

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE FOR GENERAL EDUCATION

MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 2, 2022

VIA ZOOM, 2:30 PM – 3:45 PM

Present: Angela Anderson, Aaron Ansell, Sara Arena, Stephen Biscotte, Ainsley Cragin, Molly Hall, Janet Hilder, Victoria Lael, Greg Novack, Nicole Pitterson, Annie Ronan, Hannah Shinault, Zack Underwood, Anita Walz, Sparkle Williams

Absent: Brian Collins, Earl Kline, Alireza Shojaei

Guests: Jenni Gallagher

Call to order by Hannah Shinault at 2:30 pm

Announcements

- **Quant/Comp resolution:** Representatives from the Undergraduate Student Senate sought clarification on Resolution 2021-22F after its reading at USS, inquiring whether the change would require all students to fulfill six credits of advanced quant/comp. S. Biscotte clarified that the resolution will allow students to fulfill the requirement with six advanced credits and three foundational credits OR three advanced credits and six foundational credits. The resolution is scheduled receive its first reading before University Council on March 21st.
- **Governance changes:** Any changes to curriculum governance would not take effect until the 2023-24 academic year.

1. Program Improvements

The committee opened a discussion of potential changes to the Pathways program, noting that since Pathways has now been in place for four years sufficient data is available to review the program's success and identify areas for potential improvement. Discussion during this meeting focused on the Pathways minors and the Alternative Pathway option.

After reviewing the [Pathways minor enrollment data](#), the committee was encouraged to see the growth in enrollment over the last four years. One member noted the gender and race/ethnicity disparities. S. Biscotte offered that the Office of Gen Ed is in the process of comparing the Pathways minors' enrollment against university demographics to ascertain whether Pathways minors are equally accessible across demographics. A. Cragin suggested coordinating with the cultural and community centers on campus to promote greater diversity.

V. Lael noted that the advising subcommittee has discussed an opportunity to introduce students to Pathways minors through coordination with advisors. They plan to use the Pathways minors data dashboard to ascertain which minors are most popular within a particular major, identify courses that are common to those majors, and provide that information to advisors. Advisors could then encourage their first-year students to enroll in those courses if they think they may be interested in pursuing a Pathways minor.

Additional topics of discussion included partnering with FYE courses to introduce Pathways minors to students and tiering the credit hours for Pathways minors (either officially or in practice) so that if a minor exceeds 24 credit hours it must meet a total of four Pathways core concepts, as opposed to the three core concepts currently required.

Regarding the Alternative Pathways option, some members expressed a preference for sunsetting the option since it has never been used, while others felt there was no harm in leaving it in place. Those in favor of sunsetting listed the following considerations in support of eliminating Alternative Pathways: students have different, easier means of achieving the same goals (e.g., study abroad, undergraduate research); it can be confusing for students and advisors; and in four years, no students have applied to use the option.

2. Potential Program Changes Regarding Assessment

The committee discussed possible program changes regarding assessment that could increase faculty participation in assessment, improve the accuracy of the submitted data, and better demonstrate the value of assessment to the university community. M. Hall summarized one potential option that was discussed at the last UCCGE meeting: reducing the number of student learning outcomes (SLOs) per concept so that instructors would have fewer outcomes to assess.

Some members were in favor of pursuing this option, noting that it might allow us to move to a rotational system of assessment (as opposed to all instructors submitting data every semester) since, with fewer SLOs, each individual SLO would be assessed more frequently. They further noted that it might allow for reducing redundancy across SLOs. Other members raised questions about how to choose which SLOs would be eliminated. Who would make those decisions, and based on what criteria? It was noted that the community of Pathways instructors would need to be involved in this process. J. Gallagher noted that Part III of the assessment mini-grant program, which is being launched March 4, will allow the community to weigh in on these issues. It was further suggested that we increase outreach to units across campus, offering to meet with departments who are interested in more personalized assessment support for their Pathways instructors.

3. Subcommittee Reports

Collaboratory

- A. Walz shared draft language regarding consent for sharing Collaboratory entries outside of the university and asked for input on which of the two options, linked [here](#), are preferred. Committee members can comment in the document or email arwalz@vt.edu.

Advising

- The advising subcommittee has been discussing the implications of the changes to course registration. With the move from course request to a wave registration system, they are exploring providing resources to advisors to suggest which Pathways courses they could preload to students' course shopping carts.

Assessment

- The assessment subcommittee is looking forward to getting feedback from the Pathways community through Part III of the Assessment Mini-Grant.

Meeting adjourned by Hannah Shinault at 3:45

Minutes compiled by Jenni Gallagher