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CASE STUDY



Intellectual and ethical education of university students through core texts seminars: The case of the Great Books Program at the University of Navarra

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how the Great Books Program at the University of Navarra in Spain was implemented during the period 2014 to 2023. Its teaching principles and educational aims are presented. The four main educational aims are (a) to develop reading comprehension, informed dialogue, and written argumentation skills; (b) to develop an interdisciplinary framework for understanding reality in which students can locate what they learn in their degree program; (c) to develop critical thinking and cultivate an interest in the truth; (d) to promote ethical thinking and the connection between thought and life. Three main conclusions can be drawn from the experience of the Program. First, it is possible to introduce cross-disciplinary courses in degree programs oriented towards professional qualification. Second, students adapt well to the new methodology and show interest in this educational program. Third, this is an educational approach that seems to develop certain intellectual and ethical qualities in students that are not usually cultivated in other kinds of courses, or at least not as effectively.

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1. Introduction

From an educational point of view, universities nowadays are tending more and more toward specialization and professionalization (Bok 2020). At Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American universities in particular, degrees are designed to provide students with the competencies normally limited to a specific field of study and professional practice, such as civil engineering, medicine, marketing, biochemistry, or law. For this reason, they usually do not include a core curriculum, or in other words, general, or cross-disciplinary educational courses (Pérez-Díaz and Rodríguez 2001, 241–254 and

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293–326). There seems to be little room for the ‘transmission of culture’, which Ortega y Gasset (1997) claimed is one of the missions of university education, nor for liberal educational approaches, whose main aim is the ‘cultivation of the intellect’ in the sense proposed by Newman (1982).

One way to remedy the problems associated with the specialization and the professionalization of education is the Great Books Programs (Bok 2020, 87–88; Montás 2021). These programs provide the students with access to humanistic (and scientific) knowledge that helps them build a general interpretive framework of reality while cultivating habits that help them elaborate an intellectual synthesis aimed at the unity of knowledge (Llano 2003; Lacalle 2003).

This article examines the case of the Great Books Program at the University of Navarra in Spain, implemented during the period 2014–2023. Since this is one of the first times that such a program has been implemented at European or Latin American universities (Cohen de Lara and Drop 2017; van der Wende 2011) and the experience has been reported as positive, it represents a relevant contribution to studies on higher education.

The article consists of three sections in addition to this introduction. The next section briefly presents the Program’s origins and structure, while the third section explains the educational principles that guide it. The fourth section presents evidence largely informed by the teachers’ experience and students’ feedback, which supports the conclusion that the intended objectives seem to have been reasonably achieved.

2. Origins and structure of the Great Books Program

The Core Curriculum Institute (CCI hereafter) of the University of Navarra was established in 1998 with the primary objective of providing humanistic, ethical, and theological education to students of all disciplines. As a teaching unit, the CCI falls under the authority of the Office of the Rector and has a board of directors and administrative staff but no faculty of its own. Its teachers belong to the different schools at the university (50% are from Humanities, 20% from Theology, and 30% from the rest). Among other duties, the CCI is responsible for assigning which professors teach compulsory cross-disciplinary courses called the ‘Core Curriculum’. Those entail 18 of the 240 credits that a bachelor’s degree usually consists of in Spain (where one credit amounts to 10 hours of class time and 15 hours of a student’s self-study time). This is in addition to other courses in professional ethics or the history of the discipline.

The Core Curriculum consists of six courses of three credits: Philosophy of the Human Person I and II, Ethics I and II, and Cultural Keys I and II. They are usually taken between the first and third year of the bachelor’s degree. Cultural Keys is an optional module: students choose two courses from a limited range of courses in theology, history, literature, or science, among others. Teaching is guided by the ‘Core Curriculum Principles’ (Instituto Core Curriculum 2014), which can be summarized as enabling students to acquire a global understanding of reality, which gives meaning to their lives and equips them with a framework to integrate the remainder of the courses they take for the completion of their bachelor’s degree.

Students can take the Core Curriculum courses following two different tracks, according to their teaching methodology. First, the ordinary track, with groups of about 75 students, in which explanatory classes form the main method of instruction, even though the professor is free to organize the teaching as they deem appropriate, and consequently, a wide variety of methods are used. Second, the Great Books Program track, in which Philosophy of the Human Person I and Ethics I courses follow a mainly explanatory methodology to lay the theoretical foundations of both subjects, while the remaining four courses consist of Great Books Seminar classes with groups of a maximum of 25 students. The CCI is committed to methodological pluralism, i.e. it does not regard one particular teaching method as the only possible way to achieve its educational objectives, which is the main reason why the students can choose one of two tracks.

The first Great Books courses were offered in the 2014–2015 academic year and were subsequently gradually extended until they were established in all schools as of the 2019–2020 academic year.¹ In 2022, 13% of the University's students chose this track. 684 students were enrolled, divided into 31 groups, and taught by 24 professors.

The three common essential elements of these courses are the reflective reading of classical works, seminar classes, and the writing of argumentative essays. Each professor modulates them as they might consider the most effective: whole books or selections, one or several essays, class dynamics, etc. In general, students arriving at the University of Navarra need to familiarize themselves with reflective reading and writing techniques for argumentative essays. For this purpose, the University's Writing Center offers method workshops to develop these skills.

These courses have been inspired by a tradition that started in the United States. The first Great Books Seminar was taught at Columbia University in 1919 and then expanded to other US universities (Lacy 2013, 19–36). Currently, the international benchmark association in education based on the use of core texts or great books (Lee 2020, 39–68) is the Association for Core Texts and Courses (ACTC). The University of Navarra's Program has greatly benefitted from their activities and support. The Program was designed during an ACTC summer institute at the universities of Columbia and Yale, and in the past ten years, fifteen professors from Navarra have participated in ACTC conferences and summer institutes.

Regarding the selection of readings, it should be noted that traditional great books programs in the US follow a chronological, closed list. However, at Navarra, professors were free to select the books. The only requirement they had to meet was that they had to be classical or canonical works. Moreover, the Program opted for a mixed teaching model since it included theoretical foundational courses (Philosophy of the Human Person I and Ethics I) and Great Books Seminars (the other courses).

During the implementation of the Program, several organizational challenges had to be overcome, such as the selection and training of faculty members to teach this new type of course, the coordination of teaching schedules since it involved groups from different schools, and the initial hesitation among some professors and administrators regarding the novelty of this educational approach (see Sánchez-Ostiz and Torralba 2018 for an explanation of how these challenges were addressed).

Thanks to the resolute support of the Office of the Rector and the main schools involved (Humanities and Theology), the Program is now fully consolidated.

3. Principles of teaching Great Books Seminars

In this section, the ten principles guiding the teaching of the Great Books Program are outlined. They reflect the experience acquired during these past years. In itself, the methodology that makes the seminars work is as specific and as flexible as a Socratic-inspired method can be (Adler 1983, 122–130; Lee 2020, 275–290): it must be faithful to a core of principles, but without obligatory didactic patterns that might curtail the freedom and initiative of each professor in the specific design of their course.

First, they are seminars of books (or texts) and readers, not classes in literature, history, theology, or philosophy: they do not aspire to transmit expert knowledge but for the books to be the center and starting point of a conversation of human relevance (books are instruments to subtly convey a vital message, but they are not instrumentalized) (Adler 1940, 11–15; Adler 1998). The aim of this educational approach is to contribute to the student's flourishing through the cultivation of intellectual and ethical habits.

Second, the dialogue does not start from scratch but adds to a great conversation in progress for centuries: a great book would have withstood the test of time, but also, and above all, it is an artifact that initiates a great conversation of human relevance, or that takes a decisive turn within a conversation already begun.

Third, the moderator of these seminars has the primary mission of 'igniting the spark' (Plutarch): their mission is not to prove how much they know but to guide the students in a joint effort toward the questions, the argumentation of the answers, and the vital implications that the whole process has for them.

Fourth, this method of learning is enjoyable but requires rigor: the seminar is developed in a dialogical way, based on the interventions of the students, whom the teacher has to encourage to be rigorous in the argumentation and to stick to the discussion of the text being dealt with (Great Books Foundation 2021, 5–7).

Fifth, the teacher must be as engaged with the text as the students—or even more—to create an authentic conversation (Sánchez-Ostiz 2021) based on trust and openness, in which all participants feel that their opinions are listened to, valued, and respected.

Sixth, these seminars aim to develop the capacity to judge (Torralba 2022, 71–77): to improve the student's ability to connect the particular to the general, and to locate specific problems in their broader framework. In particular, the seminars aim to relate the readings to life itself and help students to accurately describe an action or an ethical problem.

Seventh, the seminar should lead participants to discover the aesthetic and intellectual pleasure of reading (Baena 2021, Hitz 2020). Instead of seeing the list of reading assignments as a mere academic duty to fulfill, seminars help students discover the original aim of the literary and philosophical works.

Eighth, the professor has a plan of topics for discussion. However, they remain open to the possibility that the conversation might go in other valuable directions while maintaining a balance between ‘going off the deep end’ and holding their position as an authority on the text. By choosing specific readings (and producing guides to orient the student), the professor establishes the framework for the dialogue, but cannot anticipate where the actual conversation will lead.

Ninth, the process of bringing students into the conversation is laborious and requires patience, starting with the more factual questions to arrive at interpretive questions (Great Books Foundation 2021, 9–16) that have no unambiguous answer: for many, the turning point is hearing themselves for the first time making a coherent and genuine argument, beginning to trust their ability to reason.

Tenth, it is the role of the teacher to bring the class to a propitious close by summing up any insights gained and highlighting the questions that have remained open or unaddressed. This underscores the fact that an inquiry has been made in the search for the truth, even if it has not been possible to exhaust a subject and unpack all its complexity. The decisive point is to awaken a love or interest in the truth (Torralba 2022, 77–82).

4. Educational results

This section deals with each of the four main educational objectives of the Program (based on the ‘Core Curriculum Principles’ and the specific teaching principles described in the previous section) and provides some evidence to support the claim that the objectives seem now to have been reasonably achieved since its inception ten years ago. Evidence comes mainly from teachers’ experience and students’ feedback. The following sources of information are used: (a) the ‘Qualitative Narrative Assessment’ report produced within an ACTC’s working group between 2014 and 2016 (Sánchez-Ostiz and Torralba 2018); (b) the educational innovation project of the Quality and Innovation Service of the University of Navarra, carried out between 2019 and 2021, centered on the methodology of the courses; (c) a 2023 survey of students and teachers about the Program’s main educational objectives (see [Appendix A](#)); (d) a 2024 survey of students about (i) whether the Program provided an interdisciplinary framework for understanding reality, and (ii) whether it fostered the development of intellectual virtues² (see [Appendix B](#)); (e) CCI’s annual surveys on student’s satisfaction with the courses; and (f) the periodic meetings of the teachers.³

It should be noted that the 2023 and 2024 surveys were based on self-reporting and that there was no control group since they were designed as part of an academic assessment of the Program, as is common practice in universities. Regardless, what the surveys reflect is confirmed by what the teachers observe in the classroom and further verified through the students’ final essays in the courses. In addition, all the professors involved in the Program also teach other kinds of courses that permit them to compare the educational results of both. The scope of these conclusions has, therefore, the already mentioned limitations. However, they seem to be sufficiently relevant for a case study like the present one, since they provide insights that can be used to design future investigations on the topic.

The 2023 questionnaire was sent to 305 students who had taken at least two Great Books courses in the past four years. In total, 131 responses were received (43% of the respondents). These results offer, with a confidence level of 95%, a margin of error of 6%. A survey was also conducted among the Program's professors, with the same questions, except for a slight change to include the perspective from that of a professor. 22 responses were received, or 88% of the respondents. These results had a margin of error of 7% at a confidence level of 95%. In general, the responses from both groups coincide. The survey remained open to responses between 2 March and 7 March 2023.

The 2024 questionnaire was sent to 221 Law and Medicine students who had taken at least one Great Books course in the past four years. These bachelor's degree programs were chosen because they are representative of two different areas of specialization, namely the natural sciences and the humanities/social sciences. In total, 103 responses were received (47% of the respondents). Similar to the 2023 questionnaire, the 2024 results had a margin of error of 7% at a confidence level of 95%. The survey remained open to responses between 29 February and 14 March 2024. In both surveys, responses were received through an anonymous online questionnaire and participation was completely voluntary.

The student's satisfaction with the Program is very high. According to the annual surveys that the CCI carries out, the courses of the Program received, on average, an evaluation of 4,5/5 in 2022. When interpreting these results, it must be noted that the Program is an optional track of the Core Curriculum and that students with an above-average academic record tend to choose it, although there is no data to support this conjecture.

The Program was not designed to take into account the recent scholarship on character education at the university level (Lamb, Brant, and Brooks 2022) or on the cultivation of intellectual virtues (Baehr 2021). However, in the sections that follow, references will be made to both, since it provides concepts to formulate and explain the kind of educational results that the Program seems to have achieved.

4.1. To develop reading comprehension, informed dialogue, and written argumentation skills

According to the 2024 survey, students overwhelmingly felt that the courses helped them to develop the following intellectual virtues: curiosity, autonomy, humility, attentiveness, carefulness, thoroughness, open-mindedness, courage, and tenacity (Baehr 2021). This is in line with the methodology of the Program's courses, which primarily educates students on how to connect the universal with the particular, to draw particular consequences from general principles, to avoid simplification as a result of not paying attention to the context, to distinguish mere opinion from justified reasoning, to differentiate data from its interpretation, and subjective perception from objective understanding of reality. In other words, to develop their capacity to grasp what is relevant in a text, conversation, or problem. One student wrote, 'I think that seeing how much your classmates think about the books (...) and how deep they can go, makes you feel humble about your own knowledge and also awakens in you a desire to learn more about new topics'.⁴

In the 2019–2021 project, students indicated two problems that they had encountered in the classroom: (a) that the conversation sometimes did not cover the key topics set at the start mostly due to the lack of preparation of the students or the difficulty the teacher encountered to direct the dialogue adequately; and (b) that the issues addressed sometimes remained too open-ended, without reaching a clear conclusion. To avoid these problems, it was recommended that teachers employ reading guides for each book as well as other resources, such as questionnaires, forums, or reading tests, to ensure that students work through the texts sufficiently. Also, professors were asked to dedicate (more) time at the end of class to recapitulate what was discussed and, throughout the semester, to discuss the connections between the different books.

4.2. To offer an interdisciplinary framework for understanding reality in which students can locate what they learn in their degree program

The Program introduces students to the knowledge of the Western tradition through the analysis of classical authors (from the 8th century BC to the 21st century AD).⁵ Practically all students (92% according to the 2023 survey) consider that this has helped them better understand man, society, and the world. ‘The view of the human being through the eyes of literature “stimulates empathy” and helps to understand’, summed up one student.

Similarly, the Program enables students to achieve, during the course of their studies, a synthesis with other subjects, thanks to the fact that the curricula include some courses on the theoretical and historical foundations of the discipline. Although not part of the Core Curriculum, these courses have a natural continuity. In addition, the University of Navarra has recently launched an initiative entitled ‘Universitas’ to coordinate the teaching of all courses in each degree program to facilitate a more integrated approach. The Core Curriculum courses provide the foundation and framework for this task.

According to the 2024 survey, 92% of respondents found that the Program ensures that students approach issues in an interdisciplinary manner by incorporating humanities courses into their curriculum. Moreover, since each group usually brings together students from different schools, the dialogues in the seminars highlight the contrast between the different ways of understanding human beings in each discipline. They can thus more easily identify the dimension of the human being that underlies their area of knowledge, with its typical assumptions and biases. 74% of the students, according to the 2023 survey, felt that the Program has helped them connect the subjects of their field with those of other fields and acquire a more complete picture of reality. One student wrote, ‘Reading the classics somehow puts you in dialogue with humanity as a whole’.

4.3. To develop critical thinking and to cultivate an interest in the truth

The Program aims to cultivate critical thinking and the habit of seeking truth in all areas of life. Students are taught what authentic dialogue consists of and are provided the opportunity to practice creating dialogues, both orally in seminar sessions and by writing argumentative essays. This requires the reasoned presentation of positions, the critical contrast between them, and arriving at the most appropriate conclusion.

Efforts are made to make them aware of the obstacles that often hinder this dialogue in the current context, such as the tyranny of mainstream opinions, the emotivist background or the partiality of each discipline (MacIntyre 1984, 6–35; Lukianoff and Haidt 2018). One student wrote, ‘There were times when you could be alone defending a position, but you considered it to be true and many times you could even make your point to others and let them understand your truth’.

The students emphasize that the search for and the possibility of finding truth formed an essential part of this formative experience. According to the 2023 survey, more than 90% consider that the classes were oriented to awaken their interest in understanding the truth. For example, one wrote ‘One of the most positive points of the classes –and, necessarily, of the teachers– is their work to instill in the students the joy of knowing the truth’. They also emphasize, as something positive, that the commitment to the truth was more implicit or natural than imposed. This was achieved, as one student wrote, ‘not by constantly talking about the truth and insisting on it explicitly, but by discovering the truth in its most human and dynamic aspect and recognizing in the great books the great truths that their characters carry’. Moreover, they recognize that the search for truth is an intellectual habit that can be cultivated and grown. In particular, over 90% of the students (according to the 2024 survey) reported that the Program helped them to grow in curiosity, humility, and open-mindedness.

Everyone confronts the text on an equal level since the emphasis is on reading the great books not as experts in the subject matter but to seek answers to questions based on the human actions described in a literary or philosophical work.⁶ One student explains, ‘The search for truth is what should guide our conversation, and having a book helps us to focus on a topic and not dissipate; we avoid intermingling ideological, political, or personal issues unrelated to the content; this way, we can advance in-depth on a particular topic’. It also manages to awaken intellectual curiosity. ‘I feel that after each class, I discovered a new question that generated more doubts than answers, such as the meaning of our life. (...) All this awakened in me a greater desire to know and explore more’, adds another student.

Practically all students (95%), according to the 2023 survey, felt that the classes and activities have contributed to developing their critical and rigorous argumentation skills. One student explained: ‘Sharing with classmates and knowing how to argue what is wrong in their reasoning and that they show you the mistakes in yours is a healthy and nice way to walk towards the truth’. They also overwhelmingly (82%) agree that the courses have opened their minds, uncovered prejudices, and helped them to identify forms of dogmatism (e.g. in the sciences, public debate, or personal positions).

4.4. To promote ethical thinking and the connection between thought and life

The Great Books Seminars are like workshops for developing the habit of ethical thinking. The stories portrayed in narratives provide students with examples of different ways of guiding one’s life and opportunities to discuss them (Bohlin 2005; Brooks et al. 2021, 3–8; Richard 2022; Vallès-Botey and Rodríguez-Prat 2017). By empathizing with or contrasting these stories, there is a first-person understanding of the differences between living one way or another. This process subsequently impacts

the manner in which students think about their lives.⁷ According to the 2023 survey, 94% report that the Program helps them ask about the meaning of life and to reflect more deeply on such existential questions.

Reading human actions depicted in narrative works has undoubtedly made it easier for students to examine ethical principles in particular cases. However, the empathy that the reading process develops between reader and character, allows for a first-person understanding of moral experiences. This process subsequently positively influences how students approach and make important decisions in their lives, as 66% of the respondents have indicated in the 2023 survey. In addition, more than 60% believe the Program has fostered their sense of responsibility towards society and their commitment to contributing to the common good. One student pointed out: ‘All the books studied emphasized that human beings are not only rational beings but also social beings. We live with and for others; therefore, we are responsible for contributing to the development and well-being of our world’.

Although the direct and immediate objective of the courses is not to guide decision-making at a personal level, the methodology and the development of the sessions help them in practice.⁸ These courses contribute to transforming the university into a community of intellectual dialogue, where one learns, in addition to the classes, from the examples and the relationship between professors and students. The university is, inevitably, a moral community (Kiss and Euben 2010, 3–25; Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues and The Oxford Character Project 2020). It can be affirmed that, as far as personal improvement (or character development) is concerned, teachers and other peers fulfill a maieutic function through academic fellowship (Torralba 2022, 116–117). Finally, the Program aims to foster the interest in reaching personal conclusions about the issues raised, as this student exemplifies: ‘The course led a group of colleagues and me to continue the meetings every day after class because of the interest in getting to the truth of the different issues raised in class. It was an unforgettable university experience’.

5. Conclusion

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the experience of the Great Books Program at Navarra. First, although uncommon, it is possible to introduce cross-disciplinary courses in degree programs oriented toward professional qualification. Second, students adapt well to the new methodology and show interest in this educational program. Third, this is an educational approach that, according to both teachers and students, seems to develop certain intellectual and ethical qualities that are not usually cultivated in other kinds of courses, or at least not as effectively. Considering the methodological limitations of this paper, these conclusions should be taken as a preliminary basis for the design of further research.

Notes

1. Except for the School of Engineering, which is located in San Sebastián, and the School of Theology.
2. The questionnaire was based on Baehr’s list of virtues (2021, 195-196).

3. José M. Torralba was director of the Core Curriculum Institute (2013-2022), and is currently the coordinator of the Program. Álvaro Sánchez-Ostiz is a member of the Committee for the Core Curriculum and has been responsible for the training of new teaching staff for the Program.
4. To illustrate some statements, selected comments from students are included. They have been carefully chosen so that they are representative.
5. Even though almost all works in the Program belong to the Western tradition, professors are free to include readings from other traditions. Introducing students to the Western tradition offers them a good starting point to place the big questions in context, thereby enabling them to enter into dialogue with the other cultural traditions (MacIntyre 1990, 230-236).
6. For an explanation of how this is done in the classroom, see Fernández Urtasun (2021), Cascales and Echarte (2021).
7. Since Aristotle, a distinction is made when considering ethical education, between the acquisition of moral knowledge –through study– and personal improvement –through the practice of virtue. It is not enough to have greater knowledge to improve morally (Torralba 2017). In a direct way, the Program’s courses can only improve students’ moral knowledge. However, because of the methodology of the seminars, they also contribute indirectly to their personal improvement, since (i) the application of what has been learned to one’s own life is encouraged and (ii) the educational activities cultivate certain intellectual dispositions (such as humility, courage or tenacity). In this sense, the Program offers moral education in all its dimensions. Hutchins discussed the possibility of moral education through Great Books Seminars, adopting a cautious position (Pascual 2022). His concern is based primarily on the fact that students are already adults and that moral education is not part of the aims of a university education. According to the Program’s approach, which considers that ethical education is mostly provided in an indirect way, Hutchins’ reservations would be satisfied.
8. When the “Seven Strategies for Cultivating Virtue in the University” (Lamb et al. 2022) is taken as a reference, it would appear that at least three of them form an integral part of the Program’s methodology. In particular, literary readings facilitate “engagement with virtuous exemplars,” lectures and seminars enable a “dialogue that increases virtue literacy,” and, finally, the close interaction among seminar participants facilitates the creation or strengthening of “friendships of mutual accountability.”
9. Each question (in Spanish) consisted of a scale of five degrees of identification (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree) with a statement and additional space to provide optional comments.
10. See previous footnote.

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Appendix A. 2023 survey of students and teachers

Questionnaire questions and results⁹

1. These courses have helped me [help students] to better understand human beings, society and the world.

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	4,46 / 5	5 / 5

2. These subjects have helped me [help students] to see the connections between the different sciences (experimental, social, and humanistic) and how they are all necessary to understand reality adequately.

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	4,04 / 4	4,27 / 4

3. The classes were geared to awaken my interest [students' interest] in knowing the truth (e.g. about the subjects studied).

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	4,49 / 5	4,86 / 5

4. The classes and activities contributed to developing my critical and rigorous argumentation skills [students' critical and rigorous argumentation skills].

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	4,58 / 5	4,95 / 5

5. These courses have opened [contributed to opening] my mind, discovered [discover] prejudices and helped [help] to detect forms of dogmatism (e.g. in the sciences, public debate or personal positions).

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	4,27 / 5	4,95 / 5

6. These courses have helped me [help students] to ask myself [ask themselves] about the meaning of life and to ask myself [themselves] more deeply about the great existential questions (for example, about flourishing, friendship and love, or religion).

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	4,67 / 5	4,95 / 5

7. These courses have influenced [influence] positively how I make important decisions in my life [in students' lives].

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	3,84 / 4	4,13 / 4

8. These subjects have fostered my sense [fostered a sense] of responsibility towards society and my commitment to contribute to the common good (e.g. through my [their] work).

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	3,84 / 5	4,09 / 4

9. It is positive that my [the] university curriculum includes these types of courses.

	Students	Faculty
Mean / Median	4,84 / 5	4,9 / 5

Appendix B. 2024 survey of Medicine and Law students

Questionnaire questions and results¹⁰

1. The courses in the Great Books Program have helped me to more fully understand what being human is, broadening the perspective provided by the other courses in my degree.

Mean	Median
4,64	5

2. The courses of the Program have helped me to realize that understanding reality requires going beyond the limits of the science I study in my bachelor's degree, and having philosophical knowledge about the human person or ethics.

Mean	Median
4,64	5

3. The courses in the Program have helped me to ask myself ethical questions or questions of social relevance that I can relate to my degree program.

Mean	Median
4,59	5

4. The courses in the Program have helped me to ask myself questions about what gives meaning to life and how I can contribute to society through my profession.

Mean	Median
4,48	5

5. The Program's courses have contributed to my development of the following intellectual qualities:

a) Curiosity: asking myself why.

Mean	Median
4,68	5

b) Autonomy: developing my own arguments, thinking for myself.

Mean	Median
4,59	5

c) Humility: accepting my limitations or mistakes in understanding the topics.

Mean	Median
4,25	5

d) Attentiveness: being able to discover what is relevant in the topics.

Mean	Median
4,51	5

e) Carefulness: seeking accuracy in thinking, speaking or writing.

Mean	Median
4,47	5

f) Thoroughness: being profound, not settling for superficial answers.

Mean	Median
4,38	5

g) Open-mindedness: considering competing perspectives on a topic.

Mean	Median
4,56	5

h) Courage: maintaining my position or argument, without fear of embarrassment.

Mean	Median
4,32	5

i) Tenacity: embracing the effort required to understand difficult topics.

Mean	Median
4,37	5