

Academic Plan – 2012-2017

Version 4

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Introduction and context

Seneca's Academic Plan 2012-17 builds on principles and priorities that have matured since our first Academic Plan was released eight years ago and sets out a bold vision that will distinguish Seneca, its students and its graduates.

The overarching goal of the initial plan was to “build an Academic Community dedicated to student success in which all involved are striving for academic excellence.” The principle of “flexibility without compromise” was introduced and since that time has guided administrators, faculty and staff in their day-to-day activities to support student learning. In that plan, we also said that Seneca's academic community would be:

- inclusive, challenging and inspirational to students,
- responsive, consultative and innovative to industry,
- reflective, accessible and flexible to our communities,
- open, collaborative and creative to our partners in education and
- dynamic, supportive and enabling to Senecans.

We continue to be guided by that foundation, as we evolve to meet the ever-increasing expectations of learners, employers, our partners, government and society.

Seneca's Academic Plan will provide the framework for accelerating the shift from conventional teaching, learning and programming to a redesigned approach to high-quality college education with students as active partners in the teaching and learning process. It reaffirms our commitment to a collegial environment that encourages critical thinking, embraces creativity, instills integrity and promotes academic excellence.

All Seneca students will be challenged to achieve a high level of integrative thinking and to demonstrate the ability to apply learning to relevant real world contexts. We will do this by providing learning experiences that are cross-disciplinary, networked, relevant, rigorous, flexible and focused on core literacies and skills.

Seneca's intent is that this Plan will foster teaching and learning of the highest quality by promoting the importance of effective teaching and meaningful learning across the college. Regardless of whether learning is full- or part-time, regardless of whether it is taking place in a traditional classroom, a technology-enhanced lab or online environment, learning will be social, participatory, accessible and inclusive. Drawing on the power of technology and social media, students will be actively engaged in relevant and rigorous real-world experiences that test and hone their skills.

Our aim is to recruit the best possible students from diverse backgrounds, locally, nationally and internationally, provide them with an enduring learning experience that enables them to achieve their goals and ensures they are well prepared for work or further study.

The plan identifies the distinctive qualities of the Seneca graduate: highly attractive to employers; ethical, engaged and confident; adaptable and capable of addressing the challenges of the future in a global context. Just as important, it identifies our goals to ensure the curriculum reflects these qualities.

Everyone at the college has a role to play in determining the success of our students, regardless of position. We will constantly ask the questions: "How does what we are doing promote relevance, rigour, provide networked learning experiences and develop core literacies?" and "How do we know?"

At the heart of this academic plan are five core principles that govern our priorities, guide our activities, and influence our strategic allocation of resources:

1. Inspiring cross-disciplinary, networked learning
2. Committing to a new set of core literacies
3. Offering high quality, relevant programs and pathways
4. Committing to teaching excellence
5. Advancing partnerships, applied research and outreach opportunities

In each of these areas, the Academic Plan identifies specific goals which have concise measurable and attainable targets. The strategies to achieve the goals will be developed with faculty and staff as the Plan is implemented.

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