



Now in the forefront, but historically a part of Becker's DNA

The Agile Mindset:

A STUDENT'S INTERPRETATION:

“The Agile Mindset seems to be a very hopeful way of looking at life. It promotes rolling-with-the-punches, working hard, and never making excuses. It helps you keep moving forward, helping to change yourself for the better while keeping your core values as a person intact.”

– Jacob Gagnon '21
Computer Science Major
and Core 1001 student

In today's world, change is constant and rapid. As an institution of higher learning, we must prepare our students for an uncertain future. So in trying to empower students for the inevitable, without actually knowing what that is, Becker has developed the Agile Mindset—a signature initiative that has changed our curriculum and influenced our culture in just four years.

Artificial intelligence and robotics are prompting a technological revolution that is affecting how we work, function, play, and live. The best way to stay competitive and relevant in this new environment is to foster a community of life-long learners focused on uniquely human skills that machines cannot replicate. Proficiencies like empathy, divergent thinking, an entrepreneurial outlook, and social and emotional intelligence help us adapt and thrive in a world that is increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

“It is a little daunting to think about what the future of work will look like for someone in college right now. However, those who are ready will navigate the unpredictable with a lot more ease and success than those caught off-guard,” said President Nancy P. Crimmin. “Things that were inconceivable when I was in college are a reality for our students. Progress is not optional, it is underway, and we created the Agile Mindset to give our students the foundation they need for tomorrow's world.”

Simply put, the Agile Mindset is a set of intellectual tools that enables students to look at situations from various perspectives in a way that will give them a competitive edge at work, and in life. With this enhanced point of view, graduates

will be able to cope with any changes that come their way. The ability to reinvent, adapt, and grow has been a part of the institution's DNA for hundreds of years. Becker College has always been nimble and forward thinking, ready to push the envelope of higher education.

“Giving our students these skills helps them learn, but also re-learn throughout their lives. The Agile Mindset asks students to be reflective so that they can build on their existing strengths while identifying areas that need sharpening,” said President Crimmin. “Perpetuating an educational model that simply creates and imparts knowledge is insufficient. Every current college student must know how to use the power of learning to navigate the future.”

Knowing this, Becker commits to galvanizing our students by teaching them to solve problems that have not yet been identified, utilizing technology yet to be discovered, and to prepare for jobs that do not yet exist. In contemplating what its students will face post-graduation, Becker engineered a new core curriculum within general education to better align educational interests, encourage collaboration between programs, and enhance the student experience in pursuit of equipping graduates with skills that will make them “futureproof.”

“What we are trying to do is get our students to think—what are the problems we are going to face and how do you tackle them,” said William Castro, assistant professor, criminal justice and legal studies, who teaches an introductory Agile Mindset class. “A hundred years ago travel was difficult. Look at things today. We fly in the sky, have sent people to the moon, and have a waiting



Futureproofing Students

list for civilians who want to travel to Mars on expeditions that will take place in the near future. A century ago these things would have been unimaginable.”

Over the past century, jobs have continually been replaced by newer and more efficient methods of production. Now, this change is disrupting entire industries in months, not years, or centuries. The Economist predicts that by 2034, almost half of all jobs will be completed by automation, algorithms, or robots. These changes are evident already in driverless cars and complicated artificial intelligence in the smallest of devices. In order to stand out in this rapidly evolving world, students need a wholly different outlook, which has massive implications for higher education and the future of work. This thinking led Becker to create the Agile Mindset curriculum (listed on the right). Spread out throughout a student’s academic tenure at the College these classes are the foundation for an agile outlook.

A key feature of the Agile Mindset is that it applies to any person, in any program. It enhances any student’s ability to learn, whether they are a veterinary science student or game designer. The *Washington Post* states that only 27% of college graduates actually work in careers that align with their field of study. Developing cognitive skills that build complexity, mastery, and application lead to increased critical thinking and an ability to solve unstructured problems. This skillset promotes versatility and is valuable in any number of fields, even in a workforce that is constantly being asked to shift gears.

Expanding on this concept, Maria Calkins, professor of psychology and part of the team that

The Agile Mindset curriculum is made up of five core courses:

1. **Managing Transitions: Change is the Norm—Career Exploration**
2. **New Normal: Exploring Unstructured Problems—Career Strategy and Research**
3. **Needfinding: Uncovering Opportunity in Human Need—Career Strengths Finder**
4. **Entrepreneurial Mindset: Creating and Capturing Value—Career Collaboration and Network**
5. **Integrated Capstone—Career Launch**

designed the core courses, states, “Our world is not divided into boxes—one for science, one for English, etc. In this interdisciplinary world, it would be a disservice to our students to prepare them for one narrow path for their professional future. We must teach our students how to leverage what they learn in their majors with the competencies emphasized by the Agile Mindset.”

Becker graduates will be able to apply their discipline-specific knowledge to broader contexts and realistic, complex human problems.

The Agile Mindset curriculum was originally introduced to students in a pilot program in the

fall of 2015. Since that time, the courses have been enhanced and fine-tuned with students input, according to Marianne Rigo, adjunct faculty who teaches the first two courses in the Agile Mindset curriculum. “Each time we teach a class about the Agile Mindset, we gain valuable insight that leads to improvements in the curriculum,” said Rigo.

This year’s freshman class is the first to experience all five Agile Mindset courses during their Becker careers.

“Becker graduates will have a unique opportunity and competitive edge to be fully prepared for the ever-changing job market,” said Daryl Anne Statkus, chair, agile mindset and core curriculum. “They will have an adaptable skill set that includes content expertise and interdisciplinary experience with utilizing and applying cognitive skills, an enhanced awareness and application of empathy, dealing with diversity, practicing social responsibility, improved self-awareness and self-assessment, and a realization that a growth mindset is the norm, and life-long learning is the vehicle for success in life.”

www.becker.edu/agilemindset