

## The Baccalaureate Experience

Northern Illinois University is a large, complex institution with a mission that includes a strong commitment to undergraduate education. Central to this commitment is the establishment of an intellectual environment that encourages the formation of the essential habits of the educated person—curiosity, rigorous observation, tolerant understanding, and informed judgment. The diverse academic programs in each of the distinctive colleges are unified by common expectations for the achievement of the baccalaureate degree.

Baccalaureate degree holders from NIU should be able not only to appreciate the intrinsic value of human knowledge, but also to use it to engage in both scientific and philosophical inquiry, imaginative and creative—as well as abstract and critical—thinking, the solving of problems, and integrative thinking synthesizing knowledge derived from varied disciplines. The individual with a baccalaureate degree, moreover, should possess intellectual curiosity, understanding of diverse cultural heritages, and a proper regard for different values, ideas, and ways of life. All who aspire toward a baccalaureate degree from NIU are expected to seek responsibility for self and others, to achieve a basis for moral integrity and a philosophy of life, and to arrive at an appreciation of artistic and other creative endeavors, in addition to achieving physical, emotional, and intellectual self-awareness with the ability for self-assessment, along with an understanding of the potential for human freedom amidst global interdependence.

The baccalaureate degree includes general education requirements for all students and an in-depth study in at least one major area as well as individual elective choices. These obligations are met simultaneously and, together, fulfill the curricular intent of the degree.

Successful completion of the baccalaureate degree should mean that the student will have developed (a) effective habits in logical thinking, (b) communication skills, (c) quantitative skills, (d) an understanding of and ability to use modern technology, (e) sophisticated practices in using resources, (f) mature interpersonal behavior in various settings, and (g) those unique skills necessary for one's chosen area of in-depth study.