

## GOAL CERTIFICATION

In order to provide a fair and objective system for students to certify each of the six aspirational goals, students should complete either one course that substantially addresses a goal or two courses that partially address a goal. Course lists will be available online (<https://campus.hws.edu/EducationalGoals>), and each course that counts either partially or substantially towards a particular goal will be indicated in PeopleSoft under “Course Attributes”.

Students and advisors will be able to track student progress towards each goal in PeopleSoft by way of a newly created “Academic Goals” section within “Academic Requirements.” By utilizing the database power of PeopleSoft for maintaining course lists and certification, we will be able to track *all* courses that students complete towards each goal; this will provide more accurate data for assessment of the curriculum.

## DETERMINING WHETHER COURSES SUBSTANTIALLY OR PARTIALLY ADDRESS A GOAL

Each of the newly revised goals is written to stress ways of knowing, types of analysis, and critical thinking, in addition to the content associated with each goal. Using the guidelines below, faculty (and departments or programs) determine whether their courses address a goal substantially or partially, and CoAA reviews these lists for consistency and accuracy.

In order to increase fairness and consistency, CoAA recommends the following “quantitative” guidelines to assess whether a course substantially or partially addresses a goal.

- If *more than two-thirds* of your course focuses on the goal, the course **substantially** addresses the goal.
- If *one-third to two-thirds* of your course focuses on the goal, the course **partially** addresses the goal.
- Courses that focus on a goal for *less than one-third* of the course should not be listed.

Quantifying aspects of a course can be difficult and inexact. In determining the percentage of a course that addresses a goal, faculty *may* wish to consider metrics such as the relative amount of course content, the time spent on or the learning activities focused on the goal, *or* the amount of assessment (or student evaluation) directed towards the goal.

CoAA believes that using and applying the guidelines above provides some level of *standardization* in the goal system. Moreover, these guidelines ensure that the courses students take to certify their goals will have addressed the goal for **at least** two-thirds of the course, regardless of whether students take one course that substantially addresses the goal or two that partially address the goal. We expect that many individual courses listed as substantially addressing a goal, or the combination of two courses that partially address a goal, will likely exceed this minimum expectation.

## HOW MANY GOALS CAN ONE COURSE ADDRESS?

Given these “quantifying” guidelines for determining substantial and partial status for a course, CoAA recommends:

- (1) no course be listed as substantially addressing more than two goals; courses that substantially address one goal may substantially address one more goal or partially address one or two more goals.
- (2) no course be listed as partially addressing more than three goals; courses that partially address multiple goals would not likely address more than three goals using the guidelines above.

If you believe your course is an exception to these general guidelines, please provide a justification on your department or program’s Goals spreadsheet (see below).

### **A UNIQUENESS REQUIREMENT FOR THE GOALS**

**Students must complete at least five unique courses to satisfy the six aspirational goals.** *This does not mean goal courses need to be unique from courses counted towards majors and minors*, rather in the list of courses that a student completes towards the six aspirational goals, there must be a minimum number of five unique courses among the goals. This uniqueness requirement restricts students from finding the minimum number of courses to satisfy the goals and, therefore, strengthens their educational experiences towards fulfilling these aspirational goals. Moreover, this requirement will not overburden students. In the spring of 2016, the faculty voted that no more than eight courses should be required to complete the goals. Because critical thinking and communication are integrated into each student's major (and, therefore, are completed by courses taken in a major), students really have only six additional goals to consider (and even some of those may be accomplished by courses taken in an individual's major or minor). Requiring that the six aspirational goals be completed with at least five different courses only strengthens our goal-driven general curriculum.

### **STRENGTHENING OUR GOAL-DRIVEN GENERAL CURRICULUM**

The faculty voted to create a system of goal certification that increases both transparency and fairness; we believe that the above guidelines provide both. We also believe these guidelines bolster our goal-driven general curriculum. For example, in addition to the official lists of courses for substantially or partially addressing a goal, students may take courses that deal with content related to the goals to a lesser extent, which will likely synergize with their "official" certification courses and add in positive ways to their understanding of the goal. Likewise, the uniqueness requirement may mean that students address the goal beyond our minimum expectations due to the overlapping goal content of multiple courses that they complete.

Concern has been expressed about the role of the advisor-student relationship in goal certification. While increasing transparency and fairness could result in less need for conversations with students about the goals, CoAA believes that the very nature of our articulated goals actually increases the need to discuss their meaning and relevance to the education of our students. Only a faculty-student culture, starting with the first-year experience and continuing through the students' four-year experience, can promote meaningful advisor-student relationships.

Sincerely,

The Committee on Academic Affairs