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Gen Ed Task Force Meeting

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Assignment: **What are the outcomes in terms of content and transferrable skills that an NMSU graduate should have after earning a degree from NMSU?**

Before refining the information we discussed during our last meeting regarding our specific task, we discussed some general ideas.

- The Degree Qualification Profile (DQP) was identified as another source of information that may be useful for our discussions in the Gen Ed Task Force. THE DQP provides a baseline set of reference points for what students should know and be able to do for the award of associate, bachelor's and master's degrees, regardless of their fields of study.
- The question was raised if we should organize our transferrable skills in a hierarchical fashion. The consensus was that Life-long Self-learner should be the first category and the other seven are necessary "support skills" to be a well-rounded life-long self-learner.
- We then decided to review and define the seven categories we recognized as transferrable skills during our first meeting.

Transferrable skills that all NMSU graduates should have after earning a degree from NMSU:

1. Life-long self-learner—The ability to gain knowledge to expand and move into new contexts, connect the information between diverse fields to solve real world problems, and think broadly in an integrative way across disciplines.
2. Logical Reasoning—The ability to identify the premise, evaluate the quality of information and develop an argument.
3. Information Literacy—The ability to find and evaluate information using a variety of tools including the latest in technology.
4. Communication skills—The ability to communicate effectively in written communication both formally (i.e. essays and papers) and informally (e-mails, discussion boards, etc.) and in oral communication formally (i.e. oral presentations) and informally (discussions, arguments and small group interactions).
5. Quantitative Skills/Numeracy—The ability to organize, interpret, evaluate and present quantitative information.
6. Ethical Reasoning and Cultural Awareness—The ability to understand diverse cultures and societies and engage in diverse perspectives across time and space in an ethically conscious way.
7. Collaborative Skills—The ability to work effectively in teams.
8. Interdisciplinary Skills—The ability to combine ideas from two or more disparate fields in order to define, address or interpret problems of broader relevance.

Two Examples of Life-long Self-learners.

The numbers in brackets indicate how the support skills, [2] to [8], serve the goal of being a Life-long self-learner [1].

Example 1: Juan,

Juan has a B.A. in English. He has read an article by a local business person who claims that global warming is a myth. The business person's argument is that a recent scientific study shows that Antarctica is actually gaining more ice than it is losing. Although Juan did not take any environmental science courses as part of his undergraduate education, as a Life-long Self-learner Juan is able to teach himself what he needs to know in order to evaluate the business person's claim. Juan identifies the conclusion and the premises of the argument [2]. Using Google Scholar, Juan is able to ascertain that the business person's scientific source is a respectable one: it is a well-regarded peer reviewed climate science journal [3]. Juan is able to understand the quantitative conclusions of the article [5]. With further investigation, Juan is able to establish that climate scientist disavow the claim that all areas of the globe will warm equally [3]. Thus, Juan is able to ascertain that the business person has made a hasty conclusion [2], [8]. Juan shares his findings in a letter to the editor showing the weaknesses of the business person's position [4].

Example 2: Jill

Jill has a degree in chemical engineering. She has recently been elected as a city councilor. A large corporation has made a controversial application to buy city owned land to develop a shopping and office complex. Although she did not study policy evaluation, as a life-long self-learner Jill is able to teach herself what she needs to make an informed opinion on the matter [1]. Jill listens to a religious constituency that argues that the land should not be sold because it is an integral part to an annual religious pilgrimage by a local religious group to the top of a mountain [6]. Jill also listens to another local constituency that argues that proposed development would create desperately needed jobs in a historically impoverished part of town [6]. Jill reviews the corporation's projection about job creation. She researches the projection based on similar developments [3], and finds that the projection is reasonable. However, she reasons that the projections do not include jobs lost [2]. (Some existing local business may suffer as result of the development). She communicates her concerns to the corporation and asks them to resubmit their estimate to include net jobs created/lost, not simply the gross number of jobs created [2], [4]. Working with the developer, the local supporters and opponents of the development, Jill is able to broker a compromise: Part of the land used for the pilgrimage will be designated parkland and will be left untouched [7], [6]. Jill explains her findings and compromise on a blog she writes for her constituency [4].