Engagement by Design: Building the Student Experience in SLCC Pathways

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Abstract: SLCC Pathways is about engagement through design. We must make engagement a function of programmatic design decisions not the product of uncoordinated chance. Designing for engagement is less about limiting choice and more about making sure students experience a transformative education whatever choice they make. The work of ensuring engagement by design has structural implications, but our current discussions on pathways understands structure almost solely in terms of sequencing or narrowing course selection and not in terms of the relational and pedagogical practices that are the more necessary ingredients to student success. Faculty must connect with students early and often to help them make informed choices and to motivate their interest in the curriculum. Areas of study must provide coherent programs of study (and the maps to guide student choice) with special attention paid to the first year. Finally, engaged faculty must provide high-impact, inclusive educational experiences that call upon students to reflect on their learning.

"Pathways provides a guided program of study intentionally designed to enhance learning and clarify a student's route to program completion, a career, and further education."
SLCC Convocation Presentation, August 23rd, 2017

"Commit first to our students, second to our material."
Sarah Rose Cavanagh, SLCC Faculty Development workshop, March 9th, 2018

"Two roads diverged in a wood—and I
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference."
Robert Frost "The Road Not Taken"

Introduction

Salt Lake Community College is in its second year of Cabinet-sponsored work on pathways, work formally recognized and convened through the collaborative work team model. Our group is a sub-committee of the larger Pathways Phase II collaborative work team led by Kim Cosby. Phase I of SLCC Pathways culminated in the decision to organize SLCC's academic offerings into six areas of study (Hubert, 2016). Our report builds on Phase I as it responds to a specific charge situated within the larger Pathways reform effort. Our goal with this white paper is to guide and inspire the thinking of faculty and academic administrators charged with building pathways within areas of study in the coming year.

Our specific charge is to draft a white paper that

- Addresses the "foundational teaching and learning practices" in SLCC pathways (Phase II Commission, 2017).
- Advances the "general education and program structure philosophy" for pathways (Phase II Commission, 2017).

In what follows, we offer a three part framework that responds to the essence of that charge, a framework we hope directs the College's thinking on pathways going forward. We break down pathways into work around preparing students, providing students a structured set of choices, and engaging students in high-impact, inclusive programs of study. As a student decides on an area of study and potentially enters a specific program pathway, academic areas must do work to *prepare* students to make informed decisions. That work requires us to make early and meaningful connections with students, connections that help students build intentionality and cultivate a sense of belonging. Once a student decides, areas provide more *structure* to set students on the right path.[i] Finally, working within organized areas presents faculty and academic administrators with an opportunity to build more coherent programs of study and to think about how they can design for engagement.

SLCC Pathways is about more than providing a guided sequence of courses for students. Providing a structured set of choices is the easiest-to-grasp component of pathways reform. We address structure and do, in fact, provide some guidelines for how areas of study should design maps. But pathways encompasses the overall coordinated effort to engage students. If this white paper has a thesis, then, it is this: *Pathways is about ensuring engagement by design*. In the past, we have understood engagement as a

function of an individual professor's or staff member's (sometimes heroic) efforts to understand, motivate, and mentor a student; with SLCC Pathways, we understand student engagement as a function of programmatic design decisions.

Designing for engagement is less about limiting choice and more about making sure SLCC students experience high-impact, inclusive educational experiences regardless of the choices they make. In our view, the pathways thesis is really about shifting responsibility for student success from individual faculty and staff to the institution. This is the core argument in Vincent Tinto's widely cited work on completion. He states,

> Despite years of effort institutions have yet to develop a coherent framework to guide their thinking about which actions matter most and how they should be organized and successfully implemented. Too often, institutions invest in a laundry list of actions, one disconnected from another. (Tinto, 2012)

For Tinto, the imperative is both pragmatic and ethical: "we must recognize that a college or university, once having admitted a student, has an obligation to do what it can to help the student stay and graduate" (Tinto, 2012). Mike Rose, renowned scholar of underserved students in higher education, approaches pathways with caution and puts Thomas Bailey and his co-authors in the camp of those who provide "a structural analysis of the problem with community college student success that takes us "beyond individual blame" and focuses our attention on institutional factors that create barriers to academic progress" (Rose, 2016). Rose is mostly supportive of pathways reform *because* it pushes colleges to think about more coordinated, structural reforms. And, of course, *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* takes great pains to make the same point. "To achieve significant institutional-level improvements in student success, reforms need to involve more thoroughgoing organizational change" (Bailey, Jaggars, Jensen, 2015). Boutique reforms isolated in individual areas of the college do not work.

Preparing: helping students make informed choices and build intentionality

Faculty often believe the most meaningful part of the student experience is the content of our courses. While we don't discount the importance of content, research suggests that the connections students make within and outside of courses are equally if not more important to their success. In *How College Works*, researchers Daniel Chambliss and Christopher Takacs describe the "power of personal contact" in a student's experience. "Curriculum is nice, but may not be fundamental for a good college. But good people, brought together in the right ways, we suspect are both necessary and perhaps even sufficient to create a good college." The authors encourage colleges to think about how they provide well-designed opportunities for students to connect.

Opportunities for connection are particularly important right before and within the student's first semester. One goal of pathways is to help students quickly identify their goals to make better area of study and program decisions. As we think about how students make decisions, about programs or individual courses, we need to keep in mind that decisions don't happen in a vacuum. Chambliss and Takacs devote so much attention to connection because they understand that student choices are highly contextual and social. Decisions are driven by experience. A student selects a program of study because

of an engaging encounter with other students or an inspirational faculty member. Whether by design or accident, faculty exercise great influence in students' academic lives. We believe it makes sense to officially recognize that influence and support it.

In the principles that follow, we observe that faculty and curriculum (not just advising) have an important role to play in helping students make choices and that areas of study can do more to educate students about these choices.

Principle: Faculty and curriculum are essential in helping inform and connect students to an Area of Study as an early part of their educational experience.

Faculty spend more time with students than anyone else at the College. They have the unique opportunity to influence students and, therefore, have an important role to play in helping students think about their interests, motivations, and goals. While it may be tempting to suggest that maneuvering through higher education belongs on the shoulders of the student and their families, we know that our student population is mostly first generation college students, leaving them culturally disadvantaged when it comes to making informed decisions. Researchers on pathways have already begun to gather qualitative data on early implementation efforts. John Fink reports in a recent CCRC research brief that one area where pathways could improve is that "students want more guidance" (Fink, 2017).

Our recommendation is to build opportunities for faculty to educate students about their options within courses. Make these opportunities default rather than the product of an individual student's good fortune. In a later CCRC report on early implementation efforts, the authors note that "colleges redesign their new student experience to help students explore career and college options and choose a program or meta-major and develop a full-program plan early on" (Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, 2017). Redesigning the new student experience goes beyond advising and extends to the curriculum. It is within the classroom that faculty can help students make informed decisions. (It should also happen within the course because we believe it is unrealistic to add additional advising burdens onto faculty at a teaching-intensive institution like ours.)

Along these lines, the same CCRC report observes that a "handful of colleges were beginning to integrate academic supports with program-area-gateway courses" (Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, 2017). We already have at least one example of how this might be done. The School of Business uses Business 1010 to introduce students to the various subfields in the school. Students who take this course are better prepared to make informed choices about whether they want to go into Marketing, Finance, or Business Administration. The CCRC early implementation study notes that other community colleges are making similar moves. Jackson College requires a student success seminar. Lansing Community College now asks students to take "at least one course in the student's field of interest in the first semester" (Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, 2017). Students at Paris Junior College "are required to take a student success course called Learning Frameworks. As part of this course, students are helped to choose a major and are required to meet with an advisor to develop a plan with three components: career, program, and financial" (Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, 2017). Our committee also discussed the possibility of simply redesigning a signature assignment within an existing gateway course. The assignment might solicit the kind of informed goal setting we see in the previous examples, but in the context of the course curriculum. We offer these as examples only to

illustrate how the work of preparing students to make informed decisions might be folded into the curriculum.

Principle: Students need to understand the overall organization and goals of a Program.

Student intentionality isn't simply a connection challenge. It is also a communication challenge. Can a student easily interpret the overall goals and rationale of a program? (Can a faculty member?) When a student visits an area of study or program website, what will she see? How does the College communicate the aims of its programs? Where do we offer clear, compelling, motivating descriptions of our programs? In other words, when we ask a student to choose an area of study and, subsequently, a program, are we clear about what we're asking them to choose?

In earlier iterations of our pathways work, we described "learning destinations." We still believe the idea has merit. Creating learning destinations encourages areas of study to engage in some useful backward design thinking and become more disciplined in communicating the overall aims of a program. Communicating the learning destination of a program helps students make a global rather than local decision. It moves them from thinking just about courses to the overall end-goal. What skills, concepts, and habits of mind will a student possess upon completion of the program? What is the area's vision for that student?

Structuring: building maps that clarify a student's route to success and provide a coherent educational experience

Preparing students to make informed choices requires the College to provide well-designed options. The so-called "structure hypothesis" laid out in the CCRC Working Paper 25 (Scott-Clayton, 2011) and then later taken up in the pathways manifesto *Redesigning America's Community Colleges*, states "community college students will be more likely to persist and succeed in programs that are tightly and consciously structured, with relatively little room for individuals to deviate on a whim—or even unintentionally—from paths toward completion" (Scott Clayton, 2011). The hypothesis rests on research on choice architecture in domains outside of education. In other words, the structural claims made in *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* are only now being tested.

Our thesis centers on engagement because structural reform in and of itself isn't sufficient to produce significant improvement in student retention or completion. We introduce this note of caution because we observe that many focus almost exclusively on the structural component of pathways reform. Mike Rose cautions us:

> The structural fix Bailey and his co-authors offer makes sense given the evidence that the status quo creates a host of barriers to student success. Still, like all structural remedies, this one runs the risk of reducing nuanced and layered human dilemmas to a technical problem, and thus being unresponsive to or missing entirely the particular life circumstances of students. So, yes, make the college curriculum more coherent, but realize that *other human and material resources also will be needed to meet the needs of many students, and, as well, build into your structural changes the flexibility needed to*

> *honor the range of life circumstances your students bring to college. Otherwise, the fix may create unintended negative consequences* (Rose, 2016, emphasis ours).

The principles we lay out in this section cannot completely account for the specificity of the work areas must take up next year. But we hope these principles provide some guidelines for the work that must be done to create first-year and program maps for students. We also encourage faculty and academic administrators to attend to the "human and material" components of pathways beyond listing courses in a document. And we ask them to balance the need to provide students with a clear path to success with the competing need to allow students some active choice in determining their course selections. It may be helpful here to return to the CCRC early implementation study. The authors note that colleges currently implementing pathways reform are "trying to find a balance between providing too much and too little choice" (Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, 2017). Ultimately, all of this work hinges on effective partnerships with our USHE transfer institutions.

In the principles that follow, we ask areas to think about the design of program maps that support student choice, to consider building (to the extent possible) a common first-year experience within an area, to build into the design of that first year the possibility that a student may change his or her mind, to honor one of the main goals of general education in providing a broadly distributed foundational educational experience to students, and, finally, to engage in all of this work by privileging the area and the program over individual courses in design thinking.

Principle: Students need effectively designed maps in order to make good choices

When a student makes a decision about an area or a program, it is the responsibility of the institution to direct that student toward the courses that most efficiently lead to program completion. Providing students with maps helps them make informed decisions once they have selected an area of study. Maps are documents that list the courses a student must take to complete a program. A map directs choice. It nudges students toward a selected range of options within an area of study. With a map, a student should be able to produce a specific schedule of courses. A map includes both the curriculum and supporting directions for how students will navigate the pathway.

Our committee has settled on a few guidelines in helping areas construct maps. First, maps require students to take their core general education Math and English within the first 15 credits. And they should be directed to take their second-semester writing requirement and their American Institutions requirement within the first 30 credits. Doing so provides students with a foundation for subsequent coursework and reassures faculty teaching distribution and program-level courses that students are adequately prepared to tackle the written and quantitative tasks required to succeed in their courses. (Frontloading the core requirements also mostly holds students harmless if they change their mind about an area in the first semester.) There are, in other words, sequential components to a map. In some cases, we ask students to take certain courses before they take other courses.

Second, if specific courses are required in transfer, they must be specified in the map. For instance, Math 1050 is the required quantitative literacy (QL) course for transfer in Geographic Science to the University of Utah. A map, therefore, must direct a Geographic Science student planning to transfer to the U to take Math 1050 for QL. In this case, specifying Math 1050 as the QL requirement is justified. More importantly, it would be irresponsible for the institution to allow a student with a declared interest in

Geographic Science to fulfill his or her QL requirement in any other way. Programs may require different maps for different transfer institutions.

Third, we recommend students within an area frontload a general education distribution requirement from that area. Areas may want to consider selecting a high-enrollment distribution option that could potentially satisfy a student's distribution requirement represented by that area *and* function as an exploration course that would serve the preparation goal of building student intentionality.

Finally, the map needs to demonstrate how, after transfer, the student will be at junior standing in the major. By junior standing, we mean a transferring SLCC student isn't at a disadvantage to a native student, his or her general education requirements are completely satisfied, and the student is prepared and allowed to begin upper division coursework in the major. (See Appendix A for a sample map.)

Principle: A student's first year should prepare her to enter any program within the area of study

Students who complete the first year (24-30 credits) should have the requisite courses to enter any program in that area of study. This presents areas with some difficult design challenges. As areas go about building the first year, they may want to look for opportunities to build something like a first-year experience that both prepares students to make wise program decisions and supplies them with the necessary requirements needed to smoothly transition to a specific program. Doing so confers some design advantages. For instance, it makes it easier to include high-impact educational practices (see the Engagement section) in more programmatic ways.

Principle: Students should not be penalized for changing an Area of Study within their first year

Care must be taken to structure program maps so a student isn't immediately penalized for changing her mind. It is important to remember that some students who enter areas of study may be undecided on programs. Students who change shouldn't be set back semesters or years. One strategy is that areas of study emphasize core general education requirements in their first year. These core requirements generally cut across areas of study. If a student finds that the social sciences aren't a good fit within the first two semesters, it may be possible to switch to business with little to no penalty if she has taken Math, English, American Institutions and a Social Science course that both introduced her to the area but also counted toward the distribution requirement. At a certain point, of course, changing one's mind must carry costs.

General education should be distributed across many disciplines.

For areas of study dedicated to transfer, general education will form an important component of the first year. For Career and Technical programs, it will still form an important core. It may be tempting for an area of study to build what our committee has called "a general education of one's own." The concern is that areas may be tempted to ask students to fulfill many of their general education requirements within a particular area of study. We believe this would violate one of the core principles of general education, a principle captured in the phrase "distribution requirement." General education at SLCC aims to "provide broad exposure to multiple disciplines and forms the basis for developing important intellectual and civic capacities" (SLCC General Education). Paul Hanstedt in *General Education Essentials* seconds SLCC's goal. General education aims to create "liberated human beings—people who are independent and flexible in their thinking and capable of responding to the demands of a changing world in civic-minded, deliberate ways" (Hanstedt, 2012). A chemistry student learns to appreciate our aesthetic and cultural

legacies in a humanities courses. A communication student understands the explanatory power of the social and behavioral sciences in Psychology 1010. And a Psychology student gets her hands dirty in a Geology class, acquiring a greater appreciation of the physical environment that forms the basis of her cognitive inquiries.

Areas should incorporate principles that promote meaningful educational experiences outside their area. In this way, areas support each other's general education mission. The countervailing challenge will be to resist the checklist mentality that many students adopt when approaching general education requirements beyond their area. Aspirational rhetoric must be matched by specific efforts to support an integrated vision of general education.

Curriculum development should be based on the program, not just individual courses.

The nature of the academy makes it easy to design courses in isolation, but this leads to programs assembled in a piecemeal fashion. The reality is that a sequence of individually well-designed and expertly taught courses can still lead to an incoherent educational experience for a student. Building maps presents areas with an opportunity to think in more global terms about the overall design and aims of the first year and subsequent programs. Beyond maps, areas should consider building more richly descriptive documentation. A supplementary metaphor might be guidebook. A student consulting an area guidebook should not only know what requirements should be fulfilled in the first year and in subsequent programs (the job of the map). She should also know why she should fulfill them. The guidebook should supply that student with a motivating narrative. We don't need Rick Steves to tell us how to get to Prague or Stockholm, but he has perfected the art of providing accessible guides that explain why we would want to go there.

Engaging: building strong learning environments through high-impact teaching

Student engagement is a popularly used phrase in higher education. Like the phrase critical thinking in our student outcomes statements, people say it without necessarily having a fully realized account of what it means. The literature identifies three dimensions to student engagement: behavior, emotion, and cognition (Fredericks, Blumenfield, Paris, 2004). In considering engagement, we want to design pathways and learning experiences that are participatory and take account of observable student behaviors that are reliable proxies for engagement. Are students talking in class? Engaging in service-learning projects? Participating in group learning opportunities? If we have courses and programs where we do not see consistent evidence of student participation, then we need to ask hard questions about the design and implementation of those programs. We also want to consider student curiosity, motivation, and interest. These are the affective states that lead to participation and deeper learning. The SLCC faculty development book of the year, *The Spark of Learning* by Sarah Rose Cavanagh, focused on this component of engagement (Cavanagh, 2017). How do ensure our students are motivated? How do we build student curiosity? Finally, we want students to be intellectually challenged with cognitively demanding tasks. We want to engage them in the "wicked problems" of our various disciplines (Theiss, Forhan 2017). We want them to learn.

Engagement occupies the core of our thinking about pathways because the research suggests that engaging our students is the most consequential thing we can do. In his work student completion, Vincent Tinto identifies engagement as the "most important condition for student success" (Tinto, 2012):

> The more students are academically and socially engaged with faculty, staff, and peers, the more likely they are to succeed in college. Such engagements lead not only to social affiliations and the social and emotional support they provide, but also to greater involvement in educational activities and the learning they produce. (Tinto, 2012)

The teaching and learning scholar George Kuh also links engagement with student success. He describes student engagement as "the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" (Kuh 2009). For both Tinto and Kuh, engagement is the necessary component to a college achieving its goals around student completion.

In the principles that follow, we encourage areas of study to embed opportunities for engagement through reflection, high-impact educational practices, inclusivity, and, finally, involving faculty in ways that elevate their agency and intrinsic motivation to support pathways reform.

Principle: Students learn better when they reflect on their educational experiences.

Reflection connotes in the minds of some teachers emotional expressions from students saying they either "loved" or "loathed" a class or assignment. Reflection sometimes gets a bad name because it is often poorly implemented, but the learning science on reflection is clear and well-established. In their groundbreaking synthesis on how people learn, the authors of *Make It Stick* tell us that reflection is more than "taking stock of a personal experience." Instead,

> Reflection can involve several cognitive activities that lead to stronger learning: retrieving knowledge and earlier training from memory, connecting these to new experiences, and visualizing and mentally rehearsing what you might do differently next time. (Brown, Roediger, McDaniel, 2015)

The more we ask students to retrieve their knowledge and connect their learning across courses, the more likely they are to both retain that knowledge and engage with the material in a meaningful way. We already have a widely adopted instrument for encouraging and managing reflection within courses and across a program: the ePortfolio. We recommend that areas and programs commit to ePortfolio pedagogy by introducing well-designed signature assignments to be placed in ePortfolios accompanied by reflection. Areas can also build program-level ePortfolio activities that mark the culmination of a student's experience either at the end of the first-year experience and/or at the end of a program.

Principle: High-impact teaching practices improve student persistence and retention.

The American Association of Colleges and Universities identifies eleven high-impact educational practices (HIPs) that have been shown to improve student persistence and completion, particularly among underserved students (Kuh, 2008). They include things like service-learning, first-year seminars, writing-intensive courses, and common intellectual experiences (American Association of Colleges and Universities). Organizing our offerings into eight areas of study presents the College with new opportunities to include HIPs into the first-year and program offerings in a more systematic way.

As it currently stands, SLCC students encounter HIPs purely by accident. A professor just happens to teach in a learning community, or a student registers for a service-learning course because it fits with her schedule. We recommend areas makes HIPs unavoidable by building them into program maps and

connecting high-impact educational experiences to the overall goals of the program (including the knowledge and habits of mind a student should possess upon completion). For instance, the Business area could decide that all students will have a service-learning experience because they want a community service ethic to become a part of the culture of Business at SLCC. Or the Social and Behavioral Sciences area might consider folding an undergraduate research requirement into their curriculum, culminating in a capstone research presentation/ePorfolio requirement.

We need not slavishly follow the AAC&U taxonomy of high-impact practices. The more important point is to understand just what it is about these high-impact activities that appear to be so effective with students. George Kuh tells us that high-impact practices

> demand that students devote considerable time and effort to purposeful tasks; most require daily decisions that deepen students' investment in the activity as well as their commitment to their academic program and the college. . . Second, the nature of these high-impact activities puts students in circumstances that essentially demand they interact with faculty and peers about substantive matters, typically over extended periods of time.

The point, in other words, is to craft cognitively demanding assignments that require sustained effort on the part of students and rich feedback from our faculty. Courses consisting of a march through content followed by automated assessments scraping the bottom of Bloom's taxonomy (no evaluation or analysis or synthesis) should undergo serious revision before being eligible for inclusion in a program map. This might mean we need to revisit our approach to forwarding, evaluating, and approving curriculum. The current CCO and PCO process encourages empty formalism (Did I select the correct option in the drop-down menu?) at the expense of more substantive discussions of curriculum.

Principle: Students are more likely to persist in inclusive, diverse, and accessible learning environments.

Inclusivity and equity are increasingly urgent concerns for open-access colleges and universities. Kathleen A. Ross observes that the number of Pell grant applicants (a good proxy for underserved students) increased more than 50 percent from 2003 to 2013 in U.S. higher education (Ross, 2017). At Salt Lake Community College just under half of our students are Pell eligible (SLCC Institutional Research). A recent analysis of our access mission notes that SLCC "is the most diverse higher education institution in Utah. With over a quarter of our students identifying as a minority race or ethnicity we are the primary provider of education for the underrepresented populations in USHE." This fact has to mean something for our teaching. The analysis goes on to observe that

> The college has seen significant increases in minority enrollments in the past several years. Even while the college has been in a period of enrollment decline since 2011, minority enrollments have increased by 15%. The proportion of students who 15 identify as minority has increased from 18% to 27%. This trend does not seem to be slowing. (SLCC Strategy and Analysis)

SLCC Pathways reform must programmatically address what Ross calls the new student majority. Just as we are recommending the College ensure engagement by design, we also believe we need to ensure inclusivity and equity by design.

What might this mean in terms of work undertaken by areas to build first year and subsequent programs? There are a handful of specific research-based teaching practices that promote equity in the classroom. For instance, this fall, the office of Faculty Development conducted a workshop with Mary-Ann Winklemass on transparent assignment design. The Transparency in Learning and Teaching Project (TILT) is an AAC&U-sponsored project that has been shown to help all students, but particularly underserved students. Transparent assignment design asks faculty to clarify the purpose, tasks, and outcomes of an assignment with an eye toward helping these underserved students perform at the same level as their peers (Winklemass, 2016). The TILT project gives us one example of how the College should approach efforts around equity. We must move from largely therapeutic approaches to inclusivity, diversity, and equity (an inspiring speaker, an ambitious but largely isolated project) to specific, scalable measures that faculty can readily adopt.

Principle: Faculty are better teachers when they are supported and passionate about what they do.

This is more than a platitude. We have talked about student engagement, but employee engagement is equally important. Research on employee effectiveness routinely correlate healthy, high-functioning organizational culture with qualities like employee agency and a sense of purpose aligned with the organization's goals. A recent study on faculty success suggests that faculty who are given clear expectations in a collegial environment combined with appropriate autonomy are more likely to be intrinsically motivated (Flaherty, 2017). For our group, the main design challenge here comes with the recognition that adjunct professors do the majority of the teaching at SLCC. How do we engage contingent employees in sweeping structural reforms in a meaningful way?

Departments and schools need to build adjunct engagement into their work. Right now, there are real disparities in how areas of the college engage adjunct professors. Some conduct regular and predictable trainings on courses and have built systems whereby full-time faculty regularly mentor and observe adjuncts. (The Math Department comes to mind as an outstanding example.) Others do little to nothing when it comes to adjunct support and development.

Our largely decentralized, haphazard, and voluntary approach to adjunct support and development will severely compromise any meaningful progress on pathways reform when it comes to designing for engagement. Moreover, some research suggests that "students are less likely to persist in a major after exposure to contingent faculty" (Davis, 2017). We recommend SLCC seriously entertain different models of adjunct employment and development. (Perhaps this will constitute a separate CWT and another white paper.) We require FERPA training but we have no system in place to ensure adjuncts (or full-time for that matter) are supported as teachers. The reality is that we will rely on adjunct instruction for the foreseeable future. But we can do more to support adjunct instructors both within departments and schools and across the College.

Conclusion

This white paper began with three epigraphs. The first is the official institutional definition of SLCC Pathways. The definition has both informed our thinking on pathways and has required further explication. We would point out, for instance, that the phrase "enhance learning" precedes "clarify a student's route" in the coordinated aims of pathways. We interpret this to mean that learning as a product

of student engagement is the necessary precondition to a clear route to student completion. Completion without learning is pointless. More importantly, the definition is calling us to connect learning to pathways by suggesting that student engagement must be the product of institutional design decisions rather than a series of individual, uncoordinated efforts.

The second quotation is from Sarah Rose Cavanagh's visit to SLCC this spring. She enjoined audience members to privilege the student experience over the content of our curriculum. That can be a hard message for some faculty to hear. Most faculty came to teaching through a singular devotion to their discipline. Cavanagh's work reminds us that students aren't brains in vats; they come to us with experience, biases, and interests. Cavanagh's work should help us understand that soulless structural reforms (just providing a sequence of courses) do not sufficiently address students as whole persons and learners.

The third epigraph reveals the literary bent of the sub-committee chair. It is amusing to consider the poet Robert Frost the first theorist of guided pathways reform, the poet laureate of choice architecture. Recruiting Frost in the service of pathways thinking calls attention to pathways as a metaphor that structures our thinking about the nature of the problem itself. (An equally compelling metaphor might reverse our understanding of the problem. What if we imagined constraints rather than choices as the primary obstacle to completion?) Though the poem has been the subject of competing interpretations for close to a century, we include it in this paper because it reminds us that choices are consequential and that a "less traveled" option may, in fact, be the right one.

If only organizational change were stripped down to the metaphorical precision of a Robert Frost poem. In *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, Jim Collins addresses the challenge of managing change in organizations with "diffuse power structures" (Collins, 2005). He draws a distinction between executive leadership and legislative leadership. An executive leader has enough "concentrated power" to simply mandate changes. One can find examples of executive leadership in the private sector. At SLCC, power is distributed across many different areas, most obviously within the faculty shared governance structure. In contrast to an executive leader's ability to command change, legislative leadership relies on "persuasion, political currency, and shared interests to create the conditions for the right decisions to happen" (Collins, 2005). Far from lamenting the fact that distributed power exists in the social sector, Collins argues that it represents the ultimate test of leadership. "True leadership only exists if people follow when they have the freedom not to" (Collins, 2005). SLCC has a President and a Provost who enjoy the admiration and respect of the SLCC community and are capable actors in diffuse structures. Our final recommendation is that they take advantage of their talents and become more visible participants in pathways reform work. We need their legislative leadership to move forward.

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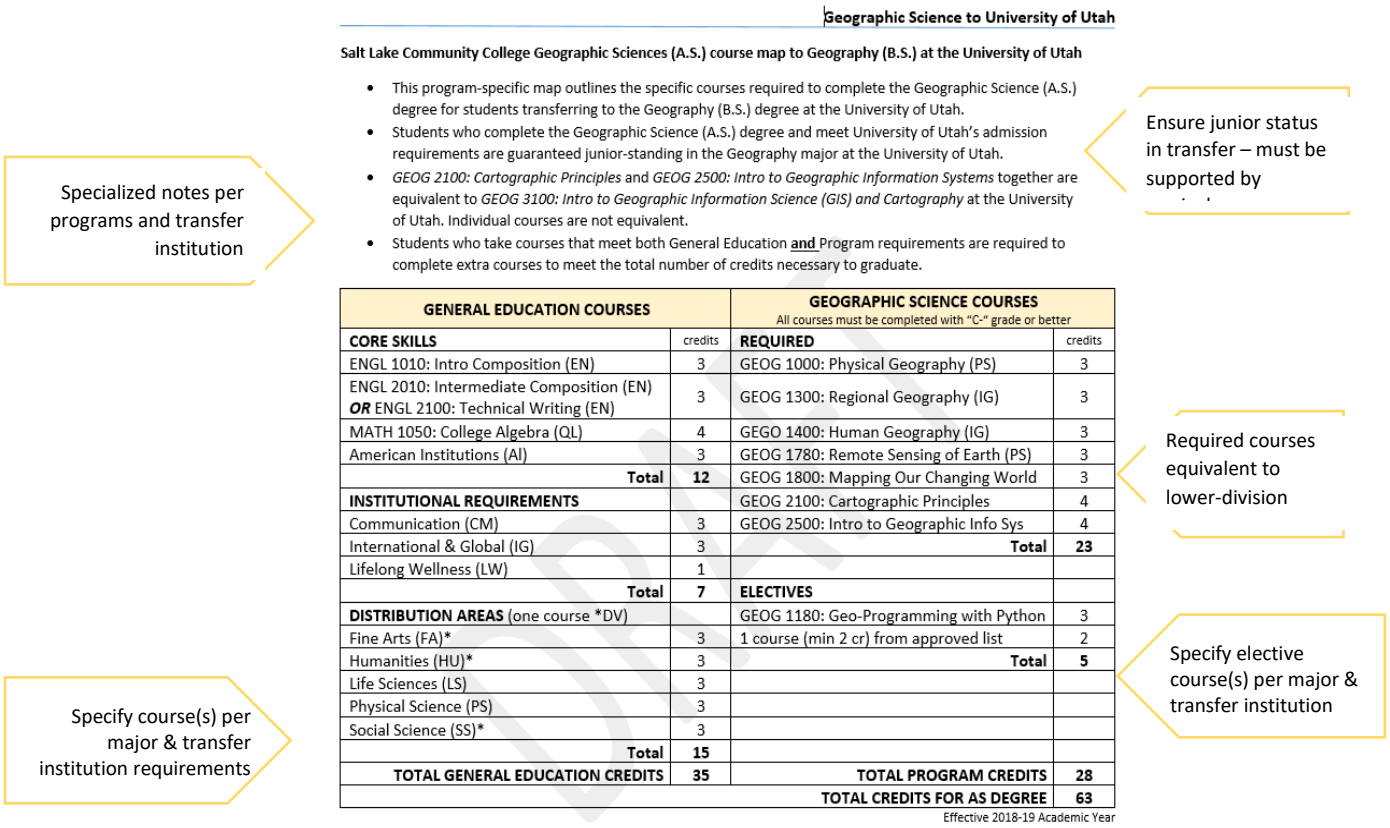
Appendix A: Map example



Geographic Science to University of Utah

Salt Lake Community College Geographic Sciences (A.S.) course map to Geography (B.S.) at the University of Utah

- This program-specific map outlines the specific courses required to complete the Geographic Science (A.S.) degree for students transferring to the Geography (B.S.) degree at the University of Utah.
- Students who complete the Geographic Science (A.S.) degree and meet University of Utah's admission requirements are guaranteed junior-standing in the Geography major at the University of Utah.
- *GEOG 2100: Cartographic Principles* and *GEOG 2500: Intro to Geographic Information Systems* together are equivalent to *GEOG 3100: Intro to Geographic Information Science (GIS) and Cartography* at the University of Utah. Individual courses are not equivalent.
- Students who take courses that meet both General Education **and** Program requirements are required to complete extra courses to meet the total number of credits necessary to graduate.

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES		GEOGRAPHIC SCIENCE COURSES All courses must be completed with "C-" grade or better	
CORE SKILLS	credits	**REQUIRED**	credits
ENGL 1010: Intro Composition (EN)	3	GEOG 1000: Physical Geography (PS)	3
ENGL 2010: Intermediate Composition (EN) ***OR*** ENGL 2100: Technical Writing (EN)	3	GEOG 1300: Regional Geography (IG)	3
MATH 1050: College Algebra (QL)	4	GEGO 1400: Human Geography (IG)	3
American Institutions (AI)	3	GEOG 1780: Remote Sensing of Earth (PS)	3
Total	**12**	GEOG 1800: Mapping Our Changing World	3
INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS		GEOG 2100: Cartographic Principles	4
Communication (CM)	3	GEOG 2500: Intro to Geographic Info Sys	4
International & Global (IG)	3	**Total**	**23**
Lifelong Wellness (LW)	1		
Total	**7**	**ELECTIVES**	
DISTRIBUTION AREAS (one course *DV)		GEOG 1180: Geo-Programming with Python	3
Fine Arts (FA)*	3	1 course (min 2 cr) from approved list	2
Humanities (HU)*	3	**Total**	**5**
Life Sciences (LS)	3		
Physical Science (PS)	3		
Social Science (SS)*	3		
Total	**15**		
TOTAL GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS	**35**	**TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS**	**28**
		TOTAL CREDITS FOR AS DEGREE	**63**

Effective 2018-19 Academic Year

[i] Here and throughout the paper the term “areas” is the agent in the sentence. By areas or areas of study, we mean both the organization unit proposed by the Pathways Phase I CWT and the faculty and academic administrators responsible for doing the work described in this white paper.