



---

## Undergraduate Education in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

---

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the oldest and largest of Villanova's four undergraduate colleges and is the primary expression of **Villanova's mission**. Each year, the College **enrolls** approximately 900 new students.

The College emphasizes **undergraduate** instruction and offers programs of intellectual sophistication and rigor that prepare students of diverse backgrounds for intellectual, moral, and professional leadership in their chosen **careers**. Students graduate prepared for entry into various professions such as business, communication and media, education, the health professions, human services, and the sciences, among many others. In addition, students are prepared to enter **graduate programs** in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences, as well as business, law, and medicine. Recent statistics indicate that 36 percent of the College's graduates go directly to graduate school and 68 percent find immediate full-time employment.

### Why a Liberal Education?

Central to the **mission** of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is Augustinian **liberal education**, which includes a commitment to service, social responsibility, and civic engagement based on St. Augustine's insight that study, scholarship, and contemplation make service all the more meaningful and an emphasis on the development of a community of shared values that benefits not only its members but also all of humankind.

The College, along with its chapter of **Phi Beta Kappa**, views liberal education as education that is concerned with values as well as facts and wisdom as well as knowledge; education that seeks freedom from ignorance, alienation, and inhumanity; education that values integrity and tolerance over expediency, and education that values breadth of scholarly achievement over specialized expertise. It is an education that prepares students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century by developing them as complex and critical thinkers, free decision makers and life-long learners with an appreciation for social responsibility and civic engagement in a global and multicultural context.

### A Challenging Curriculum

The College's commitment to liberal education of disciplinary breadth is implemented through a challenging a rigorous **core curriculum** and is characterized by engaged learning in small classes that utilize the Socratic Method, by integrated learning throughout the curriculum, by emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, and by extended learning outside the classroom.

The foundation for the implementation of liberal education is the two-semester interdisciplinary humanities seminar, ***Augustine and Culture: The Villanova Seminar***, required of all first-year students. Based on God's command to Augustine, "tolle lege," "take up and read," freshman seminars of no more than 15 students read primary texts, engage in faculty-led Socratic discourse, and develop critical-thinking skills by writing and revising papers of approximately three pages on a weekly basis. Students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences do more writing and revision of their written work than most other undergraduate students at Villanova or at most of the University's peer institutions.

Disciplinary depth for intellectual development and for career and professional preparation is provided by **academic programs** in the humanities, the natural sciences, the social sciences, and in applied and professional fields. Students in the College benefit from a wider array of faculty expertise and scholarly interest than might otherwise be available to a liberal arts college enrolling 900 freshmen. This is due to the College's role in supporting the curricula of Villanova's other undergraduate colleges. As a result, for example, students in the sciences will spend more time in laboratories and have more time to engage in research under faculty mentorship than most of Villanova's peer institutions. Also, the College's commitment to interdisciplinary learning is strengthened by the **Department of Humanities and Augustinian Traditions**, which offers students the opportunity to develop an individualized, interdisciplinary major in the humanities.

### **Learning Outside the Classroom**

Implementing the College's goal of learning outside the classroom, the first-year seminars form the organizational basis for the **Academic Learning Communities** that provide for continued engaged learning and supporting activities in the University's residence halls. The multicultural dimension of liberal education is facilitated by specific cultural offerings, by cultural and area studies programs, by the opportunity to pursue **study abroad** in cultural immersion programs, and by programs developed by students themselves. All disciplines provide such opportunities as well as the opportunity for academic and professional internship experiences.

Students develop leadership skills by participating in team-oriented projects that are curriculum based; through opportunities offered by a vast array of student organizations, such as the largest college-based **Special Olympics** program in the country, the most extensive college-based **Habitat for Humanity** program in the country, and award-winning programs in **new student orientation** and publications; by **athletics** both intercollegiate and intramural; by student membership on all University committees; and by service learning experiences both local and abroad that, in addition to providing academic credit, employ a model of self reflection and character development based on St. Augustine's insight concerning service. Opportunities are extensive.

Students are supported in their intellectual development and professional preparation by an extensive program of **advising** and mentoring by a community of faculty and staff who take as their mission Augustine's instruction: ***"Set love as the criterion of all that you say, and whatever you teach. Teach in such a way that the person to whom you speak by hearing may believe, by believing hope, and by hoping love."***