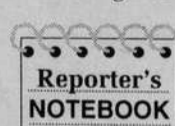


Pathways students make connections

Some say the Pathways program brings people together through academics

By Erin Middleton
for the Emerald

The commencement ceremony for the inaugural class of the Pathways program was held May 30 in the Gerlinger Alumni Lounge. Pathways was first offered to students in the fall of 1999. It began as an idea from faculty



members and students who wanted to combine University education with a more thematic and collective learning experience for first-year students. There were three Pathways offered: "Law, Science and Culture," "Exploring Culture through Spanish or French," and "Human Nature."

Each pathway, described in the Learning Communities 1999-2000 Course Schedule, is "a carefully designed one to two-year curriculum composed of integrated courses and activities. Pathways is designed to help students explore thematically related academic subjects, while giving students the flexibility to take classes outside the pathway."

If enrolled in Pathways, a student receives guaranteed enrollment in the pathway courses as well as guaranteed University enrollment, something only upperclassmen previously received. As one of the first Pathways graduates, I found the program to be hugely successful.

I am grateful to the University and to the Office of Undergraduate Studies for providing this program for students. As a student in the "Human Nature" option, I found it enabled me to make connections between classes where I did not think connections could be made.

Fall term of 1999, our pathway was enrolled in Philosophy 170, entitled "Love and Sex." In this class, we talked about the social implications of love and sex and discussed the related

works of many great philosophers, including Plato and W.E.B. DuBois. In spring term of 2000, we took Philosophy 216, entitled "Philosophy and Cultural Diversity," in which we talked of racial barriers between different cultures. The professor mentioned DuBois, and I remember thinking, "I already know that name; I remember him from fall term."

An important characteristic of the Pathways program, as opposed to other learning communities, is that it brings faculty members in contact with students to form lasting relationships. John Lysaker, assistant professor of philosophy, was a leading faculty member in the "Human Nature" pathway. At the commencement ceremony, Lysaker looked at his students and said, "I will definitely miss you all and encourage you to continue to use me for whatever advising I can give."

This was a touching time, as Pathways students in Gerlinger Lounge looked around at each other. We were the first to travel down this specially designed academic path. I have gained friendships with faculty members and students that will benefit me far beyond the two years the program lasted.

I wonder if I would have met some of these students, like my friend Breana "Bre" Bruce, a psychology major, if we hadn't been enrolled in the pathway. We share a lot of the same views on issues, like human nature and why people do the things they do.

Another of my friends, Emily Gross, a sophomore Pathways student, brought her boyfriend to the commencement ceremony. "I wanted him to meet all the people I have come to know, my friends whom I always talk about... to put a face with a name," she said. Pathways was more than students in a class, it was a community of like-minded people sharing their experiences with those close to them.

I know a little something about every one of the eighteen members in my pathway, and I'm going to miss them after this year is over, but I know we'll keep in touch. That's what Pathways is all about: Making connections between people and ideas.

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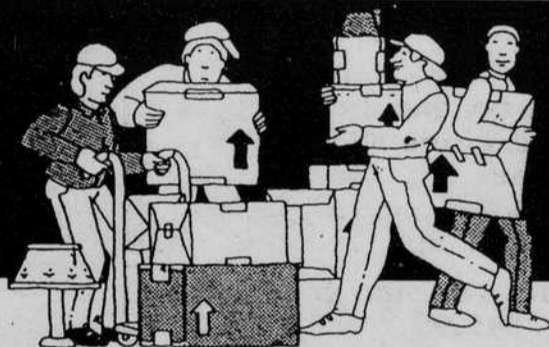
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