



## **Roanoke Pathways: *From experience to experiential learning***

The Roanoke Pathways Program will be a significant step in achieving Roanoke College's overall mission to prepare students for responsible lives of learning, service, and leadership by promoting their intellectual, ethical, spiritual and personal growth. A key component to fulfilling this mission will be forging a deliberate connection between knowledge gained through traditional modes of learning and experiences designed to put that knowledge into practice. Though experience itself is valuable, when set in a larger context of reflection, experience can be transformative. As such, **Roanoke College's Pathways Program seeks to improve student learning by enhancing the quality and visibility of experiential learning opportunities currently available to our students: research, internships, service-learning, study away, and creative/artistic works.** Through these quality enhancements and increased visibility of experiential learning opportunities we hope students will view experiential learning as a key component of their Roanoke College education. Participation in these experiences holds the promise of improving student attitude, classroom dynamics, and overall campus climate.

To achieve this mission, Roanoke College's Pathways Program will:

- improve the quality of the wide array of experiential learning opportunities currently available to our students through education about and training in the use of best practices, and supporting participation through:
  - grants to students for research materials and travel;
  - stipends and grants to supervisors who adopt best practices; and
  - removal of logistical barriers to participation; and
- increase program visibility of these opportunities for a wider range of students.

The Pathways Program objectives and learning outcomes were developed through critical interaction with theoretical literature and with recognized best practices in experiential education. Roanoke College's emphasis on educating the whole person and recent scholarly work on assessment of experiential learning were also brought to bear on our program design and led to an understanding of the potential for experiential learning to be transformative for students in multiple spheres of their lives.

The Pathways Program is an ambitious undertaking with the potential to impact not only student learning outcomes specific to experiential learning, but also the wider campus ethos, including student attitudes and classroom dynamics.

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