

# BRIDGE GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAM: VISION STATEMENT

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The BRIDGE General Education Program at Georgian Court University offers students a coherent and integrated learning experience in the Catholic intellectual tradition. This program aims to cultivate passion for intellectual growth and to foster informed, responsible, and creative citizenship for a complex 21<sup>st</sup>-century world. Students who complete the BRIDGE will sharpen the intellectual and practical skills essential to their chosen field of study and necessary to their pursuit of personal, professional, civic and social goals. In addition, completion of the BRIDGE program enables students to discover pathways to lifelong learning and to envision a future shaped by their engagement with the university's mission and Mercy charism.

The BRIDGE program encourages students to develop self-knowledge within a broader understanding of others and the world. It emphasizes the importance of critical inquiry that leads to knowledge across fields of study and provides a means for students to think critically and creatively, connecting and building upon what they learn in their general education courses. Students examine conditions necessary for peace, justice, and sustainability, as well as the ways mercy and justice are integral for how we confront the present and vision the future.

The cornerstone of the BRIDGE program is The Self in the Big Universe, an introductory course that invites students to examine their particular sense of self and place within their local situations, as well as within the broader scope of the universe. This course provides students with a framework for learning by demonstrating the inter-connectedness of all life, fostering respect for creation and the integrity of life systems. Students will also choose from a variety of courses that explore a range of key content areas in quantitative analysis, philosophy, literature, history, modern languages, religious studies, the natural and social sciences, the visual and performing arts, and ethics. To enhance thinking and learning and to sharpen written communication skills, some of these courses will be writing intensive. Students also take Shaping Lives: Women and Gender, a course rooted in GCU's special concern for women designed to further the understanding by women and men of key gender issues. The Bridge program culminates with Visioning a Future: Justice, Compassion, and Service, a capstone course that asks students to synthesize their learning experiences and envision their roles in shaping a just, compassionate world.