

TO: CUSP
FROM: Marlene Preston, Chair, UCCLE (mpreston@vt.edu)
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DATE: January 5, 2015

SUBJECT: Response to Pathways questions posed at CUSP on Dec. 8

Thank you for your careful consideration of the Pathways Proposal. As you know, over the course of many years, faculty, students, and staff from across the university have offered their time, expertise, and concern for general education. We are respectful of their input even now as we respond to questions and suggestions.

Prior to the submission of the Pathways Proposal to CUSP, UCCLE received feedback from individuals, departments, and colleges. UCCLE subsequently made changes to the proposal that now stands before CUSP. Some of those changes are listed in the memo accompanying the proposal.

In response to the major concerns/issues raised by representatives of faculty or student groups at the last meeting, please see the notes below.

Student Groups -- questions, concerns, comments

We appreciate the enthusiasm and the feedback. UCCLE will continue to work on student suggestions for improving general education. The SGA gave excellent feedback concerning operational issues that we are eager to address once the proposal's conceptual plan is passed.

Faculty Groups -- questions, concerns, comments

- *Budget and hours*--During the CUSP meeting, Rachel Holloway addressed questions about the budget, and Jill Sible addressed questions about the number of credit hours.
- *Learning outcomes*--Another question arose about the relationship of learning outcomes to better assessment and learning. (Please see page 5 of the proposal.) Learning outcomes focus on observable behaviors so that faculty can more accurately assess learning and select pedagogy to meet specific teaching-learning needs. Our current CLE has some goals that are not connected to observable student behaviors and cannot be adequately assessed.
- *Proposal guidelines*--Another issue involves the process for course approval. Proposal guidelines are operational in nature and will evolve from the proposal itself once the conceptual framework is approved through governance.

In the meantime, UCCLE will develop tentative approval guidelines based on the current version of the proposal and make that draft available as soon as possible in Spring 2015.

As outlined on page 7 of the proposal, courses in the new curriculum will meet the principles, learning outcomes, and learning indicators as described in the proposal. Proposal authors will describe the ways in which a course will fit with the Pathways conceptual plan and will outline approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment.

We anticipate that the guidelines will be similar in format to the ones we use now. (For your reference, those guidelines are enclosed.)

Currently, the goal of UCCLE is to help proposal authors move successfully through the process. We often suggest revisions rather than reject a course. We would expect to maintain that same goal as we move to Pathways, supporting a culture of collaboration to enhance general education.

As always, UCCLE strives to support students, faculty, and CUSP. Please let us know if we can be helpful in any other way as the proposal moves forward.