Richmond 2015 – Creating Academic Opportunities for VCU Students

The upcoming UCI Road World Championships (Sept 19-27) offers a unique learning opportunity for students across the disciplines. We would like to encourage faculty to seize this once in a life-time event in Richmond as a prime teachable moment. Here are some options to consider:

a. Develop Special Topics Courses (one credit 291 or 391)

These special topics courses would be one credit offerings in the 291 or 391 rubric of the major or if none is available, a CMST 391 is an option. The topic can be any theme or issue but must incorporate active student involvement with the race during the week of the race (September 19-27). In most cases it would be expected that the course would be completed within a seven week period. Student participation in the race can be as a volunteer registered through the UCI Bike race system or on a project designed by the faculty member. Faculty (or departments) will be compensated for the course at ($1,200). Proposals for a course must be submitted to Cathy Howard at choward@vcu.edu by March 20 and must have the department chair and dean approval. Goal of at least 20 courses offered with minimum enrollment in each section to be (20 - 30 students). A course proposal template will be provided to Deans for distribution.

b. Great VCU Bike Race Book*

Goals: 1) Provide a purposeful, enjoyable learning experience during the Bike Race week. 2) Give VCU students an opportunity to participate in an innovative online course that aligns with the QEP’s goals of integrative learning by means of digital engagement 3) Provide a unique faculty development experience that will advance VCU faculty’s involvement in distinctive online education aiming at deeper learning and high engagement for student success

The course: One credit, pass/fail, largely informal, fully online, probably at a reduced tuition rate (to cover course costs).

Students select a “track” identified by a lead faculty member (as many as 20 different tracks, possibly more depending on interest). Tracks could be organized around disciplinary or cross disciplinary themes (areas of creativity and/or inquiry – for example, bicycles and biomedical engineering; the history of bicycling in the US; sports medicine; bicycle brands and marketing; bicycle events in the media, etc.). With the assistance of ALT Lab, lead faculty will create track websites with ideas and examples of student
activities during the race and the learning products that might result. During the race itself, students will produce these various learning products, e.g., blogs, tweets, photographs, audio, video (YouTube, Vine). Also during the race, these learning products, categorized by tracks, will be aggregated in more-or-less real time onto a learning engagement “dashboard” page created and maintained by ALT Lab. At the end of the race, lead faculty will work with ALT Lab and student teams to curate the best works into a “Great VCU Bike Race Book” that would live online and possibly be published in print depending on resources. Faculty members are invited to propose a track theme. The faculty group will determine the course requirements and materials that would be housed on a central website developed through ALT Lab. Given the nature of the course, each track could accommodate many students, perhaps in the hundreds depending on the activities and design. Compensation may vary by enrollment exceeds this number. Faculty would be compensated by Online Academic Programs for spring and fall planning and development meetings as well as for their participation in the course—at least $3000 for development and an overload stipend for course participation. Track theme proposals are to be submitted to Gardner Campbell at wgcampbell@vcu.edu and are due March 20. This course aligns with the QEP focus on integrative thinking through digital fluency. A course proposal template will be provided to the Deans for distribution.

c. Incorporation of Bike Race involvement into existing courses

The Bike Race offers many possibilities for experiential learning across the disciplines. Faculty members are encouraged to infuse projects or studies that involve student participation in the Race as a volunteer or in activities designed by the faculty member that complement the learning objectives of an existing course. Issues for consideration include sustainability, health and wellness, economic impact, emergency preparedness, logistics, transportation design, art in public spaces, culture and language – to name a few. It would be helpful to create a list of courses that will incorporate the race. Those course titles should be submitted to Cathy Howard by July 1.

*More details forthcoming