

Why New College

Welcome to the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. I appreciate this opportunity to tell you a little about the college.

New College was founded in 1984 and is now 25 years old. In short, when we say “new,” we do not mean of recent origin. The term reflects, instead, an orientation. New College is dedicated to providing knowledge on the cutting edge, preparing students with the abilities they will need to succeed in the 21st century.

New College is interdisciplinary in its orientation recognizing that the problems our society confronts today are often large and complex, requiring multiple perspectives in order to discover solutions. An interdisciplinary approach builds upon the knowledges of multiple disciplines—like history, religion, psychology, sociology, biology, statistics—and brings them together to meet such challenges as developing sustainable societies, creating social justice and human rights, ending poverty, and understanding who we are and what gives meaning to our lives.

New College also focuses on the arts and sciences, a curriculum grounded in the study of a particular discipline or major within a broad general education that provides students with the ability to think critically, to express themselves in speaking and writing, to use quantitative and technological skills in solving problems, and to understand how values shape individuals and societies. We know that today’s graduates will hold, on average, nine jobs during their lifetimes, three of which have not yet been invented. There is no better way to prepare students for a world in constant flux than to develop their own capacities for lifelong learning and disciplined application: to hone their abilities to analyze complex phenomena, to understand themselves and others, to discover, to persuade, to innovate, and to create.

Further, in the tradition of a liberal arts education, New College is built upon close faculty-student relationships, and a large number of undergraduates pursue their own faculty-sponsored independent research projects, giving them firsthand experience in identifying and solving new problems that confront us. Also within that tradition, New College seeks to integrate curricular with extra-curricular life, the campus and the community, so that what happens in the classroom is expanded and enriched not only by lectures, discussions, and activities outside of the classroom but also by internships and service-learning opportunities in local businesses and organizations.

Finally, New College values diversity—of ideas and perspectives, of experiences, of values, of ethnicities and orientations—as a way of ensuring students have a sufficiently broad foundation upon which to build professional and personal success and satisfaction throughout their lives.

We hope you’ll join us.