

**UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION
MEETING MINUTES**

OCTOBER 4, 2023

ZOOM: [HTTPS://VIRGINIATECH.ZOOM.US/S/84229621673](https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/84229621673)

2:30 PM – 3:45 PM

Present: Angela Anderson, Aaron Ansell, Stephen Biscotte, Aaron Goldstein, Molly Hall, Earl Kline, Victoria Lael, Jason Malone, Annie Ronan, Jeremy Sudweeks, Khanh Ngoc Tran, Nicole Pitterson, Sparkle Williams

Absent: Emmanuel Benitez, Corinne Guimot, Janet Hilder, Siri Rao, Hannah Wildman Short, Lauren Thomas

Guests: Jenni Gallagher and Brandy Puryear

Meeting called to Order by J. Gallagher 2:35pm

Announcements:

Hannah Shinault is no longer on the committee due to a change in how CLAHS appoints representatives. Stacy Vogt Yuan will be the new CLAHS rep, but Hannah Wildman Short will be substituting for her during the Fall 2023 semester due to a schedule conflict.

1. Elect New Chair & Vice Chair

The committee unanimously elected A. Ansell as the new chair (replacing Hannah Shinault) and A. Anderson as the new vice chair.

2. Study Abroad & Special Study Reviews

The committee unanimously approved *ART 3954: Experiential Learning with Creative Technologies: Visualizing the First World War in Europe* for concept 2 (Critical Thinking in the Humanities).

3. Assessment Redesign Proposal

M. Hall requested feedback on the assessment redesign proposal (see Appendix A). The committee felt that the proposal would be well-received by their constituencies and unanimously approved moving forward with the proposal.

4. Proposal Assignment/Review Process

J. Gallagher provided a brief training on the proposal review process under the new governance system (see Appendix B).

5. Subcommittee Reports

- **Advising:** V. Lael reported that the subcommittee created an advisor survey last academic year and Z. Underwood compiled the results in a report. V. Lael will

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clarify a few points with the Office of General Education and then share the report with the full committee.

- **Program Improvement:** There is not yet a lead for this subcommittee; however, A. Ansell noted that they did meet and discussed improving faculty communication.
- **Pathways Plus:** S. Biscotte shared that, although the subcommittee hasn't met yet, they have started looking at data in preparation for their first meeting this.

A. Ansell adjourned the meeting at 3:35pm.

Meeting minutes compiled by B. Puryear

Appendix A

Pathways Assessment Redesign August 2023

Current State of Pathways Assessment and Rationale for Redesign

The implementation of VT's current general education program, Pathways, started in Fall 2018. This was the first semester assessment data were collected for the program. Data continued to be collected every semester and summer session until Spring 2020 when the process was put on hiatus due to the pandemic. Data collection started again in Spring 2021 and has continued every semester since.

Over the past several semesters, the percent of sections reporting data has ranged between 59% and 70% with large multi-section courses making up a large percentage of the assessed students. The current process has allowed VT to get an overall picture of the newly designed program. However, several issues have arisen.

Currently, there are no incentives for instructors or departments to participate in the process. In addition, given the large number of Pathways courses offered every semester, very little one-on-one assistance can be provided. At times, the data collected has not been able to be used due to various implementation/assessment issues. These include not collecting data specific to each of the outcomes covered, not measuring the approved outcomes, and not developing assessments appropriate for the outcome of interest.

Although multiple resources are available, as with any assessment process, more hands-on assistance would enable instructors to collect better, more informative data to facilitate improvement in their own courses as well as the Pathways program as a whole. An additional concern with the current plan is not providing enough time between data collection cycles for the information collected to be used effectively for continuous improvement.

Given these concerns, the following proposal has been developed.

Goals of Assessment Redesign:

- To create a process that yields enough data to evaluate the extent to which we are delivering on the promise of the program and to make improvements in a timely manner.
- To create a process that yields less—but more accurate and useable—data.
- To lessen burden on all involved with the process.
- To provide more individual support throughout the process.

Proposed Cycle:

- Hiatus/Redesign Year: Summer 2023 to Spring 2024
 - Pathways assessment data collection will be put on hiatus during the 2023-2024 academic year.
 - During this time, work will be done to finalize a new assessment process, including developing an appropriate section sampling plan for data collection.
 - Pathways course enrollments will be reviewed to determine the extent to which students are enrolling in particular courses to receive Pathways credit. If needed, a potential course of action will be determined.
 - During Summer and Fall 2023, a reasonable sampling approach will be developed and changes to the assessment process (e.g., sampling, a new cycle, elimination of summer/winter data collection) will be considered and approved by UCCGE.
 - The Office of General Education and Institutional Effectiveness will continue exploring potential enhancements to Canvas to support assessment.
- New Cycle
 - Year 1: 2024-2025 academic year

- Data will be collected from sampled courses in every concept area.
 - Hands-on assistance will be provided to instructors and programs to develop effective assessment plans.
 - Additional support will be provided including onboarding, office hours, and report prescreening by the Office of General Education and Institutional Effectiveness.
 - Mini-grant funding and support will continue to be provided.
 - Consistent and ongoing communications will be shared with deans and department heads/school directors as well as sampled instructors.
 - Year 2: 2025-2026 academic year
 - Same as above for Year 1. The sample for Year 2 will not contain sections sampled in Year 1.
 - 2024-2025 data will be compiled, analyzed, and shared with stakeholders.
 - Year 3: 2026-2027 academic year
 - In Year 3, the focus will be on data sharing, instructor discussions, and improvement plan development.
 - Instructor working groups will discuss and recommend changes to the Pathways program such as changes to Pathways student learning outcomes and rubrics.
 - Course-level improvements will be supported by providing professional development to instructors and programs interested in making course-level changes.
 - The Office of General Education and Institutional Effectiveness will continue to support improvements to Pathways through UCCGE.
 - Year 4: 2027-2028 academic year
 - Changes discussed during Year 3 will be taken through university governance as needed including potential outcome or concept revisions, changes to rubrics based on those revisions, changes to the overall program design, assessment updates, etc.
- Cycle 2: Restart Years 1 through 4, 2028-2029 academic year
 - Restart assessment data collection.

Rationale for New Cycle:

The proposed new plan will support VT's commitment to continuous improvement by providing:

- A hiatus year to instructors as the Office of General Education and Institutional Effectiveness work to finalize a new assessment process that includes a well-designed sampling plan and assessment cycle.
- More hands-on support to instructors for the collection of better, more useable assessment data.
- A year allocated for conversation and development of necessary programmatic and structural changes.
- A year allocated to take any proposed improvements through the university governance process.
- Continuous improvement of the Pathways program.

Alignment with Relevant Institutional Requirements:

- State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV): Policy on Student Learning Assessment and Quality in Undergraduate Education
 - SCHEV reporting for the second series of outcomes designated in Virginia Tech's assessment plan for this requirement will be reported in Fall 2023.
 - A second series of data will be collected during Years 1 and 2 (2024-2026) and reported during Fall 2026.
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
 - There will be an additional two years of data collection and ½ year of improvement discussions and plans prior to the submission of VT's 5-year interim report.
 - Currently, the standard for general education is not included in the 5th year interim report. However, this could potentially change as the standards will be reviewed this year.

Appendix B



**UNDERGRADUATE
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**
VIRGINIA TECH.

PATHWAYS GENERAL EDUCATION

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The Pathways General Education Curriculum

Core Concepts

Discourse

9 credits

**Reasoning in the
Social Sciences**

6 credits

**Critique and Practice in
Design and the Arts**

6 credits

**Reasoning in the
Natural Sciences**

6 credits

**Quantitative and
Computational Thinking**

9 credits

**Critical Thinking
in the Humanities**

6 credits

**Critical Analysis of Identity and
Equity in the United States**

3 credits (may be double-counted
with another core concept)

Integrative Concepts

Ethical Reasoning

Throughout

Intercultural and Global Awareness

Throughout

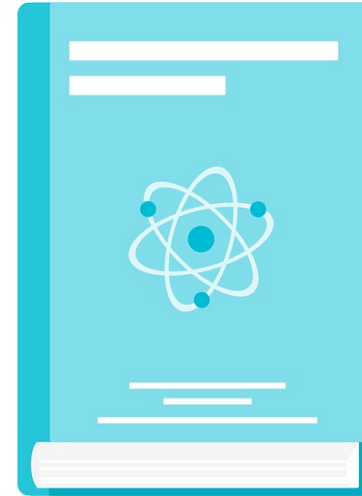
Course
can be
aligned
with 1-2
core
concepts

Only
concept
that can be
double-
counted
with one
other core
concept

Each Pathways course must
also align with one (or both)
of the integrative concepts

Pathways minors: Just like a normal minor, but must also...

- Guarantee that students fulfill at least three core concepts and both integrative concepts
- Have three levels: introductory, mid-level, and a capstone experience
- Not have any barriers to entry (e.g., prereqs in required intro courses)



Reviewing Proposals

3 Types of Proposals

1 Full Governance

Courses and minors

Longest process (~3-6 months if no issues)

Only reviewed by UCCGE if there are issues

Sometimes reviewed by UCCGE

2 Special Study

Courses only

Quick process (reviewed by UCCGE)

Approval only good for one semester

Can only be approved for one core concept

Courses can be taught a maximum of TWO times as a special study

3 Study Abroad

Courses only

Quick process (reviewed by UCCGE)

Approval only good for one semester

Can only be approved for one core concept

Always reviewed by UCCGE

Review Process

1. Two reviewers assigned to each proposal (all 3 types).
2. Reviewers conduct review and share feedback (if any) with the proposer by email.
3. Jenni will invite the proposer(s) to attend the UCCGE meeting.
4. In the meeting, the reviewers will go through their comments, giving the proposer(s) the opportunity to respond. Other committee members may offer feedback as well.
5. UCCGE votes on proposal.

Key Points for Consideration

1. The language of the catalog description, learning objectives, and syllabus should align and map clearly to the Pathways concepts/outcomes... particularly for integrative concepts. **[Full governance proposals only]**
2. In Pathways narrative, the headings ‘Mission’, ‘Inclusivity’, ‘Integration’, and ‘Relevance’ should be used, with answers to the guiding questions for each. **[Full governance proposals only]**
3. Example lessons, texts, contexts/issues should be used whenever possible to help reviewers visualize what is happening in the course. **[All proposals]**
4. Potential/example means of evaluation/assessment should be provided for each learning outcome. **[All proposals]**
5. Student-centered language should be used, such as “Students will...” **[All proposals]**
6. Although courses are encouraged to meet both integrative concepts, instructors have to submit assessment data for any concepts that are chosen. **[Full governance proposals only]**

Sample Email Text

Dear **[proposer's name]**:

I, along **with [co-reviewer's name]** (cc'd here), have reviewed your course proposal for **[course prefix & number]** for the upcoming UCCGE meeting. We are providing our comments below so that you may have an opportunity to review them before the meeting, which you will receive an invitation to within the next couple of weeks.

At the meeting, which you are encouraged but not required to attend, you may ask any clarifying questions or indicate how you might respond to our various concerns. However, please do not make any revisions between now and the meeting, as concerns may be resolved, or additional issues may be raised, during the meeting.

The day after the meeting, you will receive an email from the Office of General Education with an official list of requested revisions.

[inserted bulleted feedback here]

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about this feedback. We look forward to seeing your proposal come before the committee.

Best,

[your & your co-reviewer's names]

Full Proposals (Courses and Minors)

New Governance Approval Process (probably)

1. Course/minor proposal is entered into Courseleaf
2. Proposal is reviewed and approved at dept/school level (process varies by college)
3. If approved, proposal is advanced to 15-day review
 - Proposal reviewed by university community
 - Part I of proposal is reviewed by Registrar's Office
 - Part II of proposal (with alignment to Part I) is reviewed by Office of General Education (OGE)
 1. If no issues, OGE approves
 2. If issues, OGE passes proposal to UCCGE for review
4. If approved, proposal is reviewed by college curriculum committee for final approval
5. Course/minor entered into catalog

Revisions may be necessary during any of these steps, rolling proposal backwards

This is where you come in

Study Abroad & Special Study Proposals (Courses Only)

Special Study/Study Abroad Approval Process

1. Proposer sends proposal to Jenni
2. Jenni assigns reviewers and adds the proposal to the next UCCGE agenda
3. Reviewers conduct review and send feedback to proposer(s)
4. In the meeting, reviewers walk through their feedback, giving the proposer(s) the opportunity to respond
5. If desired, other committee members share feedback
6. Committee votes on proposal

Questions?