedback from that forum has been incorporated in this version, which we view as our "final" document, a kind of "provisional learning outcomes" that allows us to continue our work. The working group from Educational Standards that is undertaking Academic Plan action item #19 may revise, refine, and modify these further.

A. General Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World

1. Through study in the sciences, social sciences, humanities, languages, and the arts

B. Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility

1. Local knowledge (including Aboriginal history and relations) in Global context
2. Intercultural knowledge and competence
3. Moral maturity
4. Foundations for lifelong learning

C. Intellectual and Practical Skills

1. Critical thinking and Analytical Competence: the knowledge, skills, and attributes required to conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and to form substantive recommendations. Graduates will be able to
    - Demonstrate the capacity to analyze, evaluate and interpret information
    - Apply rational and creative problem-solving individually and in groups
    - Recognize and appreciate arguments as flawed or sound, and be able to articulate the reasoning behind their beliefs and actions
    - Demonstrate the capacity to identify the worth of their experience and situate it in a broader context

2. Creative thinking: Graduates will be able to
    - Demonstrate the ability to find non-standard yet effective solutions to problems
    - Seek innovative solutions employing a number of disciplinary and other perspectives
    - Feel comfortable with "quick failures" in order to learn and adapt

3. Written and oral communication: Graduates will be able to
    - Choose appropriate media and channels of communication to suit different occasions
    - Write clearly, thoughtfully, and with concision
    - Choose from a range of approaches and registers, as appropriate to the situation
    - Effectively revise written work
    - Operate in a number of "real-world" settings, like facilitating a workshop, chairing a meeting, introducing a speaker, summarizing the argument of another

4. Information literacy: Graduates will be able to
    - Determine the nature and extent of information needed for a given purpose
    - Understand the economic, legal, and social contexts of information, including the basics of copyright and plagiarism
    - Find, gather, evaluate, and properly cite information based on authority, currency, and fitness for purpose
    - Access information from a number of sources

5. Quantitative literacy: Graduates will be able to
    - Interpret mathematical models such as formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics, and draw inferences from them
    - Represent mathematical information symbolically, visually, numerically, and verbally
    - Use arithmetical, algebraic, geometric and statistical methods, as appropriate, to solve problems
    - Estimate and check answers to mathematical problems in order to determine reasonableness, identify alternatives, and select optimal results
    - Recognize the limits of mathematical and statistical methods

6. Technical literacy: Graduates will be able to
    - Understand the social and political implications of technological practice and change
    - Understand the effective scope and limitations of technology in various applications
    - Understand current software and the basics of operating systems, terminology, and networks

7. Problem-solving and teamwork: Graduates will be able to
    - Work effectively in groups, understanding the roles played by all members of the group
    - Deal with conflict through appropriate resolution methods
    - Seek innovation and solutions through group work that is more creative than individual work

The above outcomes shall be met through a variety of practices and approaches to teaching, learning, and scholarship. Some hallmarks, in addition to classroom-based instruction, include the following:

Integrative and Applied Learning, through

1. Studio-based, problem-based, and other pedagogical approaches
2. Experiential education
3. Capstone courses and assignments
4. Undergraduate research projects
5. Co-curricular activity