

Preface

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The State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo is a predominantly undergraduate institution of roughly 5,500 students located in the western Finger Lakes region of New York, 30 miles south of Rochester. It is one of the 13 university colleges and is among the most selective schools in the 64 campus SUNY system. It has a unique identity within SUNY as a premier public liberal arts college.



Geneseo was established in 1867 and accepted its first class of students in 1871 as the Geneseo Normal and Training School. For the first 90 years of its history, Geneseo focused primarily on teacher education. It became a founding campus of the State University of New York at the system's inception in 1948. As the SUNY system expanded in the early 1960s, Geneseo became a College of Arts and Sciences, offering its first four-year degree programs in Arts and Sciences in 1964. Over the past 50 years, the college has worked hard to secure its reputation as a public liberal arts college with select professional programs in business, education, and

communicative disorders. In 1980 it instituted a strong general education core which included courses in humanities in addition to courses in the sciences, social sciences, and fine arts. More recently, writing, quantitative, and foreign language courses have been added to the general education core. In 1994, SUNY Geneseo was admitted to the [Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges \(COPLAC\)](#), an organization of 26 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. As the COPLAC mission states,

The Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges advances the aims of its member institutions and drives awareness of the value of high quality public liberal arts education in a student centered residential environment.

Further evidence of the college's commitment to excellence in the liberal arts came with the installation of a Phi Beta Kappa chapter in 2004. Geneseo is the only arts and sciences campus in SUNY to have been awarded a chapter. The college offers B.A. degrees in 28 programs, B.S. degrees in 10 programs, and master's degrees in 12 programs. It offers minors in most major fields and 25 interdisciplinary minors. Five-year programs include 3-2 Engineering, 3-2 Master of Business Administration, and 4-1 Master of Business Administration. There are also 3-4 programs in dentistry, optometry, and osteopathy; and a 3-3 doctoral program in physical therapy.

Geneseo is the most selective of the thirteen SUNY comprehensive colleges. The fall 2011 admission rate is 43.4 percent; the average combined SAT score is 1327. A distinguished faculty characterized by national and SUNY teaching awards instructs students with outstanding high school records, resulting in an 81 percent six-year graduation rate. There are 242 full-time and 96 part-time faculty members. Eighty-nine percent of full-time faculty members hold a terminal degree, and 71 percent have tenure. Eighty-five percent of classes are taught by full-time faculty. Total student headcount for 2011-12 was 5,683. This number includes 5,485 undergraduates (5,371 full-time, 114 part-time) and 198 graduate students (96 full-time, 102 part-time). The 2010-11 total campus budget (IPEDS) is \$90,783,697. When [Campus Auxiliary Services](#) and Geneseo Foundation funds are included the total is \$123,956,820.

The administrative structure consists of four divisions: Academic Affairs, Student and Campus Life, Administration and Finance, and College Advancement. The president's cabinet includes the four vice presidents who head these divisions plus the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services. The Vice President for Academic Affairs also holds the title of Provost.

This self-study comes as Geneseo endeavors to advance its commitment to excellence in liberal arts while coping with the largest budget reductions in the college's history. Given that state funding is unlikely to be restored to previous levels, how can the college both maintain its quality and move forward as a public liberal arts college? Geneseo has already taken several major steps towards answering this question. A re-constituted College Strategic Planning Group is exploring how to fulfill the college's mission and realize the strategic plan in this changed environment. Recent task forces have considered faculty roles and rewards, advising, general education, environmental sustainability, reconfiguring the student course load, developing five-year professional programs, expanding educational delivery, college-community partnerships, and collaborative research. In addition, the college has created a new campus facilities master plan and completed an academic space study.

An initiative that has provided a conceptual context for this quest is the [national Bringing Theory to Practice project](#), which is affiliated with [Association of American Colleges and Universities \(AAC&U\)](#). In 2008-09 Geneseo became part of the Leadership Coalition of the project and joined "those institutions which are committed to providing successful models of how a campus culture focused on actively engaging students in learning, and evaluating their success in doing so, can address the full dimensions of the intellectual, emotional, and civic flourishing of students." Geneseo seeks to accomplish this through "comprehensive, integrated, systematic, campus-wide approaches" that integrate academic learning, civic engagement, and personal/social development and that educate the whole student. This approach to educating the whole student is sometimes referred to as *transformational learning*, and it includes what [George Kuh identifies as high-impact practices](#), practices that are associated with increased student engagement and retention.

The self-study both analyzes Geneseo's success in accomplishing its mission and exemplifies the way in which the college community accomplishes its mission. Transformational learning is an organizing theme of Geneseo's recent endeavors, and it is the theme of the self-study. "The entire college community works together to develop socially responsible citizens" (Geneseo Mission Statement), and the college community has worked together in a wiki to create the self-study and its accompanying evidence.

The self-study process began with the formation of a 16-person steering committee in January 2010. The steering committee is co-chaired by Associate Provost David Gordon and Professor of Biology Ray Spear, and it developed the study's theme, the research questions to guide the study, and the organization of its chapters. Two steering committee members were selected to take responsibility for each chapter. In this capacity they served as co-chairs of working groups of faculty, staff, and students that they created to gather relevant evidence. The co-chairs then wrote the initial drafts of their chapters. Members of the steering committee also serve as liaisons to specific college constituencies and keep them informed about the progress of the self-study. On January 18, 2012, the self-study wiki pages were opened to the college community, and two kickoff events were held to help publicize the opening. At each event, the provost and members of the steering committee urged attendees to read and comment on the self-study.

The Geneseo wiki provides an updated, electronic record of all drafts, links the document directly to evidence, and allows for greater participation in the development of the study by members of the steering committee, working groups, and the college community. The wiki has allowed all 16 members of the steering committee to be involved in writing and editing the research questions and reviewing and editing the self-study itself.

We hope that this self-study will provide direction and guidance to help the SUNY Geneseo community successfully navigate through this time of transition. To that end, this process was designed to provide evidence and recommendations to support the next phase of college strategic planning, an assessment of what we currently do to support transformational learning, a summary of conclusions and recommendations submitted by task forces since the last self-study, and demonstrated compliance with Middle States standards.

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