FAQs on the QEP for RC profs

Question: Uh, what’s a QEP again?
Quick answer: It’s a SACS thing

QEP = Quality Enhancement Plan. RC was required to develop a QEP as part of the SACS reaccreditation plan. Basically SACS wants RC to demonstrate that it has concrete plans to continue improving student learning.

Question: So what’s the plan?
Quick answer: Pathways—it’s an RC thing

For now we’re calling the program Pathways, and its focus is to improve the quality of Experiential Learning opportunities—internships, service-learning, creative/artistic works, study away, and research. This voluntary program will be built on established best practices and will offer students, supervisors, and their projects training and monetary support. We will appoint a Director to ensure the kind of leadership that will result in a successful program, and we will establish a central office for Experiential Learning to help connect students more quickly to the kinds of projects that will best complement their studies at RC and their future goals.

Question: Whose bright idea was that?
Quick answer: Yours!

The focus on Experiential Learning arose out of the work of a committee that included faculty, staff, and students. This committee gathered input from these three groups in addition to alums, all of whom indicated that Experiential Learning was a top choice. The specifics of the Pathways program were then developed through a series of departmental focus groups, investigations into best practices and relevant learning theories, faculty/staff forums, a student survey, and meetings with many groups outside of Academic Affairs. At each step along the way your input was taken seriously, and the result is a plan that has gained precision and strength. Thanks!

Question: Why is this so important now?

Experiential Learning is one of the three top academic priorities for RC, ranking right up there with strong majors and an innovative general education curriculum. We already do a lot of Experiential Learning at RC. Pathways is designed to help us bring a consistent level of excellence to these opportunities for our students.

Question: Who’s really going to benefit from this plan?
Quick answer: Students

The purpose of Pathways is to improve student learning. But how? The answer is embarrassingly simple: by making sure students begin an experience only after thoughtful planning, by guiding them through a process of reflection during that experience, and by requiring them to showcase their experience to a wider audience at its conclusion. That’s it. These simple requirements, easily adaptable to the five areas of Experiential Learning, will improve quality by transforming experiences into Experiential Learning.

Question: How’s that plan going to work?
Quick answer: Carefully & thoughtfully

Covering five very different areas of Experiential Learning, Pathways is an ambitious plan, and our first priority is to achieve a quality program. As a result, we’re going to implement the program in stages, allowing adequate time for training and development of necessary materials and support structures. Here’s the roll-out schedule:

- AY12-13: Internships & Service-Learning
- AY13-14: Creative/Artistic & Study Away
- AY14-15 Research

Question: How can I get involved?

In the year before Pathways projects in a specific area become available, you’ll be invited to participate in training to supervise projects in that area and to submit a proposal for your Pathways project. Before that time we may also ask for your help in collecting baseline data for comparative purposes.

Question: Who can I contact for more information now?
Quick answer: Rich Grant, Kim Filer, or Jennifer Berenson
see also www.roanoke.edu/QEP