

Destination Area and Strategic Growth Area Quarterly Update

**Compiled by the Office of the Vice Provost for
Learning Systems Innovation and Effectiveness (LSIE)**

September 2018

- **Cross-DA and Institute Seed Grant Network:** The investment Institutes have partnered with the LSIE office to provide matching funds that advance cross-DA/SGA research collaborations. This initiative will focus on two strategic research areas: Infectious Disease and Rural Health. The key objective is to cultivate transdisciplinary research teams that can pursue external funding. The teams will include both junior and senior faculty. Applications are due October 15th.
- **Curricular Update:** One Pathway Minor has passed through governance; the Innovation Pathway Minor emerged from collaboration between the Creativity and Innovation Strategic Growth Area (SGA) and Engineering Education, which will serve as the minor's host department. Three other Pathway Minors are being submitted to governance this Fall (Data Decisions, Adaptive Brain and Behavior, Integrated Security). Policy is looking at pathways to graduate education for STEM majors. Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) continues to support faculty teams that are developing these minors. Finding a home department for the minors continues to be a challenge. Destination Areas/Strategic Growth Areas (DA/SGAs) have identified courses that should receive the DA attribute in the PIBB. To date many of the courses and curricular efforts have focused on undergraduates and the LSIE Office is working with the VPUAA's Office to consider models for advising and marketing transdisciplinary courses/minors.
- **Cluster Hire Update:** As of the fall of 2018 ~106 cluster hires have joined the university. On August 30th the LSIE office held a Welcome and Orientation for the new hires. The event provided information about the DA/SGA initiative and an opportunity to learn about how they can participate. All of the stakeholder committees have developed plans to engage the cluster hires in their activities this academic year.
- **September 24th Fall Event:** On September 24th a university wide, half-day symposium will be held to celebrate the work and ongoing mission of the DA/SGAs. The symposium will include panels on transdisciplinary research and learning as well as roundtable discussions. The event is open to the campus community. Cluster hires will be encouraged to attend. Intended outcomes of this event include developing a better understanding of how faculty can engage in DA/SGA efforts so that current transdisciplinary communities are strengthened; connect faculty who are interested in applying for internal and external transdisciplinary research opportunities; and allow for new transdisciplinary educational offerings to emerge.
- **Destination Area and Strategic Growth Area Upcoming Events:** For information about upcoming DA/SGA events, check out the newly added "upcoming events section" on the Destination Areas Website. <https://www.provost.vt.edu/destination-areas.html>

- **Oakridge Exploratory Partnership and Grant:** LSIE is working with college leadership and the Associate VP for Research Computing to organize a trip to the Oakridge National Laboratory to visit their facilities. Faculty from DA/SGA groups who are interested in attending have submitted their names. The trip is part of a larger effort to build on Virginia Tech's long -standing partnership with the lab. This includes exploring ways in which transdisciplinary collaborations among VT faculty and the lab scientists and staff can be further developed in the coming year.
- **VT News articles:** The DA/SGAs have frequently been in the VT News and you can find a list of archived of stories on the Destination Areas website. Check it out!
- **DA/SGA Communications:** In addition to the increase in DA/SGA-related VT News articles, individual article tags for each DA/SGA are being created to allow each DA/SGA webpage to aggregate and post items relevant to their specific focus area. The Provost Communications Office (PCO) is also engaging with Admissions to inform and promote DA/SGA curriculum/pathways courses and transdisciplinary experiences to prospective undergraduate students. PCO is further collaborating with college/unit communicators to identify and ensure opportunities to showcase faculty and programs engaged in transdisciplinary efforts (both within and beyond the DA/SGAs) are being pursued.
- **Upcoming Cross-DA/SGA Activities**
 - **September 24** "Building Transdisciplinary Communities;" this event is open to the university community and scheduled from 8:00am–1:30pm at the Virginia Tech Inn. *Registration is available on the DA Website under 'upcoming events.'* Join us!
 - **October 3** Information and Trust in Society Workshop sponsored by the Integrated Security DA. Interested participants should contact Russ Walker, program manager for Integrated Security.
 - **October 11-12** 2018 Rotating Resilience Roundtables at Virginia Tech. Please contact Annamara Bukvic (VT) and Michelle Covi (ODU for more information. The project is in part supported by the Global Systems Science DA, which has provided seed funding for the Coastal@VT research group led by Annamara Bukvic and Robert Weiss.
 - **November 27-28** Advancing the Human Condition Workshop; *save the date, more information coming soon.*