



SWARTHMORE

Office of the Provost

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February 13, 2018

**To:** Faculty

**From:** CEP

**Re:** Goals for Student Learning

Beginning in the spring of 2016, we have been engaged in a review of graduation requirements based on a draft set of goals for student learning that we developed in the fall of 2015. Since we began our work, we have brought for discussion several times either the goals themselves or work that is drawn from the goals (December 2015, May 2016, September 2017). In that most recent faculty discussion – focused on a possible implementation strategy for learning goal 3 – we heard considerable disagreement with our proposed strategy, but general acceptance of the underlying learning goal.

Drawing on what we learned from the September faculty discussion, we are now at work developing a new implementation strategy for learning goal 3, which we plan to bring to the faculty before the end of the spring semester.

In the meantime, we feel that the time has come to resolve the status of the goals for student learning. We, as the elected representatives of the faculty, have worked with and drawn inspiration from the attached document, and believe that they now represent the best concise statement of the aspirations for the educational program. Although these goals have served as a working document for the past 26 months, CEP believes that embracing them more formally will increase transparency. Therefore, we wish to bring them to the faculty's attention for one final discussion. In addition, during the current academic year, the Middle States Self-Study process has revealed that we critically need to formally resolve the status of the goals, and publicize them prior to our reaccreditation visit since a clear statement of institutional learning goals is an essential element of accreditation. CEP understands of course that this is a living, adaptable document, subject to change by CEP in collaboration with the faculty should the need arise.

After consulting with COFP, we are bringing the attached, current version of the goals for student learning to the faculty for discussion, with the intention that the faculty will entrust CEP to move forward with this document. As an elected body, CEP should be responsive to faculty discussion and feedback regarding our aspirations for the educational program. We look forward to our discussion on February 16.

Thank you.

## Goals for Student Learning

### Defining Excellence

Swarthmore's commitment, first and foremost, is to intellectual rigor and creativity. Toward that end, we foster an appreciation of education as a process as well as a product. The experience we offer our students is intended to nurture the confidence, curiosity and humility to be challenged intellectually, to fulfill personal and professional aspirations, and to interact respectfully with those from a variety of backgrounds. We hold to the conviction that the best learning includes both synthesizing existing knowledge and producing new knowledge. We lay the foundation for students to understand the joys, inspirations, boundaries and goals of ethical and humane scholarship, engaging with the past and participating with others in the creation of an inclusive future.

Swarthmore's mission is secular, but our roots in the Religious Society of Friends call us to tend to community with care. And, while students may choose their level and form of participation in that endeavor, one of our goals is that students leave the Swarthmore experience having engaged with people and places in ways that broaden their sense of themselves and others.

### Achieving Excellence

Goal 1: Students will demonstrate critical thinking, depth of knowledge, capacity for individual research and/or production, and mastery of analytic and expressive skills through the core methodologies and competencies of the majors and minors.

Goal 2: Students will demonstrate knowledge, including analytic and expressive skill, across a range of disciplines, engaging with intellectual pursuits outside their major field of study.

Goal 3: Students will demonstrate an ability to constructively challenge their own and others' perspectives through engagement with different cultures, institutions, and means of expression.

Goal 4: Students will have the opportunity to engage in activities that support personal development, encourage interaction with off-campus communities, and build interpersonal and leadership skills.