Colgate University’s Mission Statement

Colgate's mission is to provide a demanding, expansive, educational experience to a select group of diverse, talented, intellectually sophisticated students who are capable of challenging themselves, their peers, and their teachers in a setting that brings together living and learning. The purpose of the University is to develop wise, thoughtful, critical thinkers and perceptive leaders by challenging young men and women to fulfill their potential through residence in a community that values intellectual rigor and respects the complexity of human understanding.

Colgate University is a small highly selective residential liberal arts college for men and women of talent who are preparing for lives of leadership and productive citizenship. The Colgate faculty is a community of scholars committed to teaching in the classroom, the laboratory, the studio, and the library. Teaching is Colgate's first responsibility, serving not only to transmit knowledge but also to transform and extend it through a demanding, imaginative curriculum. Faculty scholarship complements teaching as it advances knowledge. Colgate maintains that ideal size which allows students to work closely with the faculty; it is neither a giant research university nor a tiny liberal arts college. The dialogue between faculty and students provides exciting opportunities for independent work.

As a residential college, Colgate is committed to the belief that learning takes place in many settings. Learning must serve life, and the opportunity to live together in a variety of settings encourages interpersonal exploration, expands mutual understanding, and supports a broadened perspective within a caring, humane community. The residential community
provides a setting in which students gain maturity by taking responsibility for their actions and by coming to understand the impact of those actions upon others in an environment that is neither permissive nor authoritarian, but conducive to purposeful engagement.

Colgate is an inclusive institution with diverse students and faculty. With a mission to educate leaders who will and must come from all societal groups, Colgate is committed to educate students to virtue and encourages them to respond openly and sensitively to others who are different from themselves. Within the limitations of its resources, Colgate extends opportunities to academically qualified students without regard to their ability to finance their education.

While we celebrate our diversity, we function as one institution. Although we work together for the success of the University, we also recognize that our differences enrich the experiences of all of us. Groups that lead a separate existence do not support the whole, and those who forsake their culture impoverish all, depriving us of the richness of America's cultural background. We celebrate that difficult balance between the commonalties of human experience and the particularities of our individual lives.

The sense of community that begins in student/faculty dialogue and continues in the residential college is furthered by Colgate's general education program. The faculty at Colgate are deeply committed to the idea that the common experience of a shared core curriculum provides the foundation for dialogue both in the classroom and in campus residences. Students and faculty engage those persistent questions and problems that are general to human life as well as new questions raised by technological developments and the
proliferation of knowledge. General education at Colgate focuses on questions that transcend disciplinary interests and lie at the intersection of the social, political, economic, and philosophical transformations that have marked the 20th century.

To understand the human condition and the world in which we live requires both analysis and synthesis. We divide knowledge into manageable pieces to achieve understanding in depth, and we integrate the particular to achieve general understanding. Colgate offers a broad array of academic majors, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, to assure learning in depth, while the program of general education synthesizes the insights of the disciplines into a more coherent understanding of human experience.

The general education sequence of courses takes students not only to various historical moments but also to a variety of social and cultural locations. Colgate puts different cultures, Western and non-Western, in conversation with one another in order that students might see that culture, like the human condition, is not given a priori; it is learned. In order to build upon the knowledge gained in the general education program and to enable students to increase their capacity to view their own culture and to learn how others see us, Colgate annually offers an extensive array of faculty-directed study abroad programs in more than twenty locations in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Orientation programs enable students, regardless of their area of study, to prepare for study abroad by examining what it means to live in another culture, and they share their experiences when they return to campus. Almost half of each class participates in some form of off-campus study during their undergraduate career.
Recognizing that we know the world in many ways, Colgate educates the whole person. Those ways of knowing include the engagement of both mind and body with the external world. The fine and performing arts add the challenge of self-discipline and self-expression to the Colgate experience. The arts, which lie at the center of our eternal reinvention of culture, engage students' creative capacities and enhance their understanding of the world even as they entertain us. With flourishing programs -- both curricular and extracurricular -- in writing, music, the visual arts, theater and dance, Colgate is continually enriched by the talents of its students and faculty. In like manner, the exhilaration of physical challenge, the value of group effort- to achieve common ends, and the confidence that comes with developing the skills we need to participate in a lifetime of healthy activity are brought together in challenging athletic and outdoor recreational programs that encourage students to develop their personal potential and experience the cohesion of shared purpose.

Finally, Colgate recognizes that those who lead are obligated to help others in need. That obligation must be nurtured, especially in a society that stresses the personal over the communal. Colgate is a nonsectarian institution, but it emphasizes individual and social responsibility to serve the less fortunate. Colgate engages this obligation through an extensive program of service learning and through fostering an ethos that balances individual freedom with social good. Service activities increasingly enhance classroom understanding of social institutions and their expression.

In sum, the mission of Colgate University is to create and nurture an environment most conducive to the creation of self-knowledge and public knowledge.