CRAFTING PATHWAYS TO STUDENT SUCCESS:
How ePortfolio can bridge curriculum and advising to enhance student learning

Jackie Brousseau-Pereira
Academic Dean & Director of First Year Seminars
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Presentation to AAC&U Conference
January 28, 2017
Institutional Characteristics

University of Massachusetts Amherst

■ Public research university
■ Flagship campus of the 5-campus UMass System
■ Total Undergraduate Enrollment (Fall 2016) = 21,734*
■ 1,398 full time instructional faculty
■ 9 distinct schools and colleges

*Source: University of Massachusetts Office of Institutional Research
Institutional Characteristics

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS)

- Undergraduate Enrollment (Fall 2016) = 4,926*
- 195 full time instructional faculty
- 11 bachelor’s degree granting programs
- 18 full time equivalent academic advisors
- Average student/advisor ratio is 239:1

*Source: University of Massachusetts Office of Institutional Research
Problem Statement

SBS is a college with limited resources and more than 4,900 undergraduate students. We want to help students:

- Be more intentional in choosing coursework, experiences, and activities that will help them become who they want to be.
- Recognize and document the competencies and skills they gain during college.
- Understand the importance of reflection as a tool for growth and learning.

Solution: SBS Pathways
What is SBS Pathways?

- A framework that bridges curriculum and advising
- Developmentally appropriate to each student
- Culture change for the College
- Students become more intentional in selecting:
  - Academics
  - Experiential opportunities
  - Co-curricular activities
  - Professional development
- Students identify and communicate their competencies
- Students engage in on-going reflection about how they integrate the Pathways components
- ePortfolio is a space to gather evidence of Pathways goal completion over the course of a college career.
SBS Pathways: The Student View
Integrate College Experiences

ACADEMICS
• YOUR MAJOR(S)
• GENERAL EDUCATION
• ELECTIVES, CERTIFICATE, OR MINOR

CO-CURRICULARS
• STUDENT GROUPS
• CAMPUS ACTIVITIES
• VOLUNTEERING
• SPORTS

EXPERIENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES
• STUDY ABROAD
• DOMESTIC EXCHANGE
• CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE LEARNING
• TEACHING ASSISTANT
• RESEARCH ASSISTANT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
• INTERNSHIPS
• STUDENT EMPLOYMENT
• WORK EXPERIENCE

YOUR PATHWAYS THROUGH UMASS AND YOUR FUTURE
SBS Pathways: The Student View
How to think about college

EXPLORE

REFLECT & INTEGRATE

PLAN

INVENTORY
SBS Pathways: The Student View

How Pathways works

EXPLORE
What are your academic, co-curricular, and professional interests?

PLAN
What courses should you take? What activities might you try? Do you want to study abroad? Have you thought about doing research with a professor? Considering an internship?

INVENTORY
Keep track of what you’ve done

REFLECT & INTEGRATE
See how it all fits together
Using ePortfolio to Support Pathways

Students explore, plan, inventory, reflect and integrate across 4+ years

- Portfolio components:
  - SBS Pathways Program - Inward facing integrative scaffold with assignments
  - Showcase portfolio
  - Competencies self assessment
- Bridge across curriculum, advising, and co-curricular activity
Participation in Taskstream ePortfolio Pilot

317 students completing different aspects of the ePortfolio:

75 upper-level Integrative Experience course, working on showcase portfolios

92 mid-level technology and economics course, building portfolios to demonstrate competencies

150 first year seminars, working on various activities in the SBS Pathways Program.
SBS Pathways Directed Response Folio

Mirrors our Pathways language
SBS Pathways – Explore

Activities in this section help students explore various possibilities.

SBS Pathways Program

Activities in this section help students explore various possibilities.

SBS Pathways - Explore

What are your interests?

Directions
Options for completing this exercise:
- You can upload a file, e.g., .pdf, .doc, or .rtf
- You can enter text/images directly into the portfolio
- You can provide a link to a Google doc

Exercise: Imagine you are the Registrar for a day and get to create classes about exactly what you want to study. Forget about Gen Eds, Global Ed, and major requirements. Create a schedule of 4-5 classes that YOU wish existed for you to enroll in during your time at UMass. Please include a course title and 1-2 sentence description.

Evaluation Method

How important is my major?

Directions
SBS Pathways – Plan

**SBS Pathways - Plan**

- **Planning for Registration**
  - Directions
  - Evaluation Method

**Form:** Getting Ready for Registration

**Experiential opportunities**

- Directions
- Evaluation Method

**Finding co-curricular activities**

- Directions
- Evaluation Method

**Starting a Job/Internship Search**

- Directions
- Evaluation Method

Helps students prepare for registration

Starts students thinking about opportunities on campus and off
SBS Pathways – Inventory

Students document academic, co-curricular, experiential, and professional development activities.

Question structure allows us to gather quantitative and qualitative data.

Brief reflection built in to provide insight to student and evaluators.

---

**SBS Pathways Inventory**

This form will help you to keep track of your courses and activities each semester. Over time, you can go back and look at the things you did and reflect on your own growth. Be assured that it’s normal for your plans and interests to change over the course of your studies.

- For what semester are you completing this form?
  - No answer specified

- Did you try something new this semester? (e.g., joined a club, went to a talk, visited Career Services, went to meet with a professor, took the bus to NYC, etc.)
  - No answer specified

- What new thing(s) did you try?
  - No answer specified

- Did you participate in co-curricular activities this year? (e.g., joined a Registered Student Organization, volunteered, played a sport, etc.)
  - No answer specified

- What co-curricular activities did you participate in?
  - No answer specified

- Did you have a professional development experience? (student employment, internship, work experience)
  - No answer specified
Annual reflection can be prompted in classes, by advisors, or through other connections with students.
Lessons Learned

- We learn more about the ways students are engaging with campus.
- We can use ePortfolio to help students be more fully engaged.

**Did you try something new this semester?**
- Yes (82.3%)
- No (17.7%)

**Did you participate in co-curricular activities?**
- Yes (68.6%)
- No (31.4%)

**Did you have a professional development experience?**
- Yes (26%)
- No (74%)
What have you learned about yourself this semester?

Sample responses:

This semester, I have learned to challenge myself more to step outside of my comfort zone and get more involved. I have also learned more about my career goal in environmental policy through doing research and in my classes. I have made plans to study abroad next spring and looked into getting a masters in public policy. (second semester sophomore, spring 2016)

I have learned that I have very poor time management skills, but through the semester I made them better and my grades have improved accordingly. I am determined to do well in school and hope to continue these good habits that I have developed this semester on through my college career. (First year student, fall 2015)

College is really different from High School. I have a lot of free time and I thought it would be easier to balance school and my social life but it's a little tricky. Starting a semester late from other freshmen, I didn't think I'd make friends but I did and I am starting to put myself out there more and try new things. (First year student who began in January)
Competency and Skill Development

We believe that SBS undergraduate students acquire many of these competencies and skills while at UMass.

The problem is that they have to be taught to identify and describe them.

- Disciplinary Knowledge
- Creativity & Intellectual Curiosity
- Research & Technical Knowledge
- Information Literacy
- Critical Thinking
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Communication
- Global/Intercultural Perspectives
- Foreign Language Skills
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
- Ethical Citizenship
Competencies Self Assessment

In Pilot Phase

Example: Teamwork

Definition: When thinking about teamwork as a competency, you should consider your individual abilities and behaviors as you work with others to accomplish a shared goal. Also important are the quality and quantity of contributions you make to team discussions and work.

Examples: Working on a group project in a class, participating in group decision-making in a student organization, participating in team sports, working with co-workers at a job.

Describe situations or activities that helped you to achieve competency in Teamwork
## Competencies Self Assessment Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I share knowledge, expertise and encouragement to strengthen team performance.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Somewhat</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>No Basis for Judgment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When working in a team or on a group project, I consistently support the team by “pitching in” to help when necessary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share accountability for the results of a team, whether those results are positive or negative.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work to help team members constructively resolve conflicts that arise.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I collaborate with team members to solve problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stand behind and support team decisions even if they were not my choice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I recognize and acknowledge the different strengths of team members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- Advisors see benefits of SBS Pathways and ePortfolio
- SBS supports a developmental advising model
- Meetings with SBS faculty have been encouraging

Challenges

- Culture change is always challenging
- Faculty perspectives on their role in student preparation beyond college
- Getting buy-in and support at the campus level
SBS Pathways Implementation

Curriculum Touchpoints

- ePortfolio in all SBS First Year Seminars
- Developing sophomore experience focused on professional development
- Incorporate in Junior Year Writing and Integrative Experience courses
- Incorporate into other major coursework
SBS Pathways Implementation

Advising Touchpoints

- Major and SBS Exploratory Track advisors work with students to plan Pathways
- SBS Director of Professional and Career Development creates opportunities for students to explore professional interests
Future Use of the ePortfolio Pilot

- Continue to develop the SBS Pathways Program
- Work with instructors/faculty in departments to get more utilization and buy in
- Work toward developing alumni reviewers of professional portfolios
- Use rubrics for tracking student learning outcomes
Contact Information

Jackie Brousseau-Pereira
Academic Dean & Director of First Year Seminars
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
University of Massachusetts Amherst
413-545-1933
jbrousse@umass.edu
http://www.umass.edu/sbs/