

The Conceptual Framework of the WLC Teacher Education Program flows from the WLC mission and vision statements and the Institution's Ten *Academic Goals* which inform and shape the knowledge, skills and dispositional bases that create our respective program of study. Our WLC literature clearly states the Board of Regents directive that Teacher Education was to be nested in the liberal arts studies of this college; it was not to be an "add on" professional program. The integrative nature of the program needed to be evident in as many ways as possible.

WLC MISSION STATEMENT

Wisconsin Lutheran College, affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, is a Lutheran liberal arts college for Christian men and women. The college is committed to providing quality teaching, scholarship, and service that are rooted in Holy Scripture; promoting the spiritual growth of students, faculty, and staff; and preparing students for live of Christian leadership.

Approximately seven years ago, the Curriculum Committee was charged with studying the academic program goals; their study yielded 10 academic goals. Following that, the newly appointed Assessment Committee was charged with designing a process to assess these goals. It was during this process that an inconsistency was noted in the goals: Goals 1 and 10 were so similar, it was difficult to distinguish objectives for assessment purposes. At that same time, it was noted that the idea of "leadership", although clearly a part of the mission statement, was not a stated goal. With the approval of the campus community, the first and tenth goals were combined and the tenth goal emerged as "leadership." In spring 2009, the faculty adopted new academic goals effective Fall 2010.

Ten Academic Goals of Wisconsin Lutheran College (Effective through Spring 2010)

Wisconsin Lutheran College strives to develop in each student a Christian mind and a servant's heart that will allow him or her to excel in the world of ideas and in relationships with people. Each graduate will be committed to humble and responsible service through independent and creative thought and will use research and analytical skills to make critical judgments.

In order to achieve its academic vision, Wisconsin Lutheran College strives to meet the following goals in each of its students:

1. Christian Faith and Living: An educated Christian will grow in faith, character, ability to serve, and involvement in the community of believers.
2. Communication Skills: Given the charge to "go and tell" by Christ Jesus, the ability to communicate effectively is essential. The organization and presentation of ideas in written and oral communication is vital for empowering the individual to lead and influence others.

3. Mathematical Skills: The complexities of technology illustrate the profound influence of mathematics in shaping today's world. Mathematics provides a mode of thinking which enables the individual to abstract, conceptualize, reason, and communicate in numeric, symbolic, and graphic forms.
4. Technological Proficiency: Information technologies have become an essential part of our daily lives in today's society. A well-educated individual needs to understand the various information technologies and how to use them for communicating and problem solving.
5. Scientific Reasoning: An educated Christian should understand basic scientific principles to make informed decisions and appreciate the many physical blessings God has given us.
6. Behavioral Analysis: An understanding of the interaction between and among various social systems as well as the nature and behavior of persons both as individuals and in relation to others is essential to the life and development of a Christian.
7. Aesthetic Sensibility: The educated Christian should have a sensibility to the various ways in which humans have artistically represented their culture along with a knowledge of how humans have been moved to express themselves in response to social, technological, religious, political, and historical contexts in which they have lived. Knowledge of the creative endeavors of humans, however, is not in itself sufficient to stimulate creativity. Participation in the creative process allows students the opportunity to experience their world and give meaning to individual feelings and values.
8. Intellectual Diversity: The Christian student must be open to different ways of looking at the world. Appreciation for the complexity and diversity of human experience is essential if the Christian student is to address human needs with the Gospel effectively.
9. Wisdom: Ultimately an educated Christian seeks to exercise wisdom in his or her life. Wisdom encompasses knowledge, reasoning ability, discernment, decision making, and proper motivation. It applies, analyzes, synthesizes and evaluates facts and principles, methods and disciplines.
10. Leadership: The educated Christian realizes that the translation of his/her learning into leadership in one's home, church, community, and nation is the natural outcome of a distinctively Christian liberal arts education. Effective Christian leadership begins with an attitude of humble service to Jesus Christ and active followership of the Gospel. It consists of independent and public activity based on one's abilities and willingness to take initiative.

The Academic Vision of Wisconsin Lutheran College (effective Fall 2010)

The faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran College believes that a Christian undergraduate education based on scholarly activity, engagement with the liberal arts, and practical application of knowledge enlarges students' perspectives and prepares them for various vocations in which God places them. Consequently, graduates of Wisconsin Lutheran College will:

AG1: Articulate a world-view based on Holy Scripture, as interpreted by the Lutheran Confessions.

Students at a Christian institution of higher learning have the unique opportunity of learning to view the wonder and order of the universe as part of God's creation. This coherent perspective of the world is based on an understanding of the biblical narrative, systems of doctrine, church history, and Christian vocation through the hermeneutical lens of the Lutheran Confessions. Students are thus enabled to comprehend synoptically the diversity of information to which they are exposed, as they effectively and faithfully carry out their roles in the church and society.

AG2: Think critically, clearly, and accurately in the pursuit of the Truth.

Because students are exposed to a wide variety of social institutions, historical perspectives, manifestations of culture, and systems of belief, as well as the means by which people express themselves in these contexts, a

comprehensive Christian education equips students to evaluate wisely and discriminate and to reason validly. Moreover, the empirical skills they acquire allow them to engage with the structure, forces, and systems of God’s creation and relate scientific concepts to the phenomena of the physical universe.

AG3: Express themselves with grace and precision in a variety of contexts.

A comprehensive Christian education fosters students’ ability to listen, speak, and write respectfully, critically, and effectively. It also nurtures their ability to reason and express observed relationships in numeric, symbolic, and graphic forms, while at the same time integrating appropriate technologies into their studies. In order to communicate with integrity from a global perspective, students will develop a facility with the elements, structure, and cultural context of a foreign language. Finally, their exposure to the arts and humanities stimulates students’ willingness to depict ideas and emotions creatively in verbal, visual, and musical forms.

Building on these institutional goals, the *Purpose and Goals* of Teacher Education have been defined. These four goals maintained their distinction within the *Conceptual Framework* as graphically depicted in the next section. The center of the graphic states what has become the mantra of our program, “The Teacher as Servant Leader.” The cross, representative of our Christian values, is clearly present, but not overpowering as an effort to communicate that which is internalized and motivates us to serve and lead others.



Purpose of Teacher Education at Wisconsin Lutheran College

Teacher Education is one of the professional programs offered at WLC that is nested in the liberal arts within the Christian framework. As such, we place strong emphasis on preparing teachers to the meet the professional expectations of a fast-paced, diverse, contemporary education setting. Our focus is to prepare quality teachers and positive role models who are ready to face the challenges of traditional and non-traditional educational programs that require a high degree of flexibility, stamina and resourcefulness. The four core goals of the program which create the encompassing facets for the focus of the conceptual framework are as follows:

Goal 1: The Teacher as **Professional**

To prepare teaching professionals who demonstrate a commitment to other human beings as an extension of who they are as Christians and who reflect in their personal lives the qualities indicative of Christian commitment and leadership.

Goal 2: The Teacher as **Knowledgeable**

To prepare teaching professionals who demonstrate mastery of their content areas, skill in the methods of teaching, sensitivity to the needs of students and parents, and appreciation for the impact of education on society as a means for promoting positive human relations.

Goal 3: The Teacher as **Communicator**

To prepare teaching professionals who possess communication skills that further enhance and demonstrate knowledge and respect of individual student needs, abilities, and cultural aspects through academic performances and clinical field experiences with school systems representing urban, suburban or rural characteristics of American life.

Goal 4: The Teacher as **Life-long Learner**

To prepare teaching professionals who demonstrate and articulate the need for life-long learning as that relates to the disciplines of their content areas, to the art and science of teaching and to their own spiritual faith and service lives.

Conceptual Framework Explanation: The Teacher as Servant Leader

Because the role of an educator in this new era is so multi-faceted, we emphasize the dual natures of the committed Christian teacher--natures that on the surface appear to be contradictory. This duality is one of both servant and leader. Sometimes the natures operate simultaneously and other times independently. The dual natures highlight the expression, "Teaching is to touch the heart in order to reach the mind." We believe if our graduates are to be prepared for the new era of education, they need to understand this dual nature:

1. As a **servant**, the teacher *serves* to guide and nurture learners; and *serves* to improve a school, district, and community through effective instruction and involvement in the issues that create the environment for the learner.
2. As a **leader**, the teacher *leads* as s/he *takes* initiative; *sets* a positive example; *seeks* opportunities to participate, share, and lead; and continually, consciously *plans* for improvement in service and leadership.

Communication of the Conceptual Framework

1. Students in the program are first introduced to the framework and its components in the first education course, EDU 201 Education in a Diverse Society, by relating those goals and standards in their first philosophical statement, and as they overview *The Teacher Education Handbook* as part of the course activities.
2. Professors consider these aspects at regular discipline meetings when decision-making addresses admissions to the program, curricular design, assessment and annual goal-setting for budgetary reasons.
3. Cooperating teachers at the pre-student teaching clinical levels are generally exposed to the WLC conceptual framework through the explanatory materials and evaluative forms they receive as they collaborate with us in these developmental phases. The more we are able to develop a consistent group of these cooperating teachers for the clinicals, the better informed they can be about the WLC program. The challenge remains for us to be clear in our communication and interactions regarding the conceptual framework.

4. Cooperating Teachers at the Teacher Candidacy or Internship levels are personally explained the Conceptual Framework by the college supervisor assigned to the student teacher. This is done usually during the first week of placement when an initial visit to the school is done to verify placement and to become familiar with the setting.

Connection to Assessment System

Because the nature of learning is so complex, it is difficult to define, demonstrate and assess knowledge, skills, and dispositions in isolation from each other. The WLC Teacher Education program sees the “Servant Leader” conceptual framework as an embodiment of the complementary nature of the three aspects of teaching and learning. What follows are generalized WLC contextualized definitions for each:

Knowledge: Even though earthly knowledge is constantly increasing, changing and integrating with new dimensions of learning, the WLC teacher education student should not only strive to be the most current in earthly knowledge, but also recognize that some knowledge is constant—that which is contained in the Holy Scriptures. The essential knowledge is that which provides information about the content areas, the curriculum, instruction and the learner. The WLC student must demonstrate this knowledge through a variety of means—standardized tests, identified tasks, and course level assessments.

Skills: Just as knowledge changes so do the essential skills needed for teaching and for learning. The WLC student should demonstrate that s/he possesses the abilities to prepare, plan and execute tasks for teaching and learning through teaching mini-lessons, developmental unit plans, and strategic instructional activities for content areas.

Dispositions: Also labeled “attitudes,” this area is one which is difficult to define and demonstrate. It is generally understood to be a necessary component for effective teaching and learning. To properly define this term as applied on this campus, it is necessary to provide this context first:

- **Scripture:** “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:3-8)
- **Dictionary:** a. prevailing tendency, mood, or inclination; b. temperamental makeup; c. the tendency of something to act in a certain manner under given circumstances;
Synonyms: disposition, temperament, temper, character. Disposition implies customary moods and attitude toward the life around one <a cheerful *disposition*>. Temperament implies a pattern of innate characteristics associated with one’s specific physical and nervous organization <an artistic *temperament*>. Temper implies the qualities acquired through experience that determine how a person or group meets difficulties or handles situations <a resilient *temper*>. Character applies to the aggregate of moral qualities by which a person is judged apart from intelligence, competence, or special talents <strength of *character*>.

Based on the above contexts, dispositions are those attitudes and innate qualities that enable a teacher to serve others unselfishly, to put the best efforts forth, to deliberately create a learning atmosphere that *inspires* others to respond, to demonstrate that persistence, insistence and consistency that learners need to develop trust in the teacher, and to demonstrate the professional behaviors such as punctuality, appropriate dress and speech, cooperation and collaboration, and desire to constantly improve.