



# PATHWAYS TO GENERAL EDUCATION



Spring 2019 | Volume III | Number 2



## Pathways Year One is in the Books!

*"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Being willing is not enough; we must do."*  
-Leonardo da Vinci

Hard to believe, but the new Pathways to General Education curriculum is nearly one year old! As with any one-year old, there has been no shortage of crying, screaming, stress eating, and sleepless nights, but there has also been the opportunity for all of us to look at the world of undergraduate education through fresh eyes and with new perspective. **We've reengaged, reimagined, and reinvigorated the program, and I'm confident the students are better for it.**

How do we know? Now that Pathways is officially in place, we can start to capture amazing student experiences. In this issue, we discuss how some students have found undergraduate research and publishing opportunities through their pursuit of the Pathways Minor in Disabilities Studies, while another student was able to use Pathways as the muse for professional video production. These students aren't just willing, they are doing! **I have no doubt that as long as exciting Pathways courses and minors are offered (nearly 400 courses and 20 minors so far), these stories will continue to emerge.**

But we need your help! Are great things happening in your course or minor? Reach out so we can showcase it on our website, in future newsletters, and through VTNews outlets. Want to share the great things you are doing or wish to learn from your peers across campus? **Join us at this year's Summer Institute, June 5-6. It's shaping up to be another strong program for first-timers and repeat-attendees alike!**

So once you have turned in your grades and your assessment data, grab an umbrella drink and read this newsletter cover-to-cover as the perfect summer kickoff!

**Stephen Biscotte**  
Director of General Education

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# 2019 Pathways Grant Recipients Announced

We are pleased to announce this year's recipients of Pathways Grants. The grants are awarded to individuals or teams of faculty members to design or redesign courses, minors, or alternative pathways. Recipients then work throughout the year as a transdisciplinary collaborative cohort group to accomplish their goals, share best practices, discuss common challenges, and even contribute to the university and national dialogue on teaching and learning in general education.

Pathways Grant proposals showcase great ideas for reinventing and reimagining our general education curriculum, and the 2019 cohort represents a wide variety of disciplines. The following individuals and teams received funding to support their proposals, with proposer names and project titles listed below:

The goals for this year's program were as

### Pathways STEM Minor for Non-STEM Major Grant

- Michel Pleimling, Nora Dragovic, Carrie Hopkins, Cara Conley: **Data and Decision Sciences**
- Carlos Evia, Jane Robertson Evia, Patricia Raun, Sparkle Williams: **Communicating and Engaging with Science**
- Amanda Morris, Sean McGinnis, Michel Pleimling, Maggie Bobbit-Bump: **Materials and Society**
- Susan Sumner, Anne Brown: **Research and Data Practices**
- Kathryn Clarke Albright, Lisa Tucker, Tracy McElroy: **Technology, Humans and Environment**



*Some of the past Pathways Grant recipients at the CETL Third Annual Recognition of Teaching Excellence Celebration on April 24, 2019*

follows:

1. To support the development and delivery of courses in areas of need: advanced/applied quantitative and computational reasoning, arts, design thinking, advanced/applied discourse, and identity/equity in the United States.
2. To scale up best practices in general education to reach a greater number of students.
3. To support the incorporation of engaging pedagogies and informative assessment strategies across the Pathways curriculum.
4. To increase the incorporation of high-impact practices such as undergraduate research, project-based learning, education abroad, and service learning in Pathways courses and minors.
5. To support the development and delivery of Pathways Minors and Alternative Pathways, particularly those that span multiple colleges.

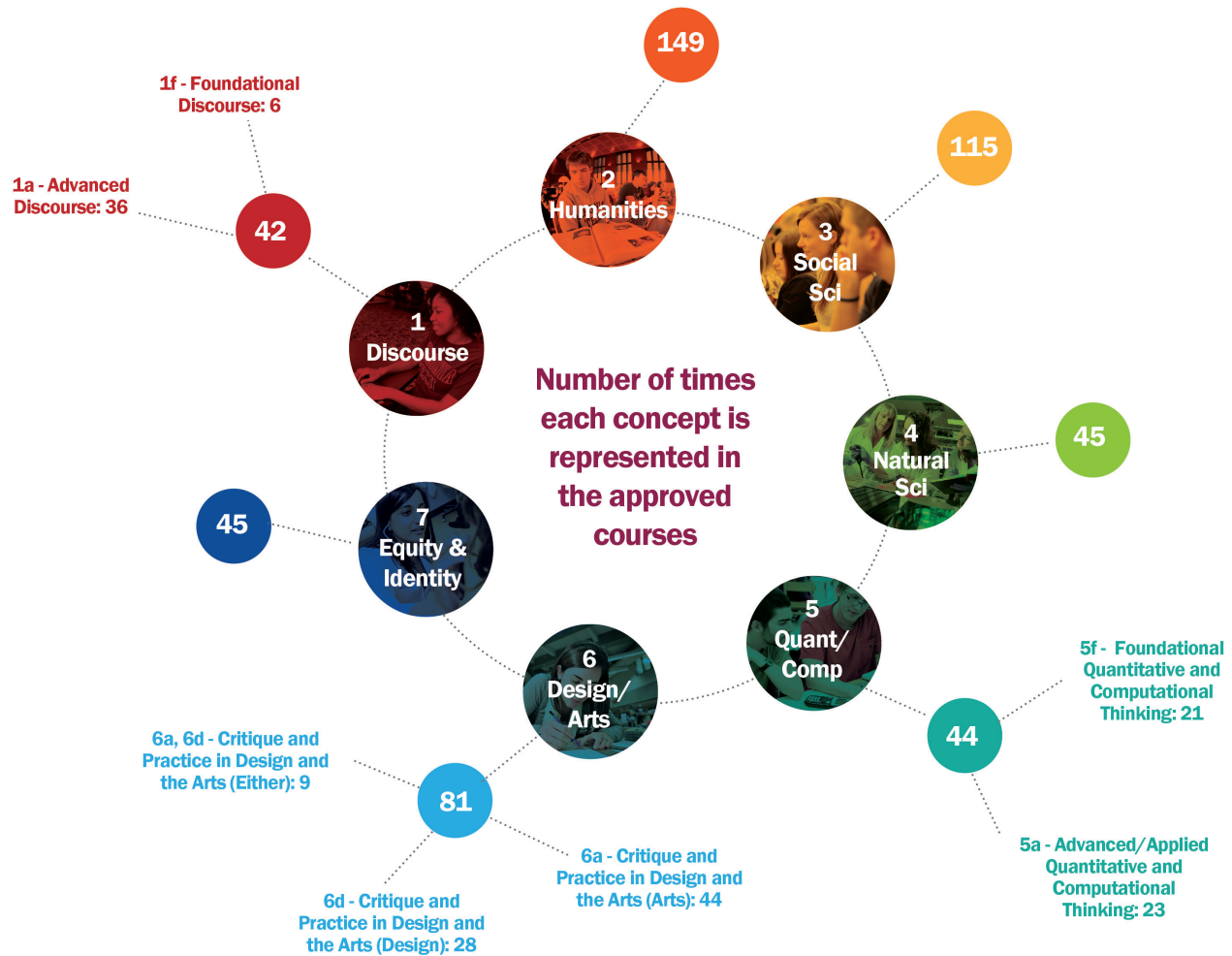
### Pathways Annual Grant

- Greg Tew: **Design Appreciation**
- John Chermak: **Earth Resources, Society & the Environment**
- Jessica Thompson: **Precalculus with Transcendental Functions**
- Jessica Taylor: **Native History**
- Heather Gumbert: **History of Television**
- Gonzalo Montero, Patrick Ridge, Javiera Jaque, Edward Polanco: **Latino and Latin American Studies Minor**
- James Jewitt, Matthew Ebert, Susanna Rinehart, John Ierrera, Justin Perkinson, Evan Lavender-Smith: **Intersections of the Arts**
- Eli Jamison: **Global Business, Society and Popculture**
- Mandy Tew: **Sustainability by Design**
- Stephen Edwards, John Wenskovitch, Margaret Ellis: **Intermediate Programming in Python**
- Janine Hiller, Aaron Brantly, Robert Weiss, Chris Zobel, Daphne Yao: **Integrated Security Minor**
- Matthew Komelski: **Adaptive Brain and Behavior Minor**

The Office of General Education is excited to support these innovative ideas from start to finish! If you missed this year's deadline, look for announcements for next year's grant cycle in December.

> Implementation Update

## To Date, the Pathways Ad Hoc Committee Has Approved 378 Courses and 18 Pathways Minors



### Currently approved minors include:

- Biodiversity Conservation
- Blue Planet
- Civic Agriculture and Food Systems
- Community Systems Engagement
- Data and Decisions
- Disabilities Studies
- Ecological Cities
- Event and Experience Management
- Global Business Practices to Improve the Human Condition
- Global Food Security and Health
- Innovation
- Language Sciences
- Organizational Leadership
- Pathways to Sustainability
- Philosophy, Politics, and Economics
- Science, Technology, and Law
- Strategic Communication
- Visual Arts and Society

Detailed information about approved minors  
[www.pathways.prov.vt.edu/minors](http://www.pathways.prov.vt.edu/minors)

> In the Spotlight: Pathways Minor Profiles

## More than a “minor” impact: Students use undergraduate research opportunities to explore perspectives of disability in new Pathways Minor

*This is the first in a series of articles profiling students’ experiences in Pathways Minors. If your Pathways Minor is underway and you have students who are willing to share their stories, please contact Rachel Corell at rcorell@vt.edu.*

### Opening Doors to Opportunities in Disability Research

Laura Beaudet is a junior psychology major with aspirations of a career in special education. Through her pursuit of a Pathways Minor in Disabilities Studies, she has learned a great deal about herself and the people around her.

Beaudet first heard about the minor as a freshman when her advisor told her about a professor in the Human Development department who was looking to start a minor in disabilities studies. “That’s how I got into contact with Dr. Carolyn Shivers,” she said. “I met with her a few times my first two years of college to talk about the minor and different career and graduate school opportunities for me. She eventually asked if I would be interested in research, and I said yes!”

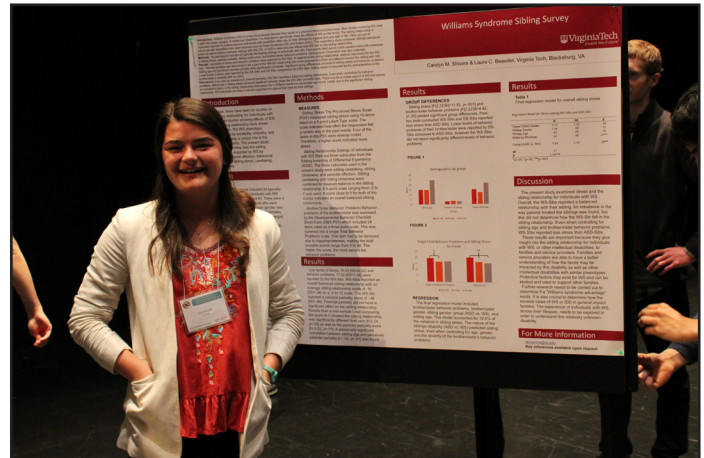
The prospect of working with a university professor on real undergraduate research was an exciting one for Beaudet, who said, “My undergraduate research position with Dr. Shivers started in the fall when we looked at the sibling relationship for individuals with Williams Syndrome, which involves a micro-deletion of chromosome 7 that results in an intellectual disability. I worked very closely with her to create the survey measures and analyze the results.”

Wanting to make the most of a research experience that was giving her the exposure to the field that she needed, Beaudet pursued the opportunity all year. “In the spring, I continued working on the project with Dr. Shivers while taking her Intro to Disabilities Studies class. It was great to take the course while analyzing the results because I could create connections to theories we learned in class,” she said.

Beaudet recently presented a poster about her research for the Dennis Dean Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship Conference held this year on April 19 at Virginia Tech’s Moss Arts Center.

### The Chance to Publish Class Projects

Meanwhile, senior Human Development major Madelyn Hart found through the Disabilities Studies Minor an



*Laura Beaudet is a junior pursuing the Disabilities Studies Minor who recently presented her research at the Dennis Dean Undergraduate Research and Creative Scholarship Conference.*

opportunity to publish her research findings. She said, “The minor inspired me to do a personal research project for one of my classes concerning universal design on college campuses. I then applied to get it published in hopes to share my work with others... an opportunity I never would have thought about pursuing if I didn’t have this minor!”

This year, Hart will see her own “The Importance of Universal Design on College Campuses” featured in *Philologia*, an undergraduate research journal published by the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. “I hope it will educate more people about accessibility here at Virginia Tech,” Hart added.

Like Beaudet, Hart says that she learned of the Disabilities Studies minor from her advisor after expressing an interest in working with students with disabilities. She acknowledges that the minor is still useful for her, although though her career trajectory and academic focus have shifted somewhat since she started at Virginia Tech.

Hart said, “I initially picked this minor because I planned to become a speech therapist. Now, I am thinking about pursuing student affairs or higher education, but no matter what job I pursue or where I find myself later in life, being educated on disabilities issues matters. This minor has taught me how to consider the needs of people with disabilities and how to incorporate those needs into how I interact with all types of people.”

*(continued on next page)*

> In the Spotlight: Pathways Minor Profiles

## For Every Major, Every Professional, Every Person

According to Carolyn Shivers, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Science and director of the minor, one of the key goals of the minor is to prepare students to work with and for a wide variety of people, whether directly or through the products and systems they design. Shivers said, “We cover not only better-recognized disabilities, like paraplegia or blindness, but the entire spectrum of disability, including physical, intellectual/developmental, and psychiatric disabilities. I like to say that the minor can be beneficial for anyone, because everyone is going to interact with individuals with disabilities throughout their life.”

Another goal of the minor is to provide students with a lens through which they can critically view society as they seek to understand disability from diverse perspectives and disciplines. Because of this, Hart says, she has learned how to support others whose needs might be different than her own. “This minor has really emphasized to me the need to recognize the experiences of those with disabilities and to become an advocate in different ways,” said Hart.

“For example, there is a ‘barrier report form’ online that Virginia Tech students and community members can fill out when they see a barrier around campus, such as a push button not working, a broken elevator, someone parked in handicap spot, a blocked ramp, etc. I have filled out the form several times from my own observations and have encouraged others to do so as well,” added Hart. “Although those barriers do not affect me personally, we still need to make sure our campus is as accessible as possible for those that need it... After all, the chance of someone having at least one disability throughout their lifetime is almost certain, especially as we age.”

As Beaudet and Hart demonstrate, no matter what your academic major is, Pathways minors can have more than a “minor” impact on your degree path, transcript, or resume; they can provide opportunities in areas like undergraduate research that may add to your perspective of the world.

## About Disabilities Studies at Virginia Tech

Hosted by the Department of Human Development within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, the Disabilities Studies minor is gaining in popularity, with about 40 students currently registered. Its curriculum includes courses in human development; apparel, housing and resource management; psychology; science, technology, and society; and education. The program provides students with a multidisciplinary view of



*Madelyn Hart is a senior whose experience in the Disabilities Studies minor led her to publish undergraduate research.*

how disability is defined and what barriers to full inclusion are faced by individuals with disabilities.

Its introductory course, HD 1134: Introduction to Disabilities Studies, is also a Pathways General Education course. While students are drawn to the class to complete Pathways requirements in the core concept areas “Critical Thinking in the Humanities” and/or “Critical Analysis of Equity and Identity in the United States,” it also serves as the gateway to the minor for many students.

Shivers said, “I’m meeting with more interested students every week. I’ve had quite a few students in my Intro to Disabilities Studies course, which has 84 students enrolled this spring semester, sign up for the minor based on what they’ve learned and experienced in the class. What I hear quite often from students is ‘I never thought about this before,’ which is so true when we think about the experiences of disabled individuals. Non-disabled people often have no idea the variety of barriers and challenges - physical, emotional, societal, etc. - faced by people with disabilities.”

With this in mind, Hart encourages all students who are interested, regardless of major, to pursue the minor. She said, “I really recommend this minor for anyone planning on working in human services. We likely encounter people with disabilities every single day, visible or not.” Aligned with the Virginia Tech Principles of Community and in the spirit of *Ut Prosim*, Hart stated, “Every single professional should know how to consider the needs of those with disabilities, and this minor definitely helps with educating us and further promoting an accepting environment for every single person.”

*Written by Rachel Kinzer Corell*

> Student Profile

## Eric Luu Brings Pathways General Education to Life Through Video Creation

If you ask him, Eric Luu agrees that the last thing he expected after saying no to a communications internship was that it would end up turning into a professional video job featuring the new Pathways General Education program at Virginia Tech. However, when the Office of General Education, one of the departments under Undergraduate Academic Affairs, needed help making some videos to represent possible paths for students under Pathways, that is exactly what happened.

### An unexpected partnership

Luu, currently a senior majoring in multimedia journalism with a cognate in marketing, had previously interviewed with the office for an internship position as Student Program Assistant for Communications, but he ultimately ended up taking a different job with more of a focus in video editing, his intended career path after college. Not one to leave a job unfinished, he recommended his friend Alexa Keeler, a dual Public Relations and International Relations major who was a perfect fit for the writing intensive position, and moved on with his semester.

Weeks later, Luu was invited to create videos showcasing the different paths students could take to complete the Pathways program in meaningful ways. These paths were based on scripts created by Keeler and Program Support Specialist from Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Rachel Kinzer Corell.

"I loved that I was able to have the professional opportunity to assist with scripting and work on developing the videos from start to finish," Luu said of his experience working with Keeler and Corell. "It was also both exhilarating and challenging having to use my network to find student actors, complete the task on a professional deadline, and shape the videos in a way that both satisfied Undergraduate Academic Affairs as well as myself."

### A hobby turned career path

Luu is quick to point out that his passion for videography became a hobby and a work skill at almost the same time. He said, "I got into videography when I was younger because I would make videos of me breakdancing. When I got to college, I gained the technical video editing skills necessary to finally create videos of all the wild ideas in my head."

Some of Luu's "wild ideas" came by way of his experiences at the university, as he found himself -- and his camera skills -- in need. "I came to Virginia Tech with very little experience, but the more classes and organizations I joined, I often found myself getting behind the camera to help the organizations I was a part of," he said.



*Eric Luu working on Pathways scenarios videos between classes*

During his time at Virginia Tech, Luu continued to develop his video expertise working for student organizations, including The Flowmigos, the university's breakdance club that Luu founded during his first year. In addition, he serves as this year's Creative Director for the university's hip hop club, Digging in the Crates, and he has also worked as a Multimedia Editor for the *Collegiate Times*.

### An opportunity for professional collaboration

To create the videos, Luu and Keeler collaborated with Undergraduate Academic Affairs staff, as well as University Studies Director Zack Underwood and College of Architecture and Urban Studies Director of Academic Advising Rob Jacks. In the end, however, creative control was up to the two students. As Underwood said, "I am proud to say that these videos were created by students, for students, as well as for their family members."

Luu and Keeler used the videos to highlight the shared and customizable learning experience that Pathways General Education provides. "Even though courses and major curriculum vary from discipline to discipline, these videos provide a consistent viewpoint. Specifically, the videos provide an initial look at the Pathways to General Education curriculum not only to University Studies students, but to any student considering what his or her academic path could look like," said Underwood.

Both Underwood and Jacks observed that these undergraduate students have a knack for marketing Pathways in a way that makes sense to their peers. Jacks said, "Working with current students to create these videos was very rewarding. Eric and Alexa were incredibly professional and used their experiences as Virginia Tech students to make something that would be relatable and interesting to incoming students and families."

Jacks also noted that a key benefit of having the scenarios

*(continued on next page)*

> Student Profile

## Pathways Scenarios: Business

(1:39) In this video, you will hear about a Business student who discovers the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Minor as a way to complete her Pathways requirements.



*In this scenario featuring a business major, "Jenna" tells about how she ended up pursuing the Philosophy, Politics, and Economics Minor.*

## Pathways Scenarios: From University Studies to Human Development

(1:11) Who am I? What do I want to be when I grow up? In this video, you will hear about a student who begins in University Studies and finds his major (Human Development) by exploring courses in Pathways.



*This scenario shows a student finding his path from University Studies to a major in Human Development.*

videos is that the conversation about different general education pathways for students can begin before orientation. He added, "These videos let us engage incoming students and their families in a way in which we haven't been able to in the past. Each of our incoming first year students will watch the architecture scenario video before registering for orientation and come to us with some insight into the path they are about to choose, so we can incorporate that into their academic plan from the very beginning."

### A learning experience in service of other students

The resulting videos do more than reveal Luu and Keeler's creativity with content development and their ability to relate to their peers via video creation. Perhaps more importantly, the videos show what the Hokie spirit of "Ut Prosim" looks like when students learn through a "real life" professional experience in service of other students at the university.

Reflecting back on her experience, Keeler joked, "We learned a lot more about checksheets than we thought was possible!" As a primary writer during the script process, Keeler worked with both major and minor checksheets to develop the student scenarios for the videos. "We had to make sure we were creating scenarios that could really work for students and hopefully give them potential ideas for their own academic career paths," said Keeler.

Once a general sketch of the scenario existed, Luu helped develop the scenes in more detail and prepared to direct the videos. Luu said of the project, "My favorite part was definitely highlighting student leaders to play

roles in the videos because like many of us, they did not have a straightforward path in choosing their majors."

### A finished product and plans for future scenarios

The three scenarios eventually scripted by Keeler and filmed by Luu followed the recommendation of Stephen Biscotte, Director of General Education, to include three very different majors: university studies, architecture, and business. First, "Nick" takes viewers through his experience at Virginia Tech starting in university studies and ending with a major in Human Development. "Abram" then tells how his interests in entrepreneurship result in him pursuing the Organizational Leadership minor in addition to his major in architecture. After that, "Jenna" speaks about her experience as a business major who is also seeking the PPE Minor in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics.

As the first academic year of Pathways General Education draws to a close, the Office of General Education is considering other scenarios like these to highlight the many paths students might take through the curriculum. Biscotte said, "Go figure, but undergraduate students can do a better job of capturing the undergraduate student experience than we can. With Eric graduating, we need to find another student videographer ASAP!"

To watch the finished videos created by Eric Luu featuring Pathways General Education scenarios, please visit the Pathways scenarios page at <https://www.pathways prov.vt.edu/about/scenarios-videos.html>.

*Written by Rachel Kinzer Corell*

> Event

## The Summer Institute: Professional Development for Undergraduate Education 2019

The 2019 Summer Institute will be held June 5 - 6 in the New Classroom Building, once again bringing folks together from Pathways General Education, First-Year Experiences, and HHMI Inclusive Excellence. **Prepare for two days of high-quality programming, networking, and sharing, as well as great food and plenty of coffee!**

Virginia Tech faculty from the Pathways and FYE communities will join HHMI Inclusive Excellence faculty from Towson University, Trinity Washington University, Radford University, Norfolk State University, James Madison University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the College of New Jersey, and Virginia Tech.

Whether you are faculty or staff, an instructor or advisor, a GA or GTA... **anyone involved in the development, delivery, or support of the Pathways curriculum is welcome!**

There are ample sessions for first timers and long-time attendees alike! Targeted Pathways sessions will be offered on Assessment, Minors, the Integration of Ethical Reasoning, and more. **Individuals who attend the entire program are eligible for 11 NLI credits.**

See the tentative **DRAFT** agenda to the right.

**Register soon!**

## Agenda (Tentative)

**Wednesday, June 5th from 8:00 am - 4:30pm**

**8:00 - 9:00 am** - Coffee and refreshments available

**9:00 - 9:50 am** - Welcome and Overview of Programs

**10:00 - 11:00 am** - Concurrent Sessions I

**11:15 am - 12:15 pm** - Concurrent Sessions II

**12:15 - 1:15 pm** - Catered Lunch on Derring Balcony

**1:15 - 2:15 pm** - **Keynote Address** by Dr. David Asai, HHMI

**Introduction** by VT Provost Dr. Cyril Clarke

**2:30 - 4:00 pm** - **Break out sessions** for Pathways, FYE, and HHMI Inclusive Excellence

**4:30 - 6:30 pm** - Reception at Rising Silo

- Food and beverages, cash bar

- Music by Blacksburg's own Huckleberry Pie Band

**Thursday, June 6th from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm**

**8:00 - 9:00 am** - Coffee and refreshments available

**9:00 - 10:00 am** - **Keynote address** by Dr. Shelli Fowler, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Introduction** by Dr. Menah Pratt-Clarke, VT Vice President for Strategic Affairs and Vice Provost for Inclusion and Diversity

**10:15 - 11:15 pm** - Concurrent Sessions III

**11:30 - 12:30 pm** - Concurrent Sessions IV

**12:30 - 1:30 pm** - Catered Lunch on Derring Balcony

**1:30 - 2:30 pm** - **Poster Session and Resource Fair**

**2:30 - 4:00 pm** - **Closing Session Workshop** on inclusive teaching by Yolanda Avent, Virginia Tech



**June 5-6, 2019**  
NEW CLASSROOM BUILDING

## THE SUMMER INSTITUTE

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

+  
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### Have a great idea to share?

*There will be opportunities for you to present mini-presentations, posters, or whole workshops, so be sure to indicate your interest during the registration process.*