

Trojan Pathways

An AI-Integrated Faculty Toolkit for Individualized Student Learning at Virginia State University

Individualized Pathways. Timely Feedback. AI Done Right. At VSU.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trojan Pathways is a faculty-facing toolkit that supports individualized learning, timely feedback, and AI literacy across the VSU curriculum. Developed over three years of AI-integrated course design in SOCI 352 and SOCI 419, the toolkit provides VSU faculty, regardless of discipline, with a Canvas-deployable module shell, a faculty feedback workflow, a Student AI Literacy Guide, two workshops, an adaptable rubric set, and an assessment suite. The toolkit draws on four AI systems available to faculty and students at no cost through institutional or free-tier access: NotebookLM, Scite, Claude, and Gemini.

Each tool serves a distinct pedagogical purpose. NotebookLM anchors students in their personalized source library. Scite verifies academic citations and grounds claims in peer-reviewed evidence, providing citation context. Claude serves as the student's argument partner and the instructor's feedback workflow hub. Gemini supports multimodal exploration. Together, they enable students to pursue a topic that matters to them, build verified evidence for every claim, and produce portfolio-grade work that reflects their own thinking.

During the fellowship year, I will package the toolkit, recruit and coach an inaugural cohort of six VSU faculty from at least three departments, deliver two workshops at the Academic Innovation Center, document cohort adaptations, and produce a findings memo to inform a potential year-two expansion. All student-facing assessment activities will be conducted in coordination with the VSU IRB and the Office of Academic Affairs. **Trojan Pathways gives VSU a substantive answer to the question every university is being asked: how does your institution teach with AI, and how do you know it works?**

PROPOSAL STATEMENT

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A. Motivation and Purpose

I have spent three years integrating AI into course design for my undergraduate sociology classes at Virginia State University. SOCI 352 (Social Problems) and SOCI 419 (Senior Research) now run on a workflow that pairs each student with a research topic of their own choosing, anchors that topic in a personalized source library, verifies claims against peer-reviewed evidence, and returns substantive written feedback within the same week. The results have shifted what I expect from undergraduate work. Students who once turned in five-paragraph think-pieces now produce policy briefs, statistical analyses, and journal-style articles.

That experience convinced me of two things. When done well, AI integration does not erode student thinking; it expands the space in which students are required to think for themselves. The workflow is portable. Other VSU faculty can adopt it once the toolkit, the workshops, and the assessment scaffolding are available in shared form. The Trojan Pathways fellowship gives me the time to package what I have built, coach a small cohort of colleagues through adoption, and document a model that VSU can decide whether to expand.

B. Proposed Work

Trojan Pathways is a faculty-facing toolkit organized around four AI systems available to faculty and students at no or low-cost through institutional or free-tier access. NotebookLM anchors students in their personalized source library. Scite verifies citations and grounds claims in peer-reviewed evidence, providing citation context. Claude serves as the student's argument partner and the instructor's feedback workflow hub. Gemini supports multimodal exploration. The toolkit does not require any paid student account on any platform, although Scite and Claude work best with a subscription, at least for faculty.

The toolkit includes five components: a Canvas-deployable module shell that VSU faculty can add to an existing course and adapt to their discipline; a faculty feedback workflow with templates and rubrics that streamlines turnaround for student writing; a Student AI Literacy Guide that teaches verification, source vetting, and the distinction between AI-as-substitute and AI-as-amplifier; an adaptable rubric set for writing-intensive, research-intensive, and applied courses; and an assessment suite aligned with learning outcomes, AI literacy, and the use of verified evidence. All student-facing assessment activities will be coordinated with the VSU IRB and the Office of Academic Affairs.

C. Goals

1. Package a complete, deployable toolkit that VSU faculty can adopt without specialized AI training.
2. Coach an inaugural cohort of six VSU faculty drawn from at least three departments through adopting the toolkit in their courses.
3. Document the cohort's experience and produce a findings memo to inform whether and how VSU expands the model in subsequent years.

D. Measurable Objectives

- Release the Canvas module shell, faculty feedback workflow, Student AI Literacy Guide, rubric set, and assessment suite as a single packaged toolkit by the end of the spring semester.
- Recruit six faculty participants from at least three departments by the end of the fall semester.

- Deliver two workshops at the Academic Innovation Center, open to the cohort and other interested faculty.
- Document at least four cohort-developed adaptations of the toolkit.
- Conduct pre- and post-assessments of cohort faculty AI literacy and confidence to inform iteration of the toolkit.
- Conduct a cohort-level review of student outcomes on AI literacy and verified evidence use, in coordination with the VSU IRB.

E. Activities and Tasks

- Package the existing SOCI 352 and SOCI 419 workflow into a Canvas-deployable module shell.
- Build the faculty feedback workflow with templates, prompts, and rubrics that work with Claude and Scite.
- Write the Student AI Literacy Guide and pilot it in two sections of SOCI 352.
- Develop two workshop curricula and run-of-show materials.
- Recruit the six-faculty cohort through department chairs and the Academic Innovation Center.
- Deliver the workshops at the Academic Innovation Center and provide one-on-one coaching to cohort faculty as they adapt the toolkit.
- Conduct pre/post cohort assessments, compile a findings memo, and present at a VSU faculty showcase.

F. Time Frame

Months 1-3 (Summer): Package toolkit components. Build the faculty feedback workflow. Draft the Student AI Literacy Guide. Develop workshop curricula. Initiate IRB coordination.

Months 4-6 (Fall semester): Recruit cohort. Deliver Workshop 1 (AI Literacy and the Personalized Source Library). Begin one-on-one coaching with cohort faculty.

Months 7-9 (Spring semester): Deliver Workshop 2 (Verified-Evidence Assignment Design). Cohort faculty pilot the toolkit in their courses. Conduct pre/post cohort assessments.

Months 10-12 (Late Spring/Summer): Compile findings memo. Present at the VSU faculty showcase. Release the documented toolkit with cohort-contributed adaptations.

G. Impact

Cohort students benefit first. Each student in a Trojan Pathways course receives a personalized research arc, training in verified evidence, and substantive written feedback. The work they produce reflects their own thinking, not the average output of a chatbot. Because the toolkit relies solely on free-tier or institutional access, no student is asked to pay for a platform to participate.

Cohort faculty benefit second. Participants leave the fellowship with a working AI-integrated course module, documented gains in AI literacy and confidence, and a cross-departmental peer network.

VSU benefits third. The university gains a documented, replicable model for AI-integrated, individualized pedagogy that can inform institutional reporting, accreditation reviews, and future grant proposals. Trojan Pathways gives VSU a substantive answer to the question every regional university is being asked: how does your institution teach with AI, and how do you know it works?

H. Sustainability and Scaling

The toolkit is designed to outlast the fellowship. Every component is built in formats that VSU faculty already use: Canvas modules, Word and PDF templates, and Google Slides workshop decks. The Canvas module shell can be cloned across course sites without specialized administrative permissions.

After the fellowship year, sustainability is maintained through three channels. The workshops can be repeated in partnership with the Academic Innovation Center, subject to AIC scheduling and capacity. Cohort faculty serve as in-department points of contact who can answer colleagues' questions within their units. The toolkit resides in a shared faculty space, with version updates managed through a light annual review.

The year-end findings memo will document what worked, what did not, and what a credible year-two expansion would require. Any expansion of cohort size, additional workshops, or inter-institutional sharing with peer HBCUs is presented as a roadmap for VSU leadership to consider, not a commitment within the scope of this fellowship.