

# Mellon Pathways Program 2018-19 Annual Report

*May 2019*

## **Joint grants:**

Guided Pathways to the Arts and Humanities (*Virginia Community College System*)  
Mapping Pathways to the Arts and Humanities (*VCU*)



# VCU

# FROM THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

*The Mellon Pathways Program represents another chapter in an already strong history of collaboration between the Virginia Community College System and Virginia Commonwealth University.*

*The joint grants — titled “Guided Pathways to the Arts and Humanities” at VCCS and “Mapping Pathways to the Arts and Humanities” at VCU — represent a unique opportunity to provide community college students in the arts and humanities with opportunities for outreach and intensive high-impact practices that will prepare them for a smooth transition and a successful academic experience at VCU.*

*Therefore, we are pleased to share, in this report, the progress we have made during this planning year. We have made great strides in many important areas, including: establishing key relationships between the institutions, creating programs that span and connect all three schools, hiring staff and personnel, developing curricular and co-curricular elements, engaging faculty and recruiting students.*

*While we will continue to grow the services and support offered by the Pathways Program, the work done during this initial reporting period leaves us well prepared to welcome our first cohort of students in fall 2019.*

*As that important and exciting milestone approaches, we’d like to extend our gratitude to those who have helped make the Pathways Program possible, starting with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Mellon Foundation’s support has been instrumental in getting this initiative off the ground, so we greatly appreciate all they have done to help facilitate this partnership and provide this opportunity for our students.*

*We would also like to thank the leadership at both VCCS and VCU for providing the strategic vision and guidance needed to bring the Pathways Program to life.*

*Finally, we also thank the faculty and staff at Reynolds Community College, John Tyler Community College and Virginia Commonwealth University. Your participation has been essential in helping shape the Mellon Pathways Program, and the hard work you have — and continue to — put in will undoubtedly pay dividends for our students.*

*So thank you all for your support of the Mellon Pathways Program, and we look forward to another exciting and productive academic year.*

*Sincerely,*

*Sharon Morrissey  
Senior vice chancellor for academic and workforce programs  
Virginia Community College System*

*Deborah Noble-Triplett  
Senior vice provost for academic affairs  
Virginia Commonwealth University*



# ABOUT THE MELLON PATHWAYS PROGRAM

The Pathways Program, a partnership between the Virginia Community College System and Virginia Commonwealth University, provides support and guidance to students at John Tyler and J. Sargeant Reynolds Community Colleges who intend to transfer to VCU to pursue a major in the humanities and arts.

Funded by a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation, the program provides personalized advising, course and career guidance and development, and community-building opportunities for students, while supporting faculty collaboration and curricular alignment across campuses.

## Key milestones for students

<b>April 2019</b>	Student recruitment begins
<b>May 2019</b>	First student declarations received
<b>August 2019</b>	First cohort of Pathways Program students enters JTCC and Reynolds
<b>September 2019</b>	Students begin e-Portfolio development
<b>March 2020</b>	Mellon Research Fellows application opens
<b>May 2020</b>	Mellon Research Fellows selected

This report provides an update on the priority areas addressed during the 2018-19 reporting cycle.

## COLLABORATIONS AND PROGRAMS

**VCU REAL:** We are working with leadership in VCU's Relevant, Experiential and Applied Learning initiative to provide experiences that allow Pathways students to immediately participate in REAL upon their transfer to VCU. Aligning the Pathways Program with REAL contributes to a smooth transition to VCU and ensures Pathways students have access to the high-impact experiential learning activities that REAL provides.

To complement our work with REAL, related partnerships have also been formed with VCU's Institute for Contemporary Art, da Vinci Center, and Common Book program.

**Tutoring services:** JTCC's Academic Resource Center is working with VCU's Campus Learning Center and Writing Center to plan joint training for tutors, allowing community college tutors to easily transition into similar roles at VCU. Tutoring resources at all institutions are also being promoted to Pathways students, with the goal of having students see tutoring as a key to success, rather than a sign of academic weakness.

**Career services:** Working with career services at all three schools, we are developing a variety of programming — including workshops, individual meetings, panel discussions and informational materials — designed to help Pathways students uncover the myriad career options available to them with a humanities/arts degree.

**Study abroad:** We have teamed with VCU's study abroad office and study abroad faculty coordinators at JTCC to increase awareness and access to study abroad opportunities for Pathways students.

**e-Portfolios:** Pathways students will document and reflect on their experiences through a professional e-Portfolio, beginning upon entry into the program. The community colleges will use an e-Portfolio platform available at VCU, ensuring Pathways students can carry over and expand on their e-Portfolio upon transferring to the university.

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

**Advising:** A dedicated Pathways Program advisor (known as transfer coaches at the community colleges and transfer coordinator at VCU) has been placed at each of the schools. Transfer coaches identify, recruit, and advise students in the program, and work with the transfer coordinator to plan year-round activities for Pathways students in order to build community among the cohorts and connections to VCU.

**Introduction to college course:** Transfer coaches are developing and will teach a one-credit academic skills/introduction to college course (SDV 100) for Pathways students, with the first courses to be held fall 2019.

**Recruitment and marketing:** Materials promoting the Pathways Program have been created and distributed at high schools, community college open houses, classes, and orientations. Websites for the program have been created on both the JTCC and Reynolds websites, with an expanded web presence at VCU currently under development. An online declaration form has also been created for students interested in the program.

# FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

**Mellon Faculty Groups:** Comprised of faculty, advisors and administrators at all three institutions, Mellon Faculty Groups have created curricular pathways and transfer-specific major maps to guide Pathways students throughout their academic experience.

- Curricular pathways provide students with a guide to required and recommended classes that will fulfill core and major requirements at the community college level while completing prerequisites at VCU
- Transfer-specific major maps offer students co-curricular and extracurricular guidance throughout both their associate and bachelor's degrees, allowing them to engage in academic and career exploration while staying on track to graduate on time with minimal debt

**Discipline-specific groups:** In addition to the larger group collaboration, faculty members in specific disciplines — including music, theatre, foreign languages, and composition — from each institution meet to discuss select co-enrollment and academic enrichment opportunities for students.

**Composition Summit:** Held in April 2019, the Composition Summit brought together English, composition and Focused Inquiry faculty members from all three institutions to address curricular differences among offered courses, explore impediments to transfer student success, and share pedagogical strategies.

**“Faculty across the partner institutions will develop a better understanding of the linkage between the curricular experiences and skill development necessary at the community college that prepares students for upper-level work upon transfer to VCU, and a deeper appreciation of the rich faculty learning communities at the three participating institutions.”**  
*- Mapping Pathways to the Arts and Humanities grant proposal*



# PERSONNEL



## **Sharon Morrissey, Ed.D. - Principal investigator, VCCS**

- Senior vice chancellor for academic and workforce programs at VCCS
- Principal investigator for the Guided Pathways to the Arts and Humanities grant



## **Deborah Noble-Triplett, Ph.D. - Principal investigator, VCU**

- Senior vice provost for academic affairs at VCU
- Principal investigator for the Mapping Pathways to the Arts and Humanities grant



## **Micol Hutchison, Ph.D. - Director**

- Works jointly between VCCS and VCU
- Coordinates all aspects of the program, including: leading faculty groups in the development of curricular pathways and major maps; supervising transfer coaches and transfer coordinator; creating promotional and application materials; and overseeing program development and assessment

### **VCCS-specific staff**

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## **Larena Burno - VCCS grant administrator**

- Coordinates the fiscal aspects of the grant at VCCS and assists with logistics and program development



## **Kirstin Pantazis - Transfer coach, John Tyler Community College**

- Dedicated Pathway Program advisor for John Tyler Community College
- Duties include: Promoting the program, meeting with students, working with faculty groups on curricular pathways, planning orientation, event programming and logistics, teaching introductory academic skills course, and incorporating e-Portfolios



## **Paul Williams - Transfer coach, Reynolds Community College**

- Dedicated Pathway Program advisor for Reynolds Community College
- Duties include: Promoting the program, meeting with students, working with faculty groups on curricular pathways, planning orientation, event programming and logistics, teaching introductory academic skills course, and incorporating e-Portfolios

### **VCU-specific staff**

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## **Ian Coyle - Transfer coordinator, VCU**

- Dedicated Pathway Program advisor for VCU
- Duties include: University transfer advising, development of events on the VCU campus, outreach to prospective students, and faculty/staff outreach

# GOVERNANCE

## Mellon Pathways Program Leadership Board membership

**Ian Bodkin**

Academic resource center coordinator, John Tyler Community College

**Wendy Bolt**

Dean of students, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

**Kimberly Britt**

Vice president for academic affairs, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

**Mikell Brown**

Dean of arts, humanities & social sciences, interim dean of mathematics & science, John Tyler Community College

**Jamie Cooper**

Assistant vice provost for academic programs, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Lori Dwyer**

Assistant vice chancellor for workforce policy, Virginia Community College System Office

**Bill Fiege**

Vice president of learning and student success, John Tyler Community College

**Sybil Halloran**

Senior associate vice provost for strategic enrollment management, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Micol Hutchison**

Director of Pathways to the Arts and Humanities, Virginia Community College System Office/Virginia Commonwealth University

**Tomikia LeGrande**

Vice provost for strategic enrollment management, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Elizabeth Littlefield**

Vice president for institutional advancement and strategic partnerships, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

**Sharon Morrissey**

Co-PI; Senior vice chancellor for academic and workforce programs, Virginia Community College System Office

**Deborah Noble-Triplett**

Co-PI; Senior vice provost for academic affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Bruce Sofinski**

Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

**Seth Sykes**

Associate vice provost of strategic enrollment management, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Maggie Tolan**

Senior associate vice provost for student success, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Mary Lou Vredenburg**

Associate dean of arts, humanities and social sciences, John Tyler Community College

**Van Wilson**

Assistant vice chancellor for student experience and strategic initiatives, Virginia Community College System Office

## METRICS AND EVALUATIONS

In addition to internal data analysis, planning for external program evaluations are underway for both the VCCS and VCU grants. These evaluations will assess whether or not Pathway Program activities are removing barriers experienced by transfer students. Indicators of success will include an increase in percentage of students transferring with a minimum of 60 credits or an associate degree, and an increase in percentage of students prepared for the culture at VCU and who smoothly integrate with other students and into their intended majors.

Quantitative metrics examined will include: student demographics, retention rates, time to completion, completion rates, student attitudinal surveys. Qualitative research will include interviews, surveys and focus groups with students, advisors, faculty and administrators.

# GOALS FOR 2019-20

## Goal:

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**Increase coordination and communication among VCU and community college faculty and advisors to align curricula and identify barriers to student success**

### Actions

- Faculty groups and advisors will continue to meet through the 2019-2020 school year, examining and developing curricular course alignment.
- Advisors (transfer coaches and transfer coordinator) will meet individually and in small groups with faculty, to raise awareness of Pathways Program and benefits of studying the humanities.

## Goal:

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**Create more seamless pathways toward baccalaureate attainment, and scaffold the appropriate curricular and co-curricular experiences to prepare transfer students to successfully compete with other degree-seeking students as well as prepare them for careers or graduate education**

### Actions:

- We will complete curricular pathways for most of the majors in our program.
- We will complete transfer major maps for all of the majors in our program.
- Discipline-specific work groups will meet to address and begin implementing student support services before and after transfer in their major.
- Career exploration and development will begin for Pathways students at the community college, parallel to the programming available for students at VCU.

## Goal:

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**Develop and implement transition programming to introduce community college students to VCU programs, academic resources, and campus engagement opportunities related to the arts and humanities**

### Actions:

- Advisors and select faculty will be learning about the e-Portfolio platform and developing our expectations for students and our pedagogy for e-Portfolios.
- Partnerships between VCU and community college units and organizations will continue and deepen.
- Transfer coaches and transfer coordinator will identify and plan events for Pathways Program participants at VCU and in the city of Richmond
- In the second year, we will launch the Mellon Research Fellows program, and will be planning and preparing materials for that program as well as recruiting both student and faculty participants.

## Goal:

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**Develop dual admission policies and processes for arts and humanities students**

### Actions:

- We are exploring options for a dual/deferred admissions model based on the results from other college articulation programs, and will have a proposal in place this fall.