About Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP):

**Excellence for Everyone as a Nation Goes to College**

**Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP)** is a decade-long national initiative launched by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in 2005 to align the goals for college learning with the needs of the new global century. Extending the work of AAC&U’s Greater Expectations initiative, LEAP seeks to engage the public with core questions about what really matters in college, to give students a compass to guide their learning, and to make the aims and outcomes of a liberal education—broad knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative learning—the expected framework for excellence at all levels of education. The LEAP initiative is especially concerned with students who, historically, have been underserved in higher education.

**LEAP includes three primary and concurrent strands of work:**

- A research initiative designed to provide evidence on the essential learning outcomes of a liberal education and periodic reports on progress in helping students meet twenty-first-century educational standards.

- The Campus Action Network, which comprises campuses of every kind from across the country that are working with LEAP to articulate high expectations for liberal education, connect educational practices and assessments to those expectations transparently, and ensure that all their students achieve the essential learning outcomes.

- A public advocacy campaign for liberal education, carried out nationally by the educational, business, community, and policy leaders in the LEAP National Leadership Council and regionally through advocacy initiatives in a set of partner states.
LEAP addresses the entire college curriculum, including both professional fields and the liberal arts and sciences. The overarching principles that define liberal education changed fundamentally in the early part of the twentieth century, when the academic disciplines displaced the classical “core” curriculum. In the twenty-first century, the principles of liberal education are changing once again. Contemporary liberal education has expanded to foster the deep learning and the practical skills and experience that all students need. It has become more powerful by bridging the traditional divides between “liberal” and “applied” learning in order to prepare all college students for success in a diverse democracy and an interconnected world.

Through LEAP, AAC&U is working with campuses to accelerate the pace of change and to organize local, regional, and national community and policy dialogues about the educational issues at stake. At a time when so many are seeking a college education, students deserve far better guidance on the kinds of learning that will serve them best in the era ahead. Highly intentional planning, teaching, and assessment to improve learning and sustain all students’ engagement are needed to ensure that students achieve the sophisticated outcomes expected from a contemporary liberal education.

This publication is one in a series of publications supported by the LEAP initiative. The first LEAP publication, *Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Student Achievement in College*, makes the case for the importance of a liberal education. Finding that national, standardized data present conflicting pictures of student learning, the authors of *Liberal Education Outcomes* suggest that campuses should focus on local efforts in teaching and assessment to significantly strengthen student learning.

The major national report published by the LEAP National Leadership Council in 2007, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, issued a call to educators and to the nation about the importance of a set of essential learning outcomes. It argued that we must fulfill the promises of education for all students who aspire to a college education, especially to those for whom college is a route, perhaps the only possible route, to a better future. Based on extensive input from both educators and employers, the recommendations in this report respond to the new global challenges today’s students face. It describes the learning contemporary students need from college, and what it will take to help them achieve it.

This publication builds on this earlier work and addresses the specific educational practices that will enable students to achieve the outcomes they will need in this new global century.

**Other Titles from Liberal Education and America’s Promise:**

—*Liberal Education Outcomes: A Preliminary Report on Student Achievement in College* (2005)
—*Making the Case for Liberal Education: Responding to Challenges* (2006)
—*College Learning for the New Global Century* (2007)
—*Assessment in Cycles of Improvement: Faculty Designs for Essential Learning Outcomes* (2007)

For more information about LEAP and to purchase LEAP publications, visit www.aacu.org/leap.