The American University of Rome
Academic Master Plan
updated April 23, 2023

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I. Message by President and Dean of Academic Affairs

We – the leadership and faculty and staff - at The American University of Rome are passionate about our mission to educate globally diverse students for lives and careers of purpose anywhere in the world. At the core of everything we do are the humanistic ideals of freedom of thought and inquiry, the resistance to narrow nationalisms and polarizing ideologies, and the enlightenment and solidarity that can be achieved by living and studying in a community of global explorers such as AUR's. With the launch of this Academic Master Plan, we reconfirm our commitment to AUR's inspiring global liberal arts mission while charting an ambitious, yet reasoned and sustainable, path of development into the future.

This academic plan is based on research and community input and with the purpose of aligning our academic offerings with the highest possible standards, the demands of the 21st – century labor market, and the evolving expectations and aspirations of AUR students. The research that inspired and shaped this document was gathered from recent faculty and staff positioning statements, group and individual follow-up sessions, a host of student surveys and focus-groups, existing plans and institutional documents, an ongoing and in-depth analysis of the ever-evolving international higher education marketplace, and our best estimate at AUR's strategic position within it. Through harmonizing the multiplicity of perspectives and data with a rigorous self-assessment of where AUR stands now, we have developed a set of mission-aligned and future-facing priorities, strategies, and tactics that can inform and guide AUR's actions while seeking to amplify the unique character and differentiating features of the university.

An obvious but truly distinguishing feature of AUR's 'character,' frequently cited by many colleagues and students, is our location in Rome and the daily learning that comes from living and studying in a foreign setting, the experience of being pushed out of one's comfort zone, and the consciousness-altering learning that occurs when immersed in a different language and culture. A second distinguishing feature that builds on the first is AUR's strategic use of off-campus locales for experiential learning, the easy access to world-famous institutions and the unique networking and internship opportunities that abound in Rome. Exploring more deeply how to further develop these invaluable assets is among the top priorities highlighted within this plan.

A third distinctive feature of the AUR experience mentioned by many is the globally diverse faculty and student body, and the knock-on effects of cross-cultural discussions on challenging topics. As a university founded on a pillar of diversity, many voices have expressed the importance of widening and deepening our recruitment efforts to increase our diversity while discovering improved ways to differentiate the AUR classroom as a space of authentic inclusion in which students from around the globe learn to think, speak, dissent, and problem-solve across any number of national, cultural and ideological divides.

An increasingly pressing concern among students (and parents) is the "return-on-investment" of a liberal arts education. It is the key factor in the ongoing flight away from this sector in the US. To combat this structural trend, AUR must include early and enhanced career advising, various hybrid curricular strategies, and a general scaling up of internships, project-based

learning, and other professionalizing certifications and experiences. In the final analysis, AUR's long-term success will be judged by the quality and consistency of our graduate career outcomes and alumni satisfaction.

Let us conclude by saying that true and lasting institutional success is not based on top-down thinking, it comes from a campus-wide collaboration around a compelling but commonly developed academic vision, lateral lines of communication for optimal idea generation and implementation, and a model of leadership that extends to all who are committed to making AUR the best possible educational experience in the heart of Rome and among the group of American universities abroad.

Scott Sprenger, President

John Muccigrosso, Dean of Academic Affairs

II. Academic Mission & Values

The Purpose of a Mission Statement

A well-defined mission is at the core of any institution's sense of self-understanding and potential for excellence. It serves as the foundation on which an institution bases its self-identity, priorities and resource allocations for a collectively desired future.

AUR's Current University Mission Statement:

> *The American University of Rome prepares students to live and work across cultures as skilled and knowledgeable citizens of an interconnected and rapidly changing world. AUR is a private, independent, not-for-profit institution of higher education that offers undergraduate and graduate programs, both to degree-seeking and study abroad students from around the world.*
>
> *Taking the best of the American approach to interdisciplinarity, student-centered-learning, our international faculty and staff use Rome as our classroom and Italy and Europe as invaluable resources. AUR's innovative programs promote intellectual excellence, personal growth and an appreciation of cultural diversity in an international environment.*

Institutional Priorities from AUR's University Strategic Plan, *Our Time is Now, 2022-25*:

1. LOCATION. Leverage AUR's location in Rome, Italy, and Europe for enhancing experiential teaching and learning.

2. LEARNING. Continuously update the academic offering, pedagogies, research, and partnerships for the improvement of graduate outcomes and academic reputation.

3. DIVERSITY. Maintain a globally diverse and inclusive learning community of internationally-minded students, faculty & staff.

4. CAMPUS. Maintain an inspiring and up-to-date campus & infrastructure that aligns with AUR's mission and student expectations.

5. SUSTAINABILITY. Achieve long-term institutional growth & financial sustainability via the optimal alignment of mission, priorities, and resource allocation. This relationship is assessed annually for institutional effectiveness and continuous improvement.

Academic Values (adapted from the Current Faculty Manual):

1. Academic Hybridity: AUR's academic philosophy encourages students to combine an up-to-date liberal arts curriculum with pre-professional programs for optimal learning and career options.

2. Academic Excellence: AUR maintains a highly qualified international faculty, supported by appropriate pedagogies, resources, and technologies.

3. Student Centeredness. AUR is a student-centered, diverse, and interactive learning environment that is designed to broaden perspectives and encourage cross-cultural communication.

4. Locale-based Experiential Learning. AUR focuses on life abroad, academic travel, and the use of Rome's, Italy's, and Europe's experiential opportunities as resources for learning, networking, and career paths

5. Continuous Quality Improvement. AUR fosters a university-wide culture of assessment that delivers continuous quality improvement in our academic offerings, administrative capacity, and human, campus, and technological resources.

6. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). As an international, multi-cultural university that recruits students and faculty from across the globe, diversity, equity and inclusion are important pillars of AUR's Mission and one of the five priorities of our current University Strategic Plan. AUR embraces DEI principles and policies in hiring, student recruitment and in day-to-day relations. We also actively endeavor to maintain an equitable and inclusive environment, both for the success of diverse individuals, for the free and frank expression of diverse ideas, and for the vitality of AUR's learning community.

III. Assumptions, Context, Data and Trends

Strategic plans are designed to address specific challenges and contexts during a specific temporal period. This current plan, it should be noted, was drafted in the wake of several institutional changes, including change of board chair, change of president, a rapid succession of deans) and during Covid-induced enrollment and financial crisis, with a devasting 50% enrollment loss. As an un-endowed, tuition-driven institution located in a challenging market sector, we thought deeply both about how to better address the many threats and challenges to our model of education, but also about uncovering new ways to seize opportunities.

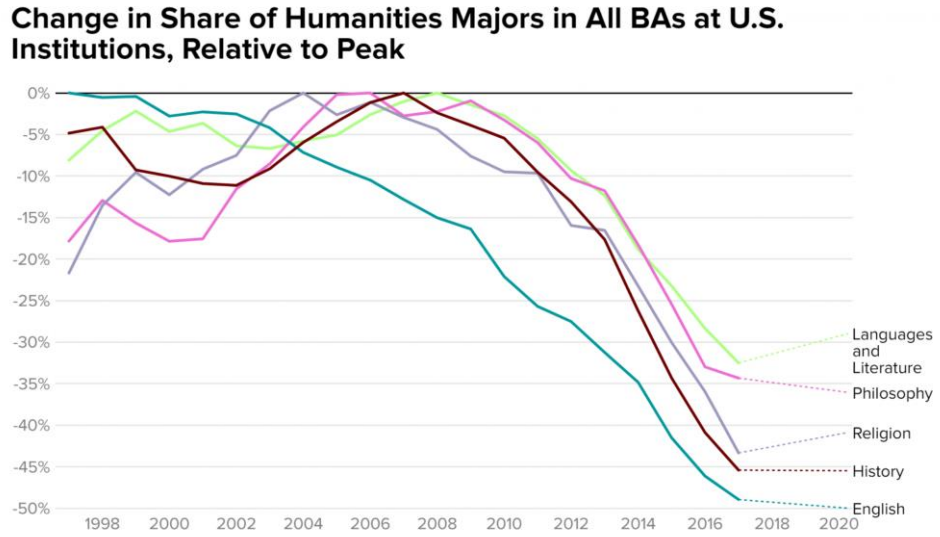
One of the first responses to the pandemic crisis was a renewed and laser-like focus on recruiting and retaining students and the launch of *AUR Ascends*, *2021-2024*, AUR's first-ever

comprehensive enrollment plan. The plan's purpose was not only to generate immediate strategies for a short-term enrollment turnaround; it was also envisioned as a campus-wide approach to sustainable long-term growth while improving our academic offer and the overall student experience.

Trends

The **liberal arts sector** of American higher education has seen declining enrollments since the 1970s and has been in a veritable freefall since the 2008-9 financial crisis (see graph 1). The decline is due to a set of inter-related factors, demographic, the rise of online learning, a general flight to career-oriented majors and credentialing, and now Covid-fatigue. The most important factor, however, has been heightened concerns about the return-on-investment of the college degree, and about the liberal arts degrees, in particular.

Graph 1.



Data Source: IPEDS

For regular readers of higher ed journalism, this widespread enrollment decline is no surprise. What may be surprising, and even paradoxical, however, is that students are leaving the humanities and liberal arts at a moment when the labor market has expressed concerns about overspecialization and is, in fact, in search of graduates with crossover competencies generally associated with liberal arts graduates. An important report by The National Academies of Sciences - Engineering - Medicine (2018) also suggests that even employers in the STEM market seek agile graduates with integrated skill sets: *"Students and parents have increasingly focused their aspirations and plans on a vocationally-driven approach. Ironically, [...] many employers — even, and, in fact, especially in 'high tech' areas — have emphasized that learning outcomes associated with integrated education, such as critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and abilities for lifelong learning, are more, not less, desirable."*

Phil Gardner at College Employment Research Institute (CERI) at Michigan State University sums up the point like this: "*There are really only two choices for graduates who want a lot of options: be a technically savvy liberal arts graduate or a liberally educated technical graduate.*"

See “Students Should Learn to Expect the Unexpected, “*Center for Higher Education Retention Excellence*, http://www.thechere.org/blog/news/2019/2/16/college-students-should-learn-to-expect-the-unexpected

General Education

General Education (or “gen ed”) is a core feature of American higher education, yet it is one of the least understood and most criticized requirements. Among the common criticisms are the lack of clear purpose, delays in access to the major, and generally a waste of time. Given that it is a requirement of the American college degree and given our firm belief at AUR in its value as part of our liberal arts mission, this plan seeks to reinforce existing curricular and advising strategies for highlighting gen ed’s importance for student learning and career preparation while minimizing the impression of a hurdle to get past.

Data on the Value of the Liberal Arts for Employers

To provide a data-rich context for thinking about opportunities that play to AUR’s core demographics and strengths, we have included passages and charts in an Appendix from the AAC&U’s recent publication, *How College Contributes to Workforce Success*, 2021, https://dgmg81phhvh63.cloudfront.net/content/user-photos/Research/PDFs/AACUEmployerReport2021.pdf).

The report, based on an employer survey of 500 executives and hiring managers, provides a detailed picture of the top-ranked career skills learned in the liberal arts, the value of developing cross-over skill bundles, the importance of internships, and the need to learn to identify, apply and articulate career competencies. The report ends with a series of recommendations so that by graduation students can: name and reflect upon key skills -- particularly how they connect to workforce needs; tell and demonstrate their “story” using an electronic portfolio system; demonstrate the proper mind-set and aptitudes developed via curricular and co-curricular learning; demonstrate applied learning experiences (notably internships); and develop breadth as well as depth of learning.

Curricular Opportunities & Growth Areas

Given the financial constraints of a small university, it is important to focus on seizing low-cost/high-impact opportunities. One inexpensive and important way to improve AUR’s academic offer is to renew our focus on, and institutional branding around, the QUALITY of our core strengths. AUR could become much better known, for example, for (1) high-quality **teaching, advising and mentoring** via a commitment to excellence and continuous improvement, careful hiring, ongoing faculty development, a marketing and re-branding effort focused on unique and exciting **learning experiences**; (2) **AUR’s use of both Rome as our classroom and our academic travel study** programming should be marketed and promoted as signature experiences across all disciplines; and (3) **AUR’s cross-disciplinary curricular philosophy** that combines the liberal arts, the creative arts, business and applied social sciences, pre-professional coursework, and internships for maximal career options at graduation; (4) implementation of **more robust career pathways and supports**, with more resources and strategic thinking devoted career advising, career development, internships, networking, and other professionalizing experiences.

In addition to amplifying and optimizing the existing benefits of our current curriculum, there are known, mission-aligned growth areas that we could and should consider adding via short courses/seminars/workshops, alternative education experiences, minors and, lastly, new majors. The admissions team, for example, reports that Psychology is the most sought-after major among potential recruits; certain areas of arts and design, especially those involving technologies (graphic design, web design, videography, User-x, data visualization), are also growing; Italian Studies might focus on "translation and localization programming" that combines Italian language and cultural study, business coursework and technology for careers in an enormous and growing global industry. Our fashion courses also are filled to capacity and suggest possibilities for growth. There are likely others that we could and should discuss as our enrollments continue to grow.

V. The Planning Framework

Priority I. Academic Strategy for Optimal Outcomes

AUR will deliver high-quality learning experiences that are grounded in mission, interdisciplinarity, interactive teaching, the Rome/Italian/Europe locale, the diversity of students and faculty, signature travel study programming—all in line with optimal graduate outcomes and student aspirations.

Strategies and tactics:

1. Integrating institutional objectives and curriculum.
Continuously review, shape, and adjust the curriculum to reflect mission and values, university strategic & enrollment plans, institutional and program learning outcomes, and in line with the academic and career aspirations of AUR students as reflected in the Strategic Enrollment Plan. Facilitate choice of liberal arts majors for professional purposes via an enhanced website (with a choice-architecture redesign), advising, skill mapping, use of NACE, AAC&U or CERI career skills data, social media and other types of messaging.

2. **Design and back-plan the AUR educational experience in light of desired graduate outcomes**. This means using enhanced advising to help students think about their AUR education not as a list of requirements, but as a design challenge by which students back-plan their curricular choices in light of individually desired graduate outcomes (i.e., graduate or professional school or direct entry into the labor market) rather than a list of check-off boxes. If learned early, the back-planning strategy provides more opportunity for students to fully and purposefully leverage the full range of AUR's resources to achieve their goals, especially in non-major requirements. To start, this can be accomplished by embedding strategy and supports into AUR curriculum & advising in simple ways:

1. Insert brief introductions to career strategy and planning in the first-year curriculum. Definitely by the second year.
2. Imagine ways to reconfigure the 3-credit internship course as separate, just-in-time modules and workshops.
3. Create career strategy and development cheat sheets for faculty advisors as reinforcement.

4. Improve communication on the strategic uses of non-major curriculum (gen ed courses, alternative education, electives, minors) via the admissions discussions, the AUR website, CRM communications, collateral marketing materials, FYS, other gen ed classes, etc.

3. Faculty development and research.

Support ongoing faculty development (research, teaching and advising) and continuously integrate research and faculty development work into course curricula, pedagogies, public lectures, panels, conferences. Better support and promote faculty development activities (conferences, seminars, retreats, workshops, new faculty orientation, opening fall conference) that prioritize academic and teaching excellence. Actively promote faculty research, faculty-student mentored research, external grant funding, and other avenues of faculty development. Seek external funding to support curricular and research initiatives of Strategic Plan and encourage and assist faculty in seeking external funding.

4. Revalorizing General Education.

Consider improvements to General Education by (1) providing institutional-level topics or questions beyond the boundaries of individual courses and (2) using signature assignments within individual gen ed courses to better "brand" the gen ed concept and its value. If Gen Ed is supposed to deliver on the promise of making students aware of the world's important questions and developing diverse ways of thinking and problem-solving for life-long learning and career competencies, we might provide different (broader and interconnected) contexts for students to deepen their understanding of this purpose and to avoid the experience of hurdles to get past. We might also think about ways to help students better prioritize their Alternative Education choices to align with their goals and interests.

6. Scholarly Career Exploration.

For students wishing to pursue graduate or professional school, we need to help them find avenues to develop student research projects, create a "future scholars" seminar for strategies to help students get into top graduate programs, improve faculty advising aimed at placing students in top programs, create better web materials to help students prepare, and designate someone to promote and mentor students for prestigious graduate scholarships (Mellon, Fulbright, etc.).

7. **Centers that Matter**.

Related to #3, develop and fundraise for research centers as collaborative spaces for cross-disciplinary scholarly research & convocation (e.g., Design & Entrepreneurship), support of female students (Center for Women's Leadership), support for teaching, learning and advising, and as curricular incubators. These are currently in a "silent phase" as we explore donor interest.

Priority II: The First Year and Retention

The title of Priority II, "First Year" refers both to First Year Seminar (FYS, a required gen ed

course of all first-year students) and to the entire first year of college, beginning with the academic onboarding process, summer advising, registration, orientation and beyond. As a required Gen Ed course in the first semester, it is important that FYS be continuously reviewed and improved so that the purpose of the course is clear and compelling, locale-based and academically inspiring, and socially engaging. With a first-to-second year retention rate at around 70-75%, it is important to find ways to improve first-year retention by 10%.

Strategies and tactics:

1. According to the authors of *How College Works*, the social dimension of the first year is key for the creation an emotional foundation for both learning and persistence. Identify and promote optimal strategies to promote social relationships, including using campus spaces and events to promote a feeling of cohort and connection to AUR.
2. For a sense of belonging in Rome, encourage more students to volunteer, engage in co-curriculars, and take advantage of non-AUR academic and social resources in Rome.
3. Promote the utility and fun of learning Italian for academic and social reasons. Strategically use the Roman context to encourage (or create) immersive social experiences at intermediate levels and beyond.
4. Improve and front-load academic advising to better manage freshman issues and prepare for what is to come after the first year.

Priority III. Achieve High Impact, Transformational Teaching and Learning across the Curriculum

Academic Affairs will promote and support interactive and "lateral" learning that views students as individuals with specific creative and intellectual capacities, who are active participants in the teaching/learning process, and who are viewed in their diversity of views as a pedagogical resource to one another and to the professor.

Strategies and tactics.

1. Emphasize a "student-centered" teaching philosophy that focuses on teaching globally diverse students equitably--following the principle of meeting students where they are and scaffolding learning to get them to where they need to be.

2. Focus as much as possible on "lateral" learning where students learn from each other, and from one another's cultural perspectives.

3. Design a greater part of the curriculum and classroom experience as problem-solving, team-based projects, leading to a culminating experience. The proposed Center for Design & Entrepreneurship and RealProjects should facilitate this endeavor.

4. Create a Teaching & Learning Center with a focus on developing faculty resources, events, and best practices.

5. Improve the grading system and application of grade-values so that the system is predictable and makes sense to an international student community. Current variations create challenges for the dean's office.

6. Require across-the-board use of electronic syllabi and LMS for managing course content.

7. Improve the design of teaching evaluations based on learning outcomes and for easier adaptive relevance.

8. Identify budget or raising funding to sponsor speakers, symposia, and retreats on teaching & learning.

9. Use scheduling and space strategically to get as many students as possible in front of the most exciting teaching that AUR offers, especially in the first year.

10. Make sure that syllabi are equitable and legible to all students. In an international context, it is important to have a uniform and jargon-less approach for communicating course materials, policies and procedures.

Priority IV. Career Development, Professionalizing Experiences

Due to the structural divide between academic and career advising, students learn too late, if at all, the incremental steps required for successful academics-to-career strategy, preparation for professionalizing experiences, and post-internship reflection. We need to find methods for systematically injecting career development strategy into the students' awareness, beginning in the first or second year (via Alternative Education experiences, First Year Seminar).Strategies and tactics:

1. Build more capacity for career-oriented curricular advising and coursework so that, based on the principle of inclusion, we can extend our reach to all students.

2. Scale up internships, project-based learning and professionalizing experiences via various innovative means (on campus internships, self-designed internships, etc.).

3. Develop processes and practices that frontload career advising into academic advising, perhaps inserting time in FYS.

3. Cross-train faculty advisors to promote awareness of, and provide resources for, skill mapping--or connecting academic outcomes to professional competency awareness. Perhaps include in syllabi how academic outcomes can be translated into language that resonate with graduate schools or employers.

4. Use technology and advising software to advise more effectively. Upgrade and maintain current software.
5. Where relevant, programs might develop discipline-relevant alumni or industry advisory boards up-to-date curriculum development, connections to resources and networks, internships.

Priority V. Hiring and retaining excellent faculty and support staff while strengthening faculty and staff development

Strategies and tactics:

1. Hire via an established and transparent search process and in-line with strategic and academic plans.

2. Develop a more ample faculty development program and support processes, especially for new and adjunct faculty.

3. Develop research groups and research centers to leverage collaborative work, curricular development and faculty-student mentoring.

4. Make AUR more visible via collaboration with external funders, partners, foundations and organizations.

5. Focus on convening or hosting high impact, brand identity conferences, symposia, lecture series.

6. Better showcase AUR research and teaching via Faculty Achievements Document, website and social media.
7. Find ways to better engage and integrate AUR's contract and adjunct faculty via faculty development, research, and improved pay.

Priority VI. Library and Academic Resources (aligned with current trends in small library design)

Strategies and tactics:

1. Working with faculty, the library will ensure continuous improvement of advanced library research skills & information literacy.

2. In conjunction with faculty, the library will ensure up-to-date resource support for AUR's programs. When possible, the library should retain partnerships with local libraries for access to their resources to avoid or mitigate costs and get students out into the city.

3. Parts of the library space should continue to be used as teaching and learning spaces to keep students engaged with the space.

4. The library could and should serve as a program-neutral space for interdisciplinary projects or design labs.

5. Program curricular proposals should take into account resources for undergraduate research support.

6. Work on budget to enhance in a mission-driven way the library's resources. A recent internal study shows AUR in last place among our peer institutions.

Priority VII. Rome is AUR's Classroom, the World is Our Laboratory

AUR will become known for key academic areas, including the liberal arts, Classics & Archaeology, Art History, IR, Film, etc., in its use of location to enhance AUR's attractiveness and academic identity (cultural heritage, the tourism industry, Italian cinema, food culture and studies, international organizations, embassies, non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, etc.).

Strategies and tactics:

1. Every program will have a plan for using Rome as a learning strategy and include some form of meaningful academic travel study. Suggestions were made to perhaps revive the J-Term or Maymester for such purposes.

2. Imagine new ways to link Italian language and culture study to other disciplines, graduate school and/or career paths.

3. Generate more resources or support systems for faculty to get students out of the classroom and into the city and beyond.

4. Encourage study of Italian beyond first year for students to have access to the local community, local archives and learning resources.

5. Include use of Rome and environs in curricular proposal template. Generate effective website materials, PR and marketing, and social media campaigns, around our signature academic experiences.

Priority VIII. Academic Affairs Management

The Office of Academic Affairs will work to improve the tradeoff between academically effective and cost-efficient scheduling of existing spaces.

Strategies and tactics:

1. Work with the registrar's office and curriculum committee to find solutions to the inefficiencies of under-used curriculum.

2. Do continual cost-benefit analyses of staffing and scheduling needs.
3. Use assessment and focus groups to identify the optimal types and number of majors and course offerings.

4. Limit the use of directed studies by driving students into existing classes.
5. Review capstones for cost effectiveness vs. alternatives.

Priority IX. Ensure a rigorous institutional research and assessment program Strategies and tactics:

1. Continuously support institutional research, assessment & data use for improved decision making and full compliance with the Middles States standards.

2. Ensure that surveys, evaluations and assessment procedures focus as much on outcomes and the student learning experience as on courses or programs.

3. Find ways to assess in real time via focus groups and surveys, with current students and alumni to get advanced signs of emerging problems.

4. Maintain and constantly update an online assessment dashboard to give full visibility on quality of university teaching and services.

Priority X. Align Master of Arts Programming with Market

The MA programs clearly capture AUR's Rome-based academic theses and ethos. The MA webpages are among the most viewed pages in the AUR website, yet we have difficulty converting pageviews into inquiries, and, despite a recent exceptional year with high enrollments, two of the three programs require increased growth to be financially sustainable. A rule of thumb for graduate programs to be viable is 20 students, with at least a third to half coming from internal undergraduate programs.

1. Continuously reevaluate the alignment of programming with market standards & demand.
2. As terminal MA programs are used by students to upskill for better career possibilities, ensure that the skills learned at AUR are aligned with the current labor market.
3. Share curriculum between the programs for cost reduction and overlapping synergies.
4. Improve graduate student access to career strategy and resources.
5. Build and use alumni and/or industry advisory council.
6. Work to build feeder schools, including AUR undergraduates.

VI. Academic Organization, Governance and Decision Making

See the AUR Faculty Handbook for details provide interlink

VII. Assessment and Continuous Improvement

See the AUR's 2021-2024 Assessment Plan and outcomes assessment results provide interlink

VIII. The Sandbox: Ideas for the Future

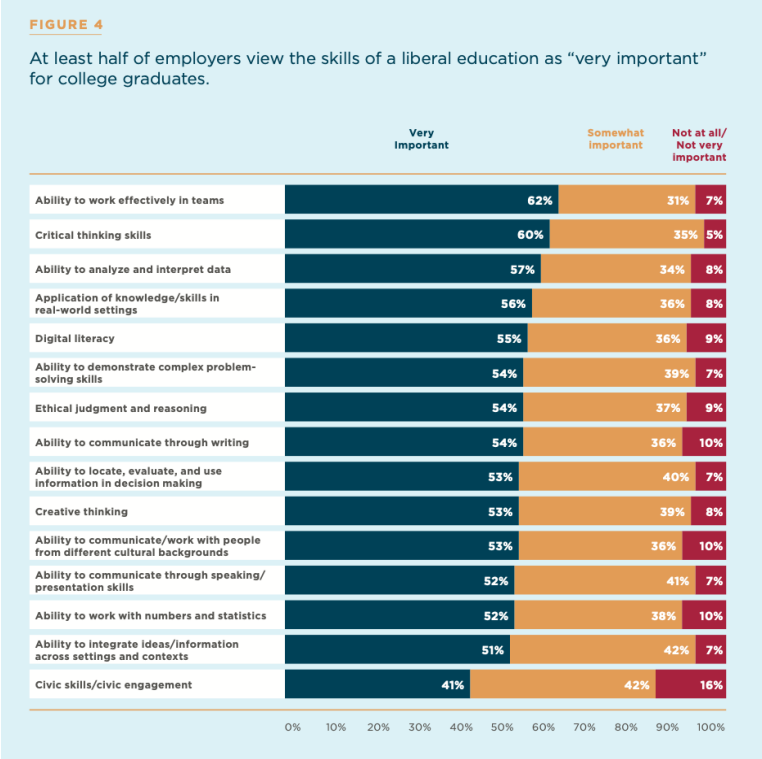
The Sandbox is a place to list, develop and play around with ideas for future curriculum, pedagogies and services.

1. Include within syllabi (or somewhere) an alignment of top career skills (from NACE, LinkedIn or CERI) with academic outcomes so that students become aware of (and learn to translate) what they are learning academically for career purposes. Research show that this is one of the biggest gaps when students enter the labor market.
2. Develop the possibility for students to acquire professionalizing certifications. Microsoft, Adobe Suite, IB teaching, coding workshops or camps, etc., to supplement their degree.
3. Put arts and creative disciplines together as a Program or School of Arts & Design, and broaden the concept of design to provide connections between departments. Develop and fundraise for guest faculty and residency programs.
4. Work with Fulbright to get a Fulbright scholar/teacher at AUR.
5. Do Stanford-style "Designing Your Life" seminars for freshman or sophomores as part of career curriculum.
6. Add to Business curriculum innovative programming, such as microenterprise, design and entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship.
7. Improve the way Study Abroad is treated and managed from an academic perspective. Work with partners to create a "global studies certificate" and use it as leverage to include desired learning experiences. Wrap up the semester with metacognitive exercises for deeper student understanding of the abroad experience, help them articulate academic and career related insights they gained at AUR. See the research.
8. Have arts students run a summer Arts in the Parks program for neighborhood youth. Have art students teach youth arts, provide lunches, fundraise for it. See existing models.
9. Create summer community engagement projects with high schools: debate club, photography, etc.
10. Promote faculty exchange programs, starting with Summer courses, to improve and

diversify AUR Summer offering and establish partnerships with similar institutions across the European Union (EU) and the Mediterranean region.

APPENDIX I

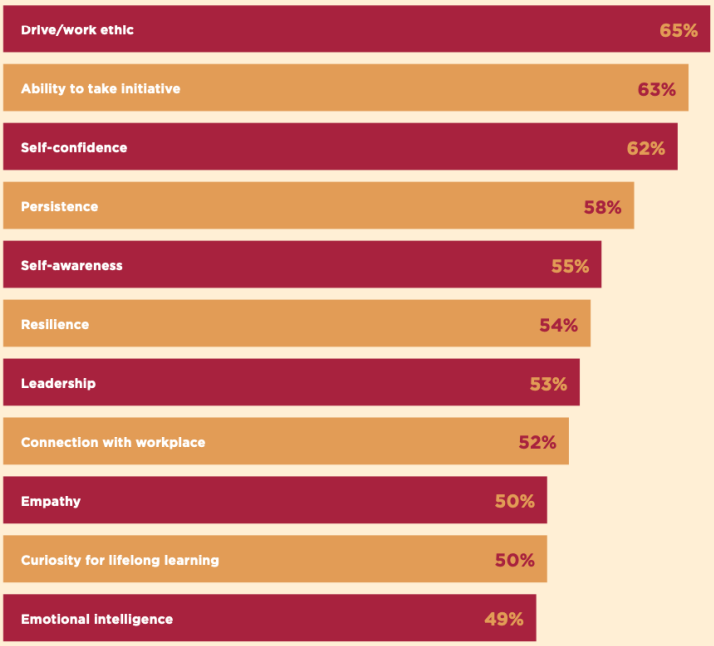
Below are the consistently top ranked skills by employers:



Ranking of Depth, Breadth and Mind-Sets

FIGURE 6

At least half of employers think it is "very important" for college graduates to possess a range of mindsets and aptitudes to be successful.



Relevance of Experiential Learning

FIGURE 21

Percentages of employers who indicated they would be "much more likely to consider" hiring a college graduate with the following experiences.

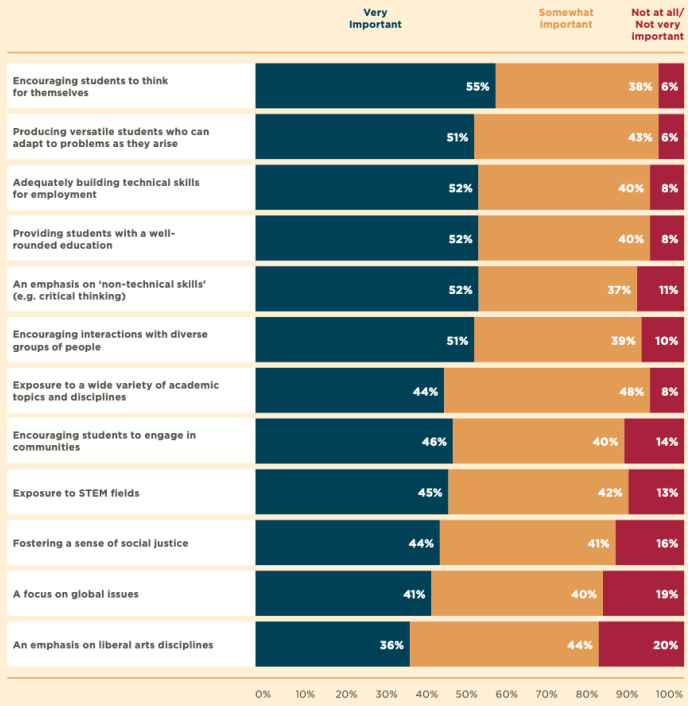
	ALL EMPLOYERS	EMPLOYERS UNDER 40	EMPLOYERS 50 AND ABOVE
Completion of an internship or apprenticeship	49%	51%	43%
Experience working in community settings with people from diverse backgrounds or cultures	47%	53%	34%
Had a job or engaged in work-study while in college	46%	50%	33%
Completion of a portfolio of work showcasing skills and integrating college experiences	45%	51%	33%
Exposure to global learning experiences	44%	51%	23%
Experience working with mentors and/or individualized advisors	43%	47%	33%
Completion of multiple courses requiring significant writing assignments	42%	49%	28%
Completion of a community-based or service-learning project	41%	54%	20%
Completion of a research project done collaboratively with faculty	41%	53%	21%
Completion of an advanced, comprehensive project in the senior year	41%	50%	29%

*All differences are statistically significant except with regard to internships.

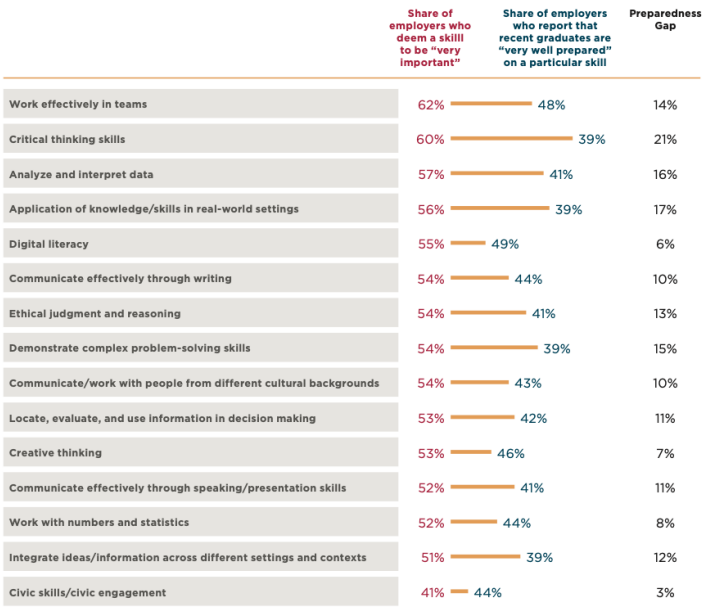
Employers appreciate combinations of the breadth and depth of learning.

FIGURE 8

Employers favor attributes of a college education that combine breadth and depth of learning.



Room for Improvement: Chart of "Preparedness Gaps"

FIGURE 12

Employers do not believe most graduates possess the level of preparedness needed for workforce success.