

UCCGE Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2020

2:30-3:45 pm, Zoom meeting

Present: Angela Anderson, Sara Arena, Brian Collins, Ellington Graves, Molly Hall, Shelley Martin, Kristin Phillips, Richard Rateau, Maren Roman, Annie Ronan, Hannah Shinault, Jill Sible, Rob Stephens, Zack Underwood, Anita Walz, James Wilson, Matthew Zarbatany

Absent: Taran Cardone

Guests: Stephen Biscotte, Jenni Gallagher

Call to Order by Rob Stephens at 2:30 pm

1. Transfer Requests (Stephen)

- **VA Transfer Passport:** The committee has been asked by the Registrar's Office to review a number of VCCS courses to see if/how they might carry Pathways credit for transfer students statewide. You are addressing these two questions 1) should the course be included in the state gen ed passport? and if so 2) for which Pathways concept should it be approved? Deadline is December 2nd.
 - o [Google Doc with Assignments and to post your Results](#)
 - o [Syllabi found on Canvas](#)
- **AP Credit:** The Office of Gen Ed has recently received a number of requests to review AP courses for Pathways credit. Historically, these requests have not been reviewed by this office. The committee discussed whether this should remain the case, or if the Office of Gen Ed should consider reviewing non-equivalent AP courses.
 - o Lacking strong opinions either way, the committee opted to table the issue and add it to the first agenda of spring semester.

2. Alternative Pathways (Stephen)

- Students are technically able to meet 9 Pathways credits through an "alternative pathway." To date no one has actually done this, and it remains unclear exactly what such a pathway might look like. However, it does offer an opportunity for creativity and flexibility in the future. The committee discussed whether the door should be left open on alternative Pathways, or if they should consider removing the option.
 - o Stephen clarified that the alternative pathway was designed to incorporate non-credit-bearing activities, such as a summer internship that connects a student's learning from Pathways courses to real-world experience.
 - o It was suggested that the Honors College might offer an opportunity to create alternative pathways.

- It was noted that it is difficult to explain the alternative pathway to students, especially since there are not yet any examples that can be pointed to.
- It was suggested that it would be helpful if students could use an alternative pathway to satisfy an entire concept.
- The committee's general consensus was to leave the door open on alternative pathways for now.

3. Student Pathways Gen Ed Essay Prize (Jenni)

- At the Association of General and Liberal Studies ([AGLS](#)) constitute last month, one of the panels discussed awarding a prize for the best student essay in the liberal arts, perhaps with a monetary award. The committee discussed whether there's any interest in such an essay contest at VT.
 - An essay contest would offer an opportunity to showcase to students and the larger campus community the value of general education.
 - Other universities typically offer a cash prize (ranging from \$200 - \$1000).
 - Two current essay contests already being offered at VT were discussed:
 - [The School of Communication's Preston Essay Contest](#)
 - [Phi Beta Kappa's John D. Wilson Essay Contest](#)
 - It was suggested that an essay content could be tied to the Pathways minors capstone courses.
 - Information still needed in order to fully discuss this possibility:
 - Where the funding would come from
 - Where it would be housed
 - Once these questions are answered, the committee will revisit the idea on a future agenda.

4. Subcommittee Reports

- Advising (Zack)
 - The subcommittee had discussed methods for helping students navigate which Pathways courses they should take based on their majors. The Registrar's Office has indicated that they could provide data, broken out by major, on which courses students have chosen to fulfill the different concepts. This information could be provided to advisors.
 - There was discussion around needing to ensure that providing such information does not adversely impact other Pathways courses, causing courses that are less frequently chosen by students to be overlooked.
 - One possible solution: provide a quarterly report to advisors that suggests courses for each concept, regularly changing the courses that are included.
 - The subcommittee also discussed the "Netflix idea" of suggesting courses to students based on which Pathways courses they have already taken.
 - The subcommittee also explored surveying students about their experiences in their Pathways courses.

- Assessment (Molly)
 - Assessment is set to resume in Spring 2021, and the subcommittee discussed using the spring semester to help faculty get back into the swing of assessment so that they can hit the ground running in Fall 2021.
 - They explored offering mini-grants as a means of doing this. These grants would support faculty in not just collecting and reporting their data, but would also help them engage with the data at the end of the semester to improve their courses.
 - The committee discussed the logistics of this, suggesting two cohorts (spring and fall), with two meetings: one at the beginning of the semester to assist with creating assessments, and one at the end of the semester to engage with the data. Grantees could present on their data at the end of the semester and share ideas with one another.
 - The Office of Institutional Effectiveness just hired a research analyst who is going to create data visualizations from prior years' data.
- Resource Repository (Anita)
 - The resource repository is still in the ideation phase, so the subcommittee is seeking input on this project. The basic idea is to provide a compilation of resources for Pathways instructors to refer to as they create assessments for their courses.
 - The Office of Gen Ed has put together a [potential structure](#) for organizing these resources, but this is just a starting point. The final product will likely not follow this structure.
 - The subcommittee is requesting UCCGE members to complete a [brainstorming Google form](#) to help the subcommittee craft the purpose and structure of the repository.
 - It was suggested that visibility of and engagement with the repository could be achieved through workshops that offer PDN credits.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm by Rob Stephens

Minutes compiled by Jenni Gallagher