

Committee for Kalamazoo College's Future 2 2009

Positioning Statement:

The mission of Kalamazoo College is to prepare its graduates to better understand, live successfully within, and provide enlightened leadership to a richly diverse and increasingly complex world.

In an inclusive, supportive community, Kalamazoo College empowers students to turn their passions into productive action in college and in their lives after graduation. "K" College students graduate with an understanding of how to navigate the world, bringing intellectual rigor, passionate interest, and practical perspective to whatever they choose to pursue.

The Promise for every student:

Among the nation's highly selective liberal arts colleges, Kalamazoo is distinguished by its commitment that all students explore, identify, and pursue their passions through the creation and implementation their own K-Plan. The components listed below provide the framework in which students' individual K-Plans will be developed.

- *A rigorous liberal arts curriculum* -- K College offers a diverse curriculum that allows students to choose a major and a set of courses that prepare them to explore, discover, and convert their personal and intellectual passions into avocational and professional pursuits.
- *International Engagement* -- K College is the preeminent undergraduate institution in providing a distinctive international experience that includes opportunities for international immersion, interculturally focused seminars, foreign language study, and a global studies minor. "K" students engage in a unique immersive international experience that is incorporated into on-campus course work and programs. Students have ample resources to support work or service abroad.
- *Experiential Learning* -- At "K", learning both inside and outside of the classroom is highly valued. Substantial resources exist to insure that all students can partake in career exploration, service learning and leadership opportunities, on-campus research experiences, student organizations and activities, and alumni-based social networking.
- *Student Leadership* -- "Enlightened leadership" is rooted in the liberal arts tradition of seeking truth and knowledge through the critical examination of one's self and the world. At Kalamazoo College, we view knowledge of self, knowledge of how one relates to others, knowledge of groups, and knowledge of organizational structures and processes as essential elements of enlightened leadership. Inclusion and reflection are central values in enlightened leadership.
- *Senior Individualized Project* -- At "K", students have the responsibility to choose the topic and methodology of their senior project and the College provides the support required for students complete the work.

The overwhelming majority of “K” students study, volunteer and/or work abroad; pursue leadership opportunities, complete internships, and engage in other hands-on learning projects; and all students complete an academic major and a Senior Individualized Project. Students receive an unusually high level of advice and support in planning for and reflecting on these experiences. In this supportive and challenging environment where each person may pursue different aspirations, the campus community is united by a common sense of excitement, fun and purpose.

A unique approach to planning and mentoring that integrates the traditionally separate forms of college advising into a holistic process, supports students as they discover their intellectual, personal, and career interests. Students, alumni, faculty, and staff create a network of resources and ideas, and share their own “K” experiences.

The power of the K Plan is demonstrated by the many ways alumni successfully shape the world in highly competitive environments. These include high rates of placement in graduate and professional school; selection for internationally recognized programs like Peace Corps, Teach for America, and the Fulbright Fellowship; success in the arts, business, the foreign service and in other arenas in which “K” alumni turn their passions in action.

Guidelines for our campus community

The revitalized K-Plan will provide an opportunity for students to continually re-engage each component of the K-Plan as they explore, identify and pursue a passion. The process will be developmental and we will need to provide opportunities for students to take risks. Full engagement with the K Plan requires that students develop and exercise their discretion, that they are active in the exploration of their interests, and that they take significant personal responsibility and leadership in charting the course of their college education.

A critical component of the revitalized K-Plan is a holistic planning approach that will utilize faculty and staff who will work together in innovative ways. As students plan their academic and personal exploration Kalamazoo College will provide an integrated planning/mentoring system to support this endeavor. A combination of individual student exploration combined with supportive planning will ensure success.

Another key component of the revitalized K Plan is an inclusive residential community where joy and fun are valued and where the availability of significant social and academic support provides a firm foundation as students move toward personal and academic independence.