

## Curriculum Committee Resolution 18/19-06

Date: November 28, 2018  
To: St. Olaf Faculty  
From: Curriculum Committee  
Re: OLE (Open, Linked, Enduring) Questions for General Education

At the December 6, 2018, Faculty Meeting, following the procedures approved by the May 2, 2018, Curriculum Committee resolution 17/18-22, the Curriculum Committee will move that the faculty approve the following OLE Questions as parameters for the general education curriculum.

### **Proposal:**

Through the general education curriculum, students will engage with three Open, Linked, Enduring questions:

- Q1. In what ways can I understand the world and my role in it?
- Q2. What skills do I need to live a meaningful and purposeful life in community?
- Q3. How can I live responsibly and prepare for challenges in a dynamic, global society?

### **Rationale:**

At the November 8, 2018, Faculty Meeting, 80 percent of 120 faculty participating in a clicker straw poll agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I support the idea of using enduring questions to engage students in general education." Following that meeting, the GE Task Force reviewed and incorporated feedback from the faculty, resulting in the revised OLE Questions presented in this resolution.

Informed by the guiding principles approved by the faculty on October 4, 2018, the OLE Questions use accessible language to help us communicate with one another, prospective students and their families, and the rest of the world, about why the liberal arts matter and what is distinctive about a St. Olaf education. These questions are intended to be the foundation for an integrated framework -- *what* we want students to achieve through the new general education curriculum; they do not specify *how* students will acquire the knowledge, skills, and experiences that we believe are essential. A shared understanding of this framework will enable the Ad Hoc Groups and the GE Task Force to begin proposing a set of ILOS for the new St. Olaf requirements. These proposals will be presented on February 28, 2019, and revised in consultation with faculty, staff, and students throughout the spring semester, leading up to a vote on May 9, 2019.

### **OLE Questions are:**

- ❖ **Open:** They address complex issues that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no but require a developed answer, based on active thinking, feeling, exploring, and reflecting.
- ❖ **Linked:** They are interrelated, and it is the process of completing the requirements that both enables and challenges students to make those connections.
- ❖ **Enduring:** They challenge students and faculty to examine "big questions" of meaning and purpose in the context of a contemporary liberal education and a dynamic, global society.

**Q1 is focused on breadth that complements depth in a major:**

- ❖ Areas of learning for this question are likely to include:
  - breadth of knowledge about the world through articulating intersections between multiple areas and methods of study: human behavior and movement; health; histories; cultures; creative expression; and the physical, natural, and spiritual worlds.
  - intersectional analysis of cultural identities, social structures, and how they shape human experience.
  - the application of concepts and tools from these broader areas of knowledge to reflect critically and more deeply on their major and how they might use this understanding to serve the greater good.

**Q2 is focused on skills that are explored and practiced extensively, across the curriculum:**

- ❖ Areas of learning for this question are likely to include:
  - the ability to use a variety of quantitative, qualitative, and applied methods in different fields to ask questions and to find, analyze, and interpret information.
  - the ability to use in critical, creative, and analytical thinking to investigate, critique, and construct arguments as part of personal, civic, and scholarly conversations.
  - the ability to reflect on the intersection, integration, and application of these skills.
  - the ability to communicate orally, digitally, and in writing in at least two languages.
  - the ability to analyze ethical issues from a variety of perspectives that interrogate norms of justice and well-being and guide moral reasoning.

**Q3 is focused on learning that is experienced in the classroom and through active engagement with diverse communities and complex challenges:**

- ❖ Areas of learning for this question are likely to include:
  - the ability to work together to tackle complex problems creatively.
  - the ability to reflect on their own choices and the choices of others, based on learning about ethical considerations and faith and values across multiple cultural and community contexts.
  - the ability to reflect on their vocation and possibilities for integrating multiple disciplinary tools to construct, contextualize, and integrate knowledge to address complex challenges.