

Mason Core Committee Meeting -January 27, 2022 (1:00pm-2:30pm)

In Attendance: Bethany Usher (co-chair), Laura Poms (co-chair), Abena Aidoo, Matt Cronin, Zayd Hamid, Jane Hooper, Christine Rosenfeld, Ben Steger, Debra Stroiney, Anne Verhoeven, Liz White, Courtney Wooten, Shun Ye, Andrea Zach, Gina Polychronopoulos (ex-officio), Shelley Reid (ex-officio), Krista Shires (coordinator),

Guests: Ginny Scott, Daren Troxler, Liz Bartles, Moses Hunsaker, Sheena Serslev

Announcements

- Meeting management

Course Proposals

| Category | Title | Notes |
|-----------|---|---|
| Synthesis | <u>NEUR 473: Current Neuroscience Research in Germany</u> | Approved: Need to clarify if prerequisites are recommended or required, not both to avoid registration issues and confusion for students. Please also take off GU references as this course is not GU |
| GU | <u>RELI 358: Islamic Thought</u> | Renumbering only: Approved |
| GU | <u>RELI 310: Judaism</u> | Renumbering only: Approved |
| GU | <u>RELI 369: Religion and Revolution in Latin America</u> | Renumbering only: Approved |
| Lit | <u>RELI 339: The Bible as Literature</u> | Renumbering only: Approved |

ADVANCE and Mason Core Enhancements

The ADVANCE team prepared a presentation to capture the potential challenges and benefits that transfer students may experience in light of any changes to the Mason Core. Specific information was provided in reference to the current models up for discussion at the Town Hall. This presentation will be available in PDF form. Discussion ensued.

Task Forces: updates from 3 existing task forces were presented via PowerPoint and discussion took place during each presentation. Presentations included catalog descriptions, student learning outcomes, assessment input, and potential impacts on student degree programs. Final recommendations will be presented during the Town Hall and slides will be made available on the website in addition to the feedback form.

- Just Society
- Global
- History

Discussion

Preparation for Town Hall (January 28, 12-1:30pm) A regional analysis for job openings for the DMV area was shared with the committee. Dr. Usher also shared the “Virginia Education Post-College Outcomes: Study of Virginia public college and university graduates from 2007 to 2018” report. The Committee voted to include Models 1, 2 and 3 with the Mason community.

Enhanced Mason Core Models: Impact on VCCCS Transfer Students

January 2022



Transfer @ Mason

- Mason enrolls over 3,500 new transfer students per academic year
 - A significant majority transfer from the VCCS; 90+% of VCCS transfers are from NOVA
 - To apply for transfer admission, students typically have at least 1 year of college-level coursework after high school
- Transfer avenues
 - VCCS and Richard Bland Guaranteed Admission Agreements (GAA)
 - Regular/competitive admission
 - ADVANCE
 - Total enrollment as of Fall 2021: 2,511
 - Total matriculants as of Fall 2021: 470

Context: Statewide

- **Statewide transfer initiatives** led by TransferVA are currently working to streamline and simplify the transfer process across the Commonwealth. This includes:
 - **Course Development Efforts**
 - Review, revise, and develop general education and major-specific coursework to increase consistency and transferability across the state.
 - Over 400 courses have been reviewed or currently in process.
 - This has allowed for the creation of both the **Passport and Uniform Certificate of General Studies**, which provide students with course options that are guaranteed to fulfill general education requirements at all public institutions in the state, either through direct equivalency or requirement waiver.
 - **Common Curriculum Development Efforts**
 - Streamline transfer-oriented Associate-level degree requirements to increase consistency and transferability to all four-year public institutions in the state.
 - Reduce unique Associate-level degree requirements that primarily serve local or regional feeder/receiver relationships while restricting broad transferability to all public 4-year institutions in the state.
 - **TransferVA Portal**
 - TransferVA has launched an online resource warehouse and search engine that will allow students and families to compare their transfer options. The Portal will include four-year plans as Common Curriculum efforts continue.

Context: Statewide

- **Passport**
 - Serves as a guide to allow students to select 16 VCCS credits that are guaranteed to fulfill lower-division general education requirements at any public, 4-year institution in the state.
- **Uniform Certificate of General Studies (UCGS)**
 - Students earning this certificate select 31-32 credits that are guaranteed to fulfill the most applicable lower-division general education requirements at any public, 4-year institution in the state.

Context: Local

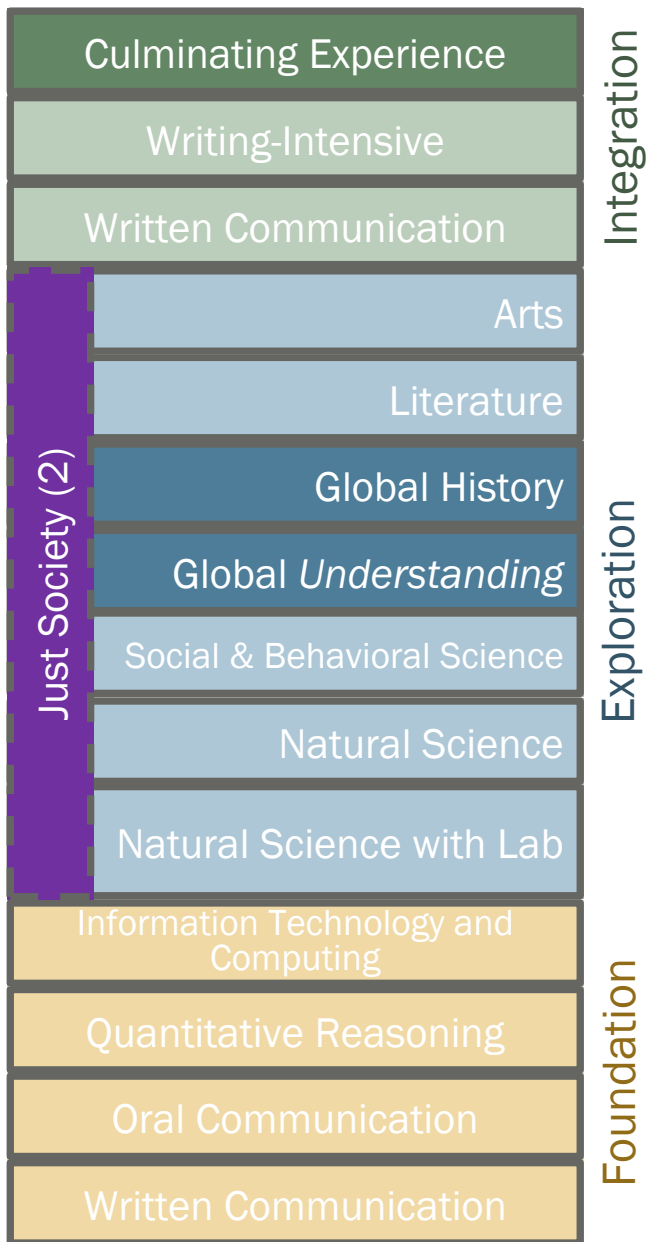
- VCCS courses instructed at any college must meet the description and, when available, the learning objectives, included in the [VCCS Master Course File](#). Individual colleges can choose to add learning outcomes, but Mason awards transfer credit at a system level, i.e. the same credit is awarded regardless of where the course is taken in the VCSS.
- Research indicates that the attainment of an Associate's degree, pre-transfer, has a significant positive impact on subsequent Bachelor degree completion rates¹.

¹National Student Clearinghouse (2013). Baccalaureate attainment: A national view of the postsecondary outcomes of students who transfer from two-year to four-year institutions (5). <https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/SignatureReport5.pdf>

Common Challenges Across Models

- Applies to all models with “floating” requirements (1 – 3 a&b)
 - Will the creation of Just Society or Global Connections-attributed courses alter the transferability and usefulness of their VCCS equivalents?
 - Floating requirements create “if-this-than-that” scenarios for students and advisors, where options in categories change based on other selections. This additional complexity makes it more likely that students will take the “wrong” course.
 - Learning outcomes in VCCS courses will not change, so this added complexity appears arbitrary since the specific Just Society (model 1) or Global Connections learning outcomes (models 2, 3a&b) are not necessarily included in the VCCS equivalent courses.
- Applies to models with stand alone Just Society requirement (2 – 5)
 - Regardless of which Mason Core category is eliminated, the addition of a non-transferrable Just Society course adds credit to 19 – 26 pathways (depending on waive-ability) and reduces general electives in 48 pathways. It makes no change to 7 pathways.
 - **Audit assumes there will be upper level Just Society options that can double count with Global.**
 - Summary of impact by pathway: [Just Society Audit](#)²
 - Example pathway mock-ups: [Example Pathways](#)
- Additional resource illustrating alignment of general education requirements by model: [VCCS Gen Ed Mapping](#)

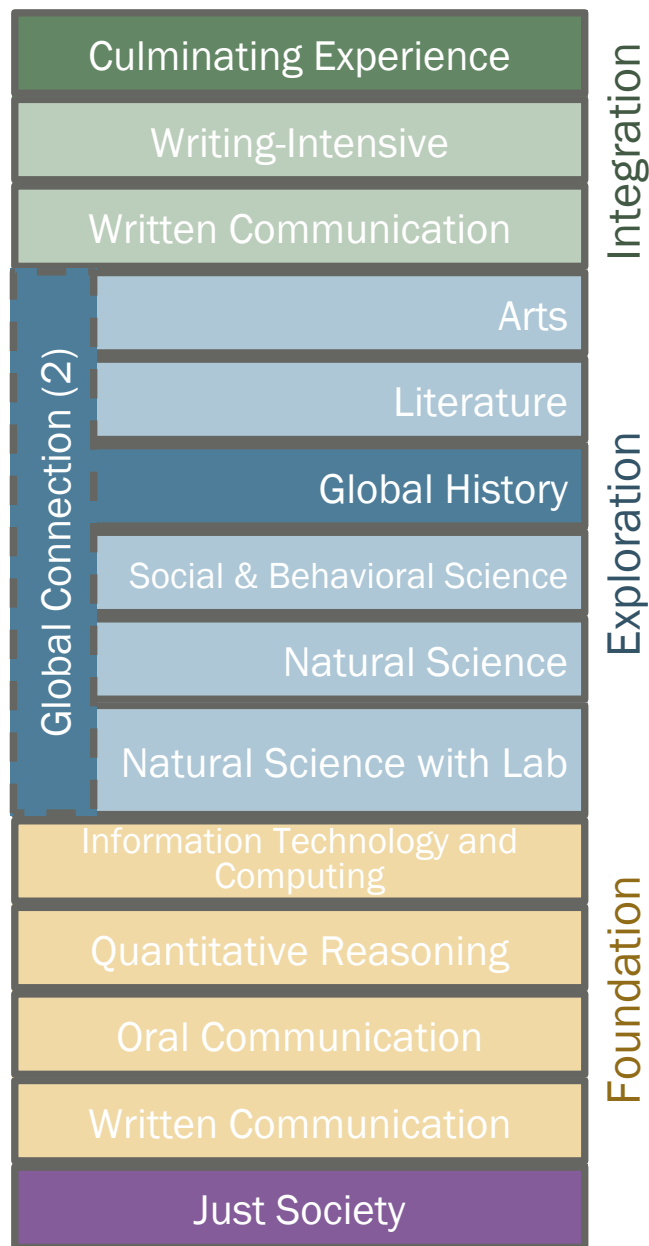
²To determine the impact of the proposed changes, we have reviewed 81 ADVANCE pathways, as they are examples of the most efficient dual degree-completion curriculum available to NOVA students, our largest transfer partner. We would expect a similar impact on students transferring from other VCCS schools or transferring outside of ADVANCE.



Model 1: Integrated Just Society

Impact on VCCS Transfer Students – Questions and Concerns

- Will changes to learning outcomes for Just Society-attributed courses alter their transfer equivalencies and usefulness in fulfilling Mason Core requirements?
 - If equivalencies change, this reduces the transferability and usefulness of VCCS general education coursework.
 - If equivalencies remain, the requirement that students select two courses:
 - creates “if-this-then-that” scenarios that complicate advising conversations,
 - restrict students’ options within categories, and
 - creates additional potential for students to have fulfilled Mason Core categories, but still have taken the “wrong” course to fulfill the overall Core + Just Society requirement.
- This affects all transfer pathways except those programs where most of the Core is completed at Mason.

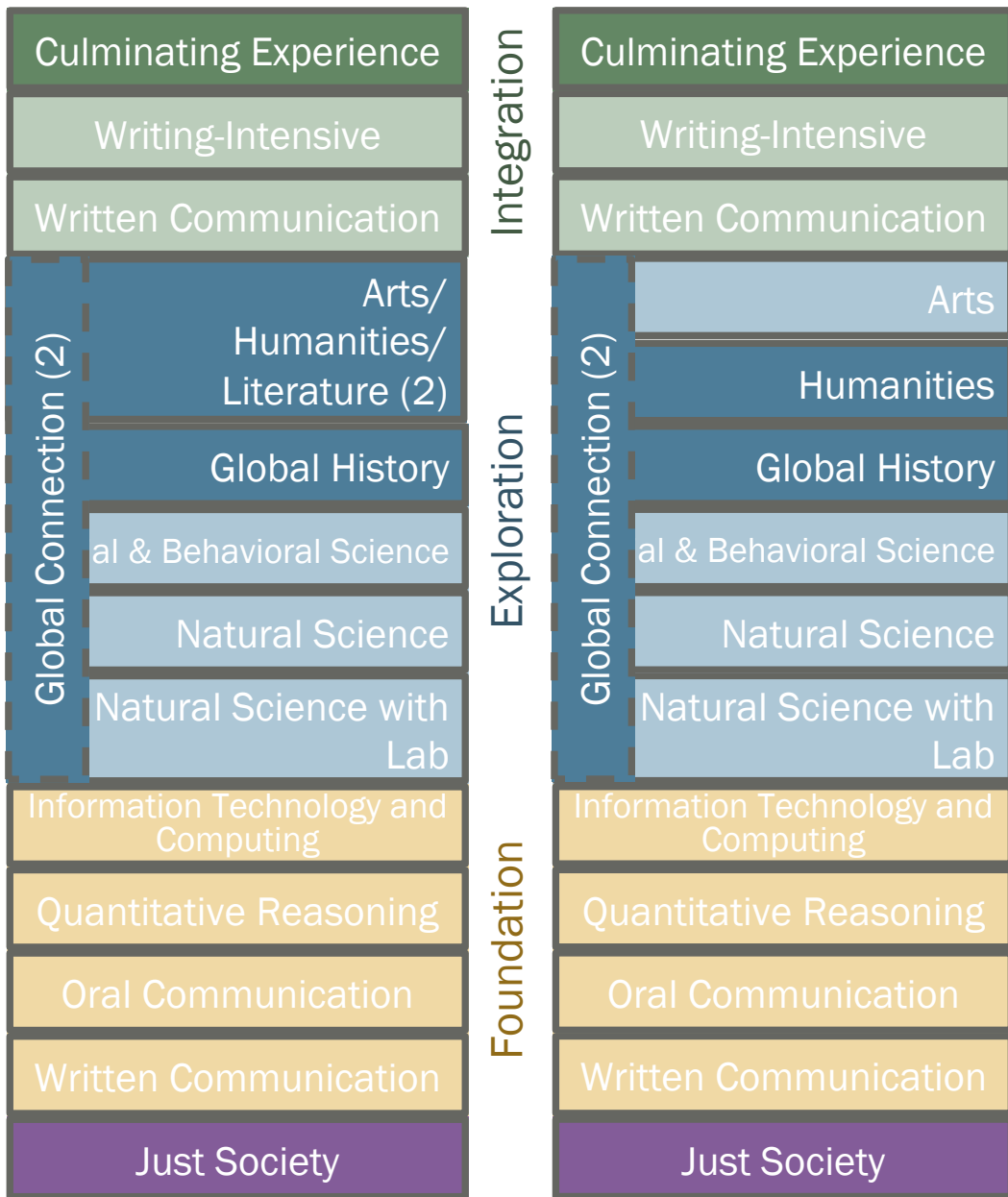


Model 2: Creating Just Society, Integrating Global Connections

Impact on VCCS Transfer Students – Questions and Concerns

- Can we ensure that Global Connections-attributed course retain their usefulness to transfer to fulfill Mason Core?
- Requiring two Global Connections courses:
 - creates “if-this-then-that” scenarios that complicate advising conversations,
 - restricts students’ options within categories, and
 - creates additional potential for students to have fulfilled Mason Core categories, but still have taken the “wrong” course to fulfill the Global Connections requirements.
- The addition of a non-transferrable Just Society course adds credit to 19 – 26 pathways (depending on waive-ability) and reduces general electives in 48 pathways. It makes no change to 7 pathways if the Just Society can double count with a Global Connections/Global Understanding course.
 - **Audit assumes there will be upper level Just Society options**
 - Summary of impact by pathway: [Just Society Audit](#)²
 - Example pathway mock-ups: [Example Pathways](#)

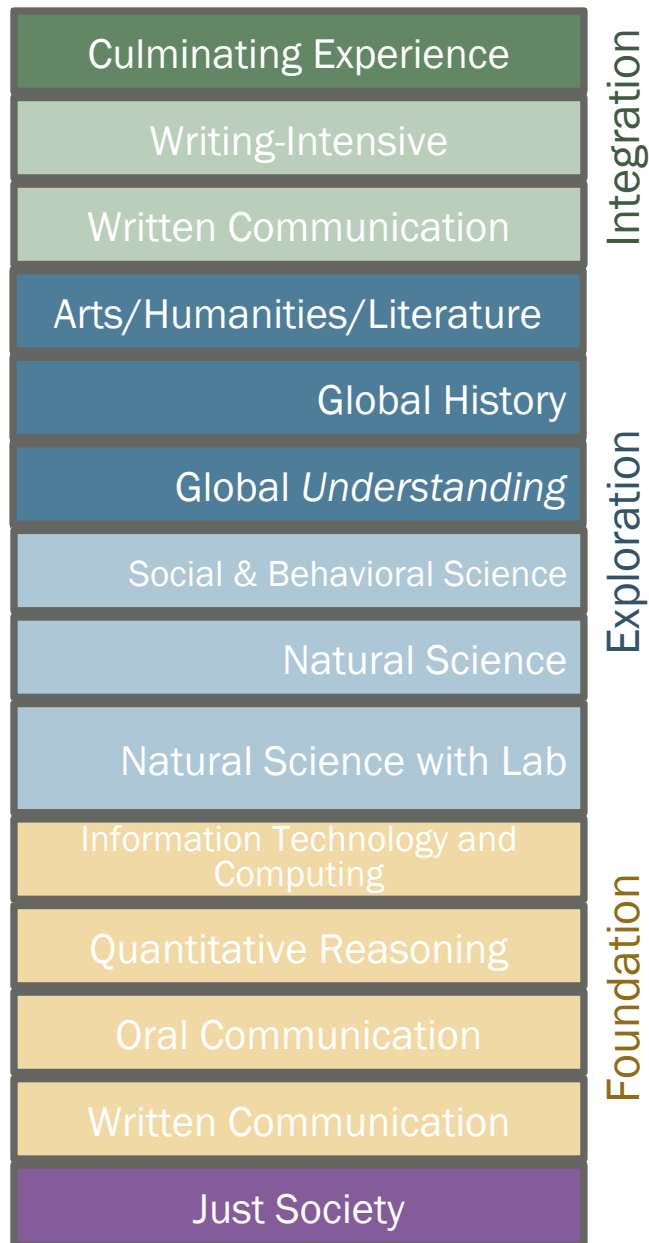
²To determine the impact of the proposed changes, we have reviewed 81 ADVANCE pathways, as they are examples of the most efficient dual degree-completion curriculum available to NOVA students, our largest transfer partner. We would expect a similar impact on students transferring from other VCCS schools or transferring outside of ADVANCE.



Models 3(a, b) Creating Just Society, Integrating Global Connections, Broadening Humanities

Impact on VCCS Transfer Students – Questions and Concerns

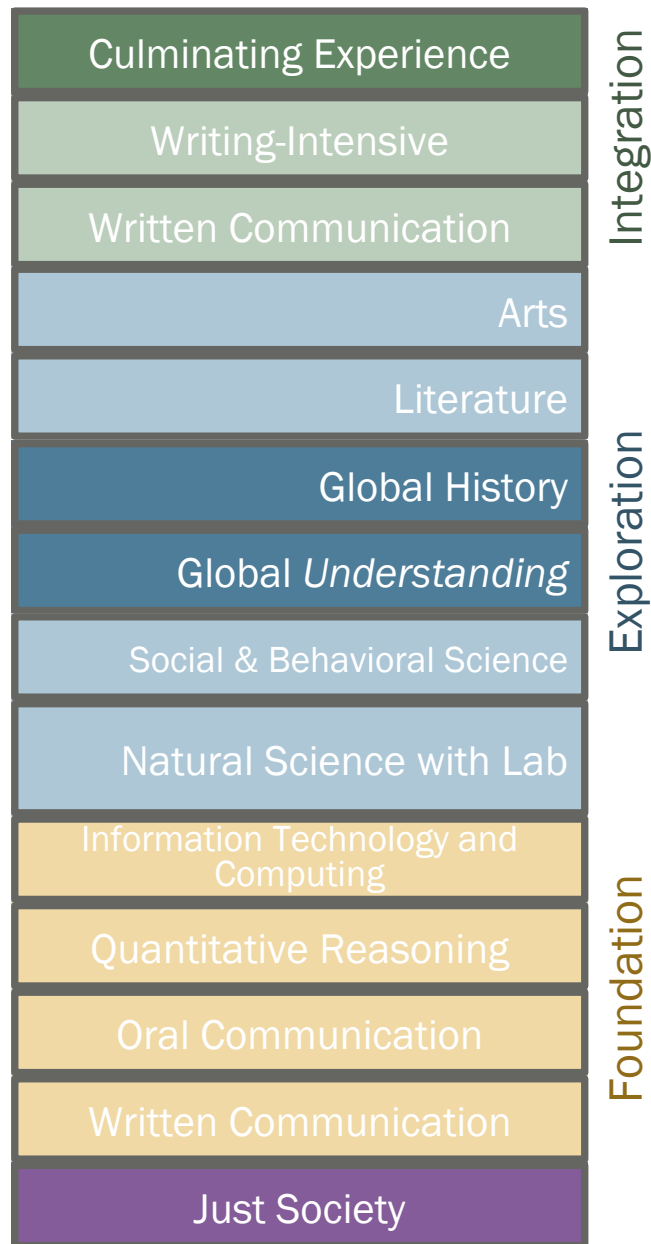
- Can we ensure that Global Connections-attributed course retain their usefulness to transfer to fulfill Mason Core?
- Requiring two Global Connections courses:
 - creates “if-this-then-that” scenarios that complicate advising conversations,
 - restricts students’ options within categories, and
 - creates additional potential for students to have fulfilled Mason Core categories, but still have taken the “wrong” course to fulfill the Global Connections requirements.
- The addition of a non-transferrable Just Society would have roughly the same impact under this model as that described under model 2.



Model 4: Combined Humanities, Add Just Society

Impact on VCCS Transfer Students – Questions and Concerns

- The addition of a non-transferrable Just Society would have roughly the same impact under this model as that described under model 2.
- This model has less complexity by retaining Global Understanding as a separate category.



Model 5: Fewer science credits, Add Just Society

Impact on VCCS Transfer Students – Questions and Concerns

- The addition of a non-transferrable Just Society would have roughly the same impact under this model as that described under model 2.
- Most Associate level degrees still require 2 lab sciences, with the exception of the Liberal Arts, AA and its specializations.
- Only 11 of 80 (14%) pathways use the Liberal Arts, AA or a Liberal Arts specialization.

VCCS Experience

- Transfer students enter community colleges and/or advising conversations with completed credits and do not always know exactly where they intend to transfer as early as needed to manage complex general education requirements.
- Federal Financial Aid Course Audit processes restrict students from receiving financial aid for courses that are not explicitly listed as degree requirements and from taking additional courses in requirement categories that are already fulfilled by other coursework.
- Advising conversations while at the community college are not informed or supported by a Mason degree audit tool, which makes tracking the completion of “floating” requirements more complicated and opaque to students and advisors.

Data: VCCS Transfer Numbers by Program

- Pending OEIP report – coming soon!